

White paper

Transformation for local authority waste management services

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The challenges and opportunities of waste management:

The challenges posed by the need to run efficient and effective waste management services for a local authority are numerous and significant. Think for a moment what is involved...

The regular and efficient collection of many thousands of large containers, full of waste products.

The need to support increased demands for recycling and sustainable waste disposal (this is sometimes the responsibility of a single unitary authority or requires the collaboration between the district / borough authority and its shire level partner for disposal).

To carry out these services the responsible authority will need expensive waste vehicles staffed by a crew with all the requisite resources, facilities and processes to safely operate and maintain the vehicle fleet.

Beyond the practical, operational realities of running a waste collection service there is the full range of customer-side considerations and expectations to contend with.

Experience of councils, backed up by their own consultation data, shows that local authority customers feel very strongly about their domestic waste collection services and are quick to let the council know if the service is not performing as expected. Also, customers today expect to be able to interact with their waste service provider through the channel of their choice, and increasingly this is a digital channel.

Beyond regular domestic collections of non-recyclable and recyclable waste, there are a range of other services that councils offer including such services as:

- Clinical waste and sharps collections
- Green garden waste collections
- Bulky item removal
- Trade waste collections

Increasingly services such as garden waste and bulky item removal are being run as revenue neutral services, meaning that the council is charging customers in order to use these services. Commercial services such as trade waste have traditionally been paid services and with this comes the challenges of debtor management bound into the service delivery.

In summary, local waste management services are complex, resource intensive and high profile. Whilst these characteristics present very real operational challenges they also mean that there are significant opportunities for improving efficiency and realising savings. What follows is an exploration these challenges and opportunities alongside examples of how different councils are responding to them.



Overview of our work with UK local authorities

Abavus works with many UK local authorities, enabling them to achieve wide-ranging transformation of service delivery across the full range of council service functions. In recent years we have invested significantly in the development of the My Council Services digital platform to support waste collection.

In this white paper we examine how the My Council Services platform supports the following areas of waste management:

- Customer self-service – how councils can most efficiently manage effective customer interactions around the access to and deployment of waste services
- Waste management – enabling mandated domestic waste collections, chargeable domestic waste collections and chargeable trade waste
- Route / round planning and management – how councils can harness technology to support improved efficiency when executing waste activities across their district, borough or unitary areas
- Mobile working – how councils can move every part of their waste processes to a digital format, right through to the point of collection

Waste and customer self-service

The My Council Services platform incorporates a dedicated and fully integrated waste management module, enabling end-to-end digital processes for any waste activity. Many waste-related processes begin with a customer asking a question, raising a concern or wanting to subscribe and pay for an additional service.

The more closely integrated your council can make the customer self-service element of its technology provision with the core waste and round data, then the lower the cost of service request processing is going to be, the shorter the time to resolution will be and the better the customer service experience is likely to be.

Here are some practical examples of how My Council Services enables integrated waste management processes.

Know My Bin Day

One of the highest volume enquiries to council websites is people wanting to know when their next bin collection will be. The My Council Services Know My Bin Day module is the cornerstone of our waste solution. It enables a customer to quickly look up their own or another property's waste collection information via a browser or native mobile application interface. By entering a postcode or other address detail the platform guides the customer through to an address match using the National Land and Property Gazetteer data. This allows a match to a UPRN (Unique Property Reference Number) which in turn is spatially matched to the relevant round data. The customer has the option of seeing just the next upcoming collections and / or the full waste collection calendar with exception days.



Many of our local authority clients make use of this integrated waste service collection look up, from Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council in the Welsh valleys across to Swale Borough Council in the heart of Kent, saving their customers' time, ensuring the delivery of accurate round collection information and enabling the efficient use of council resources.

Missed bin reporting

Another of the most common reasons customers get in touch is to report missed bin collections, whether permissible or not. The question of permissibility is an important one. Councils often find that many reports of a missed bin are not quite what they first seem. Customers sometimes report too early (for example calling at ten past nine on the morning of collection day) or perhaps reporting a missed collection when in fact their bin had not been presented in good time for the collection. Equally important is to enable customers to report a missed collection when that is genuinely what has happened.

The integrated waste module includes the ability to create a dynamic eform that makes use of a Missed Bin plugin. The plugin connects the form with the

round data and allows for the creation of rules and criteria that manage the way that missed bin reporting is enabled for a customer. For example, rules could be created that state any of the following:

- **Bins can only be reported as missed for collection after a specified time on the day of collection**
- **Bins can only be reported as missed for 48 hours following the collection day**
- **Bins already flagged (by the crew) as contaminated or some other status are not permissible for reporting as missed**

Live round collection data can be used to inform these rules. If the council is using the My Council Services in-cab technology and the crew are creating live round information (by flagging collections as contaminated or not present or marking

collections as completed as they go) then this live data can be fed back to the round collection data used to trigger rule conditions.

Once a missed bin report has been qualified as allowed then a missed bin service request (SR) is automatically created. This SR can then drop into the automated workflow, allowing it to be assigned to a vehicle or a crew, related tasks to be created and automatic notification to be sent back to the customer and other contributors to the process.

Whilst this approach will never eradicate non-compliant missed collection reports in their entirety, it does go a long way towards minimising their occurrence and provides a valuable self-service point of resolution for genuine missed bin reports.

Missed Bin

Report a missed collection

Waste collection

Enter address 78 Grove Hill, London, E18 2HZ, UK [Continue](#)

service request

Override	Select	Service	Date	Status	Message
-	-	Garden collection 120L	30-Sep	Open	<DIV style="color:red">Reported as Missed already! </div>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Garden collection 120L	30-Sep	Open	You are only allowed to report a missed collection up to 3 days after collection date

Only collections that meet the configured criteria can be selected for missed collection reporting

Automated, condition based rules that reference round collection data to govern missed bin reporting

The conditions and rules that are used to proactively manage missed bin reporting can be created and configured in the back office of the My Council Services platform. Configuration does not require specialist technical skills and there is no coding involved. The Waste Module provides an intuitive graphical user interface that can be used by a trained user, as shown below.

Missed collection

Cannot report before 01:00 PM

☒ And status type is open

Message
The collection team is still out, please report this issue after 1pm

Allow reporting upto days 3

Inclusive of ☐ Exception Days ☒ Saturdays ☐ Sundays

Message
You can not report a missed collection after 3 days

Allow customer to report as missed in following statuses and sub status

Allow status and sub status message
You are allowed to report this as a missed collection

Not allow status and sub status message
This is not available to be reported as a missed collection

The back office of the Waste Module allows for configuration of comprehensive rule and criteria that govern the permissibility of a collection to be reported as missed

We have many councils using this functionality, including Newport City Council, Caerphilly County Borough Council and Swale Borough Council.

Booking and paying for ad hoc waste services

This plugin enables varied booking processes relating to waste services delivery. To date, it has been most commonly used to enable bulky item uplift services, where a customer needs assistance through the removal of large items (such as furniture or other bulky items that are no longer required).

Some councils offer this service free of charge, but many now run it as a revenue neutral service and so levy a small charge. Some councils charge per item, according to the item's size and bulk, whilst others charge a flat fee for a certain number of items. There's also a lot of variation in terms of what kinds of items are and aren't eligible for collection in this way. The potential number of different process options and charging models is high.

With that in mind, the Waste Booking plugin enables councils to configure exactly how their process should work and to create the required number of booking slots per day (or other collection arrangements) with the corresponding charging structure. It also integrates with the council's preferred payment gateway provider to enable the collection of online payments. Once the booking has been made and the requisite charges paid, then the resultant SR can then drop into the configured downstream workflow. The entire process can be automated and made digital if required, saving the council time and money whilst offering an improved user experience.

Make a bulky waste booking

Address 78 Grove Hill, London, E18 2HZ, UK

Date 10-JUN-2019

Go

Payment information
Amount : £ 0.00
Tax : £ 0.00
Final amount : £ 0.00

Availability

Select	Facility	Title
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Special collection	Special collection

Items

Select	Group	Title	Weighting
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Furniture	Sofa	

Start time 09:30 End time 16:30 Details View

Remove item Copy above item Add item

Provide any further instructions

Fully configurable waste booking. Enabling the full range of ad hoc collection and charging processes

Signing up and paying for contracted waste services

Virtually every local authority in the UK offers a range of contracted waste services. Typical examples are services such as green garden waste collection and trade waste collection. Amongst the My Council Services user community there are many local authorities using combinations of the modules we offer to simplify, improve and digitally deploy contracted waste services.

One of the defining characteristics of a contracted waste service is the financial and legal, mutually binding obligations that the council and its customers enter into. The My Council Services platform includes a dedicated Contracts, License and Permits Module to support the creation, management and renewal of these mutual contractual arrangements.

This allows a council to configure templates for each type of contracted waste service e.g. green garden waste, trade waste, non-hazardous waste etc. This eases the complexity of the process

management and renewal because it enshrines all relevant terms and conditions, such as term and termination, service definitions, novation options and any grace or transfer periods that may form part of the arrangement.

Customer payment is enabled via integration with the selected payment gateway provider. For contracts that may run for multiple contract terms, we offer direct debit payment options with the contract template being set to auto renew at the next anniversary.

Contracts

Options Action

Edit	Number	Period	Template	Start	End	Parties
	10975	Initial	Trade - Non Hazardous	22-MAR-2019	21-MAR-2020	
	10974	Initial	Trade - Non Hazardous	22-MAR-2019	21-MAR-2020	

View

Policy

Terms

History

Add

Owner

Party

Item

Task

Note

Action

Renew

Change status

Novate

Service request

Num... 164853

Form Trade waste registration

Show All Owner Parties Item Tasks Service level agreement Service request Payments Notes

Owner

No owner found

Parties

Type	Parties	Role
Customer	Mr. Trade Waste1 (tradewaste1@abavus.co.uk)	Admin
Location	Caton & Partners Ltd, Essex House 7-8, The Shrubberies, George Lane, London, E18 1BD, UK	Admin

Item

Edit	Period	Product	Price	Quantity	Total	Start	End
	Initial	Trade Waste 1100L Container	£240.00	1 1100L Container	£240.00	22-MAR-2019	21-MAR-2020

The Contracts & Permit Module provides a Business Console interface that supports the complete range of management options for active contracts. This includes contract updates, status management and the ability to renew and / or novate a contract.

The configuration screens of the Contracts and Permits Module enable a non-technical person to design and build contract templates from scratch. Here we're focusing on waste processes but of course this functionality can also be applied to any other contractual, license or permit-based process that the council offers.

Contract

Status

Define and manage contract status.

Transitions

Define and manage contract status transition

Type

Define and manage contract type.

Access

Define and manage contract owner role type.

Reason

Manage contract termination reason, cancel reason and novate reason.

Policy template

Add or edit contract policy template.

Templates

Create/edit contract template.

Contract & Permit templates can be configured from scratch to suit any contractual process requirement

Supporting daily waste operations

So far we've focused on the customer-facing elements of waste management service but behind the scenes there are complex and wide-ranging back office processes that My Council Services can also support. This includes (although is by no means limited to) examples such as:

- The despatch of a suitable crewed vehicle to collect a verified and permissible missed bin SR.
- The addition of a single uplift task to a particular route on a specific day in order to complete the removal of a bulky waste item.
- The addition of a contracted collection schedule to an existing round and the prior delivery of a suitable waste receptacle, for example for domestic green garden waste.
- The addition of a contracted collection schedule to an existing trade waste collection round and the creation of a task to conduct a site inspection to assess suitability of location for accommodation of a high-volume trade waste receptacle.

The My Council Services platform enables the configuration and triggering of a full range of back office actions and downstream workflows. These can be set up as fully automated

and preconfigured workflows. Alternatively, appropriate actions can be manually triggered by a member of back office staff or a remote worker using the My Council Services graphical user interface. The principal idea is to create automated workflows wherever it makes sense to do so and to allow human intervention and discretion to override this whenever preferable.

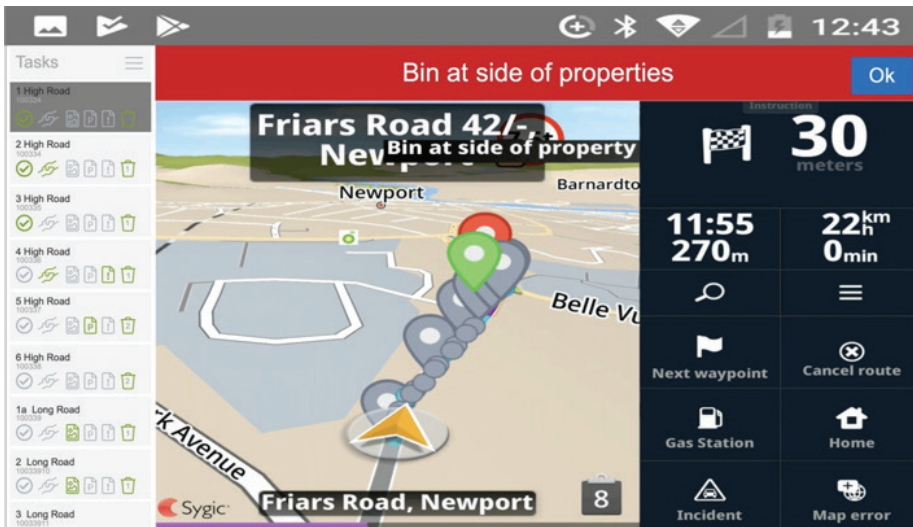
Our rapidly growing community of local authority clients have a varied set of operating models in place. Some councils run all their waste services in house, using their own staff, vehicles and all associated technology support. Others have a contracted waste provider (such as Veolia, Kier or Biffa) and so daily operations are managed by the contracted third party whilst customer contact is through the council's own customer service channels. A third option is a hybrid of the above, whereby some services are outsourced whilst others are retained in house. My Council Services can be adapted to suit any of the models described here.

An end-to-end integrated approach for waste services – complete digital solutions on a single integrated platform

Many of our customers use the My Council Services platform to deliver their entire waste services portfolio, from point of customer contact right through to in-cab handheld technology. For example, Newport City Council has successfully rolled out a wide range of customer-facing self-service processes for waste, including intelligent missed bin reporting, know my bin day look up and book and pay for bulky item collection, all as part of an ongoing digital transformation project. Each of these customer-facing processes is tightly integrated with round collection data that is also securely stored and maintained on the My Council Services platform. The platform then extends into each of the back office processes, covering all aspects of service request and case management. The final element that enables fully digital waste processes is mobile, remote working augmented with route planning and round optimisation.

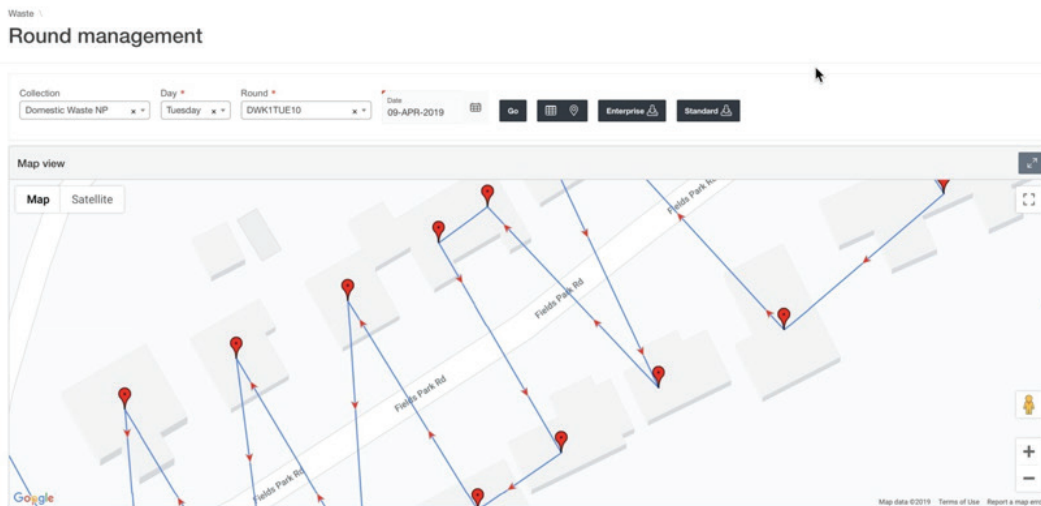
My Council Services Mobile Working capability has enabled many councils to push the transformation agenda deep into their processes, helping realise significant saving and deliver measurable efficiencies. The following capabilities are enabled by My Council Services Mobile Worker:

- The ability to assign tasks directly to teams and individuals, using spatial information to automate workflow direct to teams and individuals
- Role-based access control ensures that staff only receive and have visibility of work and the associated data that is directly relevant to them and their role
- Allow supervisors to manage, in real time, the constant flow of ad hoc work allocation whilst in the field, including workforce monitoring and lone worker capability and risk assessment
- Route and round planning and optimisation to ensure efficient execution of assigned tasks and round collection schedules

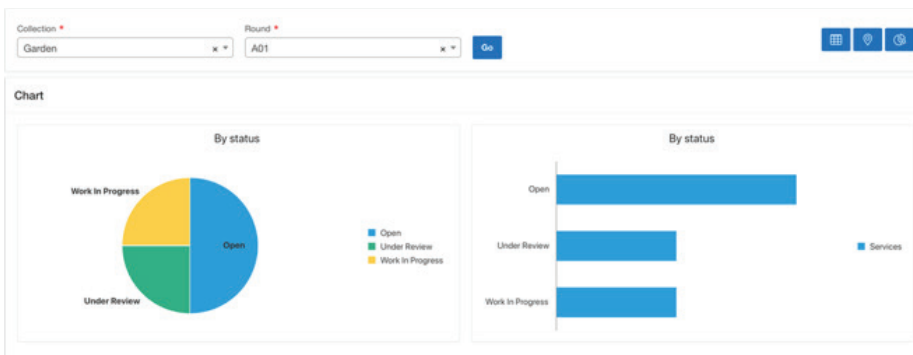


In cab, or hand held mobile working for rounds and routes. Providing turn by turn navigation, hazard alerts and meta data for specific collections

Route planning and on device display capabilities for waste services incorporate important and valuable meta data into the process. For example, details such as a gate access code for an assisted collection and details on terrain and topology are built into the process ensuring maximum efficiency and safety throughout the process.



With route and round management technology deployed to the crew in the collection vehicles it becomes possible to capture live round information which can further enhance the processes and feedback to customers.



Business Console for live reporting and round interrogation is available as part of the solution

An integrated solution for waste collections – working seamlessly with an outsourced waste collections partner

As well as offering a self-contained end-to-end solution, the My Council Services platform can also operate seamlessly with third party waste management systems, and we have delivered this type of hybrid solution many times.

At Southend Borough Council the collection of domestic waste has been outsourced to Veolia. We have integrated the My Council Services platform to deliver the customer-facing element of the domestic waste processes, as well as using significant parts of our own waste module to enhance the overall waste solution available for both Southend Borough Council staff and residents.

Work started on this project in early January 2017. Southend Borough Council already used some of the My Council Services technology to allow residents to report issues via their smart phones. This was further extended to allow residents to report issues via web, mobile and telephone. Southend Borough Council then switched from using a legacy customer services platform to the My Council Services Service Desk platform to manage these inbound requests. We then completed a system integration into the Veolia waste application, allowing for a real-time 360 feedback loop from customer to crew and back from crew to customer.

Another example of a hybrid waste solution is from Cannock Chase District Council in Staffordshire which selected Biffa to deliver its domestic waste collection services. With a new waste contract in place, the council wanted a flexible and easy-to-use system to capture residents' waste issues and pass them on to Biffa for resolution. Within just a few months, Abavus had delivered and integrated the necessary My Council Services components to enable this functionality. Abavus also provides the staff who are responsible for managing the outsourced waste contract with invaluable management information and data, helping them to ensure that best value is delivered from the relationship with Biffa.

A similar hybrid waste solution is also in place across the Somerset Waste Partnership. This programme provides an integrated waste service for four local authorities (Mendip, South Somerset, Sedgemoor and South West, and Taunton). The outsourced partner in this case is Suez Waste Management.



About Abavus

Abavus is an established UK-based technology and service provider to the UK public sector. Since 2007 we have been delivering software solutions and consultancy services that underpin and enable transformation and efficiency programmes in local authorities.

At Abavus we work extremely closely with one innovative, independent software house – iTouch Vision – who develop the widely used My Council Services enterprise platform. Abavus and iTouch Vision have entered into a long-term partnership agreement, whereby Abavus implements and supports My Council Services exclusively in the UK public sector.

This allows iTouch Vision to invest the maximum resource in its continued research and development activities, whilst Abavus focuses on the delivery and support of the solutions to clients.

Abavus has a customer base of over 50 UK local authorities and government organisations using the My Council Services solutions, as well as a small number of private clients. We are firmly established in the public sector market as a leading provider of innovative, cost-effective information technology solutions, helping public and third sector organisations to save money and make significant efficiency gains.

Abavus has been successfully delivering technology-enabled transformation projects in the testing operating environment that has prevailed following the financial crash of 2007 and the unyielding constraint on funding that this has created. Whilst this has been challenging it has meant we have to keep our projects focused on value and delivery. Our responsive, customer-focused approach has enabled us to thrive in a busy marketplace.

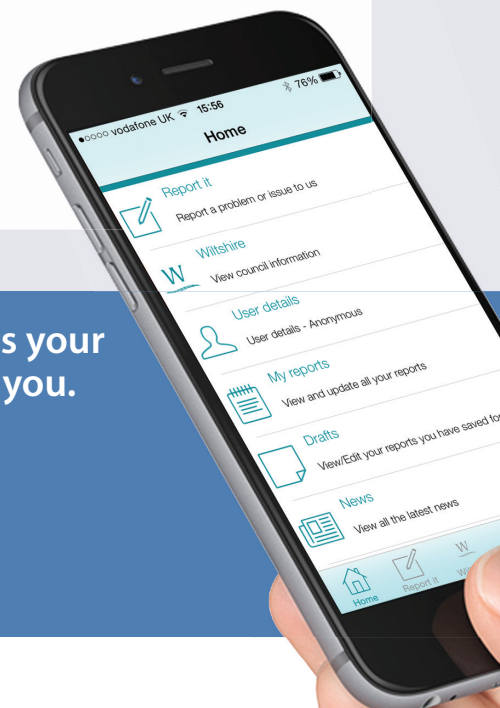
Consultancy and training

Abavus also provides consulting and training services to ensure that our clients are up and running with the technology solutions we provide as quickly and efficiently as possible.

Drawing upon our extensive knowledge and understanding of public sector organisations and the specialist technical skills within the team, Abavus leads and supports consultancy and training engagements with the focus on driving business transformation and change.



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