A digital city prepared for change

Bristol City Council's new platform delivers major benefits today and paves the way for future innovation.

Summary

Bristol is the UK's 8th largest city. Years of budget cuts drove the council to design a new approach to service delivery. Using a user-centric approach, Bristol City Council have successfully launched a digital platform that delivers end-to-end transactions, optimises existing and legacy systems, and future proofs its ongoing strategy.

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In Brief

INDUSTRY:
Government

COUNTRY/REGION:
United Kingdom

USE CASE:
Content Management Solution, Customer Portal, Mobile, Public Website

KEY FEATURES:
Integration Framework, Liferay Web Experience Management, Modularity, High Availability and Scalability, Modern UI, Responsive Design

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> **We've laid a solid foundation stone and we can use it to deliver more services in a far better and more efficient way for our citizens.**
>
> Tracy Dodds, Digital Services Manager, Bristol City Council

Challenges

- Ongoing financial pressure driving council to make more services digital

- Population is increasingly mobile-first with rising expectations of digital services

- Lack of engagement with citizens throughout service delivery processes

Results

☆ **LEADING THE LOCAL AUTHORITY DIGITAL SERVICES DELIVERY IN THE UK**

Meeting the needs of both the organisation and the community it serves, Bristol City Council is able to support the end-to-end customer journey of their local citizens. Bristol's new digital service platform is at the heart of the digital transformation process and the cutting edge of digital services in Britain today. Ultimately Bristol City Council has a clear vision and strategy on how best to meet the changing needs of the growing demands for high quality service provision and a reducing cost base.

Liferay

Doing more with less

With a population of approximately 500,000, Bristol is the largest city in the south of England after London. Like all local authorities, Bristol City Council is under increasing financial pressure. The need to optimise spending has never been greater, nor the opportunity to innovate and do more with less.

Bristol have seized this opportunity to create a brand new solution for their citizens and businesses. Liferay is the foundation for more than just a new website - it is a framework that houses end-to-end transactions such as residents' parking passes or older persons' bus passes. It empowers citizens to access services 24/7 through their preferred channel, whenever and wherever they choose. The user experience is fast and intuitive, meaning access to services has never been easier or more efficient.
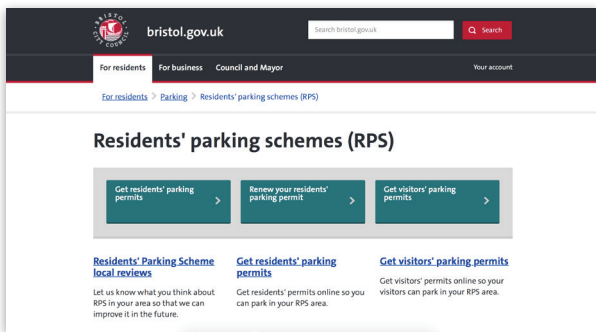
The entire customer journey, end-to-end, has been reengineered to be tracked and analysed. The aim is for the user and council staff to have a single view of the process and easily see what is required to complete the journey successfully. Liferay is equipped to handle the level of transactions required and does so securely and efficiently. User interactions can originate from anywhere, so the service was designed with the mobile user in mind. Responsive design was implemented, and the user experiences a consistent journey even when multiple devices are incorporated within a single transaction.

Real agility yields real results

Liferay was selected for its open standards design, open source flexibility and enterprise level support. It provides the framework into which all new digital services are plugged. This service oriented approach allows the council to optimise existing and legacy systems, safeguarding past investment, whilst future proofing its ongoing strategy through an open framework ready for new technologies as they come along.

Speed of development and delivery improved enormously. Bristol City Council successfully launched an alpha site within just seven weeks from starting the build. After fourteen weeks the public beta site was delivered and received very positive feedback. Liferay's features, such as responsive design and native mobile capability, allow services to be built once, but effectively used in any environment.

Finally, cost savings have been a major benefit. The freedom and interoperability of an open platform like Liferay not only optimises any existing IT investment (technology agnostic), but also substantially reduces the cost that is intrinsic in traditional manual processes and service provision.

Engaging citizens like never before

The technology selection process started with the user. Bristol City Council actively obtained user feedback and user needs. Citizens wanted a clear, crisp website that was easy to navigate. The council also heavily invested in user testing early on to ensure the right solutions were selected according to user needs.

The majority of Bristol's population is online and citizens today expect intuitive and consistent digital experiences, whether from the public or private sector. Bristol City Council has a clear vision and strategy on how best to tackle the growing demands for high quality service provision and a reducing cost base. Flexible and feature rich, Liferay helps meet the needs of Bristol's diverse population as well as those of the council and its staff.

Bristol City Council experienced record high levels of engagement with the public as the new platform was rolled out. As the council continues to engage with citizens and respond to their changing needs, Liferay offers great potential for future development. It now serves as the foundation of a new website and suite of services, and in future will facilitate citizen collaboration online, issue tracking and more.