NORTH HERTFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

Modernising Council Tax services

Managing diminishing resources and overcoming a 6-week backlog by automating 75% of online transactions.

- £797k additional revenue collected
- £157k debt reduced within a year
- 75% online transactions fully automated
- 6-week backlog reduced to 2 days
- 100% staff up-skilled and cross-skilled

GOVTECH
AUTOMATION MADE SIMPLE
A Netcall Company

ABOUT NORTH HERTFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

- Services 133,570 residents
- Located less than 40 miles North from central London
- District formed in 1974, and made up of 24 wards
- 94% of residents are satisfied with the area as a place to live

BRIEF

Like every other council over the last decade, North Hertfordshire had already faced challenging times with customers expecting more, council funding slashed and technology advancing at pace. Partly because of new housing build, workload in the Revenues service began to rise just as senior members of staff chose to leave and were replaced by colleagues with much less experience. To keep on top of an increasing workload, the Revenues service needed to modernise itself to meet rising customer expectations, while finding ways to use its skills and resources more efficiently and effectively.

Digital transformation provided the solution.

SOLUTION

The council already had an online facility for customers to self-serve, but this service still relied on manual input from officers to complete online transactions. To exploit all the benefits of online self service, Geraldine Goodwin, Revenues Manager, selected Govtech's webCAPTURE digital process automation service. Online transactions would now be automatically completed in the Revenues system unless the council's own business rules triggered an intervention. Interventions would automatically be classified as High, Medium or Low priority items. At a stroke, it became possible for officers to deal only things which required their expertise and to target the right resources at the right problems.

RESULTS

By using webCAPTURE, the council not only saw significant financial benefits, but also a cultural change and improved customer service. Change can be difficult in local government, and the hardest part was getting staff on board.

> "Staff can naturally worry that technology might take their jobs away. But by involving and engaging them, the outcome is that we've taken the mundane work away and given staff time to concentrate on the higher value work that automation can't do, such as engagement with vulnerable customers.

Geraldine Goodwin, Revenues Manager

With around 75% of online transactions fully automated, staff were able to spend more time on recovery and collection with an additional £797k collected over the previous year and arrears declining by £157k.

Officers in the team now have more generic skills, and greater variety to their work. Where there used to be a backlog of between 4-6 weeks in the 'in-tray', it's now typically a couple of days.

Trust in change

The Revenues service is critical to the council's operation with responsibility for the billing, collection, recovery and enforcement of Council Tax and other debts. Even contemplating change can be daunting. But making the right changes is rewarding.

"I was apprehensive to start with, too. But the Govtech implementation team worked with us to build confidence and, in the end, I can honestly say it was the easiest, most successful IT project I've been involved with. Not only that, but the ongoing support has been fantastic."

Geraldine Goodwin, Revenues Manager

Looking to the future

North Hertfordshire District Council are building on this success with plans to encourage more self-service and to carry out a Single Person Discount Review using another Govtech digital process automation service.

"Despite losing experience from the team, we have collected more money, arrears have declined, we have better customer service and staff are happier. Govtech is a smarter way to work."

Geraldine Goodwin, Revenues Manager

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75%
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6-weeks to 2 days
backlog reduced

100%
staff up-skilled and cross-skilled

Happy customers
from improved customer service

ABOUT GOVTECH

Govtech is a trusted partner for its many UK local authority customers. As experts in digital process automation, we help councils to maximise returns on investments in online services, Customer Experience and Customer Relationship Management systems. Our hosted solutions integrate with all mainstream Revenues and Benefits systems and automate processing of online Revenues and Benefits transactions.

We track and monitor the automation rates, review these with customers and compare them with others. This helps you achieve more by freeing up skilled resources that are lost to manual checking and processing. As budgets tighten, demand and expectations grow and resources are stretched thinner, you're being asked to do more. Whether you use NEC Revenues & Benefits, Capita or Civica, our end-to-end eCAPTURE and webCAPTURE digital process automation services will help you to bridge the gap.

All standout digital transformation success stories begin somewhere...

No matter what your starting point is, get in touch and our team will arrange an informal conversation to understand what improvements you want to make and why, explore ways digital process automation may be able to assist and, if you need it, provide help to write a business case based on achieving those goals.

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