



North Lincolnshire Council Migration – The benefits of embracing early digitisation.

Local authority profile

Local authority: North Lincolnshire Council

Relevant originating authorities: Historic England, Natural England

Work started: 10 August 2023

Served notice: 19 April 2024

Date of migration: 31 May 2024

Data type: Digital

Number of charges migrated: 65,055

Software supplier: Arcus

Migration supplier: HM Land Registry (HMLR)

Delivery model: HMLR delivered

Live operating mode: Incumbent API

Before the programme

Dave Atkinson, Business Partner – Innovation & Data, at North Lincolnshire Council knows the importance of digitisation. Before migrating to the Local Land Charges Register, Dave and his team were brought in to digitise North Lincolnshire's local land charges data. Dave said:

“After my first meeting with HMLR I knew that our data was probably in better shape than most. We certainly were not apprehensive about migration.”

The migration of the LLC data was an extension of the work they were already doing, so they embraced the project.

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During the programme

North Lincolnshire was the first local authority (LA) to go live using Arcus Global API (Application Programming Interface). Acting as an early adopter, Dave has helped HMLR to understand the actions needed to optimise Arcus Global for other migrating local authorities. “We had a good relationship with the team at Arcus, so it was quite a straightforward process for us. However, I think that is partly because I have a programming background and I am familiar with databases, if we needed to manipulate the data in anyway, I would be able to do that. I imagine there are some local authorities out there who would find that a bit daunting,” said Dave.

This is where HMLR LA Delivery Manager, Pam Patchett comes in. She worked closely with North Lincolnshire and Arcus during migration to ensure that future Arcus Global migrations run smoothly:

“The difficult part for us was setting up the tools to assist future migrations,” said Pam. “We had to understand how the systems worked and reacted together, so there were a lot of meetings with Arcus. Dave understands the back-end of his systems very well, so I have conversations with him to understand how the tooling is working, and to try to predict any issues which may arise. We are currently trying to improve our processes by compiling a range of questions to ask local authorities about system setup to understand how the extraction tool will work for each migration.”

After the programme

“We are more accurate with data now because we know it is getting checked at HM Land Registry,” said Dave. “We didn’t come from a land charge background, but we are more conscious of the processes that go into maintaining an accurate LLC register.” Not only are North Lincolnshire’s customers benefitting from more accurate, quicker search results, but the teams that Dave works with are finding their processes simplified. “Previously, other services would send a paper record to the Land Charges team who would enter the record on to the register on their behalf. Now the services are entering the data themselves. I think the charges are getting onto the register faster, and the more people use the entryway, the quicker it is becoming.”

There has also been a cost saving for the council; previously the Land Charges team consisted of three people. Two of the team retired and one moved department. The council has not had to replace them as the LLC Register reduced the team’s workload so significantly that it can be handled by one person – Dave is currently responsible for this area.

What advice would you give to other Authorities?

When asked to express how important it is for LAs to start digitising their data, Dave had two simple words: “It’s crucial.”

Dave added, “Moving over to the LLC Register has reduced our workload massively in terms of land charges. I would advise other LAs to get their data digitised as soon as possible.”

HMLR LA Delivery Manager, Pam Patchett added “If you’ve got a planning portal, use it because we can then use the documents in the planning portal to help you with the digitisation. This can help to speed up the work that we do.

Taking the first steps to digitising your data could be as simple as scanning or photographing your paper records to get them online. If some of your data is already digitised, think about why certain charges may be missing and what steps you may need to take to get them on the register. You don’t need to wait until you begin migration with HMLR – start early and do little and often to ensure that migration runs smoothly.”and do little and often to ensure that migration runs smoothly.”

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