RETH NK

CATALOGUE OF INNOVATION AND
EFFICIENCIES SAVING THROUGH
TECHNOLOGY

TRANSFORMING LOCAL SERVICES

Kent Connects
transforming local services

CONTENTS

BETTER FOR LESS

A SYSTEM FOR HANDLING ALL CUSTOMER TELEPHONE ENQUIRIES THROUGH ONE CENTRAL NUMBER

WHO?

Medway Council

WHAT?

A system for handling all customer telephone enquiries through one central number.

WHY?

The council needed to streamline its back-office operation in order to improve services and cut costs.

Previously, citizens had almost 140 published telephone numbers to search through when making enquiries. The then-current IT systems did not link council service areas so callers faced constant re-direction.

The council decided to aim for one central telephone contact, one central administration hub and an efficiently integrated set of IT systems, to reduce duplication of work while providing a faster response.

HOW?

Medway installed the Lagan customer relations management programme, combined with EBASE Eforms, as the tool to integrate their back-office operations. They also launched IDOX, a new electronic document and records management system which automatically links with Lagan so that all document files are efficiently captured.

With Lagan at its heart Medway have now integrated an impressive number of back-office services including IDOX, Confirm, Aqua (Adult Education), Acolaid, M3, Academy, Evince, Parking, ICON (for payments) and www.medway.gov.uk. This puts relevant data immediately at the fingertips of response staff taking calls at the single enquiries number.

Further developments are in the pipeline. For instance, Lagan Citizen Mobile will provide a seamless path for citizens to report problems (e.g. graffiti, abandoned cars) which will be centrally recorded and posted for attention.

The council is also working to link Lagan to Frameworki (social care) as the initial central point of contact for the appropriate service and support.

WHAT SAVINGS?

Medway has achieved its target savings, with the final phase about to start delivering further efficiencies.

Quantitative savings were £3.7m off base budget (not cumulative) for customer contact and administration services, and a reduction of over 20% in expenditure for those activities across the council. The council is on track to reduce operating costs by £14M.

OTHER BENEFITS?

The council now has an effective Initial contact and administration team which operates through one central telephone number. While there are still separate numbers for different services, many of these are automatically routed to the central team who answer the call in the name of the service.

This has significantly reduced duplicate processing, making transactions faster and avoiding keying errors. Service areas such as libraries and leisure centres no longer have to handle routine telephone calls and can now concentrate on on-site customers.

In addition, Lagan forms are also published on the council's website, making many services available online for the first time.

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DATA RECOVERY AND BACKUP AS A SERVICE

CONSOLIDATING DATA RECOVERY AND BACKUP INTO A SINGLE, MORE EFFICIENT OPERATION

WHO?

Eight Kent Connects partners.

WHAT?

Consolidating data recovery and backup into a single, more efficient operation.

WHY?

The existing data recovery contract was drawing to a close, and needed to be replaced by a system using updated technology to provide more integrated support and enhanced capability.

HOW?

Mid Kent ICT, formed by Swale, Maidstone and Tunbridge Wells Borough Councils, is developing a data recovery solution for a new consolidated data centre, with an off-site disk-to-disk facility for replication purposes. It became apparent that the same solution could be shared by other partners, so the group proposed a collaborative offering based at the Kent Connects Regional Datacentre (KCRDC). Kent Connects Strategic Projects Board approved funding, and development is now under way.

WHAT SAVINGS?

Joint procurement of data recovery hardware and software will reduce the cost of independent implementations of the same project in multiple locations.

OTHER BENEFITS?

Shared infrastructure and resources promise improved speeds of both backup and data recovery.

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NGAGE

A WEBSITE ENABLING ALL STAFF, AS WELL AS MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC, TO UPDATE THEMSELVES ON CURRENT PROJECTS AND CONTRIBUTE THEIR OWN VIEWS AND SUGGESTIONS.

WHO?

East Kent Services

WHAT?

A website enabling all staff, as well as members of the public, to update themselves on current projects and contribute their own views and suggestions.

WHY?

Specific service change is different to continuous improvement. The necessary new thinking required a focus for fresh ideas.

HOW?

East Kent Services created a dedicated team, free of 'business as usual' demands, to guide the process. The initiative is beginning with smaller-scale projects to assess how outside engagement can help to improve services through interaction via the website. The team produces a regular blog informing users of decisions, and how their input has had an influence.

WHAT SAVINGS?

By engaging with staff and the general public, projects require smaller working groups and less research, which means savings are already being made.

OTHER BENEFITS?

The website is completely public facing. Users outside the organisation can see what's going on in East Kent Services, with the facility to join in the discussion and help design the final product to fit the specific needs of the end user.

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DOMESTIC ABUSE SUPPORT SERVICES WEBSITE

A SIGNPOSTING WEBSITE DIRECTING MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC TO RELEVANT LOCAL SERVICES OFFERING SUPPORT IN CASES OF DOMESTIC ABUSE.

WHO?

Kent and Medway councils

WHAT?

A signposting website directing members of the public to relevant local services offering support in cases of domestic abuse.

WHY?

Victims of abuse needed a clearer idea of support services offered throughout the county.

HOW?

Kent and Medway Domestic Abuse Strategy Group formed a development team involving partner agency representatives. In addition to its own members' input, the group consulted young adults across Kent on their views about domestic abuse.

The group then commissioned the design of a multi-agency signposting portal through which members of the public can identify local services offering support if they are, or know somebody who is, a victim of domestic abuse. The directory holds hundreds of details for local one-stop shops, support charities, solicitors, and more. There are also several pages providing helpful tips about how to feel safe and seek help.

A young people's section also highlights links to valuable resources for young victims of abusive relationships.

The site also caters for professionals, through sector-related job advertisements, training sessions and strategic documents.

WHAT SAVINGS?

This online, single point of reference directs users to the relevant service without involving council staff in costly use of time.

OTHER BENEFITS?

Victims get a faster, more efficient service, while support providers know they're dealing with relevant enquiries.

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VIRTUAL DESKTOP ARCHITECTURE

A DEDICATED DESKTOP ACCESSIBLE TO STAFF IN ANY LOCATION, USING ANY DEVICE THAT HAS A NETWORK CONNECTION

WHO?

Kent County Council

WHAT?

A dedicated desktop accessible to staff in any location, using any device that has a network connection.

WHY?

1. To provide greater flexibility and mobility for staff, especially those working from non-KCC sites as council property space diminishes.

2. To reduce the total cost of ICT and free resources for more strategic business value-driven work.

HOW?

After a detailed procurement process the council opted to work in conjunction with VMware and Phoenix Software to discover, design, test and then build a solution.

The planned Virtual Desktop Infrastructure (VDI) will move all desktops into a central server. A single desktop machine will stand as the gold master image; this desktop is then available to be cloned across the network to any device with the replication software installed. By April 2015 Kent County Council's (KCC) ICT are planning to test multiple machines, and are also considering the use of non-KCC- issued devices to act as hosts for the replicated desktops. Chromebooks have been tested in running the VDI software and mobile devices could also potentially be used as remote desktop devices.

WHAT SAVINGS?

VDI will replace 10,000 desktop computers, reducing electricity and on-site support costs.

OTHER BENEFITS?

KCC Staff will be able to reach their desktops from nearly any mobile device with a network connection. Mobile working will become a lot more accessible to all KCC staff. Updates will be automatically installed when using a device as it would clone from the master copy.

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CHANNEL MIGRATION PROJECT

A CAMPAIGN TO SHIFT CUSTOMER CONTACTS FROM THE TELEPHONE TO DIGITAL SELF-SERVICE

WHO?

Kent councils

WHAT?

A campaign to shift customer contacts from the telephone to digital self-service.

WHY?

Responses to customer phone calls are often dissatisfying for the caller and take up disproportionate staff time and resources.

HOW?

All Kent councils were invited to participate and contribute additional funding to the budget. From there, a small team was recruited and formed. The team is hosted by Tunbridge Wells Council, whose Chief Executive, William Benson, formerly chaired the Kent Customer Services Group.

The project focuses on improving customer experience through the promotion of digital self-service, using marketing and behavioural change techniques sourced from the public and private sectors

The team also uses technological innovations such as user testing and user experience-capture software to inform the development of systems and service.

Through the shift to digital services, massive savings are made by reducing direct contact with customers and introducing preventative methods to help users decrease their demands on services.

WHAT SAVINGS?

By increasing web use and reducing call volumes, the councils see substantial cost savings and increased revenue collections through more E-form submissions and preferred-behaviour payments (e.g. by direct debit), less time spent in cash and cheque handling, and lower costs associated with offline admin and manual processing.

OTHER BENEFITS?

The project has given participating councils a fresh perspective on customer service, deeper insight into the experiences and attitudes of the general public, greater understanding of the role of digital technology within local government, and a more modern and contextual approach to customer and demand management.

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KENT DIGITAL HEALTHCARE

A PROGRAMME OF SOFTWARE APPS THAT ENABLE SOCIAL CARE PATIENTS TO MAINTAIN THEIR INDEPENDENCE BY MONITORING AND SHARING THEIR CONDITION AND NEEDS REMOTELY AND ACCURATELY

WHO?

Kent County Council

WHAT?

A programme of software apps that enable social care patients to maintain their independence by monitoring and sharing their condition and needs remotely and accurately.

WHY?

The social care and independent living sectors have, so far, under-used technology in the provision of benefits. Until now, telecare solutions have worked through a fixed phone line, which has greatly reduced the number of services that can be provided.

HOW?

Through the development of apps KCC are helping individuals to stay independent for longer by providing a software based solution that allows social care patients' details to be plotted, easily updated, and shared with domiciliary carers if needed. This will both reduce the need for paper based systems and will enable users of the apps to monitor their own health. As well as the application-based solution KCC ICT are looking at providing assisted living technology, with the ability to link to the software and update over the internet.

WHAT SAVINGS?

47% of the public funds that go towards care homes and domiciliary care are spent on residential and nursing support. The introduction of this solution will provide enormous benefits by reducing assisted living costs.

OTHER BENEFITS?

This project focuses on independence, and by implementing the software and hardware based solutions described, patients will be able to live self-reliantly, while their loved ones are confident they are safe and healthy. This will reduce stress on domiciliary care throughout Kent and help citizens to live in their own homes for longer.

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MICROSOFT LYNC TELEPHONY

A NEW NETWORK-BASED PHONE SYSTEM GIVING STAFF GREATER MOBILITY AND ENABLING EASIER COMMUNICATION WITH CUSTOMERS AND BETWEEN ORGANISATIONS

WHO?

Tonbridge and Malling Borough Council

WHAT?

A new network-based phone system giving staff greater mobility and enabling easier communication with customers and between organisations.

WHY?

Tonbridge and Malling have had their current phone system for a number of years but it is now reaching the end of support by the manufacturer.

HOW?

The council is replacing its phone system with an entirely network-based solution using Unified Communications technology, which links telephone use with a variety of devices and media types including Instant Messaging and video conferencing.

A sample of 50 users is testing the feasibility of the service, which will be rolled out over six months if successful. The contact centre will also be receiving the same upgrade in August 2015.

WHAT SAVINGS?

The project will deliver savings by reducing the amount of required telephone switches for the organisation, while calls within the extended network will be free.

OTHER BENEFITS?

With a telephone system that's accessible over numerous devices, the council workforce will become more mobile and operate more flexibly. Enhanced technology will also mean better communication between the council and the general public.

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ONLINE FIRST WORLD WAR TIMELINE

AN INTERACTIVE TOOL PROVIDING A HUGE INFORMATION RESOURCE ON THE FIRST WORLD WAR AND ITS EFFECTS ON KENT AND MEDWAY

WHO?

Kent County Council Libraries

WHAT?

An interactive tool providing a huge information resource on the First World War and its effects on Kent and Medway.

WHY?

The project was prompted by requests from local First World War Centenary partners at the Royal Engineers' Museum meetings.

HOW?

Starting in spring 2013, a number of Kent Library volunteers worked together to develop the timeline. They painstakingly reviewed & listed material in the local history collections at the Kent History & Library Centre, Maidstone, and used Tiki Toki specialist timeline software to create the interactive tool.

Users can traverse the timeline to find items of interest throughout the period, and click on entries to reveal further information from library and archive catalogues, There is also a keyword search facility for quick and easy navigation

WHAT SAVINGS?

The Timeline project, one of the leading features in Kent Libraries' WW1 centenary programme, is extremely efficient in terms of resource & personnel input. As a virtual item it demands no expensive venue space, physical materials or exhibition activity.

OTHER BENEFITS?

The timeline has proved an excellent tool for public engagement with KCC's WW1 centenary programme scoring over 2000 views in three weeks.

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www.kent.gov.uk/about-the-council/news/campaigns-and-events/kent-and-medway-in-the-first-world-war

Also see shortcut:
www.kent.gov.uk/ww1

MINDSPACE

AN INITIATIVE THAT SEEKS TO INFLUENCE THE BEHAVIOUR OF RESIDENTS THROUGH UNDERSTANDING THE WAYS IN WHICH PEOPLE REACT TO DIFFERENT MESSAGES

WHO?
Tunbridge Wells Borough Council

WHAT?

An initiative that seeks to influence the behaviour of residents through understanding the ways in which people react to different messages

WHY?

The need for a cost-effective way of encouraging residents to take actions beneficial to them and more efficient for the council

HOW?

MINDSPACE was developed by the Behavioural Insights Team in the Cabinet Office. Tunbridge Wells Borough Council has adopted the process to help develop its communications with residents.

MINDSPACE stands for Messenger, Incentives, Norms, Defaults, Salience, Priming, Affect, Commitment, and Ego. Using these headings as tools for research, analysis and action, the council is working on ways to get its messages across more productively - for example, in promoting effective transaction methods such as direct debit instead of cheque payments.

WHAT SAVINGS?

MINDSPACE has the capacity to encourage 'channel shift' - for instance, it has demonstrated the potential to reduce telephone calls by 339 a month, equivalent to £2054 in staff time.

OTHER BENEFITS?

MINDSPACE is a practical way of encouraging action on a massive scale with a single message placement. This helps the council achieve its aims much more efficiently and cost-effectively.

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MKIP JOINT TELEPHONY

CONSOLIDATION OF THREE BOROUGH COUNCILS' PHONE SYSTEMS INTO ONE

WHO?

Mid Kent ICT

WHAT?

Consolidation of three borough councils' phone systems into one.

WHY?

This is a significant part of Mid Kent ICT Services' plan to consolidate systems and services across the Mid Kent Improvement Partnership over a 10-year period. Telephony is one of the key areas for savings in costs and administration time and effort.

HOW?

Mid Kent ICT will be consolidating the voice circuits of Maidstone, Swale and Tunbridge Wells Borough Councils into a single implementation of SIP trunks, replacing three independent implementations of ISDN30 circuits.

The project is still at an early stage, with an independent consultancy developing a business case which highlights immediate potential savings, and also how SIP can be part of a fully-featured Unified Communications platform in due course.

WHAT SAVINGS?

Early indications are that monthly trunk costs will be greatly reduced, as will costs for per second/per minute calls. Calls to Kent Public Service Network (KPSN) partners using the same SIP platform will be free.

OTHER BENEFITS?

A single solution managed by one team will cut administration across three councils. SIP will also be used as a basis for further shared systems and services, providing much greater efficiency and cost-effectiveness.

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ONLINE HOUSING NEED REGISTER

TRANSFER OF THE HOUSING WAITING LIST FROM A PAPER-BASED TO AN ONLINE SYSTEM

WHO?

Canterbury City Council

WHAT?

Transfer of the housing waiting list from a paper-based to an online system

WHY?

The project is a response to an in-depth service review under the council's Customer Focus programme, which showed that customers wanted the option to apply for social housing online.

The aim is to deliver a better customer experience while reducing service costs.

HOW?

The council conducted a series of workshops allowing team members and others to challenge existing procedures and redesign an improved, streamlined process, automated from end to end. This involved the Housing Options team, East Kent Housing and EK Services, plus senior management.

The council then developed the new online form in collaboration with EK Services and Locata, and, in November 2013, transferred its Housing Need Register (waiting list) from a paper-based application form to the Kent-wide online system, coordinated by Kent Homechoice. The system is web-based and delivered by Locata. Detailed user testing led to further developments and improvements in the system, in order to deliver the best possible customer experience.

WHAT SAVINGS?

Overall staffing costs have dropped by £23,074 per annum. Time saved in document management is estimated at £1900 a year. Large volumes of printed application forms are no longer needed, providing a saving of almost 60% in 2012/13, with considerably more forecast for the full year of 2014/15. Savings in postage are estimated at around £1500 a year.

OTHER BENEFITS?

Customers now enjoy a much more streamlined and convenient process, and can apply to join the Housing Need Register, via the council website, at any time of day or night, any day of the week.

The council has seen its back office paper flow reduced by 95%, a 74% drop in face-to-face meetings regarding housing, and a significant fall in the number of telephone calls - and all with applications being processed well within approved timescales.

The new system has also released staff resources to improve other aspects of the housing service such as verification of circumstances and assessment of medical awards.

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OPEN SOURCE CMS FOR WEBSITE MIGRATION

TRANSFER OF THE CONTENT MANAGEMENT SYSTEM FOR A NUMBER OF WEBSITES TO AN OPEN SOURCE FACILITY

WHO?

Ashford Borough Council

WHAT?

Transfer of the content management system for a number of websites to an open source facility.

WHY?

The current CMS is no longer supported, and managers are experiencing difficulties in updating content.

HOW?

The council explored the feasibility of migrating its websites to an open source CMS solution, a number of which are well-established and supported.

It selected a CMS based on the Microsoft .NET technology stack. Due to its alignment to industry standard technology this system is highly extendable through module, plug-in or bespoke development, which makes it possible to integrate with existing software development tools.

The CMS was implemented on existing infrastructure with website framework development undertaken in-house.

WHAT SAVINGS?

The technical features of the new CMS mean that no further outlay of software or hardware costs is necessary.

The new system is expected to save £70,000 over a five year period. These savings are based on comparison with the capital and revenue costs of the existing CMS provided by a third party software supplier.

OTHER BENEFITS?

Taking the open source route will enable the council to take advantage of a low-cost system while maintaining an appropriate level of technical support.

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PAPERLESS E-BILLING

A CHANGE TO ISSUING COUNCIL BILLS BY EMAIL RATHER THAN THROUGH THE POST

WHO?

Tunbridge Wells Borough Council

WHAT?

A change to issuing council bills by email rather than through the post.

WHY?

To make billing easier for the customer and more efficient and less costly for the council.

HOW?

The council invites residents to sign up on its website to have council tax and other invoices sent to an email address. This is optional, and residents may continue to use the postal system if they prefer, although the email system avoids bills being lost or misplaced.

WHAT SAVINGS?

Savings are being made through a reduction in postage costs and fewer enquiries to handle regarding bills held up in the post.

Savings from E-billing are approximately £6,000 per annum at the moment, but this is expected to grow as residents become more and more familiar with electronic communications. The council estimates it currently saves about £1 per bill sent to households in the borough as a result of the introduction of E-billing.

OTHER BENEFITS?

Bills sent through the E-billing system are received faster and use no paper, making the process environmentally friendly as well as more efficient.

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PAY-BY-PHONE CAR PARKING

ENCOURAGING PAYMENT OF CAR PARK FEES BY CREDIT OR DEBIT CARD VIA PHONE RATHER THAN IN CASH

WHO?

Tunbridge Wells Borough Council

WHAT?

Encouraging payment of car park fees by credit or debit card via phone rather than in cash.

WHY?

To make paying easier and cheaper for the customer and more efficient for the council.

HOW?

Tunbridge Wells has introduced differential charging to encourage residents to use electronic methods of payment for parking. Paying to park by phone, using a debit or credit card, is cheaper than paying using cash. The council uses the PayByPhone system to provide the service in car parks across the Borough.

WHAT SAVINGS?

Savings will be made by driving down the costs associated with parking ticket machines, including cash collection, maintenance and fraudulent pound coins. Registration is up by 200% since the beginning of the project.

OTHER BENEFITS?

Customers benefit financially through lower charges, and in terms of convenience through not having to find change. As a further advantage, they have the capability of topping up their parking time remotely.

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PLAYGROUND MONITOR

THE CREATION OF A MOBILE APP TO MONITOR THE CONDITION AND MAINTENANCE OF PLAYGROUND EQUIPMENT

WHO?

Dartford Borough Council

WHAT?

The creation of a mobile app to monitor the condition and maintenance of playground equipment.

WHY?

To streamline the procedure, ensure accurate record keeping, and provide immediate notification of issues and problems.

HOW?

The council developed Playground Monitor in collaboration with a former employee now operating as a software consultant.

The app is a mobile-to-cloud software system that enables users to track the maintenance status of playground equipment and the issue of new equipment when necessary.

The system stores an inventory of playground equipment and stores details of all maintenance and inspection schedules.

The mobile user views a daily task list and can report back on all issues via the app, using photos and GPS if required. Office staff receive immediate notification of any problems, and the system keeps a historical record for all equipment.

The application is in continuous development, with frequent changes and enhancements based on user experience.

WHAT SAVINGS?

The new system means that inspectors and maintenance staff no longer have to report to the office in person, as all communication can be conducted via the app. As a further benefit, the inclusion of photos with mobile reports reduces the need for managers to make site visits. This saves a considerable amount of time and expense.

OTHER BENEFITS?

Immediate notification of issues and problems reduces the likelihood of injuries to children. This, in turn, reduces the possibility of insurance claims.

As the system is cloud-based, the only hardware requirements are the smart phones or tablets used by field staff. The desktop console can be viewed via any internet-connected device, so there is no set-up time or expense.

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PREVENTIVE TEXT MESSAGING

A TEXT MESSAGING SERVICE TO REMIND RESIDENTS OF APPROACHING COUNCIL TAX PAYMENTS

WHO?

Tunbridge Wells Borough Council

WHAT?

A text messaging service to remind residents of approaching council tax payments.

WHY?

To save time, effort and costs in the issue of reminders and follow-up contacts.

HOW?

An in-house team developed a simple application programmed to send texts to citizens before their council tax payments are due.

WHAT SAVINGS?

There has been a significant reduction in the numerous forms, calls and contacts associated with late or forgotten council tax payments. For every text message which leads to prompt payment instead of recovery action there is a saving of up to £14, or even more if the case would otherwise have gone to court.

OTHER BENEFITS?

The council has also used the system to send gentle reminders to people on weight loss programs, and plans further applications in future.

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SELF-SERVICE WASTE ENQUIRIES

ENCOURAGING RESIDENTS TO MAKE WASTE SERVICE ENQUIRIES ONLINE RATHER THAN BY PHONING CUSTOMER SERVICES

WHO?

Gravesham Borough Council

WHAT?

Encouraging residents to make waste service enquiries online rather than by phoning customer services.
With the self-service system in place, the customer service desk has noticed a large reduction in calls received for the new waste scheme. Customers are being directed away from calling the council offices and instead being diverted straight to the information they require.

WHY?

An entirely new waste service, including new bins throughout Gravesham, meant that call volumes were likely to rise. The council needed to make enquiries easier for residents, and to take the potential pressure off the customer services desk.

HOW?

The council's in-house web team produced an online programme that could answer most residents' questions, and designed a set of E-forms to steer users towards virtual contact. The council also updated its automatic phone answering system, to direct callers more efficiently and with less human contact.

WHAT SAVINGS?

The customer service team's volume of waste-related queries has been reduced by 70%, making for a more efficient and cost-effective use of council staff time in other areas.

OTHER BENEFITS?

With 70% of enquires for the new scheme finalised through self-service, and web pages delivering more extensive and specific information, residents are enjoying a much faster and more comprehensive response to their questions.

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STREET CLEANSING MOBILE WORKING

AN APP THAT CONVEYS WORK ORDERS TO OPERATIVES, ENABLES MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC TO REPORT UNCLEANED AREAS, AND EQUIPS SERVICE DESK STAFF TO LOG PAPER-FREE REPORTS

WHO?
Maidstone Borough Council

WHAT?

An app that conveys work orders to operatives, enables members of the public to report uncleaned areas, and equips service desk staff to log paper-free reports.

WHY?

To save workers time in driving to the depot to receive work sheets and driving back to deliver them when completed.

HOW?

Maidstone Borough Council is working with Abavus to create this app for use on mobile devices.

The app will enable ground-based staff to be instantly updated with work orders. Citizens will be able to use the same app to report areas that need to be cleaned and see which areas have already been reported. Maidstone service desk will use the app to log reports, which will completely eliminate the paper based system.

WHAT SAVINGS?

The system will inevitably make significant savings in fuel costs. It also means fewer duplicate reports and no paperwork - features which have already produced economies equal to two full-time-equivalent positions, thanks to savings in clerical time.

The project is still only in early stages so other quantitative savings are yet to become apparent.

OTHER BENEFITS?

Workers will be able to receive their assignments and sign off jobs much more quickly, and spend more productive time carrying out their key task rather than travelling.

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TABLETS FOR MEMBERS

SAMSUNG TABLETS – WITH AN AUTHENTICATED, INTERACTIVE APP – ISSUED TO MEMBERS TO CONVEY AGENDA AND DOCUMENTS SWIFTLY AND EFFICIENTLY

WHO?
Tonbridge and Malling Borough Council

WHAT?

Samsung tablets - with an authenticated, interactive app - issued to Members to convey agenda and documents swiftly and efficiently. The app also enables members of the public to view public documents associated with council meetings.

WHY?

To save time and costs in printing and issuing paper documents.

HOW?

The council procured a supply of Samsung tablets, and then utilised the modern.gov app to link to the back office system. The app is available for download both to council members and the general public, with permissions given dependent on login. Members will be able to download, annotate and share documents through the app.

WHAT SAVINGS?

The project has reduced the cost of printing agendas, minutes and reports, and has also eliminated the need for a private courier to deliver confidential items.

OTHER BENEFITS?

Speed of accessibility - the new system makes documents available for viewing as soon as they are published on the system.

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TWIFI

FREE WIFI FOR THE GENERAL PUBLIC IN TUNBRIDGE WELLS TOWN CENTRE

WHO?
Tunbridge Wells Borough Council

WHAT?

Free wifi for the general public in Tunbridge Wells town centre.

WHY?

To attract and retain visitors, and act as a resource to inform them of local businesses, events and services.

HOW?

The council worked with MLL Telecom to install the Twifi network in the town centre, using existing street furniture such as street lamps and security camera poles.

The system allows users 15 minutes' free wifi access in any one day. It also acts as a portal to designated websites detailing local attractions, shops, events and any other items of interest in the town.

WHAT SAVINGS?

MLL Telecom provided TWifi at no cost to Tunbridge Wells Borough Council, so any increases in the local visitor economy due to its presence can be calculated as pure profit.

OTHER BENEFITS?

Tourists and visitors can access a huge amount of information immediately, while they're actually in the town centre - a great benefit both to users and to local businesses.

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UNIFIED COMMUNICATIONS

A UNIFIED COMMUNICATIONS TELEPHONY SYSTEM PROVIDING USERS WITH A PACKAGE OF SOLUTIONS IN A SINGLE DEVICE

WHO?
Kent County Council

WHAT?

A unified communications telephony system providing users with a package of solutions in a single device.

WHY?

To give staff the flexibility to change location and take their phone service with them, to increase communication efficiency throughout the council and across its partners, and to reduce travel through the use of video and web conferencing.

HOW?

The council is working on the design of a Unified Communications system, to be followed by user acceptance testing and then a phased rollout.

Browser-based Openscape software enables users to create conference calls, link their out-of-office phones to receive incoming calls, change their status, and even use the system as an instant messaging service.

Each user is given a number and login password, so they can log into any UC phone.

WHAT SAVINGS?

Reduction in travel for face-to-face meetings will mean financial and environmental savings. The UC system also saves on charges for multiple services - e.g. voicemail, instant messaging, audio conferencing, web collaboration, fax and texts - by combining them in one package.

OTHER BENEFITS?

Contacts can be added and saved on the Openscape client, and can be accessed using the UC login through any mobile device. Calls can be made directly from the Openscape client. Voicemails received are sent to the mailbox of the user, allowing staff to collect messages left on their machine outside the office.

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WARDEN ACTIVITY FORM

AN EXCEL-BASED SYSTEM ENABLING COMMUNITY WARDENS TO RECORD DAILY ACTIVITIES IN MORE DETAIL THAN EVER, AND TO EMAIL THE DATA DIRECTLY TO HEAD OFFICE FOR PROCESSING AND REPORTING

WHO?

Kent County Council

WHAT?

An Excel-based system enabling community wardens to record daily activities in more detail than ever, and to email the data directly to Head Office for processing and reporting.

WHY?

To replace an outdated recording method which produced little meaningful data.

HOW?

The Warden Activity form is an Excel-based reporting mechanism. In creating it, the council set up a small development group involving a number of wardens from across the county, each with a mixed range of IT skills. The group thoroughly reviewed existing data reporting categories, carried out a gap analysis, and worked with the wardens to ensure the form accurately matched their daily operations.

Several versions were tested for comparative clarity. The finished version now enables wardens to email data directly through to Head Office for processing and reporting. The enhanced clarity and consistency of the new data mean it can be fed automatically into multiple reporting mechanisms to produce reports both for supervisors and senior level management. The collected data also highlights all links with service level strategies and partnership operations.

WHAT SAVINGS?

The new reporting form replaces the outdated paper procedure, providing highly accurate and consistent data much more quickly and with fewer errors. This saves valuable time and eliminates printing costs.

OTHER BENEFITS?

The data collected via the new form gives a clearer picture of wardens' work and the services they interact with. This is invaluable knowledge when planning the future operation of the service.

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WEBSITE ONLINE CHAT

AN ONLINE LIVE CHAT FACILITY THAT CAN HANDLE ENQUIRIES FROM THE PUBLIC WITHOUT THE NEED FOR TELEPHONE CALLS

WHO?

Tunbridge Wells Borough Council

WHAT?

An online live chat facility that can handle enquiries from the public without the need for telephone calls.

WHY?

To keep enquirers on the website instead of making a phone call, and to encourage take-up of future online options as they develop.

HOW?

The council procured an online application enabling WhosOn live chat software to be embedded into its website. This facility offers users a clickable link whenever they need help. When clicked, the link opens a new window with the chat interface, allowing the caller to 'talk' to an online representative.

WHAT SAVINGS?

Previously, 65% of calls made to the council were by users who found the number from the website. The live chat option has led to a notable reduction in calls, enabling the council to cut queueing times for those who prefer to use the phone.

OTHER BENEFITS?

The live chat service helps guide customers more easily than by phone, as links can be shared through the instant messaging application and users can be directed quickly to pages of relevant information.

Customers do not have to wait in a call queue, and are able to get on with other things while the chat is in progress. Council advisors use their time more efficiently, since they can handle a number of chats at once.

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