



Customer First saves time and money for East Renfrewshire

“With the push to maximise efficiency through online services, it’s important that staff time and effort is used accordingly.”

Graeme McWilliams,
East Renfrewshire Council



East Renfrewshire Council saved three months' development time, and associated costs, by customising 'off the shelf' web navigation and content tools developed for local government by Scotland's Customer First programme.

When East Renfrewshire Council decided to develop a more customer-focused website in response to detailed user testing, Customer First's National A-Z Project provided three key pieces of pre-built infrastructure.

These comprised a web navigation structure; a checklist of 800 service offerings and a database of 1,700 Frequently Asked Questions gathered from councils across Scotland.

Each has been developed with the project aims of:

- improving council web content organisation, search and navigation
- supporting consistent self-service for citizens
- providing cost and efficiency savings
- creating a common language and infrastructure across Scottish councils

"Being able to implement a fully developed navigation structure as opposed to devising our own has probably saved us about three months in development time," explains Graeme McWilliams, East Renfrewshire's Community Information Development Manager.

[Continued overleaf >](#)

Bottom Line Benefits

- Time and cost savings on web development
- Improved functionality for citizens
- Better use of staff time



In association with:



CUSTOMER FIRST

The Customer First Advantage

In the new spending context for local government, the Customer First programme helps councils to deliver:

Better quality public services
through improved collaboration and learning

Faster response
by delivering 'first time' public services

Enhanced credibility
improving perceptions of local government

Lower costs
by delivering public services more efficiently

Wider coverage
ensuring people receive the services they're entitled to



"It has freed up council staff to focus on the type of content they want to include on the website, while our web developers have been able to concentrate on what they're good at - developing customer focused applications - rather than getting involved in mapping a navigation structure.

"With the push to maximise efficiency through online services, it's important that staff time and effort is used accordingly."

Customer First's web tools also allowed East Renfrewshire to customise a number of its own usability improvements. These include allowing customers to sign into the website and personalise content. The new web platform has been integrated with East Renfrewshire's Customer Relationship Management (CRM) system, meaning that customer services staff handling enquiries can also access FAQs and other information on the website.

East Renfrewshire's site now receives 15,000 to 20,000 more unique visitors a month than it did in 2006.

The Customer First programme aims to help councils answer at least 75% of customer queries at first point of contact, particularly through helping people find the answer to their questions on council websites.

What Products?

East Renfrewshire Council adopted and customised the following Customer First tools:

Scottish Navigation List - a common web navigation system featuring a drop-down menu bar of 11 key service areas. These include Business & Trade, Education & Learning, Law & Licensing and Housing.

Scottish Services List - a dynamic listing of more than 800 council service descriptions providing a common language for Scottish councils. Entries include Planning - conservation areas; Disabled people - parking bays and Elections - proxy votes.

FAQs - a generic database of 1,700 most common frequently asked questions. For example, How much does a special uplift cost? Or, What are the library opening times?

Number Crunching

£8.52 - the average cost of a face-to-face transaction

26p - the average cost of an internet transaction

800 - the number of services in a typical council

Customer First is a £34.5m Scottish Government-backed programme to deliver more convenient and responsive public services, encourage online access to services and ensure that at least 75% of core service requests can be handled at first point of contact. It has been developed in partnership with councils, COSLA and the Society of Local Authority Chief Executives (SOLACE), under the auspices of the Improvement Service.

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