**Really Useful Day**

**Model User Journey**

**Pay your council tax**

**LGSL / IL = 57/2**

Really Useful Days are **free, practical training days for local authorities**, aimed at helping councils improve their digital services.

They involve a mixture of workshops, inspiring talks (often from other councils who talk about their experiences) and the chance for councils to network with each other

They are run regularly across the UK (see a list of future events at [www.localdirect.gov.uk/events/calendar/](http://www.localdirect.gov.uk/events/calendar/)) on different themes, including “Social Media for councils” and “Improving user journeys”.

At the “Improving user journeys” event, local authorities work together in groups, looking at different user journeys. They critique 3 examples of the journey and come up with their own ‘model’ version.

**This is a collection of all the praise, criticism and model journeys**

**groups have come up with for the user journey: “Pay your council tax”.**

**Council pages looked at =**

Forest of Dean, Glasgow, Havering, Hull, Mendip

**Pay your council tax**

This model journey was worked on in **Bury St Edmunds on 9 May 2013**

**A mock up of a good customer journey:**

1. Payment option page –
   1. Online at the top
   2. All other options, but in the order you want to promote them
2. If direct debit, allow an online application online – no printing of document necessary.
3. Mobile-friendly
4. Postcode search for places near you where you can pay using a payment card (Allpay Outlets)
5. Shopping basket so you can make multiple payments for different services (eg pay a parking fine) at the same time
6. Receipt emailed to user (email address capture for marketing purposes)

**Pay your council tax**

This model journey was worked on in **Exeter on 10 June 2013**

(Groups looked at Havering, Forest of Dean, Hull websites)

**The Good – what local authority sites should be trying to include**

* Minimal clicks / pages
* Offers different payment methods
* Makes clear security in place and charges payable
* ‘How much do I owe?’ button
* Minimal text – only what is necessary

**The Bad – the pitfalls local authority sites should try to avoid**

* Arriving on the wrong landing page
* Repeating your choice of council tax (should remember your choice)
* Styling inconsistent (looks like a different site)
* Assumes that you will pay online – doesn’t encourage direct debit
* Paying by phone is promoted above paying online (even though online is cheaper)
* Too much text
* Direct debit form is at the bottom of the page, separate from text about direct debit
* Poor side links
* Postal address should be in the form (PDF) not on the page
* No validation on payment window – risk of errors
* Information on how council tax is calculated and spent before information about how to pay
* Telling you about security and charges on a different page to payment

**A mock up of a good customer journey:**

**Pay your council tax online**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Postcode: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

Payment details: \_\_\_\_\_\_

**How to pay your council tax**

We take these cards:

⮹ ⮹ ⮹ ⮹

* Info about secure payment
* Info about charges
* Further information

You can pay your council tax by:

* Online
* Direct Debit
* Phone
* Cash
* Cheque

**How much do I owe?**

Contact us Cookies Etc

Page 1

Page 2

**Pay your council tax**

This model journey was worked on in **Llandrindod Wells on 30 July 2013**

(Groups looked at Mendip, Forest of Dean, Hull websites)

**The Good – what local authority sites should be trying to include**

**Mendip**

* 3 pages long
* First page gives ways to pay
* Tells you it’s a secure page and that it’s to pay council tax
* Easy to pay
* Gives more info on different ways to pay in case user doesn’t have card to pay
* Simple to use

**Hull**

* Tells you how to find your reference number

**Forest of Dean**

* ‘Pay for it’ page tells user what it is about
* Only 2 pages

**The Bad – the pitfalls local authority sites should try to avoid**

**Hull**

* Taken to wrong page (“How to reduce your council tax”)
* Six pages long
* Contact details at the top
* User has to scan page
* Four pages in and we still can’t pay
* Sixth page is the online payment page!

**Forest of Dean**

* Doesn’t tell you that you need a reference number
* Doesn’t give a choice of how to pay (face to face, etc) – assumes you want to pay online

**A mock up of a good customer journey:**

**Pay your council tax online**

Paying online is the fastest and most secure way to pay for your council tax.

Council tax ref number: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Amount you wish to pay: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

⮹ ⮹ ⮹ ⮹ (credit card logos)

For email or SMS\* confirmation, please enter

your details \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

or (sign up here)

\*10p charge will be added for SMS message

Other ways to pay

**1**

**£10 off if you pay by Direct Debit! Woo! Click here!**

**Council tax payment confirmation**

Your ref number: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Thank you for paying £x amount to the x council

To view your balance online, please or

Did you know you could get a £10 discount by paying by Direct Debit?

Can we do this better?

😐 ☹ ☺

Comments:

Link to DD form

Sign up

Login

**3**

**Other ways to pay**

Direct Debit, etc

Links to Direct Debit form

**2**

Login

**🔒**

**Pay your council tax**

This model journey was worked on in **Nottingham on 20 September 2013**

(Groups looked at Mendip, Forest of Dean, Hull websites)

**The Good – what local authority sites should be trying to include**

**Mendip**

* Good flow (consistent)

**Forest of Dean**

* Short journey
* Simple form

**The Bad – the pitfalls local authority sites should try to avoid**

**Mendip**

* No way to set up a direct debit online
* 3-step process – but could be 2
* Requires lots of detail on form

**Forest of Dean**

* Unnecessary blurb / image
* Not specific (multiple user needs)

**Hull**

* Takes you to wrong first page
* Recommended link is wrong
* Payment link is lost
* Page order is backwards
* Multiple user needs on 1 page
* Final form – unless user has tax payment card, s/he can’t complete

**A mock up of a good customer journey:**

1. Specific link to pay council tax
2. Prioritised list of payment options
3. Direct link to form

**Pay your council tax**

This model journey was worked on in **Newbury on 1 October 2013**

(Groups looked at Mendip, Forest of Dean, Hull websites)

**The Good – what local authority sites should be trying to include**

**Mendip**

* No clear signposts
* Should link straight to page 4
* Page 4 content should be shrunk by 90%
* Bad for mobile accessibility (length of page and the PDF)
* Good icons on payment page
* Good security on payment page

**Forest of Dean**

* Short journey
* Simple form

**The Bad – the pitfalls local authority sites should try to avoid**

**Mendip**

* Change first heading from ‘By the internet’ to ‘Pay online’
* Make it clear what cards are accepted and if there is a % surcharge
* Ultimately, just use the ‘Secure payments’ page as the link from GOV.UK to ‘pay your council tax’, but add on a list of other things that can be paid online to the page.

**Forest of Dean**

* Remove text about being a 24-hour service
* Use ‘payment’ screen as link from GOV.UK and add links to other ways of paying
* ‘Pay for it’ page should be renamed ‘Pay online’
* ‘Pay for it’ page covers too many things. Would be better for users to have a separate council tax payment page with ways to pay (Direct debit / post, etc)
* Payment page should prompt an email upon completion that says “Thanks for your payment” (receipt) and also “Did you know you can also pay for xxxxxx online?”

**Hull**

* No clear signposts
* Takes you to wrong page – should link straight to payment page
* Page 4 content could be shrunk by 90%
* Bad for mobile accessibility (length of page and the PDF)
* Good icons on payment page
* Good security on payment page

**A mock up of a good customer journey:**

1. Online ‘Council tax payment screen’ and links to other payment methods. Use icons for each card, intuitively ordered on the form
2. Dynamic validation on form
3. Suggest useful info – eg Direct Debit, New council tax resident set-up

**Pay your council tax**

This model journey was worked on in **Edinburgh on 11 October 2013**

(Groups looked at Glasgow, Forest of Dean, Hull websites)

**The Good – what local authority sites should be trying to include**

**Forest of Dean**

* Task is clear from search result (pay it)
* Clear wording
* Short journey (number of clicks)

**Glasgow**

* High result in Google

**Hull**

* Search works well

**The Bad – the pitfalls local authority sites should try to avoid**

**Forest of Dean**

* Could go straight to page for paying Council Tax and make journey even shorter

**Glasgow**

* Multiple payment options via online payment
* Online payment page – not needed. What is this page for? Could be missed out altogether
* Link to online payments is too far down the page – not digital by default!
* The payment page you land on first is not specific to council tax.
* Makes it look initially like you have to register to pay online but you don’t
* Search in Google doesn’t take into deep link for payments.

**Hull**

* Land on the wrong page from GOV.UK
* Search results list is very long – although council tax is at the top
* The top search result takes you to info on council tax, rather than page to pay
* The link to pay is halfway down the page
* The page is far too long

**Pay your council tax**

This model journey was worked on in **East Devon in the morning of 23 October 2013**

(Groups looked at Mendip, Forest of Dean, Hull websites)

**A mock up of a good customer journey**

(Green boxes represent internal concerns / considerations, pink boxes represent user concerns / questions)

GOV.UK: Pay your council tax

Can I get my husband to pay a contribution?

Add option – can we help with your council tax?

**EDDC**

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**Pay your council tax**

There are several ways you can

pay your council tax:

* ONLINE

Or

* By Direct Debit
* By Phone
* At the Post Office

Can I pay in smaller, more frequent payments?

I’m finding it hard financially – any help?

Add more info about how and why it’s secure – put in better English, with a picture

Add option – can we help with your council tax?

Would user like to pay council tax in a different pattern?

I’m worried about putting details online due to potential fraud

I need to have options of ways to pay.

**Online payments**

**Secure payment**

Postcode: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Or

Ref no: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Amount: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**Security Information**

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Choose your address from dropdown menu

**Pay your council tax**

Your payment has been received.

Thank you for paying your council tax online.

Return to EDDC homepage

This model journey was worked on in **East Devon in the afternoon of 23 October 2013**

(Groups looked at Mendip, Forest of Dean, Hull websites)

**The Good – what local authority sites should be trying to include**

**Mendip**

* Straight to required info
* Clean pages

**Forest of Dean**

* Straightforward
* Information about payment methods at start of info

**The Bad – the pitfalls local authority sites should try to avoid**

**Mendip**

* Still could cut down on number of clicks to complete journey

**Forest of Dean**

* Maybe better to use icons for payment methods

**Hull**

* Incorrect link
* Cluttered page
* Numerous links to the same information / results confusing
* Recommended link not correct
* 3rd click takes you to the info
* Only by 6th click can you input info in order to pay

**A mock up of a good customer journey**

(Green boxes represent internal concerns / considerations, pink boxes represent user concerns / questions)

**Pay council tax**

Home page choice =

* pay council tax online

OR

* alternative payment methods

On 1st click pay page – we need other payment methods

I don’t trust online payment services

We need a pointer to help if struggling

Fear of fraud

Pay page

Assurance to customers that personal ID details are taken by a ‘secure’ person

Worry about missed payments

On related links, other methods of payment

**Pay your council tax**

This model journey was worked on in **Manchester on 20 November 2013**

(Groups looked at Mendip, Forest of Dean, Hull websites)

**The Good – what local authority sites should be trying to include**

**Mendip**

* Best user journey
* Takes you to the right page to begin with
* Takes you to the payments landing page
* User then clicks the one they need

**The Bad – the pitfalls local authority sites should try to avoid**

**Hull**

* Starts with the wrong page
* No link to pay – forces customer to search
* Search results aren’t well formatted
* When get to correct page, no title saying “Pay your council tax”
* Link to “How to pay” is hidden in the middle of the page
* Should take you directly to council tax payments instead of the landing page
* to payment

**Forest of Dean**

* Takes you to a pay landing page for payments but doesn’t give you the option for other pay methods (eg direct debit)
* User then clicks on council tax payment

**A mock up of a good customer journey:**

Simple, clear fast

As a customer, I want to pay my council tax so I don’t have to contact the council

* Land on the ‘Pay your council tax’ page
* Select method of payment
* Reveals the details the user needs to complete transaction