



CIVICA

Case Study

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Teignbridge District Council first to reap the benefits of Civica and Comino partnership



Local authority revenues and benefits departments have changed radically over the last few years. Whether adopting mobile working to allow visiting officers to handle enquiries in the field, or introducing e-payment systems to allow citizens to pay council tax at their convenience, revenues and benefits has been a pioneering area on the road to e-government.



Introduction

Civica, one of the UK's most experienced providers of consulting, software and services for the public sector, today announced that Teignbridge District Council has implemented Comino's Electronic Document Management System (EDMS) within the Council's Tax Revenues and Housing Benefits departments in less than three months, increasing productivity and improving customer service for residents.

Teignbridge District Council has also been using Civica's Authority Revenues and Benefits suite to help accelerate the benefit claim process and achieve further efficiency savings as envisaged by the Gershon agenda.

Civica introduced Comino into the partnership and provided the integration necessary to enable Teignbridge to streamline further the process of administering council tax and housing benefit, by storing all documents electronically, reducing the amount of time spent processing, photocopying and storing paperwork.

"We are extremely proud of implementing the EDMS and workflow solution in such a short space of time. It is a true reflection of the hard work that has gone into making this partnership work. Efficiency savings have already been realised and we look forward to rolling out the system into other departments" said Paul Baker Head of Customer Services at Teignbridge District Council

The new document management system has also improved performance management at the council by enabling managers to monitor workloads electronically instead of manually, being able to reassign work at peak times and cover leave and sickness when required.

In addition, Teignbridge can respond to Freedom of Information requests more effectively. Previously, one single request could involve time spent photocopying information and pulling data from multiple locations. Now, with all of the documents being stored electronically, the amount of time spent on these enquiries has been drastically reduced.

"As Teignbridge has demonstrated, Comino offers an important and complementary product set to our portfolio of local government services. The Civica Group offers a very strong proposition in an increasingly competitive and consolidating market and we look forward to helping other local authorities meet the modernisation agenda through our integrated approach," said Simon Downing, chief executive of Civica.





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Improving customer service in Teignbridge

Teignbridge District Council is no exception. It has delivered a range of innovative IT-based services focused on providing essential social benefits to those who depend on them. These include an online benefits calculator, which allows citizens to calculate their entitlements; an e-payment system, so that residents can pay their council tax by debit or credit card online, by phone or in a customer service centre; and web access, allowing people to view information including account statements online. It is currently piloting a mobile benefits application for staff to use tablet PCs to complete claims in people's homes.

The latest initiative is a key project that looks set to transform customer service at the council. Working alongside Civica and Comino, it has embarked on a project to introduce customer relationship management (CRM) and electronic document management (EDM) systems into the council and to merge staff from revenues and benefits, planning and environmental services as well as the main reception into an integrated customer service team. "Our aim is for 80 per cent of all enquiries to be resolved at the first point of contact, regardless of the channel the customer uses to interact with us," says Paul Baker, head of revenues and benefits at Teignbridge District Council. "CRM is a major factor in this, as it provides information to help general customer service staff resolve department-specific enquiries."

Teignbridge has been a user of Civica's applications since 1993 (it extended its contract with Civica for another ten years last September). The first step in this multi-disciplinary project has been completed with the implementation of a new EDM system to integrate with its revenues and benefits software in order to streamline processes, reduce paperwork and improve customer service. Notably this phase was completed in less than three months.

"Comino had successfully implemented EDM at Torbay and West Devon Councils and we visited Torbay to see the system in action," says Baker. "We thought there might be opportunities for partnership working and sharing best practice with our neighbouring councils and Torbay also confirmed that Comino had excellent project management skills for introducing the system."

The department is already seeing advantages from the system. Accuracy of benefits claims has improved from 96 to 98 per cent, with the workflow solution leading staff through a common claims process, reducing the margin for error.

Another outcome is the improved efficiency that the system has delivered. "We have streamlined our processes and cut out a lot of the paper chase," says Baker. "Customer service advisers no longer have to search out paper files and can look up a claim to check its status and the documentary evidence that goes with it. This is good for staff productivity and for the customer."

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Future

The next step is to roll out EDM to planning and environmental services by July 2006, in conjunction with the CRM system, and to have all departments live on both systems by July 2007.

Although the EDM system is part of a wider customer service strategy at the council, Baker believes in giving new technology time to bed down to realise its true potential. "We are extremely proud of implementing the EDM and workflow solution in such a short space of time. Now that we are live, we will continue to streamline the way we work to get the full benefit from it to develop our business and to transform the customer experience."



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