



# Introduction

**Andrew Sweeting**  
Digital Services Manager

**Julie Crawshaw**  
Digital CMS Lead

**Pete Smart**  
Digital Content Lead



# The old Manchester



# Partnerships

- **In-house**
  - Digital communications team
  - Web developers
  - Design studio
- **Partners**
  - Jadu: UX web design, web development, CMS engineering
  - Keep it usable: usability testing
  - Abilitynet: accessibility organisation



# Why website re-design?

We needed . . .

1. a 'responsive design' – from smartphone to big screen
2. to reflect why people come to our website
3. to prioritise on statistical analysis rather than opinion and conjecture
4. to streamline content and make it customer-focused
5. to update the site design



# 1. Responsive design – from smartphone to big screen

- site was primarily designed for pc
- smart phone use approaching 50% - most people will soon use phones and tablets
- ‘responsive design’ means no separate designs - site automatically adjusts to fit
- new design fits smart phone format (without shrinking and expanding)



## 2. To reflect why people come to our website

- 80% of visitors have a task – to find specific information, or carry out transaction
- only 20% are ‘grazers’, simply looking
- the new site is task-orientated and customer-focussed
- most-common tasks are obvious to find, easy to use



### 3. Prioritise on statistical analysis rather than opinion and conjecture

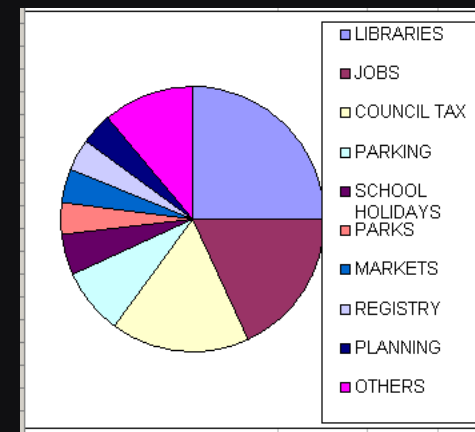
- prioritised on statistics from all sources: web page visits, search terms, phone contact and customer service centres.
- greater prominence to most commonly-requested topics
- evidence-base for 'real estate' eg home page prominence
- but also prioritise topics that account for heavy non-web traffic (e.g. bins and recycling) in a drive to channel-shift.



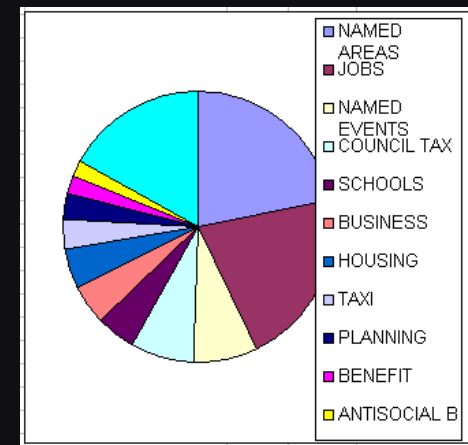


# Examples of statistical evidence-base 1

EXTERNAL GOOGLE SEARCH		
	6 months	%
LIBRARIES	46497	25%
JOBS	33343	18%
COUNCIL TAX	31248	17%
PARKING	14312	8%
SCHOOL HOLIDAYS	10226	5%
PARKS	7534	4%
MARKETS	7230	4%
REGISTRY	7088	4%
PLANNING	7037	4%
PAY TICKET	4824	3%
HOUSING	4693	3%

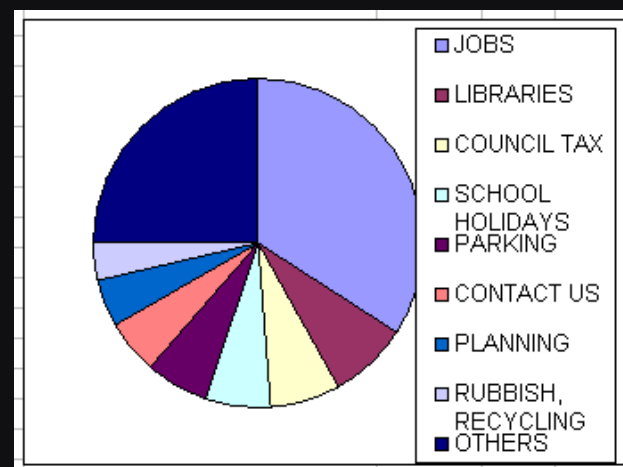


INTERNAL SEARCHES		
6 months		%
NAMED AREAS	2152	21.8
JOBS	2101	21.3
NAMED EVENTS	775	7.8
COUNCIL TAX	721	7.3
SCHOOLS	490	5.0
BUSINESS	470	4.6
HOUSING	452	4.6
TAXI	374	3.8
PLANNING	301	3.0
BENEFIT	220	2.2

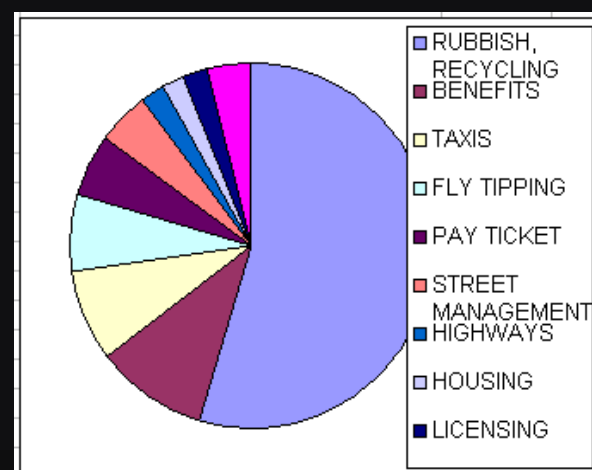


# Examples of statistical evidence-base 2

PAGE VISITS		
6 months		%
JOBS	485253	34.3
LIBRARIES	108635	7.7
COUNCIL TAX	94303	6.7
SCHOOL HOLIDAYS	91042	6.4
PARKING	87747	6.2
CONTACT US	70927	5.0
PLANNING	66890	4.7
RUBBISH, RECYCLING	55092	3.9
COUNCIL DEMOCRACY	44456	3.1
HOUSING	39248	2.8



CUSTOMER CONTACTS (Phone/person)		
6 months		%
RUBBISH, RECYCLING (breakdown below)	76500	54.6
BENEFITS	13800	9.9
TAXIS	11100	7.9
FLY TIPPING	9900	7.1
PAY TICKET	7800	5.6
STREET MANAGEMENT	6600	4.7
HIGHWAYS	3300	2.4
HOUSING	2700	1.9
LICENSING	2700	1.9



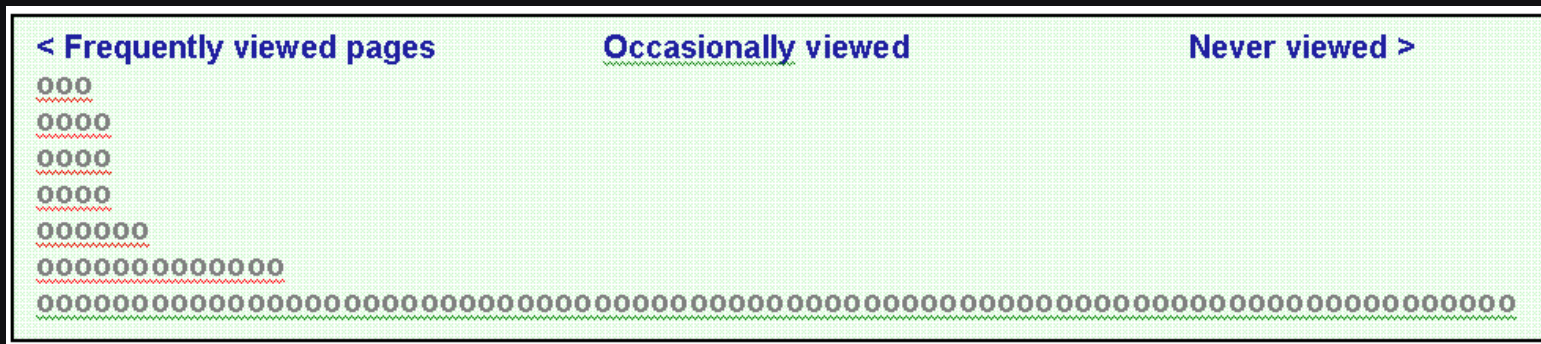
## 4. Streamline content and make it customer-focused

- content was in long 'wall of text' web pages
- 'calls-to-action' hard to find
- customer-unfriendly – especially on smart-phone
- started with most-visited task: reduced page lengths and restructured content
- edited out repetition and unnecessary information
- text in shorter to-the-point chunks
- strip out old, un-read, inaccurate content following principle of 'do less, better'

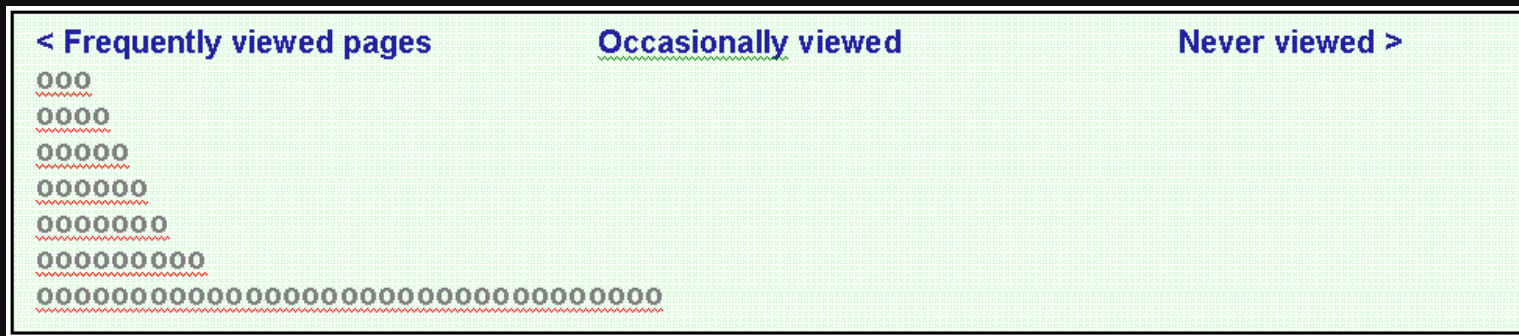


# Long neck, long tail

- Before



- After



# BEFORE

## Claim student discount

### Student exemption, or reduction in the bill because of a student

If everyone aged 18 or over living at your address is a full-time student or student nurse, then you may not have to pay Council Tax because your home may be exempt. You need to [claim an exemption](#) unless you live in a hall of residence.

If you are a student and you share your address with someone who is not a full-time student then we can reduce the Council Tax bill by 25%. [Claim money off because of a student.](#)

If you are a student and you rent your address with two or more joint tenants who are not full-time students then there is no reduction and the people who are not students are liable to pay the Council Tax. They are jointly responsible for the bill and can [claim benefit](#) based on their income.

#### Students in halls of residence

Students living in halls of residence don't have to pay Council Tax. Halls of residence are exempt properties, so if you live in one, you don't need to claim an exemption. To count as exempt, a hall of residence must be:

- owned or managed by a charity, or by an educational establishment that mainly provides further or higher education; or
- the subject of an agreement that allows the educational establishment to nominate most of the people who will live there.

#### If you are a foreign student and your partner or dependant is from overseas

If you are a foreign student and your partner or dependant is not a British citizen and is not allowed to work or claim benefits, you will both be exempt from paying the Council Tax (you do not have to pay it). You need to send us a copy of your partner's passport and your student number if you study at Manchester Metropolitan University, University of Manchester, University of Bolton, Manchester College of Law, Royal Northern College of Music or Manchester Victoria College. If you study elsewhere, we need a copy of your partner's passport and a copy of your student certificate - you can get this from your college's Admissions office.

#### If you are a student living with an owner-occupier

If you live with someone who is not your partner and who owns the house you live in, that person must pay Council Tax. They may be able to claim a 25% discount because you are a student.

#### Part-time students

Part-time students must pay Council Tax, but they may be able to [claim Council Tax Benefit](#).

#### Full-time students who share with part-time students

If you are a full-time student and you share a property with a joint tenant who is a part-time student, then we reduce the Council Tax bill by 25% and the part-time student is liable to pay the Council Tax.

To be counted as a student, you must be undertaking a full-time course at a college or university (or similar educational establishment) in the UK or the European Union. You do not necessarily have to attend - if you are engaged in distance learning you can still qualify as a student for Council Tax purposes as long as you meet the other student criteria. You must be living in the UK.

#### A full-time course is one that:

- lasts for at least one academic year, or if the establishment does not have academic years, for at least one calendar year;
- you normally undertake for at least 24 weeks in each academic or calendar year; and
- you normally undertake for an average of at least 21 hours a week of study, tuition, work experience or a combination of these.

[Claim a student exemption or money off because of a student](#)

#### Do it online

- Claim a Council Tax student exemption
- Claim a Council Tax money off - charge of the bill
- Report a problem with a Council Tax bill
- My account

#### Council Tax Service

Revenue and Benefits Unit  
Council Tax Service, PO Box 147,  
Manchester, M15 5TU

[claimmoneyoffnow.co.uk](#)

0161 274 9200

0161 961 9611

#### ADDITIONAL ITEMS

##### Download

- Council Tax student exemption
- Council Tax money off
- Council Tax charge of the bill
- My account

##### FAQs

- What is a full-time student?
- What is a part-time student?
- What is a student?
- What is a student?
- What is a student?
- What is a student?

##### Search

##### Council Tax

##### Help

- What is a student?
- What is a student?
- What is a student?
- What is a student?
- What is a student?
- What is a student?

[Print this page](#)

## Claim student discount

### How to claim an exemption because everyone in your home is a student, or money off because of a student

#### We need proof of your student status

To claim an exemption or money off you must give us:

- Proof that you are a full-time student
- Proof that other students who live with you are full-time.

A full-time student is a student who is studying full-time at a college or university in the UK or the European Union. You must be studying at a college or university in the UK or the European Union. You must be studying at a college or university in the UK or the European Union.

For people studying elsewhere, we need to see a copy of each person's student certificate which you or they can get from the college's admissions office.

Everyone in the household is a full-time student and you provide us with proof of this we can make the property you live in exempt from Council Tax.

#### How to claim

There are three ways to claim:

#### Claim online (you live in Manchester and University of Bolton)

- Manchester Metropolitan University (MMU)
- University of Bolton
- University of Bolton
- Manchester College of Law
- Royal Northern College of Music
- Manchester Victoria College

You need your student number to fill in the online form. You will also be asked for your contact details, the dates of your course, your council tax reference number (if you don't know it you can call 0161 274 9200), some details about your property and details about other people (including other students) who live with you.

**Download and fill in the Council Tax student exemption form (you live in Manchester and study at a college or university other than those listed above).** Send it to us with a copy of your student certificate and any other people's certificates (if we need it) you can get from the college admissions office.

#### Claim by email (you prefer to claim online or by post)

Make sure you include the following information:

- **Your name and details**
  - Full name, address (including post code), Council Tax account number (if you have one), phone number.
- **Your course details**
  - The university you attend, course title and end date, student number (if you have it), Manchester University, University of Bolton, Manchester College of Law, Royal Northern College of Music or Manchester Victoria College. If you live elsewhere you'll need to send us a copy of your student certificate (see notes below).
- **Property details**
  - The name and address of the owner or agent (if you rent the property, the name the agency is called, the date the agency is due to end).
- **Details of other people in the property**
  - The number of people aged 18 or over who live in the property, full name, date of birth, whether they are a full-time student, the college or university each full-time student attends, the date each person's course starts and ends and their student number (if they attend MMU, Manchester University, University of Bolton, Manchester College of Law, Royal Northern College of Music or Manchester Victoria College). If they study elsewhere you'll need to send us a copy of their student certificate (see notes below).

#### Sending your proof by post

If you have to send us student certificates through the post make sure you include your name and address with them so that we can link them to your details. Send them to the Council Tax Service, PO Box 147, Manchester, M15 5TU. Or you can send them to us on 0161 961 9611.

#### Details of claim, student status

- **Student exemption, or exemption or money off because of a student**
  - How to claim an exemption because everyone in your home is a student, or money off because of a student

#### Do it online

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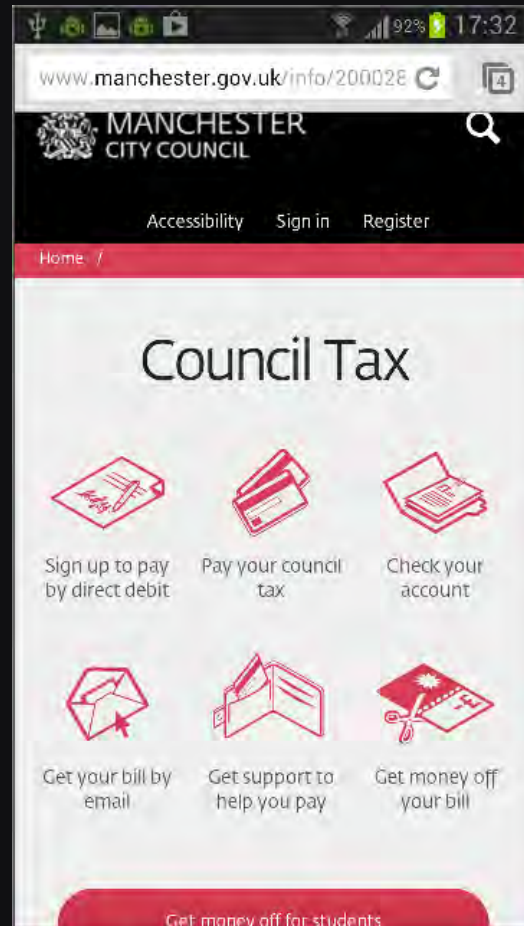
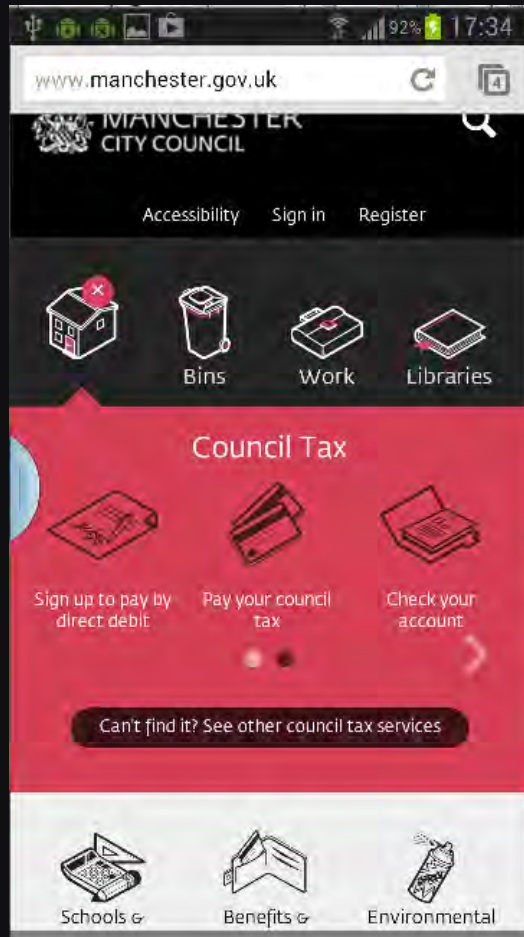
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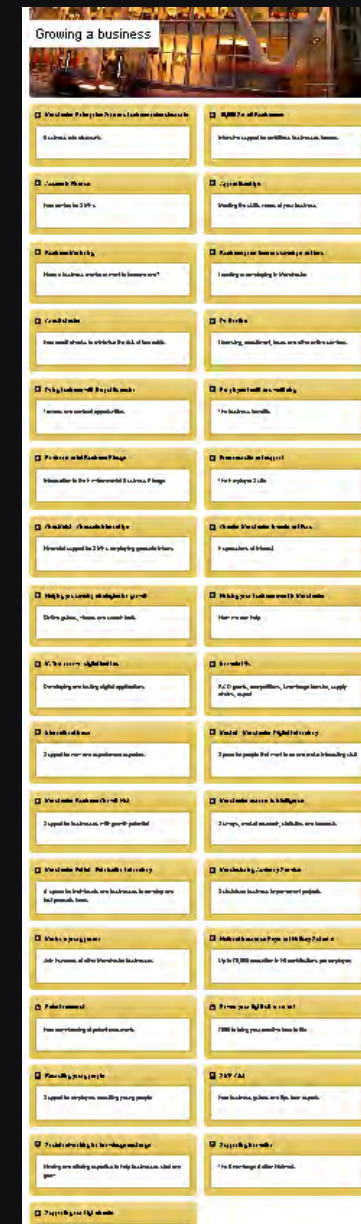
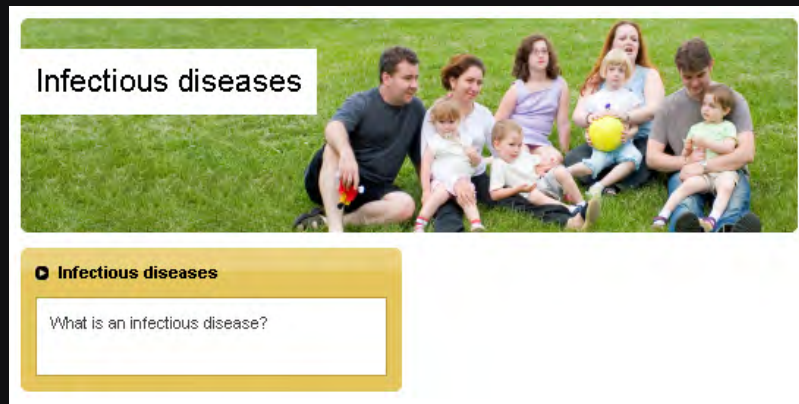
# AFTER

New site on mobile phone



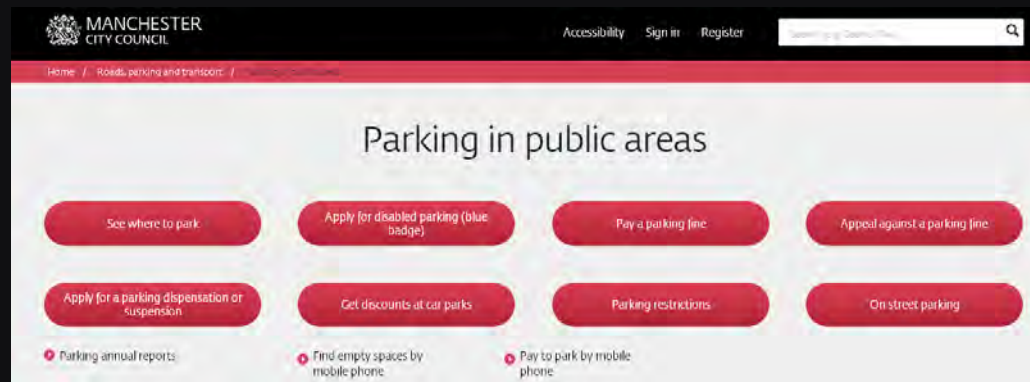
# Landing page hierarchy: BEFORE

From one item, to many items . . .



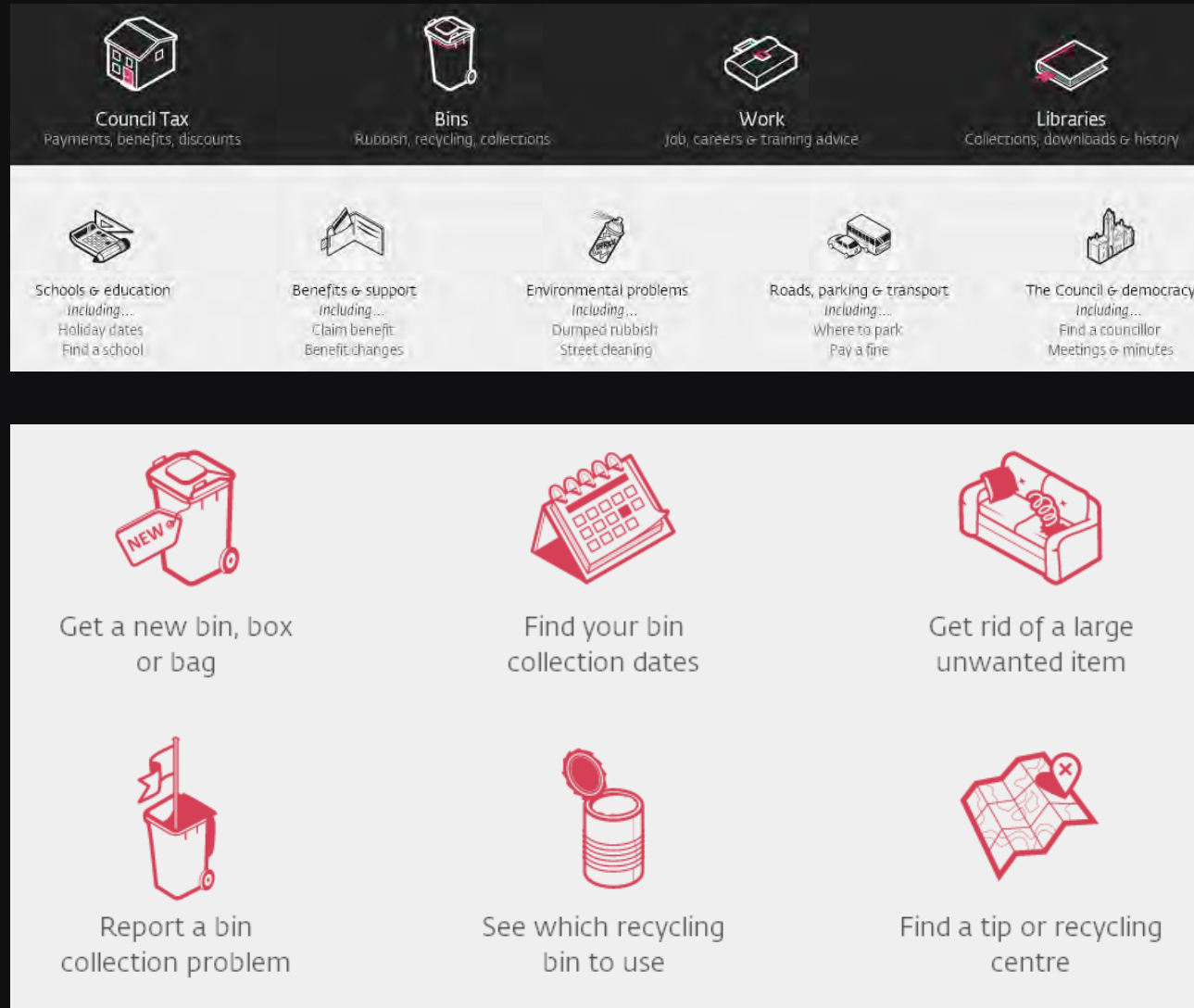
# Landing page hierarchy: AFTER

## Consistency and clarity



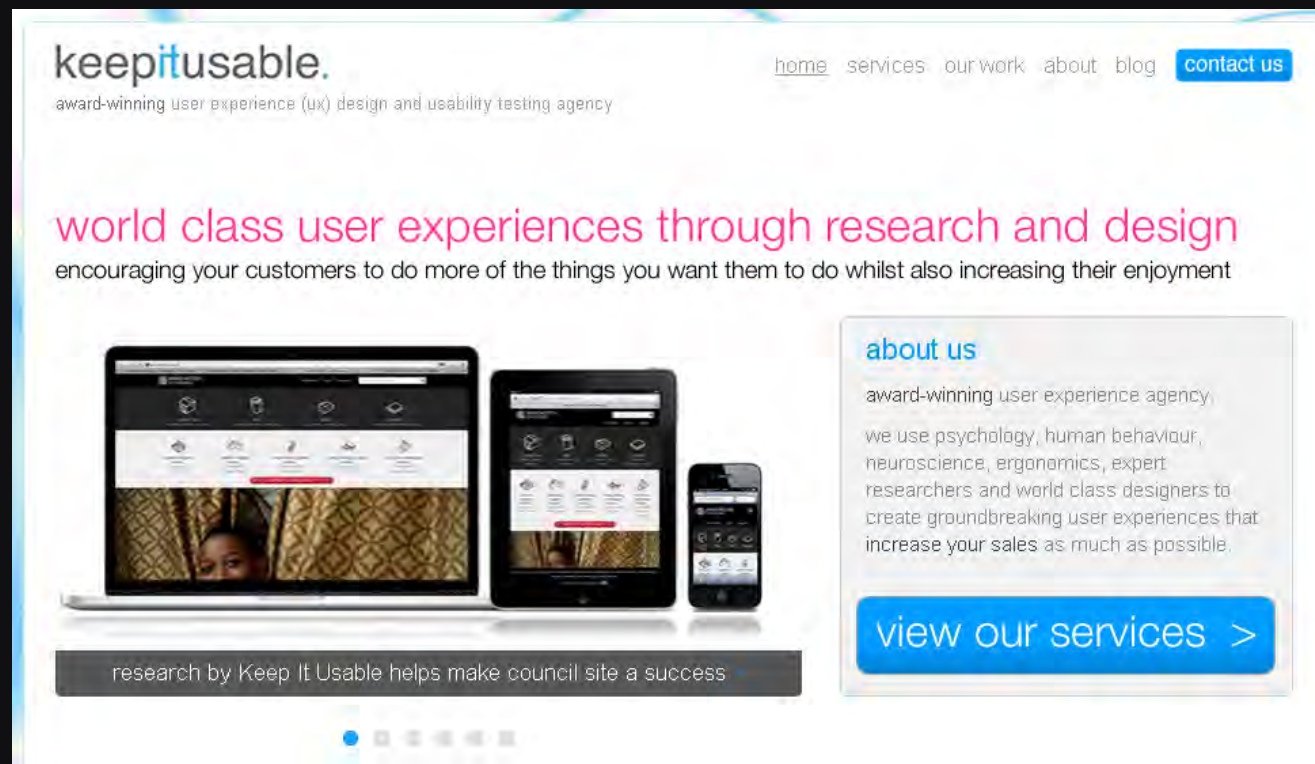


# Iconography to aid navigation



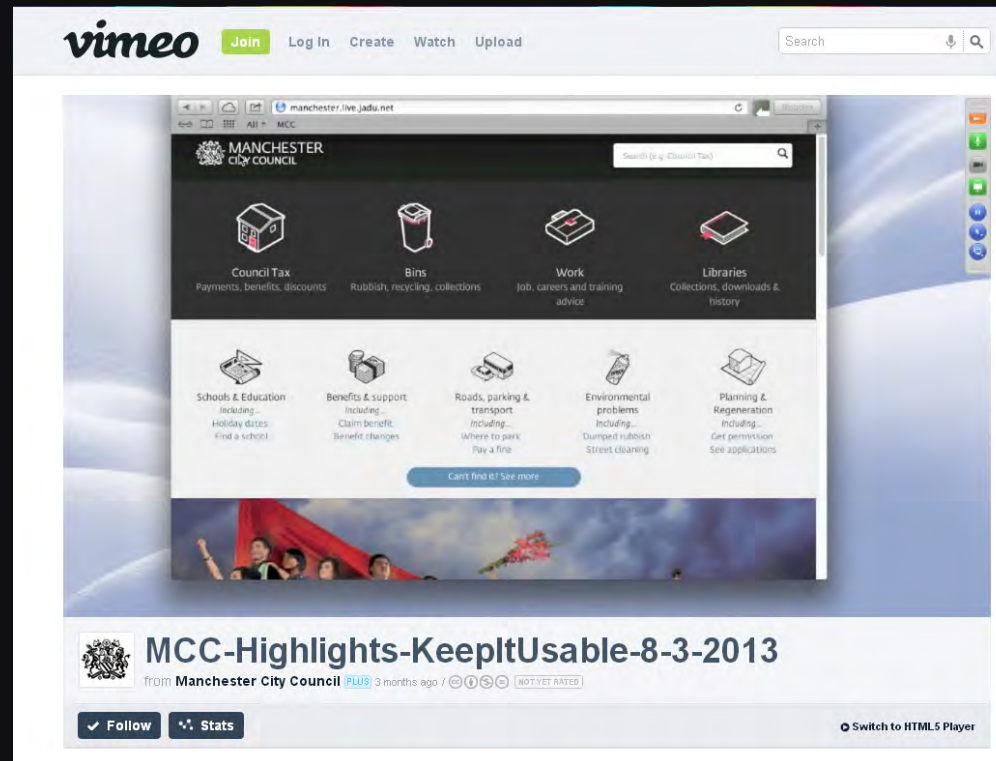
# User testing

- Tested by independent specialists, Keep It Usable



# Video of user testing in action

- See real Mancunians testing the site before it went live, and hear their comments.
- Go to: <https://vimeo.com/61353968> password: *manchester*



# User testers

- “I liked how you get through to the information in two or three clicks. The information is easy to find. It's really, really simple. Ideal reading on the phone. Not too much info”

**Lindsey Ash**

- “I like it a lot. Never been so easy to use. Well laid out. Fits well on the ipad. Things are where you'd expect them to be”

**Christy Lucas-McMillan**



# Keep it Usable

- "The user testing was a great success. Everyone was very positive towards the new direction and it was evident that a well designed council site improves people's perception of the council and changes their behaviour. The site was so easy and quick to use that people who traditionally always called the council said they would now use the website."

**Lisa Duddington**

Keep it Usable



# Accessibility testing

- User-testing run by Henshaws Society for Blind People
- Accessibility audit by Ability Net
- “The new site uses a very clear design and layout, and the responsive design also works very well. Overall the site looks very promising and should be great to use for all users, including disabled users”.



# User testing

- Extensive testing, using realistic tasks, with councillors and staff at all levels.
- Feedback and comments from all testing reviewed and incorporated into next iteration.





# Huge response from go-live



**Changify** @Changify

Liking the new @ManCityCouncil responsive website - hard to believe it's from a council! :) <http://t.co/Zx24KTvvhb>

GB ManCityCouncil



**UsefulisUsable** @UsefulisUsable

@RWD @ManCityCouncil @StuRobson Really makes me want to visit

San Marcos TX US ManCityCouncil in reply to RWD



**mattkirwan** @mattkirwan

Yup! @ManCityCouncil have set the bar. Knowing councils, it's just too high. Compared to @mbrocouncil attempt (12months ago)/ @mynameiscolin

Unknown ManCityCouncil



**forepoint** @forepoint

The new @ManCityCouncil is a great example of how focusing on what your users require massively changes a new website. #UX #UserCentric ^SB

Unknown ManCityCouncil





## Huge response . . .



**pdjohnson** @pdjohnson

Beautiful new government web site - Manchester City Council <http://t.co/sjhrXjHfxm> @ManCityCouncil via @gtrufitt

Manchester England GB ManCityCouncil



**MrShivS** @MrShivS

A great council website <http://t.co/YxTGfbBwDh> @ManCityCouncil. Other #localgovweb teams should take note. #socitm

Midlands ZW ManCityCouncil



**carlbembridge** @carlbembridge

New @ManCityCouncil website is really brilliant, great job! <http://t.co/f1uByC41lw>

GB ManCityCouncil



**cgkean** @cgkean

@GrevsterStudios @rwd @mancitycouncil @thepaulb That's really neat. Very clean & simple & most probably mobile 1st mentality

GB ManCityCouncil in reply to GrevsterStudios



**Armstrong** @Armstrong

@Jordanmoore @mancitycouncil wow... Did they not get the memo that good council websites are illegal?

GB ManCityCouncil in reply to Jordanmoore



MANCHESTER  
CITY COUNCIL



manchester.gov.uk

# Creating a stir in the web world

**we are liquid.**  
**integrated solutions**

home / about us / **news** / what we do / showcase / clients / contact /

**MANCHESTER CITY COUNCIL**

Accessibility Sign in Register

Council Tax  
Payments, services, discounts

Bins  
Household recycling, collections

Work  
Job vacancies, training advice

Libraries  
Collections, programmes, events

Schools & education  
Including...  
Primary, secondary  
Special schools

Benefits & support  
Including...  
Council tax benefit  
Council housing

Environmental problems  
Including...  
Council tax benefit  
Council housing

Roads, parking & transport  
Including...  
Council tax benefit  
Council housing

The Council & democracy  
Including...  
Council tax benefit  
Council housing


Learn how to use your services

**websites we like:**  
**manchester city council**

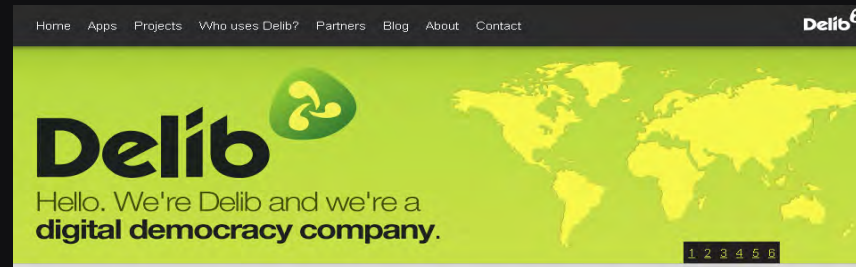
I'm not sure why or how, I've struggled to put it into words, but my conclusion is that Manchester City Council's new [website](#) is just bloody brilliant. It's as simple as that.

When you look at other local council websites across not only the North West region, but the country as a whole (without being too harsh) they're all a bit pants and not very user friendly.

With this website, they have beautifully funnelled a huge organisation into an initial nine navigation elements – each carefully illustrated with simple but effective iconography. Full screen imagery accompanies event listings and promoted areas of the website, something that other councils seem to tread lightly around.



# Creating a stir in the web world



## Council websites become more citizen-centric

We've been watching this trend with interest, and have compiled a few examples of great council websites.

### Manchester City Council

Manchester City Council recently launched a [fantastic new website](#), which targets the needs of residents first. Based on research carried out by the council, the new site replaces a four-year-old version that users considered outdated and difficult to navigate, especially on mobile devices.

The council's research found that 80% of users used the site primarily to complete simple tasks, such as to request a new wheelie bin or pay a bill. Taking this on board, the new site was designed around resident services, not around the council's structure, making it easy for people to do their business fast.

A bonus of this resident-centric design is that the large icons, contrasting colours and large font make the website highly accessible, meeting government standards and, more importantly, resident needs.

# Creating a stir in the web world



The screenshot shows the top navigation bar of The Guardian website. The logo 'theguardian' is in blue. Below it are links for News, Sport, Comment, Culture, Business, Money, and Life & style. A secondary navigation bar includes Professional, Local Government Network (highlighted), Hubs, Policy, and Practice. Below this is a teal banner with the text 'Insight and engagement hub' and 'From the Local Government Network'. The main headline reads 'How councils can keep up with changing online trends', followed by a sub-headline: 'Manchester council's website leads the way with responsive technology that recognises what type of device visitors are using'.

theguardian

News | Sport | Comment | Culture | Business | Money | Life & style

Professional | Local Government Network | Hubs | Policy | Practice

**Insight and engagement hub**  
From the Local Government Network

**How councils can keep up with changing online trends**

Manchester council's website leads the way with responsive technology that recognises what type of device visitors are using

## And keen interest from other authorities

**From:** "Dayna Slate" <[Dayna.Slate@london.gov.uk](mailto:Dayna.Slate@london.gov.uk)>  
**Date:** 23 May 2013 13:02:06 GMT+01:00  
**To:** "'[s.tomkins@manchester.gov.uk](mailto:s.tomkins@manchester.gov.uk)'" <[s.tomkins@manchester.gov.uk](mailto:s.tomkins@manchester.gov.uk)>  
**Subject:** Manchester City Council's website

Hello

I hope this email finds you well. My name is Dayna Slate and I work at the Greater London Authority – for the Mayor of London and London Assembly. I've been reviewing your very brilliant new website, and I wanted to see if it was possible to meet with some of your team who undertook the feat to understand your process a bit better and see how you got to where you did.

**Helen Adams** <[helen.adams@bristol.gov.uk](mailto:helen.adams@bristol.gov.uk)>  
04/06/2013 17:06  
**To:** "'[webfeedback@manchester.gov.uk](mailto:webfeedback@manchester.gov.uk)'" <[webfeedback@manchester.gov.uk](mailto:webfeedback@manchester.gov.uk)>  
**cc:**  
**Subject:** Learning from your approach

I am a project manager in Bristol City Council and we have been viewing your website it has been giving us inspiration. We are about to embark on a similar journey – redesign and mobile optimisation of our website, improved transactional services and the creation of a single 'My Account'. We are seeking to undertake this following 'agile' approaches rather than a single hit launch. This is new territory for us and I am seeking to understand from your experience, how long this process might take and what might be possible in a first iteration.



# Channel shift targets

- focus on high-volume transactions eg bins, potholes
- target £500k savings by April 2014
- move 50% of high-volume transactions online
- 50% reduction in phone calls transactions
- need to change behaviour to achieve success





# Channel shift in six months since go-live

- 18,500 new online customer accounts (6,000 in previous six months)
- Phone calls down 7%
- For **integrated** forms:
  - online transactions up 39%
  - phone transactions down 17%
  - emails down 21%



# Shifting bins!

## Proportion of bin requests online

- October 2012                      **25%**
- April 2013                        **33%**
- October 2013                    **51% (2300 transactions)**





## Final thoughts

- Seek senior stakeholder support
- Secure resource, not just financial
- Do your research and share your insight
- Approach the project from the ground up
- Create a solid content strategy
- Plan, test and test again
- Collaboration - treat your agency like part of the team
- Don't stop at project delivery

