

Case Study

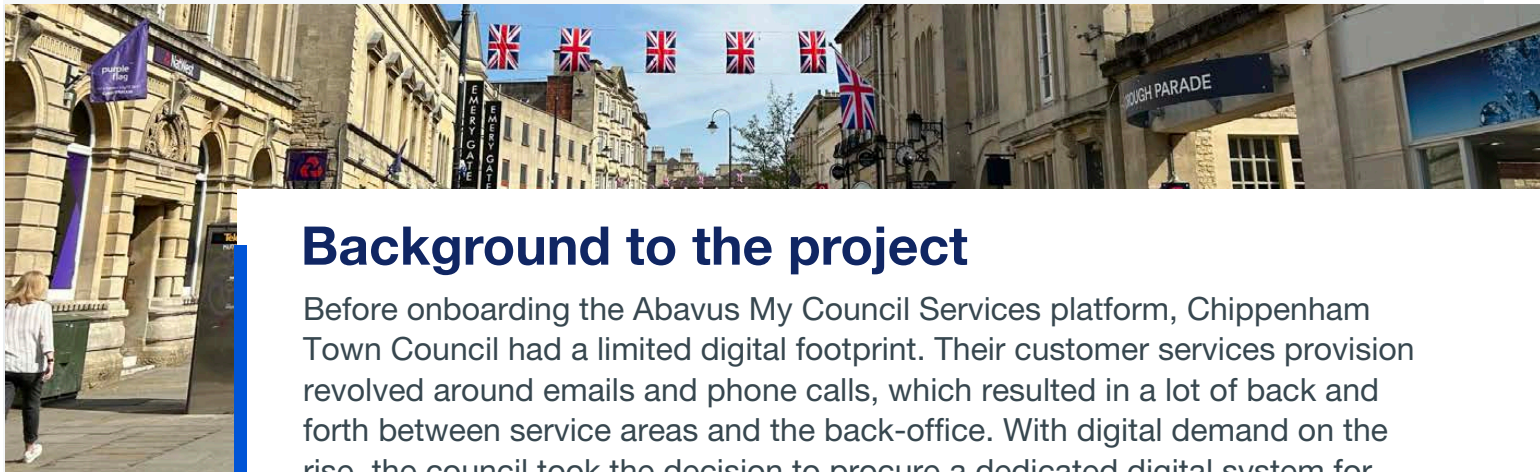
Delivering Digital Transformation Across Chippenham Town Council

Chippenham is a flourishing and lively market town with a 40,000+ population in southwest England, nestled on the banks of the River Avon. One of the largest town councils in the UK, Chippenham is a blend of historic and contemporary, with modern transportation links and a wealth of well-maintained green spaces and play areas.

"With its affordability, configurability, and ease of use, we knew our My Council Services system would be a great fit for smaller parish and town councils. With a strong desire to move away from legacy ways of working, Chippenham Town Council really embraced the digital transformation process and the success of this project is testament to their hard work and commitment in providing quality services to their customers."

Darren Bird, Abavus Ltd Operations Director





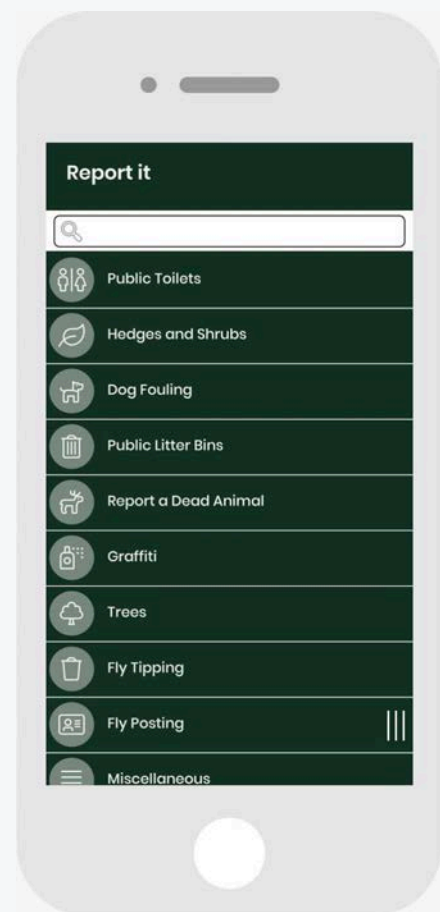
Background to the project

Before onboarding the Abavus My Council Services platform, Chippenham Town Council had a limited digital footprint. Their customer services provision revolved around emails and phone calls, which resulted in a lot of back and forth between service areas and the back-office. With digital demand on the rise, the council took the decision to procure a dedicated digital system for their staff and customers.

What were the key drivers for digital transformation at Chippenham?

As a busy town council, Chippenham wanted to adopt more modern ways of working using digital technology. Key objectives of this transformation included:

- Improving customer experience by providing easy-to-use online channels for reporting issues and raising requests.
- Providing staff with more efficient workflow processes, creating a digital repository of information that could be easily captured, maintained, and retrieved.
- Being able to resolve issues more quickly, or at the very least keep customers up to date with the progress of their requests.
- Providing a system that could analyse data to help inform future council decision-making, enable customer feedback, and effectively manage complaints.
- Having a safe and secure digital system that moved away from paper-based record-keeping.



**CHIPPENHAM
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What problems were Chippenham facing at the time?

Before onboarding Abavus technology, Chippenham Town Council did not have any dedicated customer-facing digital systems.

This way of working was particularly inefficient and did not lend itself to achieving the best customer outcomes. As all reports and requests came into the same email address, the customer services team would simply forward these on to the relevant staff members for processing and action. With demand for services continuing to increase, Chippenham Town Council needed to adapt their ways of working through adopting a consistent approach.

"Without standardised processes, one of our key problems was finding the location of a report - for example, we spent a lot of time looking for specific hedges. This was time-consuming and ineffective when trying to collate, track, and manage issues. It often felt like a game of email ping pong, with telephone calls and numerous site visits to reach a resolution. In addition, without a dedicated repository for reports, we were relying on staff to remember conversations and triage processes and outcomes. This was challenging at times when staff went on annual leave, as we had no way of knowing the full context of queries."

Lynsey Nichols, Chippenham Town Council's Head of Communications and Customer Services

Why did Chippenham choose Abavus to deliver digital transformation?

My Council Services provides a repository for holding information, as well as a system that would enable the Council to report and analyse incoming requests to better plan service delivery now and in the future.

Abavus had already established a good reputation for supporting councils of all sizes across the UK. Chippenham Town Council considered a number of digital solutions, but felt that My Council Services would provide the best fit for their requirements.

"We did our research, liaising with other councils and colleagues to understand the choice of available systems. After discussions with Wiltshire Council, the authority put us in touch with Abavus. We were clear on our objectives, and we were confident that Abavus could help us achieve them. Abavus were very helpful demonstrating how their system works, and we were comfortable with their system's capability, flexibility, and affordability. If we wanted to expand into other areas in the future, we knew the system could also grow with us."

Lynsey Nichols, Chippenham Town Council's Head of Communications and Customer Services



How was digital transformation implemented at Chippenham?

Having been involved in very few digital transformation projects, staff at Chippenham initially found the onboarding process to be challenging.

"We knew onboarding would not be easy - initially, even the technical terminology being used was like learning another language!"

Lynsey Nichols, Chippenham Town Council's Head of Communications and Customer Services

With the above in mind, it was important for Abavus to quickly recognise this and to adapt plans accordingly, as the project would obviously be at risk if the staff involved could not fully understand the system.

"As a company we learnt some valuable onboarding lessons that have informed future town council engagements. It is critically important to ensure lines of communication are active and open to quickly remedy any issues that arise."

Darren Bird, Abavus Ltd Operations Director

After running into some early challenges, plans were adapted. As a result, the project was quickly back on track with deliverables being met.

"Abavus were very patient with us as we slowly worked through the initial training. Once we got through this initial phase, everything started to click into place."

Lynsey Nichols, Chippenham Town Council's Head of Communications and Customer Services

Taking Chippenham live on the system

Abavus provided Chippenham Town Council with a non-production system so they could fully test their processes before launching the live system, giving the Council peace of mind ahead of the go-live date. Once all processes had been fully configured and tested, Lynsey made the decision to 'soft launch' the system with minimal publicity to ensure their staff had time to adapt to new ways of working and make changes to processes where necessary.

"Once we were comfortable with the system being live, we made sure we were all consistent with the messaging about why we are doing this. We remind customers that we now have a new system and a mobile app that provides acknowledgement emails and status updates for their submissions."

Lynsey Nichols, Chippenham Town Council's Head of Communications and Customer Services



What was Chippenham's experience working with Abavus?

The delivery of this project has been a valuable experience for Abavus and Chippenham, and the Town Council has successfully achieved their digital transformation goals.

"We knew what we wanted: a customer-friendly and easy to use system. It took some time, but we worked through it together to get where we needed to be. We have a good relationship with Abavus, with open lines of communication. If we have a concern,

their support team is very responsive and quick to lend a hand. If we want to speak to an actual human being rather than use a digital chat system, we can do so quickly and easily."

Lynsey Nichols, Chippenham Town Council's Head of Communications and Customer Services



What benefits have been realised at Chippenham?

Chippenham Town Council's digital transformation work has been significant, enabling the following benefits:

- Chippenham now have a shared system offering two-way communication between officers and customers. There is no longer miscommunication as both parties receive updates directly.
- Data is held in a single system, providing an extra layer of protection and enabling easier compliance with GDPR and other data protection and security regulations.
- Standardised eForms are used for information gathering, with consistent data being used to quickly resolve issues.
- Better data management and report filters, enabling improved analysis of key issues to better prioritise where resources need to be directed.
- With ward map boundaries configured, reports can be filtered by wards and specific date periods, enabling accurate and up to date information.
- With the implementation of a native mobile app, Chippenham Town Council is much more accessible for many people who can now access council services on the go.

"98% of issues now go through the system. The word is still going out and we tell our councillors to inform customers to submit queries through our system. We are especially delighted to have a native mobile app, which has the same forms as the ones on the web. A significant portion of traffic now comes through mobile devices."

**Lynsey Nichols, Chippenham Town Council's
Head of Communications and Customer Services**

"Improved data gathering and retrieval has been hugely helpful. Our customer services team can look at data over specific periods (e.g. monthly) to see what the most common issues are and what queries we are facing. For example, we can track increased submissions in leaf clearing, grass cutting, etc, and with these spikes in service requests we can prepare ahead of time to make better provision for services such as these."

**Lynsey Nichols, Chippenham Town Council's
Head of Communications and Customer Services**

In conclusion...

Chippenham Town Council has achieved its immediate digital transformation goals by working with Abavus.

"There is so much more the system can do, and we are considering opportunities for mobile workers, bookings, payments, and further app development. My Council Services has been a real worthwhile investment, supporting both customers and staff as digital demand grows. For Town and Parish councils in a similar position, start the conversation - it's worth it for your customers and for your staff. Demand in reports and queries are growing and our local community is very engaged with their local environment. My Council Services has provided a communication solution that is effective for customers to use."

**Lynsey Nichols, Chippenham Town Council's
Head of Communications and Customer Services**



About Abavus Ltd and My Council Services

Abavus, alongside its partner company iTouchVision, design, develop and provide the award-winning My Council Services digital technology solution used by 50+ UK local authorities. This has enabled us to build a wealth of digital transformation experience since 2011.

From its early origins, we rapidly developed My Council Services to support the business needs of local authorities. This responsive, customer-focused approach has enabled us to thrive in a competitive marketplace. Our market-leading enterprise platform is utilised across the UK in all aspects of local authority business, including:

- Asset and Amenity Management
- Births, Marriages, and Deaths
- Customer Relationship Management
- Environmental Health
- Environmental Services
- Highways and Roads
- Housing
- Leisure and Parks
- Licensing, Planning, and Regulatory Services
- Mobile Working
- Parking Management
- Revenues and Benefits
- Street Cleansing
- Waste Management

With a system straddling all local authority business areas, My Council Services is the go-to product for senior leaders and managers looking to deliver continuous and sustainable improvement and efficiency across their organisation.

Consultancy and training

Abavus also provides consulting and training services. This is to ensure that our clients are up and running with our technology solutions as quickly as possible. We draw upon our extensive knowledge and understanding of public sector organisations to drive digital transformation for business.



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For more information about My Council Services and to book your free demo, contact us below:



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