**Really Useful Day**

**Model User Journey**

**Search the register of planning decisions**

**LGSL / IL = 516/8**

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: “Search the register of planning decisions”.**

**Council pages looked at =**

Islington, Kensington and Chelsea, Liverpool, Northumberland, Norwich, Salford

**Search the register of planning decisions**

This model journey was worked on in **London on 2 March 2012**

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

* Page with simple, single search box, with options to go to weekly lists etc
* Passing postcode through from Gov UK so user doesn’t have to enter it again on LA site

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

* Pages with multiple search boxes
* Jargon – official terminology
* Lack of branding consistency
* Irrelevant information (eg context)
* Top task (call to action) lost on page
* Directing people away from page to offices etc
* Forcing registration

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

Simple search box – postcode, ref number, etc

Advanced search

Instructions appear as you click in box

Multiple results

One result

Key info

**Search the register of planning decisions**

All relevant info

Basic information on web page, advanced as PDFs

Option to track

This model journey was worked on in **Bristol on 25 July 2012**

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

* Landing page has a search option
* Simple search:
  + Application number
  + Postcode
* Options for more advanced search
* Link to richer info by form
* Use natural language – words people use!

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

* Use too many words before the form
* Use technical planning terms
* Not more than two pages – search / results
* Don’t overly complicate the search – make it clear what you need
* Don’t hide links in the text
* Don’t lose the primary user journey in secondary tasks

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

Application number:

Postcode:

Pending Decided

Advanced search

Decisions made this week

Archive of decisions

Other ways to view applications

More information on the planning process

**Search the register of planning decisions**

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

(Groups looked at Northumberland, Norwich, Kensington and Chelsea websites)

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

**Northumberland**

* Correct page / topic
* Simple / easy search
* Map for results
* Description of results, including headings

**Norwich**

* Simple search system
* Map with results
* Good use of fonts

**Kensington and Chelsea**

* Landed on correct search page
* Good notes
* Concise
* Nice results – easy to read
* Divided applications, decisions and appeals into separate areas

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

**Northumberland**

* Took you to wrong landing page from GOV.UK
* No search help
* 1st page – too much text and too many different fonts and text sizes

**Norwich**

* Took you to wrong landing page from GOV.UK
* Unexplained logo (“PA”)
* Links unclear
* Poor content
* Hard to find things
* Too much info in results
* No headings for search results

**Kensington and Chelsea**

* No title in results – uses case numbers
* Tabs on results not very clear
* No choice for applications, decisions or appeals only
* No map of results

**Model user journey notes**

* Search via case number or postcode
* Maybe include search radius (miles?)
* Search spatially

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

Page 1

**Your council**

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**Planning search**

Applications Decisions Appeals

Radius

0 miles 20 miles

Search

More options

/ /

/ /

Date range to

Page 2

**Your council**

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**Planning search results**

Date (filter)

Status

Address

Case no

Title

Exeter EX2 4DS

Map

+

–

**Search the register of planning decisions**

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

(Groups looked at Northumberland, Norwich, Kensington and Chelsea websites)

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

**Northumberland**

* Keyword search
* Wording is user-centric
* Site helps to identify what we are looking for
* Possibly good for accessibility – can be used by screen readers?

**Norwich**

* Search within applications – multi-level

**Kensington and Chelsea**

* Search took us direct to the right page
* Postcode refinement
* Can select either application, decision or appeal
* Notes are informative
* Overview includes address / date – allows quicker identification

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

**Northumberland**

* All the information is there, but structure and presentation aren’t brilliant
* Too much information – too busy
* The task (which is the key thing) is at the foot of the page
* Colour!
* CAPS!

**Norwich**

* Land on wrong page when search
* 3 steps to correct area
* Navigation is inconsistent
* Information not top level
* Titles not on search results – seems like an essay!

**Kensington and Chelsea**

* Keyword search not explained
* Wording is professional – not simple English
* Is using tables accessible?

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

1. Google or GOV.UK

2. Planning search keyword (define parameters in plain English)

Optional filter / checkbox

Applications

Appeals

Decisions

3. Select the required application for more detail

**Search the register of planning decisions**

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

(Groups looked at Northumberland, Norwich, Kensington and Chelsea websites)

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

**Northumberland**

* Search by postcode works
* Clear results returned for search

**Kensington and Chelsea**

* Search takes you direct to planning applications search page
* Search is effective
* Presentation of results is very good – divided into open applications / decisions / appeals plus further explanation at bottom of page
* Easy to find decisions required
* Easy to read full details of decision
* Excellent

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

**Northumberland**

* Went to planning page, not search page
* Link to search is buried in the text
* Results not divided into open applications or decisions

**Norwich**

* External and internal search failed
* Documents, not web pages
* Navigations took you to planning page
* Planning page focussed on policy, not the user
* Lind to applications not immediately obvious (poor logo) – needs to stand out more
* Results overpowering – descriptors too long and too difficult to read

**Kensington and Chelsea**

* Not sure what NAA meant on the decisions page
* Not optimised for mobile

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

Postcode search

20 per page

Show

Search

Reset

Advanced search (keyword)

**Useful notes**

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Decisions (16 results) Appeals (0 results)

Applications (1 result)

**Related pages**

Ward

Address and details

Registration date

Case number

-------------

---------

-----------------

--------------------------------------

---------

--------------------------------------

-----------------

-------------

**Useful notes**

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_