

CABINET MEMBER DECISION

Date of decision – 31 JULY 2025

MYPARISH WEB PORTAL

Relevant Cabinet Member

Councillor Ian Cresswell, Cabinet Member with responsibility for Environment and Communities

Relevant Chief Officer

Hannah Perrott, Assistant Director for Communities

Local Member(s)

All Members

Recommendation

1. That the Cabinet Member with Responsibility for Environment and Communities:

- a) approves the withdrawal of the MyParish web platform;
- b) Notes that the council will work with the County Association of Local Councils (CALC) and town and parish councils through the transition and ensure sufficient time is provided to transfer to new website providers, with a minimum of 12 months before the site is withdrawn; and
- c) Any further decisions in relation to the withdrawal of the MyParish web platform are delegated to the Assistant Director for Communities in consultation with the Cabinet Member with Responsibility for Environment and Communities.

Background

2. [MyParish](#) is a Worcestershire County Council (the council) website which has been in existence since 2008 and provides an online presence for town and parish councils to publish documents which they are required to make publicly available as set out in the [Transparency Code](#) for smaller authorities (turnover of less than £25k per annum);

‘The data and information specified in this Code must be published on a website which is publicly accessible free of charge.’

3. The option to utilise a free web presence was included in the Worcestershire Parish Charter in 2011 which eight parishes signed up to, but this has not been reviewed since publication.

4. Around 40% of town and parish councils have their own websites across a range of different web providers.
5. In the 12 months from May 2024 to May 2025 there were 10829 visits to MyParish which averaged 902 visits per month. There were 178 visits from website administrators averaging 14 per month.
6. A free website for town and parish councils isn't provided routinely by upper tier local authorities, although it is usual for a list of town and parish councils and contact details to be available. There are examples where local authorities will develop a website for town and parish councils for a fee.
7. In Worcestershire, Wyre Forest District Council hosts parish council information for two parishes. All other lower tier authorities have dedicated webpages providing contact details for the parish and town councils within their boundary.
8. Since September 2020, all parish, town & borough councils must have a website that complies with Website Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.2 AA rating so that it meets Accessibility Guidelines as set in the Public Sector Bodies Accessibility regulations.
9. The MyParish website is hosted on a platform which utilises old technology and is not technically robust or resilient. It does not meet current web accessibility guidelines outlined above for information added after 2018 and will require financial investment in order to develop a new platform that is meets the WCAG 2.2 AA guidelines.
10. The council has discussed the issues and challenges with the County Association of Local Councils for Worcestershire. They have expressed their commitment to work alongside the council and all town and parish councils that will need to develop alternative provision as part of this transfer, ensuring there is sufficient time to be able establish and budget for a new website.
11. Consideration around communication of any changes is a priority, to ensure that there is a clear and consistent message for town and parish councils as well as elected members.

Legal, Financial and HR Implications

12. The current MyParish platform places the council at risk as the information uploaded is on a council platform which is unmonitored, with no corporate control of the information. There is a liability risk for the council as the website host, including copyright infringement and defamation through information published on the website. In addition, the current site does not meet the website accessibility requirements for public sector bodies (WCAG 2.2 AA) for any information added after 2018.
13. There are no direct financial implications to the council in relation to the recommendations, the cost of new website provision would be met through parish and town councils directly.
14. There are a range of options available to town and parish councils to provide a WCAG 2.2 AA compliant website. Initial research has identified that a new website could be established from private sector providers for between £500 and £1000 plus ongoing

annual hosting fees. The council IT Services team could also undertake this work with a cost of around £4000 per unique site created.

15. There are no HR implications.

Joint Equality, Public Health, Data Protection and Sustainability Impact Assessments

The JIA screening did not identify any potential considerations requiring further assessment during implementation.

Supporting Information

None

Contact Points

County Council Contact Points
County Council: 01905 763763

Specific Contact Points for this report
Hannah Perrott Assistant Director – Communities Tel: 01905 846354
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Background Papers

In the opinion of the proper officer (in this case the Assistant Director – Communities) there are no background papers relating to the subject matter of this report.