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ELECTRONIC SERVICE DELIVERY

2004 - PROGRESS REPORT BY SCOTTISH LOCAL AUTHORITIES

SCOTTISH EXECUTIVE

Contents

Background 1
Electronic Service Delivery – Progress Report 2
Social Work and Health Services 5
Education Services 6
Transportation Services 7
Economic Services 7
Housing Services 8
Environment - Land and Property Services 9
Leisure Services 10
Environmental Control Services 10
Corporate Services 11
Financial Services 12
Continuing Progress 14
Case Studies 15
Feedback, Contacts and Useful Links 46

Background

In terms of reporting progress on Electronic Service Delivery (ESD) for Scottish local authorities, there have been two national reports produced. The first report published in March 2003 showed that councils were able to provide online information on 79 per cent of their services. The second report produced in July 2004, identified that local authorities continued to make progress, with information available online for 82 per cent of services. Figures were based upon a review of all 32 councils, 10 generic service areas and 91 core services. As well as measuring information online, the survey also measured transactional activities in line with the e-Europe 4-stage ESD framework.

These reports also set out that local authorities will work towards an agreed single model of electronic service delivery to allow citizens, communities and businesses to be able to deal with their public service provider when they want, where they want and how they want, over the channel of their choice, and be confident that they will receive high quality services. Through reviewing and redesigning business processes, this will improve the management of the service, and more importantly focus service delivery around the needs of the customer.

ESD is about moving toward a common infrastructure that supports multiple channel access face-to-face, telephone/contact centre and online - service delivery, as well as integrating back office and front office operational systems, accessible by local customer services staff, who have the appropriate expertise and knowledge to deal with general service enquiries through to service transactions, where possible, at first point of contact.

The Executive in promoting this agenda, has consulted and worked with local authorities to provide additional resources and support, for example through the Modernising Government Fund (MGF) **£65.5 million** has already been provided to help finance projects that can deliver innovation, provide better information and more convenient joined-up services. But more importantly to support councils and their community planning partners to work together, not 'reinventing the wheel'. A further package of funding (MGF3 - £38.45 million), has also been approved.

Already across Scotland a number of Contact Centres are operating or developing, and a one-stop service delivery is gradually becoming the norm for citizen-focused services. From face-to-face and telephone enquiries, through to e-mails, online payments and kiosk services, a customer relationship management approach will put the mechanisms in place that will enable the pulling together of data into the citizen's account. This will ensure that citizens/customers receive the same quality of service and meaningful response, regardless of how they choose to conduct their business with their council.

The Executive - Public Service Reform and Efficiency Division in partnership with all 32 Scottish local authorities has implemented an online ESD reporting application. This web-enabled tool has been key to the collation and dissemination in reporting national progress on ESD. During 2004, through a consultation process with councils' ESD Co-ordinators, an evaluation of the 91 service activities resulted in agreement to focus future reporting of e-government on a realigned set of 46 core service activities. During September/October 2004, collation of information on the redefined core services was piloted with five local authorities. Appropriate changes were made to the online reporting tool and the subsequent evaluation from the pilot successfully demonstrated that reporting on the new core service activities could be achieved.

Electronic Service Delivery – Progress Report

This report provides a third national measure of progress against ESD targets for all Scottish local authorities. Progress is measured against the e-Europe 4-stage framework, the definition of transactions being:

- Online Information about public services;
- One-way Interaction, e.g. downloading of forms, discussion forum, e-mail;
- Two-way Interaction, e.g. forms returned electronically, e-mail response;
- Full online Transaction, e.g. full electronic interaction including order, delivery, payment and posting of transactions.

The report shows that since the first publication in March 2003, local authorities have continued to make progress, with information available online for 87 per cent of services (Figure 1). Progress continues to be made in the delivery of transactional services with 63% now provided electronically, such as making Council Tax Payments over the Internet, electronic Library catalogues – renewing and reserving books and making online electronic payments for services such as Housing Rent Payments.

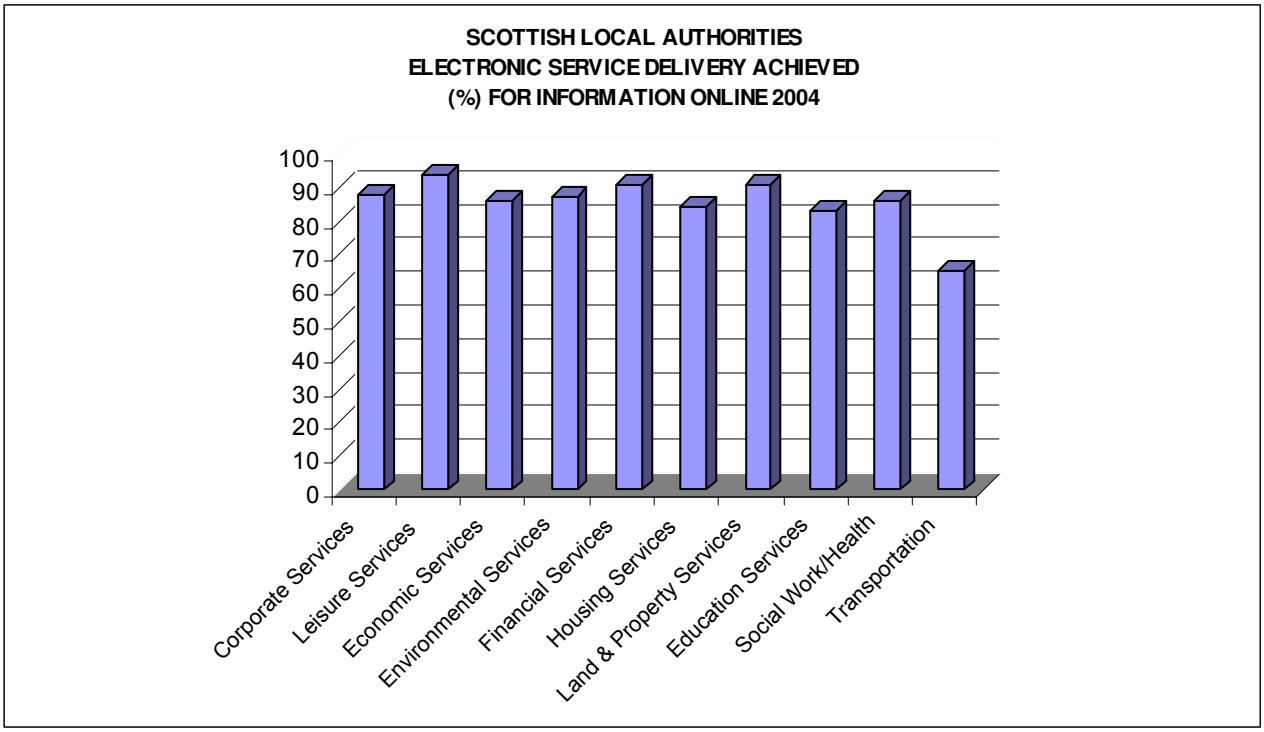


Figure 1 – ESD % of service information available online

It is evident that Councils are implementing operational changes to their infrastructures and business processes, including continual integration of back office systems to front office service delivery through a customer centric environment, provided by multi-skilled and appropriately trained staff.

The Customer First strategy was launched on 29 October 2004 at Hamilton Townhouse by the Minister for Finance and Public Service Reform and sets out the key success factors required to deliver seamless, open and accountable improvements to public services over the years (2005 – 2008). It will also bring together the component parts of the MGF programme – the electronic service delivery, the multi-channel approach, the use of a single corporate infrastructure to support the development of the citizen's account, coupled with a

voluntary account card (smartcard), linking the account to a common addressing system, and focus on a number of core priorities and effectively communicate this to customers, to service providers, and to those who supply goods and services to the public sector.

All local authorities will work towards an agreed single model of electronic service delivery and Customer First will provide guidance and support towards this. The model recognises that in most instances the first point of contact for public services is the local council and the preferred method of contact is the telephone, for the time being. Customer First will provide guidance within which all authorities can develop a contact centre approach, which provides customers with a single point of access for services most frequently requested. It will also support a programme to train multi-skilled customer services staff to respond to a wider range of service requests.

Modernising Government Fund projects have shown that improved services to the citizen are underpinned by improvements with the business processes, and the transaction processes which enable services to be provided more accurately, quickly and efficiently, and at a lower cost. This is an essential component of the efficient government drive and targets within Customer First have been set for the delivery – in the longer term – of recurring annual savings around **£56 million** and to realise the potential for further savings from sharing core data with other parts of the public sector, thereby reducing their data maintenance overheads.

These challenges will be achieved through defining a Business Planning Framework for Customer First. The 2005/06 priorities (subject to final submission and approval by the Customer First Programme Management Board and the Improvement Service Board) will set out the broad objectives to:

- Deliver a **sustainable national infrastructure** and messaging hub to support a secure **Citizen Account and Property Gazetteer**, ensuring that business processes maintain the integrity of the infrastructure and authentication processes, ensure that only updates from a trusted source are able to alter the status of a record;
- Ensure that the Citizen's Account can be enabled to support a number of **local and national entitlements** under the national entitlements scheme;
- Deliver an operational **national voluntary card scheme** with the first entitlement – concessionary fares – by 1 April 2006;
- Deliver, via the local Council CRM and back office integration process, **a single point of contact for the first time delivery of public services**, to track transactions via a sustainable citizen account and provide an accurate citizen data source to sustain the national infrastructure;
- Deliver a sustainable corporate gazetteer in every Council, integrated via the CRM into the local back office systems, and providing an accurate data source to sustain the national infrastructure;
- Establish a **procurement function** that can deliver economies of scale in procuring goods and services for Customer First partners, and provide a model for a joint procurement service on behalf of local authorities;
- Establish a **benefits realisation programme** for Customer First to ensure that first time delivery of core service requests can be monitored, and efficiency savings can be measured.

The development of a **common infrastructure** to support this has been the MGF focus for Electronic Service Delivery (ESD); rather than simply developing web enabled services. It is important that the Customer First strategy is able to demonstrate the success of projects

already being implemented and can provide some measures of service improvement. For instance, through the Customer Relationship Management (CRM) programme, councils are beginning to develop a unified and consistent view of their citizens that includes customer tracking, and the logging of customer enquiries against a single electronic customer record – the citizen's account.

The ultimate objective for the Executive and local councils is for citizens, communities and businesses to be able to deal with their public service provider when they want, where they want and how they want, and be confident that they will receive high quality services. The way in which an electronic service differs from the traditional method must be clear and apparent. For citizens and for the staff who work in our public services, there must be incentives to attract them to use cost effective, well-designed, secure, easy-to-use systems performing electronic transactions that satisfies their requirements.

The following tables illustrate the specific progress made across the 46 Core Service Activities through ten generic service delivery areas.

Table 1

Social Work and Health Services

Social Work and Health Services	Information Online	One-Way Interaction	Two-Way Interaction	Full Online Transaction
	ESD Enabled %	ESD Enabled %	ESD Enabled %	ESD Enabled %
Blue Badge - Applying for a blue badge	86	65	42	6
Social Work - Applying for Home Care	89	59	36	12
Social Work - Applying for social work services	86	62	50	12
Social Work - Assessing need for social care (Single Shared Assessment)	83	50	39	12
Social Work - Ordering and Supplying Aids and Adaptions to the home	86	59	42	15

For Social Work and Health Services, ESD continues to support the delivery of key front line service delivery. Improvements in the capture of information at a local level, provides more responsive timescales in processing information on clients' care requirements. For instance through the use of Personal Digital Devices, details can be collated electronically from a home visit and makes a valuable contribution through information gathering within the assessment process for health care.

ESD has helped to exploit the common data standards and infrastructures that supports the growth in the partnership approach between local councils, health service providers, general practitioners and other public service agencies, to ensure that the transfer of client health care information is managed and exchanged effectively within safe and secure environments. The benefits achieved include time savings in the processing and transfering of information between service delivery units, and the reduction in administration overheads including maintenance of databases and duplication of effort.

Table 2

Education Services

Education Services	Information Online	One-Way Interaction	Two-Way Interaction	Full Online Transaction
	ESD Enabled %	ESD Enabled %	ESD Enabled %	ESD Enabled %
Education - Booking a course and other learning activities	83	48	36	18
Education - Making a general enquiry about Lifelong Learning	86	62	56	18
Education - Providing information for parents	92	62	56	24
Education - Recording pupil attendance in schools	74	48	30	24
Education - Transferring pupil information between schools	71	53	48	30
Education Grants - Applying for a clothing grant	80	48	24	12
Education Grants - Applying for an Education Maintenance Allowance	80	48	24	12
Education Grants - Applying for free school meals	89	59	27	12

The Scottish Executive Education Department continues to work in partnership with all 32 local authorities to explore the potential application of new and innovative technologies, delivering modernised learning methods across Scotland.

In terms of information for parents/guardians on a range of education subjects, this area continues to be developing through both local and national initiatives. This activity demonstrates that expectations from parents/guardians are being progressively achieved. A specific initiative highlighted is a national initiative supported by local council Education Service Departments called Parentzone.

This project helps parents/guardians to get involved in their children's education. Information on every school in Scotland is available. Through an interactive website, there are a series of advice and support pages to help parents/guardians with sharing information, parents evenings, representation in schools through boards, and research outcomes such as "Parents Views on Improving Parental Involvement" on their participation in children's education.

Table 3

Transportation Services

Transportation Services	Information Online	One-Way Interaction	Two-Way Interaction	Full Online Transaction
	ESD Enabled %	ESD Enabled %	ESD Enabled %	ESD Enabled %
Paying a Parking Fine	65	45	30	18

The revised core service activities identified for national progress on ESD, highlighted that Paying a Parking Fine could be reported in a consistent way, as a number of councils are working towards processing information electronically and providing a facility to allow customers to pay parking fines online.

In general, ESD has helped local councils in partnership with Strathclyde Passenger Transport and operating bus companies to ensure that customers have access to support on a range of transportation issues, including information and application against concessionary travel.

As announced by Mr Nicol Stephen, Minister for Transport, in Parlaiment on 22 December 2004, all older people (over 60) and people with disabilities will have free bus travel throughout Scotland from April 2006. This will involve the distribution of over one million smartcards, and the operation of these as part of the national concessionary transport scheme will be enabled through ESD.

Table 4

Economic Services

Economic Services	Information Online	One-Way Interaction	Two-Way Interaction	Full Online Transaction
	ESD Enabled %	ESD Enabled %	ESD Enabled %	ESD Enabled %
Business Development – Applying for a Business Development Grant	86	62	33	3

The partnership role between councils and Scottish Enterprise through local enterprise business units, continues to develop and grow through improved communication channels for disseminating business information, and helping to promote local ecomonic activity.

Many local authority websites have direct electronic links to local Scottish Enterprise websites where information includes electronic lists of vacant potential business premises that are available using local councils' property databases. Councils are also providing information and advice on planning regulations, including online planning, and suitable business development areas, all of this activity combined has contributed to help generate and invigorate local economies.

Table 5

Housing Services

Housing Services	Information Online	One-Way Interaction	Two-Way Interaction	Full Online Transaction
	ESD Enabled %	ESD Enabled %	ESD Enabled %	ESD Enabled %
Housing - Applying for a house	80	56	33	15
Housing - Enquiring about the status of a repair	77	53	42	12
Housing - Making an enquiry about status on the waiting list (including points)	80	48	33	3
Housing - Requesting a repair	89	65	42	15
Housing - Requesting general information and advice	80	65	48	15
Housing Benefit - Applying for housing benefit	89	65	50	15
Housing Benefit - Making a general enquiry or notifying change of circumstance	89	65	50	21
Housing Rent - Making a payment	89	59	53	50

There continues to be improvements made to business processes supporting the delivery of Housing services, including the integration of operational systems to help customer services staff deal with information enquiries, and perform actual service transactions electronically.

Many councils now provide an appointments service for housing repairs bringing together a range of internal service units, to allow customers to book service repairs, and have these completed at a time that is convenient to them.

There are a number of local housing organisations that deal with their council electronically through digital exchange of information. This helps increase the ability of individuals and groups to influence community circumstances and working together to make the most of the resources available and to be as effective as possible.

Table 6

Environment - Land and Property Services

Land and Property Services	Information Online	One-Way Interaction	Two-Way Interaction	Full Online Transaction
	ESD Enabled %	ESD Enabled %	ESD Enabled %	ESD Enabled %
Building Control - Applying for a building warrant (including making a payment where appropriate)	92	71	36	18
Planning - Applying for planning permission and making a payment	92	68	45	21
Planning - Enquiring about the status of a requested planning application	86	68	53	24
Refuse Collection - making a complaint about refuse collection	92	65	53	24
Refuse Collection - making a general enquiry about refuse collection	92	62	50	21
Roads and Pavements Fault - Reporting faults with roads and pavements	89	65	62	24
Special Uplift - Requesting a special collection (including making a payment where appropriate)	92	65	50	33
Street Light Fault - Reporting a fault	89	71	62	27

ESD continues to bring about improvements in a number of key public facing services, it is noted that services including Special Uplifts and Street Light Fault reporting have made exceptional progress in terms of full electronic delivery.

Through ESD, councils are actively developing the business processes and tools to explore the potential for online planning applications. Such an approach will bring a range of benefits to both the customer and the local authorities in terms of time releasing savings, and able to improve the business processes for planning requests.

A key success contributed by the Modernising Government Fund was all fourteen Assessors in Scotland worked together to develop, deliver and maintain the Scottish Assessors' Portal. For the first time, there is single point Internet access to the Valuation Roll and Council Tax information on a Scotland-wide basis sourced from a locally managed and maintained database held by each of the fourteen assessors.

The Portal is part of a larger programme of work with the thirty-two Scottish local authorities to create and maintain up-to-date and accurate address-based systems that will be a primary source of information for a wide range of e-government solutions that, in addition to assessors' information, includes online planning, building control, roads, finance and other critical services delivered by local government.

Table 7

Leisure Services

Leisure Services	Information Online	One-Way Interaction	Two-Way Interaction	Full Online Transaction
	ESD Enabled %	ESD Enabled %	ESD Enabled %	ESD Enabled %
Leisure & Recreation - Booking a Council facility and making a payment	92	56	36	18
Public Library - Renewing, extending and reserving library books	95	83	74	59

Throughout Scotland, one of the key successes resulting from ESD is the approach that local councils have taken with the development and implementation of technology to provide learning centres.

The learning centres not only offer computing classes, but also offers courses in personal and community development using access to computers. The learning is carried out at a pace convenient to the individual, whether it is delivered in a class setting, or on their own through self-learning.

Table 8

Environmental Control Services

Environmental Services	Information Online	One-Way Interaction	Two-Way Interaction	Full Online Transaction
	ESD Enabled %	ESD Enabled %	ESD Enabled %	ESD Enabled %
Pest Control - Reporting general instances of pest infestation	86	71	59	24
Pest Control - Requesting a service to deal with pests (including making payment where appropriate)	89	65	45	21

Continuing progress of ESD specific to Environmental Services reflects the importance of front line service delivery to the daily lives of citizens and their communities. Councils are changing the ways in which these services are provided through improved capture of requests, reducing the numbers of stages involved, and exploiting the use of information and communications technology to both track and process a service request.

Many local authorities provide online reporting of pest infestations, which improves the speed of notification to the council, and allows confirmation to be returned to the citizen through electronic acknowledgement. Where appropriate, payments can now be made for services received through a web-enabled system.

Table 9

Corporate Services

Corporate Services	Information Online	One-Way Interaction	Two-Way Interaction	Full Online Transaction
	ESD Enabled %	ESD Enabled %	ESD Enabled %	ESD Enabled %
Council - Applying for a job with the Council	95	86	68	36
Notifying a change of address	71	50	45	21
Registering a Birth, Deaths or Marriage (including making a payment)	92	65	42	15
Making a Complaint	95	77	62	24
Licensing - Applying for a Liquor Licence (including making a payment)	86	71	33	12
Licensing - Applying for a Street Trader Licence (including making a payment)	89	71	36	18
Licensing - Applying for a Taxi Driver Licence (including making a payment)	86	65	42	18

It is without doubt that the range of service activities provided under Corporate Services by local authorities have made a substantial impact under the ESD agenda. There has been an increasing number of councils that now provides an interactive personnel recruitment service, where citizens can view vacancies electronically, download job application forms and return completed forms online. In some cases councils are reporting that up to fifty per cent of completed job application forms are now being returned electronically.

In regard to Licensing, there is now a wealth of information located on councils' websites on the requirements for applying, the process involved with the application, and the payment options for a range of licences granted by local licensing boards. These improvements allows information requests to be satisfied at first point of contact, and reduces the amount of time that customer services staff spend on answering enquiries, thereby redirecting this time towards the processing of licence applications.

Table 10

Financial Services

Financial Services	Information Online	One-Way Interaction	Two-Way Interaction	Full Online Transaction
	ESD Enabled %	ESD Enabled %	ESD Enabled %	ESD Enabled %
Council Tax - Making a Council Tax Payment	92	71	59	62
Council Tax - Applying for benefit, discount, exemption, relief and direct debit	89	65	45	21
Council Tax - Making an enquiry about banding, balance, direct debit or payment due date	89	65	56	30
Council Tax - Making an enquiry about entitlement to benefit/discounts/exemptions or relief	92	71	50	24

As can be seen from the result shown in the above table, Council Tax service activities continues to make good progress. There is evidence to support the development of online payment of council tax, has been successful as another revenue stream for local authorities.

Through the improvements of internal council tax information systems, highly trained customer services staff can now access a range of information on council tax, and are able to provide assistance to citizens on enquiries against discounts, exemptions, balances, and payment dates. As councils develop local customer relationship management processes, supported by access to back office information and operational systems, council tax enquiries can be resolved quickly and efficiently.

Notes

1. The options available for ESD responses to the online reporting system were Yes / Partial / NA and Planned Completion Date.

2. The percentage figures depicted within Tables 1 to 10 under each stage of the 4 stage e-Europe Framework were based on the total number of responses received for the options for Yes and Partial delivery.

3. Within Tables 1 to 10, the percentage figures for Information Online relates specifically to viewing information on services electronically.

4. For One-Way Interaction, this information relates to services available where citizens and customers can electronically download forms, also complete an online request, and submit an email or take part in a discussion forum.

5. For Two-Way Interaction the percentage figures identify services where information can be submitted electronically, such as returning completed forms online, also providing electronic confirmation to citizens and customers on requests for services, and responding to email.

6. There are occasions when electronic service delivery (ESD) for two-way interaction could sometimes be higher than one-way interaction. This reflects services being developed with the aim of immediately satisfying requirements for two-way interaction, and have, by default, already fulfilled one-way transaction criteria.

7. For Full Online Transaction the percentage figures relate to services where an electronic request and transaction can be made online, and that the request or transaction can be processed electronically with a facilty to make a payment. Examples of this include booking services online, receiving electronic confirmation of the booking and making a payment electronically. This also includes allowing payment of Council Tax over the Internet and submitting an application form for a service with the appropriate fee.

Continuing Progress

Through the Modernising Government Fund, projects have demonstrated that improvements are being achieved in the delivery of local services. These have been underpinned by reviewing and redesigning local authorities' business processes, better integration between back and front office systems, exploitation of partnership working, all of which is supported through effective change management practices.

In meeting the challenges of the modernising agenda and using a mechanism for reporting on benefits, successes and celebrating commitment can be highlighted both in quantitative and qualitative terms. Just some of these successes are as follows:

- The bureaucracy – involved in delivering services, for example housing repairs steps can be reduced from 40 to 12; Clothing grants can be reduced from 21 to 15 steps, dealing with special uplifts via a single CRM process reduces the requirements to raise an invoice and process a cheque;

- The 'blue badge process' turnaround time' can been reduced from 3 weeks to 1 week and a non-discretionary badge can be processed within an hour;

- The allocation of a council house can be dealt with in a single transaction by a Customer Services Officer, whereas previously the customer would have to have three separate meetings with a housing officer, a rents officer and a benefits officer;

- Dealing with 70% of transactions by Contact Centre (telephone) and cutting down on postal and face-to-face transactions can reduce costs by as much as 40%. Councils can deal with more calls from customers and answer these calls more quickly, for example, answering 90% of calls within 20 seconds.

A commitment was also given in the document Customer First Management Overview a strategic framework for the Scottish Executive and Scottish Local Authorities, launched by the Minister for Finance and Public Service Reform on 28 October 2004, specifically Bullet 37 - that Customer First "***will refine and develop the initial benefits realisation programme to produce a definitive set of indicators that everyone is comfortable with and can provide a baseline from which to measure improvements in efficiency and in outcome"***

In terms of future reporting on ESD, this will be integrated to the business objectives of the Customer First Programme in order to concentrate measurement effort on the key benefits, that contribute to the strategic goals of Customer First. All benefits will be tracked through a common and shared understanding, that can provide meaningful information to all relevant stakeholders, through a reporting framework that is simple, practical and is not an administrative burden.

Case Studies

There are 27 case studies that illustrate some examples of good e-government practice and provide an opportunity to share knowledge on innovative projects either fully implemented or currently being developed. These examples clearly demonstrate how the impact of ESD can improve service delivery and enhance citizen choice.

Sustaining Investment in Education

EAST RENFREWSHIRE COUNCIL

FREE SCHOOL MEALS AND CLOTHING GRANTS

Until April 2004 the Council's free school meal and clothing grant scheme was administered by Community and Leisure. 2700 grant applications per school year were processed and open bank cheques totalling £135 000.00 issued. 1500 requests for free school meals are also received, validated and processed.

The Council used systems and processes introduced by Strathclyde Regional Council 12 years earlier.

Review and Evaluation

Community and Leisure undertook a best value review during 2002. One of the recommendations of that review was a two-stage transfer of responsibility for administration of free school meals and clothing grants to Customer Services.

Prior to the transfer a review of the current procedures and an evaluation of possible updated supporting software was undertaken.

The existing procedures were process mapped. The mapping exercise identified as many as 23 steps within the process.

Issues identified with the existing system

- The process was not joined up. Applicants were being asked to provide documentary evidence of proof of benefit that is either, issued by the Council (council tax rebate, housing benefit), or is already available via the Council's benefit system.
- Forms have to be endorsed by the school the child is attending then returned to the Council for processing. If there is more than one child on the form the school of the eldest child should check that other children on the form actually attend East Renfrewshire schools. More application forms printed than actually required
- Existing software was not supportable
- Existing software was not compatible with creditors system.
- Applicants have to endure the indignity of queuing to provide proof of eligibility.
- Officers from Community and Leisure supported by Education's Attendance Officers held surgeries in many areas during the summer to check benefit information, taking them away from other work.

New systems and practices

After evaluation of supportable free school meal and clothing grant systems, new software was purchased and implemented which linked to the benefits system and the school roll.

On introducing new practices and software the process was reduced to a maximum of 13 steps.

Benefits of the reviewed and joined up process

No requirement for 2,000 interview letters per year to be produced and issued

No requirement for 2,000 interviews to be undertaken

No requirement for schools to endorse application forms reducing the administrative burden on them.

No requirement for applicant's details to be double entered into both clothing grant and creditors system.

The Council can be proactive in the fight against poverty by issuing application forms to customers receiving benefits that are eligible for free school meals and clothing grant, but have not applied.

Assists the council in achieving "Joined up Government" targets and an end to customers queuing to provide proof of benefit.

Further information is available from Linda Wilson Customer Services Manager at 0141 577 3406 and email linda.wilson@eastrenfrewshire.gov.uk

FIFE COUNCIL

ALERTS TO SECURE SUPPLY TEACHERS

Primary schools in Fife are the first to benefit from a new automated messaging service to speed up time-consuming problems securing supply teachers to cover staff absences.

The new service follows the success of similar initiatives by Fife Council to use modern technology to deliver text and email alerts to people when there are road, school and other council closures.

All supply teachers registered with the council in Fife have been asked to supply email and mobile contacts if they wanted to take part in the new system. Over 1,500 teachers are now registered. Their details including information about their location and availability have been added into the council's intranet website allowing schools to quickly search and be shown a list of matching supply teachers who could fill specific absences. The schools simply click the ones they want to contact, up to ten at a time, and the electronic system will automatically trigger an email and/or text message to be sent to the contacts given.

The message will specify the name of the school, the length of the placement and give the school telephone number if supply teachers want to take up the opportunity.

Fife's 146 primary schools began using this system in the New Year, with secondary and other schools expected to come on stream in the near future. Not only will the schools benefit, but the system will also benefit supply teachers who previously may have missed out on a number of job opportunities because they didn't get the message in time.

Since the launch of the service on 5th January, schools have been quick to use the new system to book not only supply teachers for immediate vacancies, but also to pre plan supply cover to fill vacancies they know are coming in the next few months. In just three days, almost 30 schools used the system sending out just over 14,000 messages to set up over 750 contracts with supply teachers.

Further information available from Gregor Wilson, New Media Team, Customer Relations Management Service, Fife Council at 01592 413260 and email Gregor.Wilson@smtp5.fife.gov.uk

STIRLING COUNCIL

STIRLING SCHOOLS BENEFIT FROM CONTACT CENTRE APPROACH

There are currently 68 Schools and Nurseries in the Stirling Council area, which provide support and education for almost 15,000 children up to the age of 18. Stirling Council employs approximately 850 teachers, Early Childhood Educators and Support Staff in order to operate these Schools and Nurseries and are able to provide more than 30 different subjects.

Children's Service received up to 200 requests and arranged almost 250 days of cover each month for Primary Schools. Children's Services received these Supply Cover requests from Head teachers, Teachers and administration staff of Schools and Nurseries. As Secondary Schools were arranging cover independently it was not possible to evaluate the number of requests that were being handled.

Supply Cover in the Contact Centre.

In July 2004, Children's Services requested support from the Business Design Team and the Supply Cover project was initiated with the following aims:

- Support Children's Services aim of "*Promoting and delivering integrated education care and support services of the highest quality*."
- Improve customer (internal) access to the service;
- Improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the service;
- Deliver cost savings around provision of the service; and,
- Deliver business intelligence to facilitate future service improvements.

As part of this project it was decided to integrate the management of all Supply Cover requests (Nursery, Primary and Secondary) centrally into the Contact Centre.

By working in partnership with Children's Services and the Contact Centre, the Business Design Team were able to deliver a technology and operational solution that was available for launch within 6 weeks (see basic process flow below).

Following the successful launch on the 5th October 2004, the Supply Cover process has logged more than 2500 requests for Supply Cover, handled more than 1500 tracking/admin calls and made more than 6500 outbound calls to arrange cover. To date the service has been used by 66 of Stirling's 68 Schools/Nurseries and has provided 32 different types of Supply Cover (33 types available).

Feedback from service users has been very positive and has been received both via e-mail:

In addition to the efficiency benefits the solution has delivered invaluable insights into what is being requested and how the service is performing. Specifically the solution has provided the following information that was not previously available:

- Number of requests from each School.
- Number of requests for each Subject
- % Success in arranging cover for each School/Subject
- Reasons for submitting supply requests
- Most requested Supply Cover staff
- Request profiling (seasonal demands, call patterns etc)

Children's Services are now using these insights to refine their Service processes, target their recruitment strategy and investigate skills gaps.

Equally, the Contact Centre's management team have used the system to analyse the most successful times to make outbound calls and have amended the shift patterns to target these times.

Whilst the initial launch has been successful there are still a number of possible improvement and the processes will continue to be reviewed and developed. On an quarterly basis Children's Services will continue to meet with the Contact Centre and BDT in order to review service delivery and tailor the service to the ever changing need of both Schools and Supply Cover staff.

Additional Projects

Following the successful launch of the Supply Cover service, the Contact Centre have began supporting Children's Services by pro-actively outbound calling Supply Cover staff who have not returned their consent forms to allow them to be added to the current Supply List.

During these calls advisors capture additional contact details (e-mail address, mobile number etc) that will be used by Children's services to communicate initiatives and opportunities throughout the year.

This service will be introduced annually (before the start of the academic year) into the Contact Centre in order to maximise the response to the consent forms and increase the number of Supply Cover staff on the list.

Further Information available from Peter Tolland, Business Change Manager,
Stirling Council at 01786 443317 and email: tollandp@stirling.gov.uk

WEST LOTHIAN COUNCIL

MANAGING SCHOOL ATTENDANCE

Groupcall is a management information system piloted within a primary and 5 secondary schools in West Lothian. It has been developed to manage attendance by communicating unexplained absences to parents as well sending announcement type messages. The system sends an automated voice or SMS text message to the parents' home, mobile or work telephone numbers that are stored within the school's Phoenix administration system. The system has been used to notify and confirm to parents their child's first day of absence, but its also been used on school excursions to inform parents that their children had arrived safely at the destination and to remind them of parents evenings. The system increases child safety, but also frees up valuable time that staff previously spent calling parents. Groupcall can be accessed from any computer with an internet connection providing the user has the login and password – which means that even in an emergency school closure, parents can still be contacted even though no one can make it into school. Evaluation of the pilot with parents was extremely positive and has reduced the number of unexplained absences, improved attendance and is simple to use!

Further information available from Des Walsh, Business Solution partner, at 01506 773674 and e-mail: des.walsh@westlothian.gov.uk

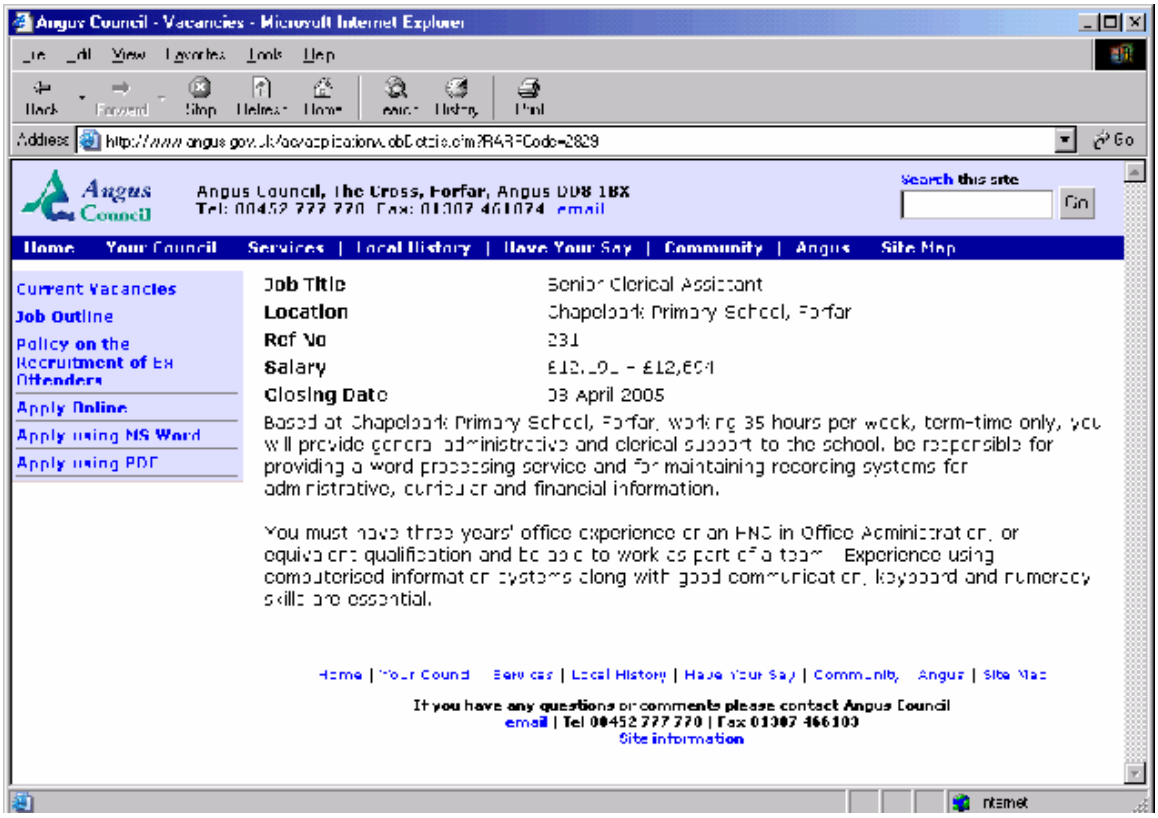
ANGUS COUNCIL

JOB VACANCIES

Angus Council identified the need to extend the functionality of the vacancies section of it's website to include such features as applying on-line. However, it also recognized the need to review existing internal business processes involved in the recruitment process.

Whilst accepting that products existed in the market place, a decision was taken to develop the functionality in-house. This was to ensure that:

- all existing internal business processes were reviewed and where appropriate re-designed in advance of developing the new system
- the internal system adhered to the navigational features of the corporate intranet
- website functionality adhered to the navigational features of the council's external website.



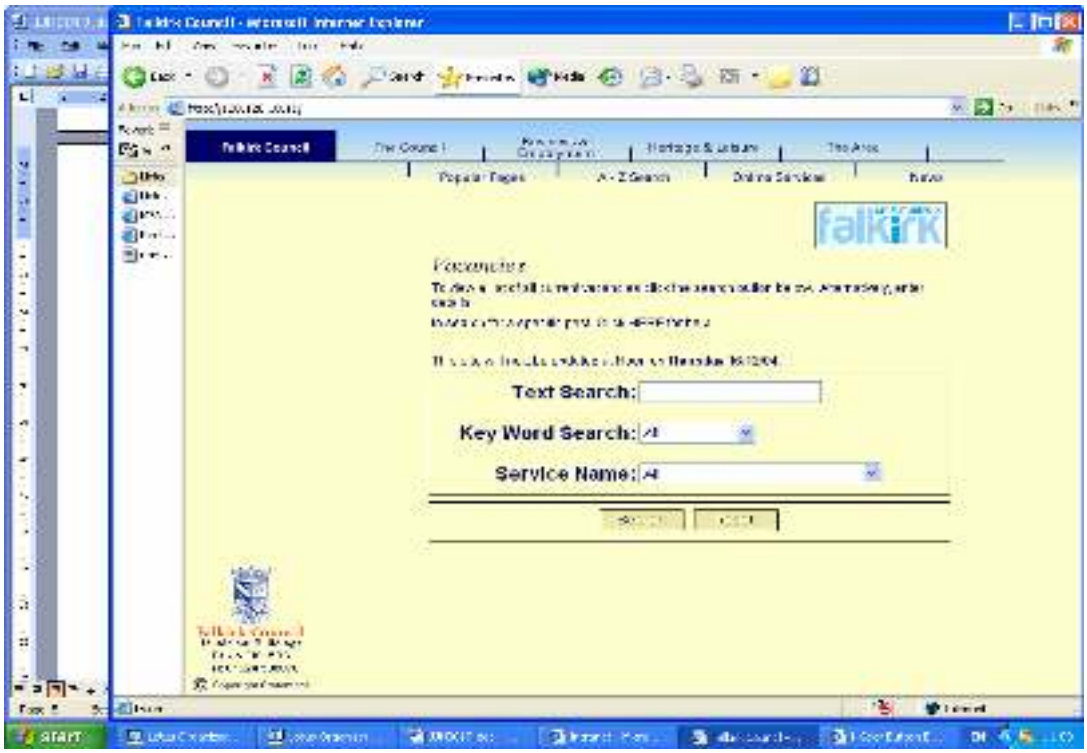
Departmental representatives can now initiate processes via the corporate intranet, and electronically supply the supporting information that is subsequently published on the council's website. However the system also produces electronic files necessary for any hard copy advertising publications

Potential candidates can now peruse current vacancies and view all documentation associated with each job. They can then apply via their preferred choice of media, e.g. on-line, Word, PDF etc.

Further information available from Gordon Fenton (Software Services Manager)
Tel 01307 473904 E-mail fentongn@angus.gov.uk

FALKIRK COUNCIL

RECRUITMENT ADVERTISING ON-LINE



On line recruitment supports Falkirk Council's objectives in terms of 21st Century Government and is a positive reflection on the e-HR.

This method of recruitment has significant resource implications saving approximately £4,000 per 5% of internet applications. Applicants were introduced to our on-line facility in October 2001 and by the end of that year we were receiving 11% of returns on-line. The years 2002/2003 enabled us to recognise and improve what we offered applicants and those years saw a rise in on-line returns to around 25%.

In 2004, as a result of 'The Employee Resources Team' actively promoting the on-line facility for applying for job vacancies the number of applicants choosing this method to apply has risen steadily to 56% of all returned application forms being received on-line.

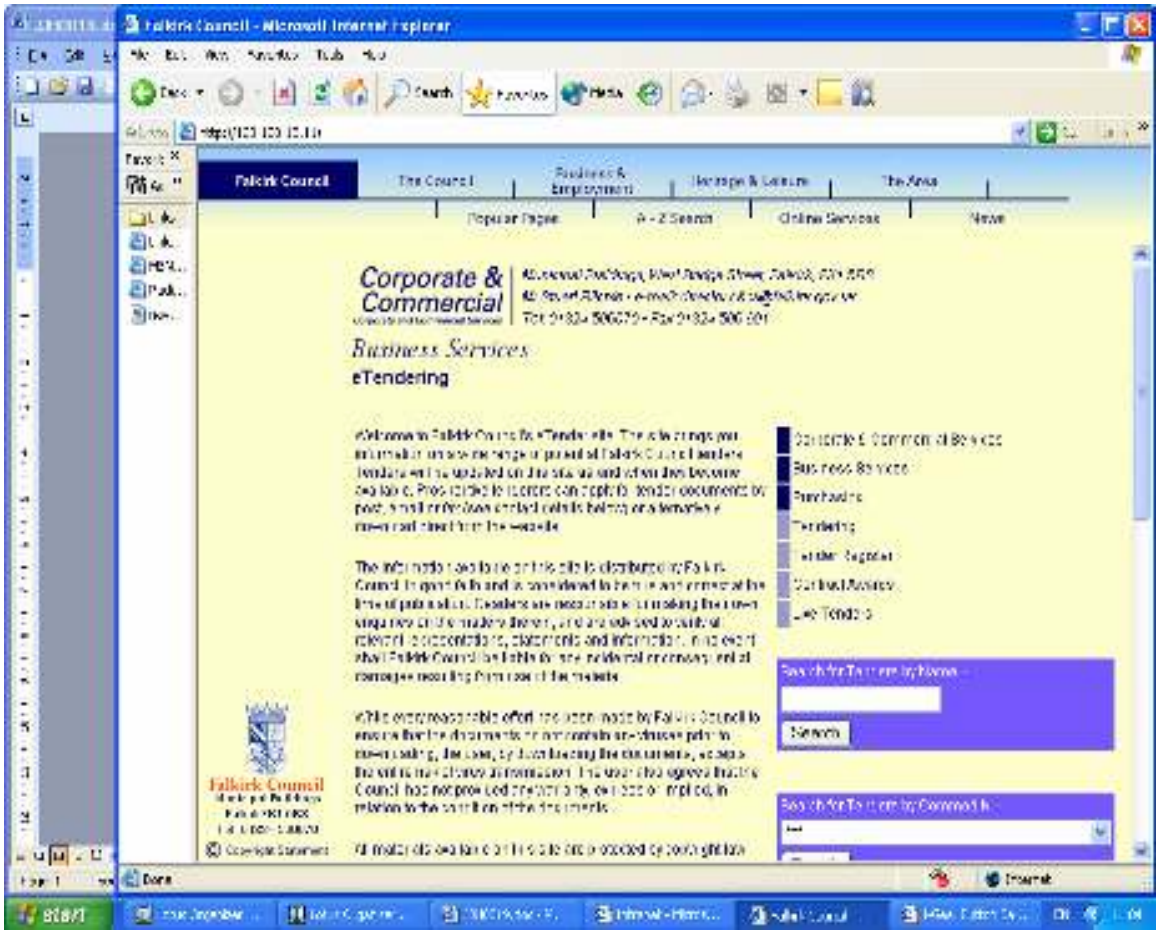
The team support and advise applicants who had in the past been unsure of using the on-line facility and their reassurance has helped applicants recognise how easy this option is, in particular when applying for multiple vacancies.

This improved area of service delivery has been welcomed by applicants and because it is automated it means that the same team can handle the increased volume of job applications.

Further information available from Liz McKnight, Employee Resources Administrator
Human Resources, Corporate & Commercial Services, Falkirk Council
Municipal Buildings Falkirk FK1 5RS. Telephone 01324 506224 and
e-mail liz.mcknight@falkirk.gov.uk

FALKIRK COUNCIL

PIONEERING E-TENDERING



Falkirk Council is pioneering an e-tendering solution that saves the council and its partner's money by making the tendering process more efficient and effective.

This e-tendering initiative began with a pilot phase focussed on a mobile telephone contract. Teething problems (such as PDF version compatibility) were addressed and the pilot was extended, until 136 companies had used the e-tender website. Feedback, from these companies, was extremely positive and last year saw the full rollout, involving 90 contracts worth £45 million.

Contract documentation is downloadable in PDF format, together with the pricing schedules as Excel spreadsheets. This saves business and the council time and money. For example, by April 2005 the project will have saved the council over £40,000 in printing and postage costs alone.

In 2004 the facility was extended to include tenders for partner organisations such as neighbouring local authorities and public sector bodies. In addition, in response to feedback from users, the tender site now gives information on contract award and current contracted suppliers.

Downloading tenders from the web is now by far the most common way for businesses to get their tender documentation from central purchasing.

Further information available from William McQuillian, Business Development Manager, Corporate & Commercial Services, Falkirk Council at 01324 503121 and email william.mcquillian@falkirk.gov.uk

FIFE COUNCIL

FIFE DIRECT – JOBS ON-LINE

Fife Direct is Fife Council's community website which has achieved over 18 million hits since its launch in 2003.

One of the key areas on the website is that relating to jobs which uses a different selection of channels appropriate to the needs of the job seeker.

Job adverts, details and application packs are added to the Fife Direct hub, from there the full information is displayed on www.fifedirect.org.uk/jobs where users can download full details and application packs.

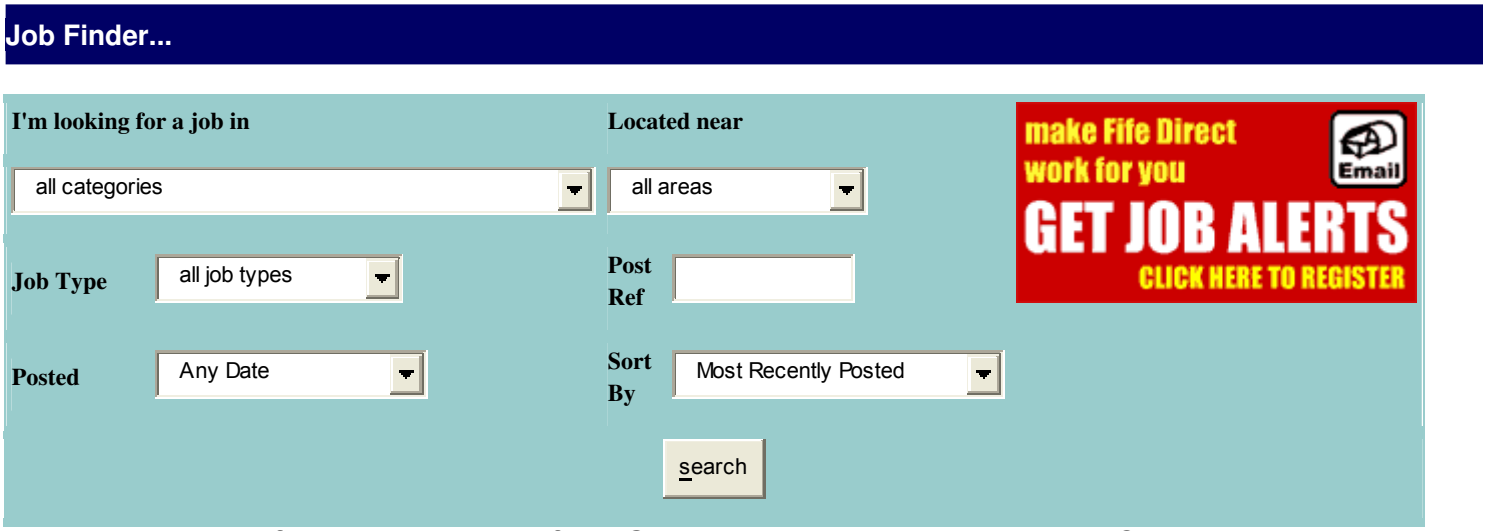
The adverts are automatically compiled into a weekly paper jobs bulletin for display in jobs centres and other locations and syndicated to the jobs sections of other media.

This makes it quicker and easier for staff and the jobseeker who can check all the vacancies quickly and easily, download the application packs they need or call or visit any Fife Council or partner office where they can be downloaded for them.

From a customer perspective further benefit has been gained from the recent addition of the job alert service. Now job seekers can register on Fife Direct for personal email alerts that let them know as soon as a job is added that meets the type and location they are looking for.

The email contains links directly to the job adverts and packs on Fife Direct

In an average week there are about 4,700 visitors to the job section of the Fife Direct website with 500 application forms accessed online. It is the most popular part of the Fife Direct site.



Further information available from Gregor Wilson, New Media Team, Customer Relations Management Service, Fife Council at 01592 413260 and email Gregor.Wilson@smtp5.fife.gov.uk

THE CITY OF EDINBURGH COUNCIL

GIVING CHOICE IN SOCIAL HOUSING

Since April 2003, finding a new home to rent in Edinburgh has been more straightforward in a project under the City of Edinburgh Council's Smart City vision.

Prior to this, tenants had to apply separately to social housing providers across the city, and were assessed on a variety of complex points systems. This meant tenants having to complete 25 different application forms. To avoid this, we created a Common Housing Register, bringing together the Council and 24 of the city's Registered Social Landlords (RSLs). *EdIndex* is a single registration process, through which people can gain access to housing provided by the Council and our partner RSLs. *Edindex* allows these partner landlords to access this large common pool of applicants to run shortlists and allocate houses as they become available. *EdIndex* is available to authorised users Council-wide through an intranet and to all partner organisations via a secure portal using ISDN and ADSL broadband connections.

At the same time – and on the same IT platform – the Council introduced *Your Key to Choice*, a method of choice-based lettings for all Council homes. Available Council homes are now advertised on a website – developed in partnership with Scotsman Publications – and in a news sheet.

Applicants have welcomed this new process and consistently 50-60% of notes of interest in advertised homes are registered online. Since tenants can select the specific properties they are interested in, there has been a considerable reduction in the refusal rate and therefore properties lying empty. Similarly, the amount staff time required to match tenants to properties is much less than before and, because the process is more transparent, less time is spent explaining the process or individual decisions.

The launch of *EdIndex* and *Your Key to Choice* was also a considerable technical achievement. The Council worked with BT, our strategic IT partner, to develop and launch a system that would accommodate both the interactive processes of choice for the Council and the complexities of supporting 25 individual allocations policies from a common pool of data on applicants. Despite this complexity behind the scenes, the result for the public has been to make finding a new home in Edinburgh simpler and more understandable.

www.edinburgh.gov.uk/keytochoice
Further information is available from David Hunter e-Housing Projects Manager at 0131 529 7238 and E-mail david.hunter@edinburgh.gov.uk

Regenerating and Improving Scotland's Communities

SCOTTISH BORDERS COUNCIL

STUDYIT NEW ECDL MODULES

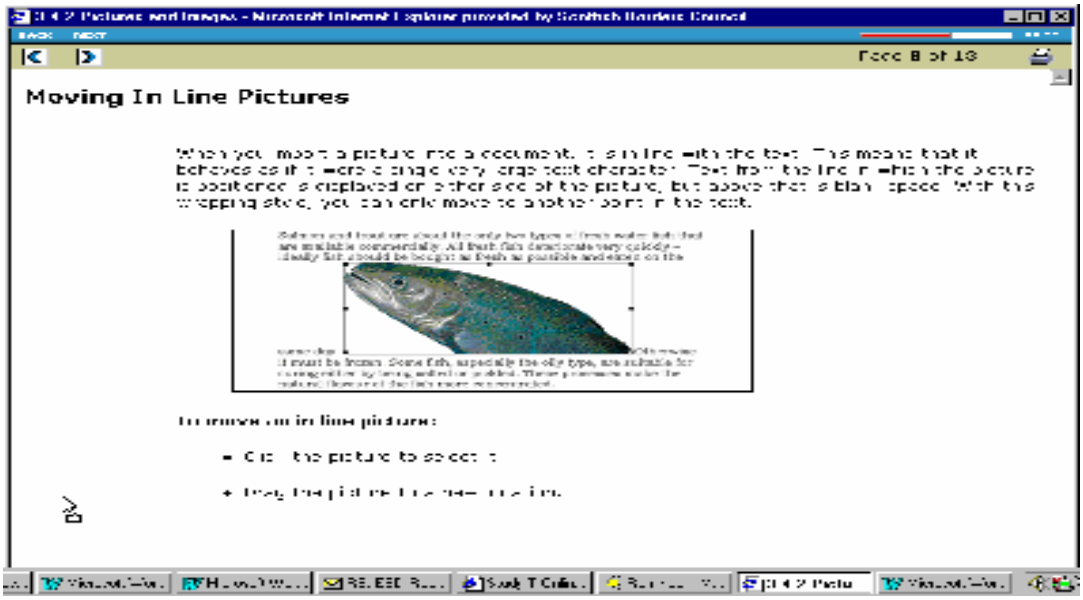
Scottish Borders Council Library & Information Service offer free access to the online ECDL course, and to courses in Customer Care and Information Handling Skills, through the public computers in all local libraries.

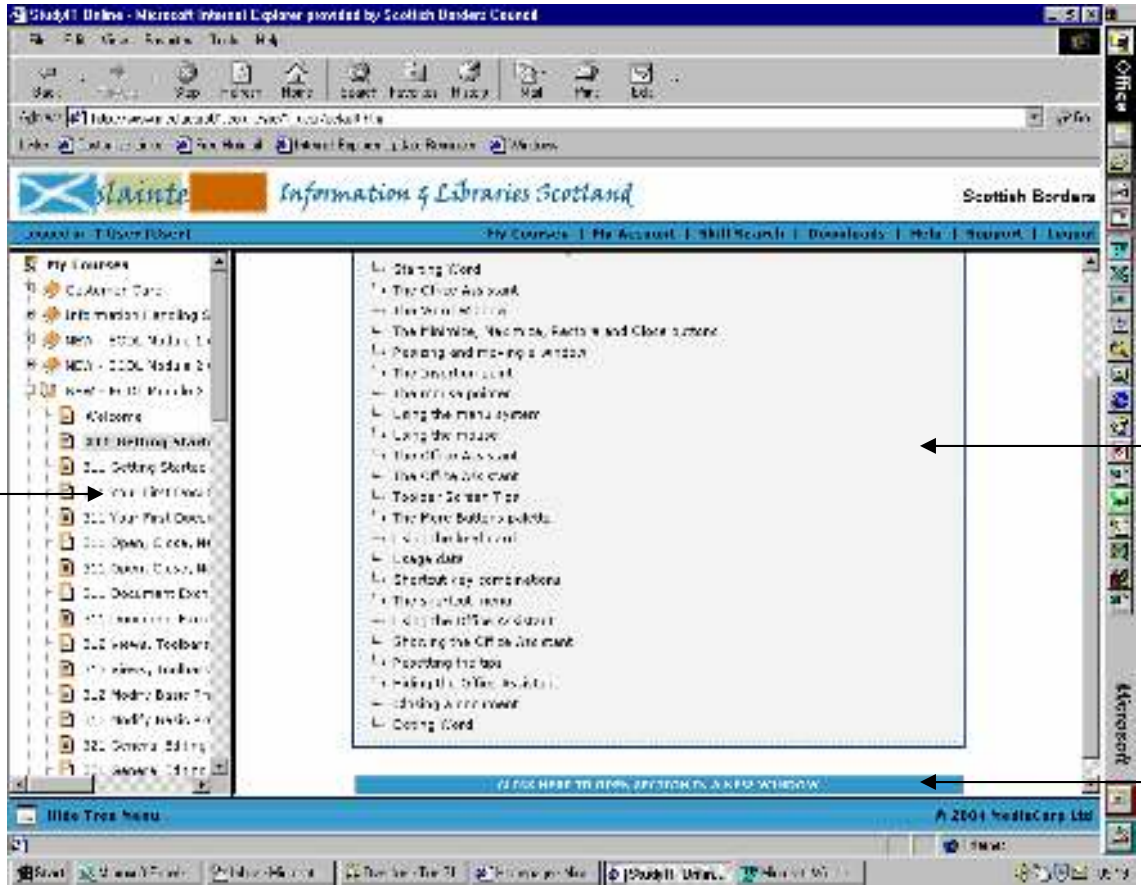
The Study IT package was purchased from Mediacorps and is partially funded by SLIC (Scottish Library & Information Council), using NOF residual funding.

ECDL is and internationally recognised qualification in Information and Communications Technology (ICT) which enables people to demonstrate their competence in computer skills for personal satisfaction and to enhance their career prospects. Many potential employers now ask for this qualification from job applicants.

The library service is delighted to be able to offer the courses free of charge and are sure that many people across the borders will benefit from the scheme.

Currently there are 111 learners registered with more than 50% using it to learn new skills and improve their job prospects. The contract has now been renewed for a further year to enable more people to benefit from this scheme.





To view a section. Click on icon beside the section you want to study

A list of topics covered appear in the right hand section of the screen

Scroll to the bottom of the screen and click the blue bar to start studying this section

Further information available from Monika Wardle, eBusiness Analyst, Scottish Borders Council at 01835 825049 and email mwardle@scotborders.gov.uk

Enhancing Quality of Life and Promoting Scotland

THE MORAY COUNCIL

ELECTRONIC ACCESS TO MORAY'S HERITAGE

A library indexing system called 'Libindx' was created in 1988 to allow access to the Local Heritage Service's index to sources of information about people, places and subjects relating to Moray. Libindx enables researchers to look up specific people, places and subjects relating to Moray and to find, in the one index, sources relating to the relevant topic. Having tracked down these sources the researcher can then visit the local heritage centre or ask for a copy to be forwarded to them.

All indexed references to specific individuals, properties and subjects are included under their own unique reference number. Libindx Sources indexed include local government archives from the 13th century to 1975, local newspapers, gravestone inscriptions, non-established church records to 1855, architectural plans, books and family histories. Regularly updated, the people index contains over 200,000 names and acts as an aid for genealogists tracing their roots in Moray as well as researchers into well-known Moravians such as Ramsay MacDonald or the Wolf of Badenoch.

The places index, as well as listing the plans from major architectural collections including the distillery plans of Charles Chree Doig, provides details of photographs and sources of histories of the many historic buildings in Moray such as Elgin Cathedral and Sueno's Stone. The many diverse subjects indexed include sport, education, archaeology and highway robbery. Many of the items listed are taken from the local newspapers, which date back to 1747.

Previously this indexing information was only available at green screen terminals in the Council's network of libraries. The launch of a web enabled version of Libindx in March 2005 has opened up electronic access to a vast amount of information to researchers on an

unprecedented global scale to anybody interested in tracing their family history of ancestors from the Moray area or those simply keen to find out about the history of the people and places of Moray.

Commenting on this new on-line service, Graeme Wilson, Local Heritage Officer, welcomed it as a significant breakthrough. "Here we have the fruits of the last 30 years work by staff, volunteers and personnel on various government sponsored schemes. Libindx offers unrivalled access to a whole range of sources, making it so much easier for the researcher, at home or abroad, to find key sources on Moray." The Libindx system can be found at libindx.moray.gov.uk.

Further Information available from Alan Kirkwood, Head of ICT Services, The Moray Council at 01343 563210 and email alan.kirkwood@moray.gov.uk

Improving Health and the Environment

FIFE COUNCIL

SPECIAL UPLIFTS

As a consequence of meeting the targets set by the European Landfill Directive, a full review of how we collect, recycle and dispose of our waste was undertaken, resulting in the formation of the Area Waste Plan for Fife. This plan highlighted a number of options, with the aim of providing the best practical environmental option for Fife. The option chosen included the decision to charge for the special uplift of bulky household items.

At this time, the decision was also taken to make the accessing of the special uplifts service much simpler.

This has seen the creation of a single number for all people phoning to request and pay for special uplifts, with all calls answered at the Council's Contact Centre. The Contact Centre's hours are 8am to 8pm, Monday to Friday, which allows a greater range of access for customers than was previously enjoyed.

The number used is also the same as that for recycling, and as such allows for customers to have the widest choice available to them in terms of how they wish to dispose of materials. This raising of awareness allows Fife to take steps to initiate a culture change for its customers that needs to be reflected nationally.

Customers wishing to pay by cash or cheque can do so by visiting one of the Council's Local Offices, spread throughout the Kingdom.

The requesting a special uplift process has been re-engineered and as such most calls / visits last no more than three minutes and provides instant confirmation of when the items can be uplifted.

The information is then transmitted electronically to Environmental Services to allow them to determine the routes to be taken.

Future development of this, should see this function being delivered via self-service functions in addition to all environmental services being delivered via a single number.

Further information available from Gregor Wilson, New Media Team, Customer Relations Management Service, Fife Council at 01592 413260 and email Gregor.Wilson@smtp5.fife.gov.uk

SCOTTISH BORDERS COUNCIL

TECHNICAL SERVICES – CONFIRM ONLINE

Technical Services currently use an asset management and customer service management information system called Confirm, supplied by South Bank Systems. The system is live in both the Grounds Maintenance section and SB Local (pilot rapid response team).

It is the intention of the Department to expand the use of Confirm. This expansion will help to meet Electronic Service Delivery targets through the customer service module that is already Internet enabled. Citizens will be able to log an issue by telephone, mail or online for all Technical Services functions such as reporting road and lighting faults, ordering special uplifts or reporting fly tipping. The system is fully transactional and includes feedback to the citizen. At the back-office, full workflow ensures that all issues are dealt with. There is also a detailed reporting tool available.

The expansion of Confirm within Technical Services is primarily to improve the business in terms of both efficiency and productivity. This will also allow the Department to publish more pertinent information to the Council's website automatically and follows the CRM concept.

It should be noted that further expansion is subject to a current bid to the Capital Group being successful.

Further information is available from Duncan Nisbet, Information Services Manager, Technical Services at (01835) 825126 and email dnisbet@scotborders.gov.uk

Improving Local Authority Services

STIRLING COUNCIL

ON-LINE FAULT REPORTING AT STIRLING COUNCIL

The aim of this project was to prove the concept of a single mechanism allowing the public (and our employees) to report a wide variety of faults online. Over time this mechanism had to have sufficient flexibility to allow it to handle the full range of enquiry types encountered by the Council, with minimal future IT development.
Faults reported online were to be fed automatically into the new workflow system within the Council's Contact Centre and from there directly to the relevant Service back office systems for action. Full workflow tracking and reporting was to be used on any work raised.
The faults selected for the proof of concept were taken from a list of subcategories already used in the Contact Centre because they could be reported anonymously. They were:

Streetscape	Roads
Broken Glass Removal	Blocked Gullies/Drains
Dead Animal Removal	Fallen Trees
Fly Tipping	Flooding
Graffiti Removal	Footway Defects
Leaves Removal	Ironworks
Litter Removal	Potholes
Overflowing Dog Bin	Replacement/damaged road signs & markings
Overflowing Litter Bin	Street Nameplates
	Weed Spraying

The concept has now been proven and the project has been very successful with feedback from the public and employees indicating that online fault reporting has been well received. The facility directly interfaces with the Council's existing contact centre processes, making use of integrated workflows especially developed in-house for the purpose. The system requires no intervention or additional input from the Contact Centre advisers, nor from the relevant Service until the job is sitting on their to do list. The process is seamless for the user.

The processes and system were designed and developed using the Business Process Modelling and Workflow tool provided by the e-Work product from Metastorm. Work is underway to enhance the system by providing additional services on-line and improving the presentation and layout of the screens.

How it works

The citizen can access this facility by clicking on the "Online Services" link on the Stirling Council Internet homepage, and then clicking on the "Click here to…" link on that page.

The page opens with a list of the subcategories listed above. The user selects what they are calling about, selects the area where the fault is, and then gives a description and more accurate location of the fault. If they wish, they can provide their name, address and contact details. Once the job has been submitted, the citizen is given a call reference number and a timeframe when the job should be completed.

Once the Contact Centre workflow system has determined what job has been requested, it then interfaces with the relevant integrated service system. This system, in turn, raises a job on the relevant supervisors to do list, just as if it had been logged via the Contact Centre, allowing the fault to be fixed.

Further information available from Peter Tolland, Business Design Manager, Stirling Council at 01786 443317 and email tollandp@stirling.gov.uk

EAST LOTHIAN COUNCIL

ACCESS EAST LOTHIAN COUNCIL'S INTERACTIVE WEB SITE

East Lothian Council's interactive Web site provides a host of information about the county of East Lothian, the Council, Council services and a whole lot more.

The site features East Lothian's award winning Planning Online facility, where citizens can view planning applications, submit planning applications and make payments. The Planning Online service was awarded top marks in a recent Scottish Executive online planning survey.

The East Lothian Web site allows Council vacancies to be viewed and enables candidates to submit online job applications.

Surfers are able to search the library catalogue for books, CDs, videos, books on tape and other items in the libraries, and library members have the option to view items on loan, make renewals and place reservations, all from the comfort of their own homes, or in the case of at least one library member – from an oil rig.

Council tax bills can be paid online, using the Alliance & Leicester BillPay service.

The Web site also features an easy to use "easyweb" guide to council services in East Lothian. Easyweb has been constructed with the less experienced surfer in mind.

Further information on the East Lothian Council Web site is available from Nadine Gray, Web Manager at 01620 827746 and email ngray@eastlothian.gov.uk.

CLACKMANNANSHIRE COUNCIL

RE-LAUNCH OF CLACKSWEB (www.clacksweb.org.uk)

Clackmannanshire Council's website was re-launched on 16th March 2005 with a new look and a number of enhanced services. Almost every aspect of the website has been improved, with new information, more online services, vastly increased accessibility and a number of useful tool that people will find helpful. Many of the improvements on the new site are as a result of direct feedback from visitors to ClacksWeb.

Some of the key developments include:

- The use of themed site sections, which concentrate on the type of services from a citizen perspective, rather than how the Council is organised.
- The site adheres to web standards, meaning it will work for any visitor using a standards-compliant web browser or other device.
- Accessibility meets and exceeds the provisions of the WCAG Conformance Level "AA", improving access to our information for all users, regardless of their abilities.
- A powerful new search engine, replacing the previously more limited search engine. It indexes all pages on ClacksWeb, as well as files in Adobe Acrobat, Microsoft Word and Rich Text Format;
- The first stage of MyClacksWeb, a more personalised service which provides people with the information they want from ClacksWeb, in the the way you want it.
- Dedicated databases for documents and publications, application forms, events, tenders, properties, and a lot more besides.

And there's more to come ….. more new content and services will be added in the coming months, including:

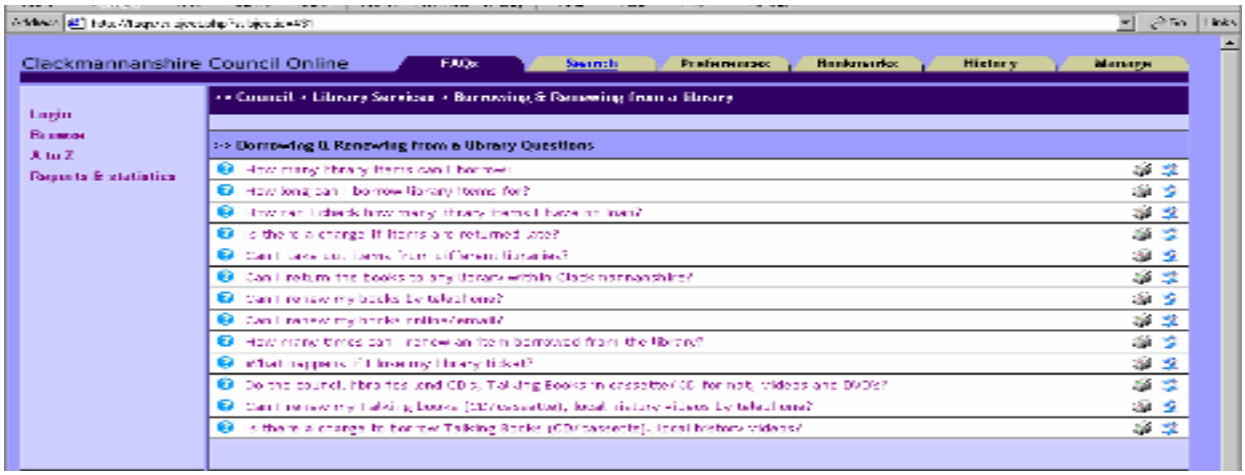
- Many more online forms letting people conduct business with the Council at a time and place that suits then.
- Frequently Asked Questions, providing quick and easy to find answers to enquiries about the services we deliver;
- Online GIS services, providing mapping and extended information in our property database;
- A database of community groups, with details of clubs, societies and other groups in the county.

For further information, contact Daniel Champion, Web Development Manager, Tel: 01259 452258, E-mail: dchampion@clacks.gov.uk.

DEVELOPMENT OF COUNCIL'S KNOWLEDGE BASE/FAQ SYSTEM

Customer contact analysis has shown that a significant proportion of enquiries to local authorities are of a routine nature, such as requests for information, requests for council forms, etc. An extensive web-based system has been developed by Clackmannanshire Council to allow Contact Centre staff and other front line staff to resolve these information-type enquiries at the first time of asking, thereby helping improve customer service and internal efficiency.

Information is categorised in a number of different ways – thematically, by council structure, by life events view and by the Local Government Category List (LGCL). A powerful search engine allows staff to find the correct FAQ very quickly. A version is also to be made available on ClacksWeb soon, making it quicker and easier for members of the public to find answers to their enquiries.



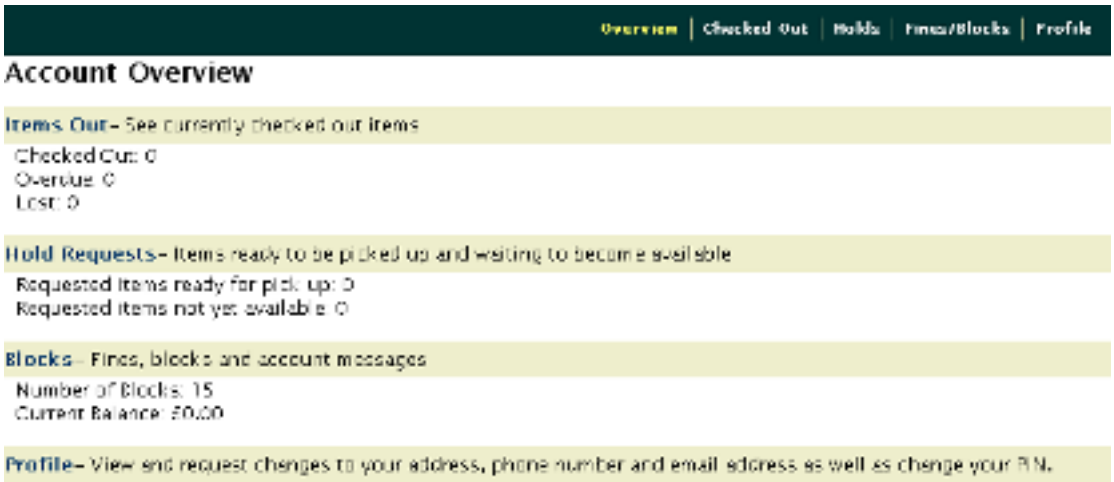
For further information, contact Brian Forbes, Modernising Government & Business Change Manager, Tel: 01259-452187 or bforbes@clacks.gov.uk

EAST DUNBARTONSHIRE COUNCIL

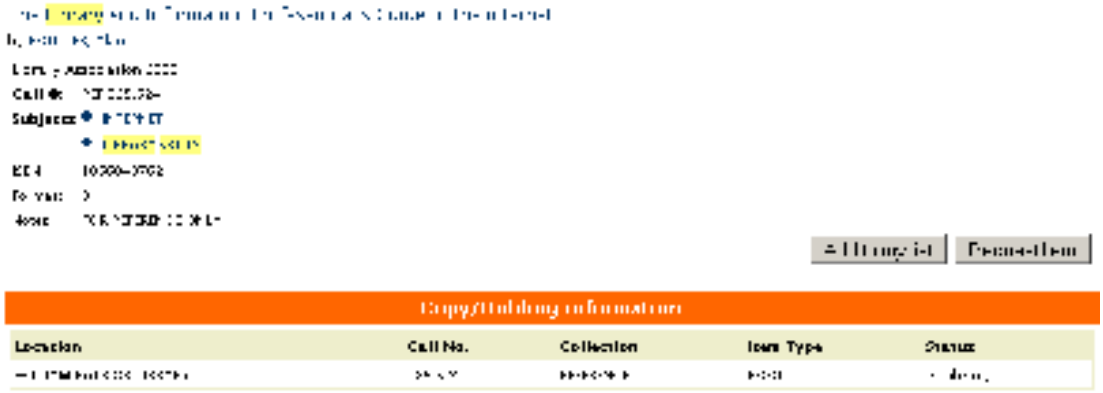
ONLINE LIBRARY FACILITY

East Dunbartonshire has recently introduced an online library catalogue facility. The entire catalogue is now available for browsing, including all books, CDs, DVDs and more. Visitors to the site can now search for an item using basic or more powerful search forms at their own convenience. Lists of new and most popular items are also available for browsing.

Logging into the site is both simple and secure. Patrons enter their library card number and a customisable PIN for access to account information and functionality. After logging in, a patron is able to request and renew items from any of the Council libraries. Account information available online includes items currently on loan, hold requests, fines or blocks on the account as well as personal information.



The site is full of useful information to help visitors plan a visit to one of our libraries. Travel information, opening hours and borrowing details are all available from the site. All features of the online library facility are designed to make the service more accessible and user-friendly.



Further information available from Carol Coia, Business Change Advisor, East Dunbartonshire Council at 0141 574 5637 and email carol.coia@eastdunbarton.gov.uk

EAST RENFREWSHIRE COUNCIL

CUSTOMER COMPLAINTS COMMENTS AND COMPLIMENTS- LET US KNOW

The current Let us Know scheme was agreed 3 September 1997 and reviewed 2004. The scheme is well established and widely publicised across the Council. The scheme set out timescales for replying to complaints and guidance for the reporting to Council of complaints, comments and compliments.

East Renfrewshire Council's Customer Services Section Customer First was given the responsibility for the administration of the corporate complaints scheme during 2001.

It was decided that prior to introducing an electronic corporate complaints etc database a review of existing practices and procedure should be undertaken.

A review of the recording, monitoring and reporting of comments , compliments and complaints arrangements for in the council's 7 departments was undertaken to determine the existing administration procedures. Consultation with Directors, Councillors, Customers and other stakeholders on their requirements of any complaint, comment or compliment information gathered was also undertaken.

Let Us Know and Customer Relationship Management Database (C.R.M)

A project team was formed consisting of members of staff from, Customer services, I.T Section and Chief Executive's Department. The remit was to develop, implement and a corporate complaints etc database.

Oracle CRM was the tool used to facilitate electronic delivery of this service.

What does the system do?

It is a centrally held corporate database, which allows access from all departments.

It processes complaints from the person recording them onto the database to the section who have responsibility for answering the complaint.

It allows the recording of:-

The name and address (including ward) of the complainant

What the complaint was about

When the complaint was made

It allows the recording of complaints that are deemed to be equality issues

The timescales under which the complaint should be answered

When the complaint was answered

What has been done to resolve the issue

Has the complaint being raised by a councillor/MP/MSP on behalf of a constituent.

The main reports presently produced are:-

1. Monthly report to directors detailing complaints for their department
2. Quarterly report to councillors detailing complaints etc for their ward
3. Six monthly reports to chief executives department
4. A quarterly report to the corporate equality manager

Future developments for the system include:

Integration between the online complaints recording form and CRM.

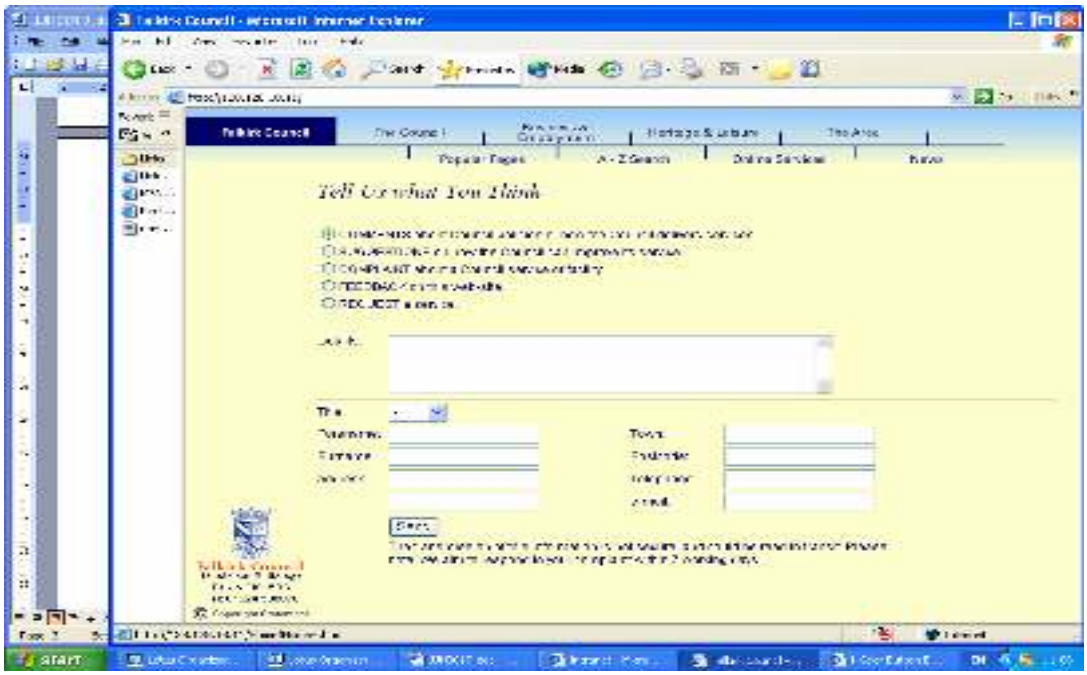
Integration with Microsoft office suite, allowing use of template documents and scanning and storing original hard copy documents into the relevant complaint electronic file.

Escalation manager will allow an automatic notification sent to a Manager/Head of Service/ Director when a complaint is reaching or has passed its set timescale for reply.

Further information is available from Linda Wilson, Customer Services Manager at 0141 577 3406 and email linda.wilson@eastrenfrewshire.gov.uk

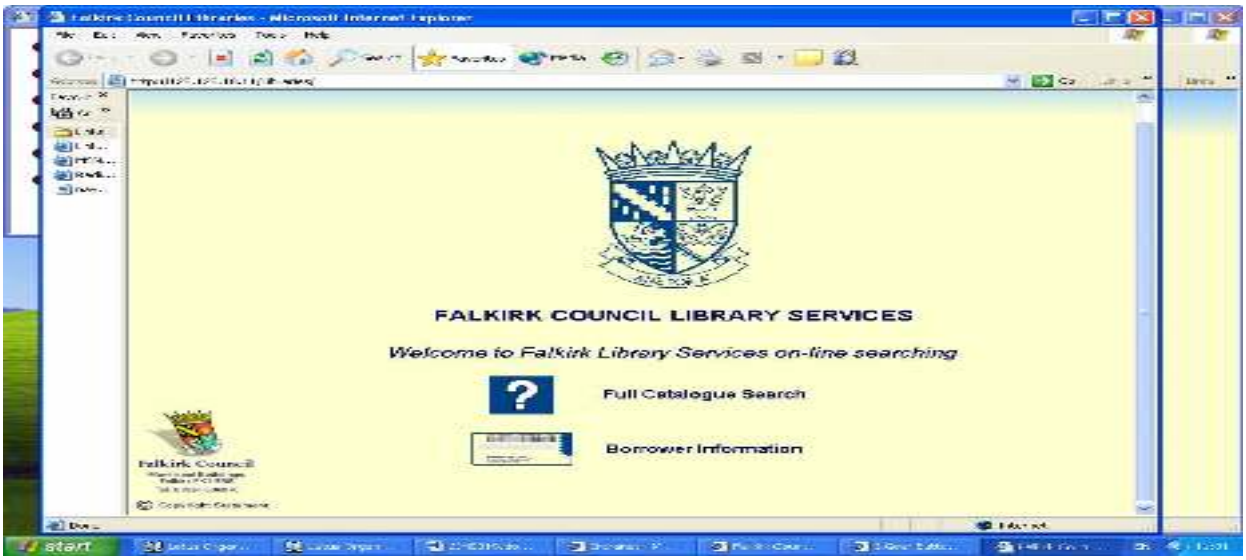
FALKIRK COUNCIL

FALKIRK COUNCIL LIBRARY SERVICES ON-LINE USER COMMENTS



Remote access to the Library Services includes a facility for members to access a comments area and have direct contact with the service. All comments are responded to and immediate action taken where appropriate. Quarterly analysis of these comments serves to highlight areas of good practice and gives insight into areas that may give cause for concern. In the context of promoting quality services by evaluation and continuous improvement, the analysis of these comments is proving to be a very useful tool.

e-services in Falkirk Council Library Services



Since setting up facilities to conduct library transactions on-line the volume of business has increased steadily. Each month sees over 2000 hits on the library catalogue.

33% of library reservations are placed on-line. It is interesting to note that library closed days do not attract any more or less on-line reservations. This would suggest that people

are using the service as a convenience and not purely as an alternative access point when libraries are closed.

Renewals made on-line have risen to 2.3%, but this facility attracts very little business on Sundays.

All on-line services interact directly with the Library management system with little intervention from library staff. The computer deals with reserved items and alerts the library to details and the preferred collection point. The borrower can access their record and track the progress of any reservations placed. The library will phone them when the item is ready for collection.

Further information is available from Irene McIntyre, Library Services Manager, Falkirk Council Victoria Buildings, Queen St. Falkirk FK2 7AF.
Telephone 01324 506804 and email irene.mcintyre@falkirk.gov.uk

FIFE COUNCIL

FIFE DIRECT TO YOU

The Fife Direct to You project focuses on using new technology to improve or create services that provide real human benefits providing in particular job information and in severe weather listings of school, road and other council closures to residents.

Fife Direct to You has created an effective way of enabling Fife Council to be pro-active and provide the information and services direct to individual residents.

The nature of some areas of information demands timely, swift and wide distribution so Fifers can react to it. For example, it is crucial news about school closures reaches parents from as early as 7.30am so they can make alternative arrangements.

Information updates are distributed to six different communication channels automatically and simultaneously. This includes Teletext, TV, internet, radio, telephone, email and frontline offices. Fife residents can now simultaneously access the information through a channel that suits them. Whether they prefer using their TV, phone, radio or PC they get the same information at the same time.

Fifers can request information to be sent directly to them and specify how they want to receive it. For example, parents can now request text messages to their mobile phone or an email if their child's school closes. Similarly job seekers can request email alerts if a new job is announced that matches their requirements.

Both of these pilots have proved popular about 900 registered for tailored job alerts and over 4,700 parents registering for the emergency school closure alerts since its launch in December 2003.

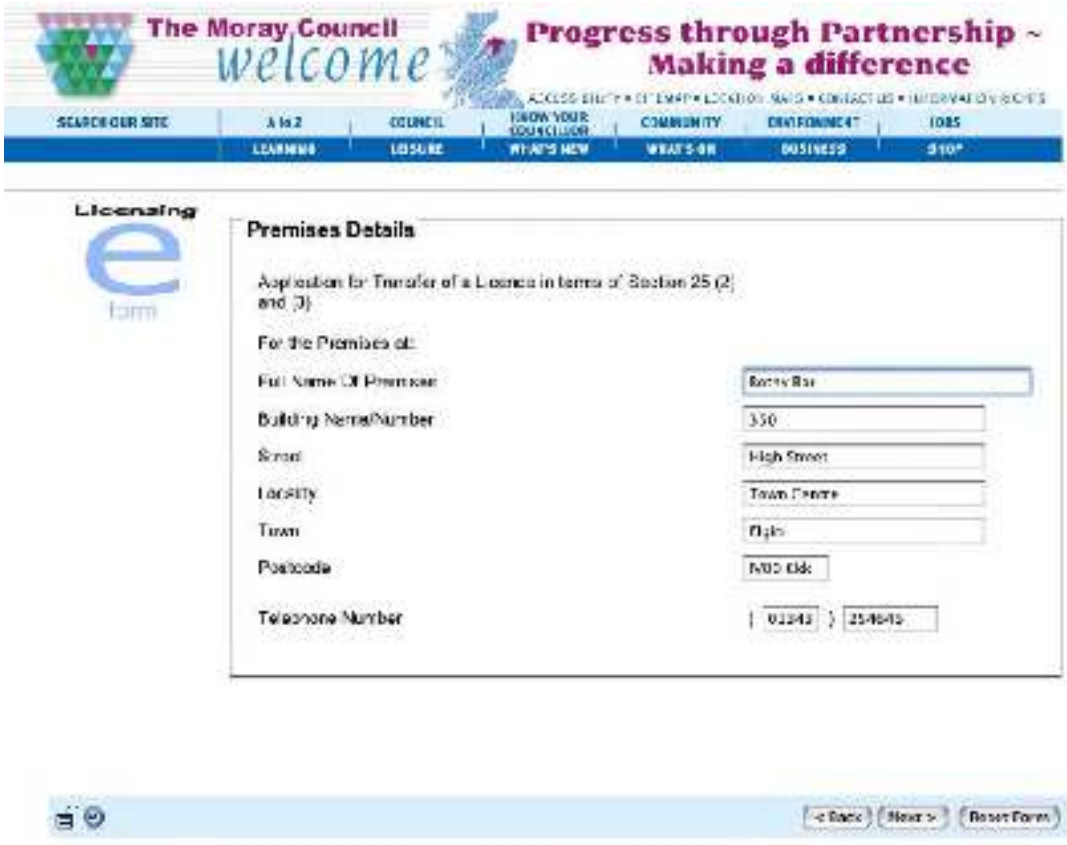
Further information available from Gregor Wilson, New Media Team, Customer Relations Management Service, Fife Council at 01592 413260 and email Gregor.Wilson@smtp5.fife.gov.uk

THE MORAY COUNCIL

ELECTRONIC ON-LINE FORMS: THE KEY TO MODERN SERVICES

The Moray Council recognised early on that an electronic forms system lies at the heart of the modernising government agenda by supporting electronic service delivery and better access to services. It is also at the centre of the Council's MGF funded Easyaccess project which is part of the Scottish Executive's Customer First programme. Finally, it is also pivotal to the Council's response to the Efficient Government initiative by helping to speed up the application process for local government services and automating the data capture from application forms directly into the back-office systems.

The Moray Council, recognising this strategic importance, set about tendering for a best of breed system by identifying 27 suppliers of electronic forms systems. Three suppliers were short-listed following a detailed evaluation exercise and finally in October 2003 Mandoforms was selected as the best value for money solution, which most closely met the requirements of the Council. One of the key decision criteria was the ability of Mandoforms to offer a distributed standalone capability whereby forms can be filled in by field works using laptops or PDAs, then stored and processed locally. Another essential criteria was the ability to part fill in forms, for example, the single shared assessment for social care services, where common forms may be completed over time by more than one person and therefore there is a need for synchronisation with a central master copy.



The Council is now converting all its applications forms, including a number of internal forms, to electronic forms. The first services to go live with the system will be Special Collections, Job Applications and Licencing. All the electronic forms will be made available through the Council's web site either on a self-service basis or on an assisted service basis at the Council's access points. Manadoforms will also be used to build a variety of enquiry screens to enable citizens to query account balances, status of service requests and other real-time information. Finally, development work is under way to integrate Mandoforms with

the Council's CRM system to allow on-forms to be pre-populated with personal details and thereby make the process of requesting services much more user friendly.

Overall the Moray Council has been impressed with the functionality, flexibility and ease of use of Mandoforms and are happy, as a highly satisfied customer to speak to others about it in more detail.

Further Information available from Alan Kirkwood, Head of ICT Services, The Moray Council at 01343 563210 and email alan.kirkwood@moray.gov.uk

WEST LOTHIAN COUNCIL

WEST LOTHIAN CONNECTED

West Lothian Connected is a multi-agency one-stop shop in busy Almondvale Centre in Livingston – which houses JobcentrePlus, council, health and Inland Revenue staff. JobcentrePlus staff now process benefits claims from customers via their Customer Management System. The information that customers provide also ascertains entitlement to free school meals and school clothing grants. Instead of having to submit another claim this information is passed directly to council staff within 'Connected', entered into the council's Enquiry Tracking System and the relevant schools informed. Free school meal access and clothing grant access is much speedier, less bureaucratic and take up is higher. Recently this has been expanded to include Inland Revenue staff. When customers make claims for working families tax credit, their eligibility for free school meals is also ascertained. This is a much more pro-active way of promoting these benefits – and helping low-income families.

Further information available from Linda Cunningham, Community Planning Manager, West Lothian Council at 01506 777143 and email linda.cunningham@westlothian.gov.uk

EAST DUNBARTONSHIRE COUNCIL

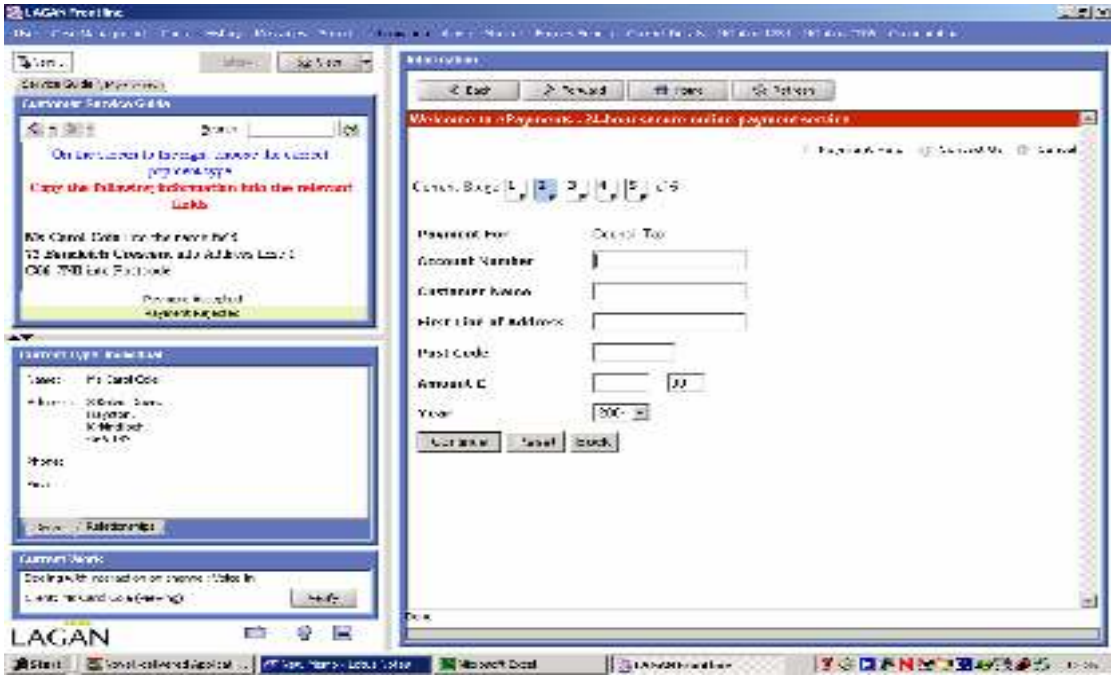
ELECTRONIC PAYMENTS

In response to the major challenges being faced by the public sector to increase customer focus, improve efficiency and make more effective use of resources, East Dunbartonshire Council has identified payment collection as an opportunity for achieving these aims.

The Council recognised that it needed to offer customers a choice in how and when they paid for services and have therefore implemented an epayments solution. East Dunbartonshire's customers can now choose to pay for a range of services using a variety of payment methods i.e. online through the Council's secure website, by telephone through the Customer Contact Centre or through our automated Telephone Touch Tone service (24/7).

The Touch Tone service allows customers to enter their payment details by using the keys on their telephone. Full account, card validation and APACS authorisation is utilised during the payment process and customers are provided with a payments reference number following a successful transaction. The process is clear and simple to use.

Customers who prefer to speak to an operator can make a payment by telephoning the Council's new Contact Centre. The telephone payments solution is integrated with the Council's CRM system and is a highly adaptable module of the Internet payment solution, which allows card payments to be secured from any PC on the Council's Wide Area Network.



Further information available from Carol Coia, Business Change Advisor, East Dunbartonshire Council at 0141 574 5637 and email carol.coia@eastdunbarton.gov.uk

EAST LOTHIAN COUNCIL

EAST LOTHIAN'S SMART APPROACH

Access East Lothian is the local smartcard introduced by East Lothian Council for people using council services. Smartcards were launched in all East Lothian secondary schools in the first half of 2004. Pupils were soon able to benefit by using them to borrow books, CDs and other materials from both school libraries and the range of branch libraries throughout the county. The smartcards also gave the students access to Young Scot benefits such as discounts from more than 1,800 shops and services across Scotland.

Dunbar Grammar became the first of East Lothian's six secondary schools to offer 'cashless catering' towards the end of 2004. Smartcard holders can use their cards to purchase food and drinks from the school canteen or vending machines.

The use of the cards has greatly reduced the queues at lunchtime and improved the speed of transactions. The cards can be credited by parents depositing money into individual accounts at the school, so pupils no longer require to carry cash for school meals. The stigma of free school meals has also been removed as the details of each cardholder's account remains confidential.

Greater health promotion initiatives can be introduced using the smartcards, with cardholders targeted for special promotions. Choosing healthier meal options would entitle cardholders to bonus points that can be accrued for a range of benefits including sports activities. Work is currently proceeding to roll-out Cashless Catering at the other five secondary schools in 2005. Members of the 12 branch libraries in East Lothian were encouraged to apply for an Access East Lothian smartcard. The cards provide holders with membership of the library service throughout the county and are the first stage of a proposed multi-application smartcard.

Information about the new smartcards was detailed in articles in the local press and in the Council newspaper and website. Each library distributed promotional material to raise awareness and individuals were encouraged to complete a questionnaire, which provided invaluable information on people's views about smartcards and their range of possible benefits.

Work is about to commence on adding more leisure services/benefits to the card including membership of Council sports centres. Where appropriate, it is also proposed to add details of concessionary travel entitlement, reducing the number of cards individuals need to carry to access services in East Lothian. Future applications include the ability to use the card to pay rent, council tax and non-domestic rates bills.

Access to the East Lothian Library Catalogue from the comfort of their own home has proved to be the 'purrfect solution' for many local residents. Launched as a branded website www.libcat.eastlothian.gov.uk using an image of a library cat toying with a computer mouse, this new application has caught the imagination of library members.

Individuals can open a free account at their local library which provides each member with a unique membership number that allows them to check items they may currently have on loan, which they can renew on-line from PC's at home or from a workplace. They can also search the full library catalogue and reserve items, which can be collected at a later date from a convenient branch.

Local publicity was generated and included photo-calls for the press at some libraries. Marketing material including the library cat branded posters and bookmarks. These

bookmarks have proved so popular that a further print run of an additional 6,000 was ordered less than a month after the launch.

Further information available from Gordon Stephen Modernising Government Programme Manager East Lothian Council at 01620 827153 and email gstephen@eastlothian.gov.uk

Innovative Partnership Working

EAST AYRSHIRE COUNCIL

COMMUNITY HEALTH IMPROVEMENT PARTNERSHIP

East Ayrshire Council is constantly striving to provide better services to its customers, to deliver targeted information to users of mobile phones, and to keep staff in touch and extend the boundaries of communication on the move.

East Ayrshire Council is using Vodafone Mobile Connect GPRS data cards to extend access to council services in remote communities via the Mobile Library service, and to promote healthier living initiatives by providing public internet access to health education sites via the council's CHiP (Community Health Improvement Partnership) van. Staff who spend time out of the office can also keep in touch with the council's support networks and email wherever they are. The data cards provide internet access to community support workers who often work in remote areas, and bring the benefits of council services closer to the people who need them. East Ayrshire Council is also piloting the advantages that Vodafone Big Mobile brings, by improving communication with its customers by supplying up-to-date details of the council's various activities via SMS.

Benefits:
● Vodafone Big Mobile allows East Ayrshire Council to target information directly at its customers, via SMS a fast and easy way to make contact

● By widening the scope of communication, the council will attract a more effective response to leisure activities and community initiatives

● Vodafone Mobile Connect GPRS data cards keep council staff and elected members in touch at all times, bringing productivity gains and efficiency improvements

● Community help vehicles equipped with laptops and data cards bring the power of the Internet closer to people

Further information available from Graham Stewart, IT Business Manager East Ayrshire Council grahamstewart@east-ayrshire.gov.uk

THE CITY OF EDINBURGH COUNCIL

THE BENEFITS OF STORING INFORMATION ELECTRONICALLY

Over the last three years, with the purpose of modernising their services, the City of Edinburgh Council's Planning and Building Standards (PBS) units have been undergoing some significant changes as part of our Smart City vision.

Being the busiest planning service in Scotland, handling over 4,500 applications a year, a situation replicated in our building standards service, PBS identified a need to make their information and services more accessible to both staff and the public, bringing about increased efficiency, more office space and more time to focus on improving their services further.

We worked with our strategic IT partner, BT, to develop a new database to store information that was previously held in lots of different places. Paper records were scanned and put onto this new system, thus making information quicker and easier to access and freeing up valuable office space.

BT also assisted us in developing and launching a web portal that allows members of the public and property professionals to view details of all planning and building warrant applications in the last 15 years and include their comments on current planning applications. Applicants can submit and pay for their planning applications and building warrants on this portal. People can view details of all applications online, at a time that is convenient for them, when previously they would have had to visit a Council office during office hours.

The portal also offers a facility for solicitors to obtain property enquiry certificates, the property's 'credentials'. Solicitors use these to inform housebuyers if their future home is in a conservation area, is a listed building or has any outstanding statutory repairs. An area search is also available for professionals and public to see planning applications for the last six years showing approved or refused developments, by collating all planning applications into one easy-to-read document.

The success of these changes makes the PBS units a potential source of revenue as well as revolutionising the way staff work, allowing them to concentrate on their professional function rather than paperwork. Property professionals and the public benefit from a more efficient, modernised service.

www.edinburgh.gov.uk/planning

Further information is available from Liz Brougham, e-Government Division 0131 529 3513 and E-mail elizabeth.brougham@edinburgh.gov.uk

Feedback, Contacts and Useful Links

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Useful Links

Open Scotland
http://www.scotland.gov.uk/topics/?pageid=459

e-Government Unit
http://www.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/e-government/

UK Online
http://www.ukonline.gov.uk/Home/Homepage/fs/en

UkauthorITy.com
http://www.ukauthority.com

Convention of Scottish Local Authorities (COSLA)
http://www.cosla.gov.uk

Society of local authority chief executives and senior managers (Solace)
http://www.solace.org.uk

Society of Information Technology Management (Socitm)
http://www.socitm.gov.uk

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