



SALFORD CITY COUNCIL

Embracing digital change

Improving service offerings and prioritising those in need, in pursuit of its Digital First customer strategy.

- 48,000 online transactions within 1st year
- >50% all queries require no manual intervention
- Up to 100% full automation of simple CT changes
- >50% increase in staff productivity
- Staff can focus on more meaningful work

ABOUT SALFORD CITY COUNCIL

- Services 240,000 citizens
- Over 150 big name companies
- 'Digital Council of the Year 2018'
- 'Overall Digital Leaders 100 Winner 2018'

BRIEF

Salford City Council are pursuing a 'Digital Salford' ambition, a central theme of which is their 'Digital First' customer strategy. Against the backdrop of a rapidly evolving technological world and continuing budgetary pressures, the council aims to improve customer service, and target and prioritise services to those who need them the most.

In pursuit of this strategy, the council's Revenues service identified operational challenges that needed to be addressed. The council wanted to: clear a persistent backlog of work, improve recovery rates, improve the service for all customers and free up as many staff resources as possible to focus on complex cases.

SOLUTION

Digital process automation was considered to address these operational challenges.

Working closely with ICT, the service consulted with the relevant stakeholders across the council including operational and senior managers, customer services and procurement, gaining political support along the way. Building a solution in-house was considered, as were various product offerings, but given the technical complexity around Council Tax and Business Rates integration, Govtech's webCAPTURE service was chosen after a full business case analysis because of the proven results it had achieved elsewhere.

RESULTS

Salford implemented the solution over a year-end period when volumes of Direct Debits, Discount applications and Moves would peak. With a soft launch over a month and the contact centre advising customers to self-serve, the implementation project was successfully completed.

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Working with Govtech was incredibly easy. Govtech understood our questions and issues, which is not always the case with other suppliers. It felt like one project team, and post project launch, they remain incredibly supportive.

Sue Virgin, Revenues Operations Manager

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Within a year, Salford had seen a dramatic change. The Revenues service now receives over 4,000 transactions through webCAPTURE each month, of which 2,000 don't reach a member of staff at all as they are fully automated. Simple changes and Direct Debit transactions are performing at levels close to 100%, with very little manual intervention needed. Where Salford's business rules trigger interventions, these are automatically classified as High, Medium or Low priority items and sent to work queues with notes to aid officers.

Govtech and Salford continue to monitor performance and make minor changes periodically to optimise automation and further encourage self-service. webCAPTURE has freed up time so that staff can spend more time dealing with vulnerable customers, as envisaged by the 'digital first customer strategy'. This led to a change in staff attitudes to using new approaches to delivering public services.

Recognition for its digital ambition

The council's progress has also been recognised nationally, with Salford being awarded both 'Digital Council of the Year' and 'Overall Digital Leaders 100 Winner' at the Digital Leaders 100 awards in June 2018. A tremendous accolade, but the council isn't content to sit still; instead, it's looking ahead to further improvements.

Continuous Digital Improvement

Working with Govtech, Salford adopted an early pilot of Single Person Discount reviews, which rapidly showed a financial benefit. The team also have plans to better manage the high volume of student and landlord transactions and by constantly reviewing their online offer, they are looking at greater integration with other systems so that the customer journey is quicker, easier, and better.

"Working with Govtech has been a pleasure. They are collaborative, and there are no hidden surprises: what Govtech promised, they delivered."

Sue Virgin, Revenues Operations Manager



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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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