



Ryedale District Council – Council Web Sites

Which Council Aim does this case study deliver?

To transform the Council

The ICT Programme integrates with the Council’s priority services and outcomes in the following terms:

To have a high quality, clean and sustainable environment – by assisting in CO2 reductions by reducing the need for citizens to physically visit Council premises to obtain information or transact with the council. It also promotes the local environment and offers advice on helping to maintain its sustainability.

To transform the Council. - the web site facilitates new ways of working, including shared services, smarter working and process and service improvement by enabling them to be provided online by the council or its partners. Web sites can help the Council to link the citizen to it and its partners directly and efficiently around the clock and at times convenient to the user.

Background

The Council has had an intranet since 1998 and a public web site since 1999. The current web site and intranet went live in December 2005. The Council sites have a Web & Content Manager responsible for their development and maintenance, whilst day-to-day activity is devolved to service unit web editors who are trained to develop pages and keep them up-to-date.

What was done?

Being a compact Council finding time and resources to provide a developing web presence had always been problematic. However in 2004, as the Council moved towards finding ways to meet the national e-government targets, councillors agreed to a new post being established with responsibility for the web site, intranet and other Council web presences. This post was titled the Web & Content Manager and reports to the ICT Manager, who had previously been responsible for the work.

Who was involved and how?

Members, through the ICT Working Group, assisted in choosing the software and supplier used. Officers are continuously involved through the Web Editors Group, which meets occasionally, but largely via email, along with ongoing training sessions, including external web site accessibility trainers.

What was achieved?

From first appearing in the Society for Information Technology Management (Socitm) “top ten”, when the scheme first started in 2000, the Council has maintained a steady place, staying in the top quartile of web sites every year, whilst providing examples of good practice.

Who benefited and how do we know?

Visitors to the site have slowly increased as citizens and others have become accustomed to using the Internet to find information and carry out transactions to more than 150, 000 visitors during 2009. The usage of Council web sites has been constantly recorded and records maintained. Feedback is encouraged and a standard form was created for this purpose. To further this purpose the Council was an early adopter of a system from Socitm that presented web site users with a questionnaire, however, after

further investigation of the market an alternative solution that also fed back from telephone and face-to-face visitors is being moved to, since it is more flexible and cost-effective. The system also provides a solution for “avoidable contact” and will assist all Council services to improve their processes, at the same time. The use of the system across all channels avoids a focus upon electronic ones to the possible cost of traditionally delivered ones.

Resources and value for money

The current web site was procured following a lengthy public tender. However, there are and have been ongoing discussions with neighbouring authorities and software houses to attempt to achieve a shared service on content management system, hosting or other area of the web site.

The Web & Content Manager also provides development and support for a number of smaller Council web sites using open source software, along with offering a design and build service to parish councils for free.

Next Steps / Further Action

The investigations around shared services for web site provision continue, as the probable cost of maintaining and developing them using commercial applications grows.

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Background documents/Links:

Press report
Surveys