

# Selected Case Studies

2018 - 2020

Rob McCarthy

My approach is to keep work clean, simple, and effective. Fuss-free interfaces and careful execution - design as it should be.

Throughout my career I have collaborated with passionate people to create desirable, feasible and viable digital products and services.

# Skills

Design system build and maintenance

Use case and user story creation

Wireframing and sitemapping

Lo-fidelity prototyping

Hi-fidelity prototyping

# Case Study - W4P

Rebuilding the UK Pub industry's leading specialist website builder.



## **The challenge**

Take a decade old website builder system; upgrade, update, and improve, whilst retaining and growing an established customer base.

## The project

Websites4Pubs had a system that had been built upon over the years into a fully functional website builder for the pub industry. Throughout this time, the system had become bloated with features, the UI had been left untouched, and a customer acquisition strategy was non-existent.

Working within a small product development team, our strategy was simple; keep existing customers happy on the current system, whatever it took, whilst developing a new system that we could soft launch to existing customers.

At the early stages of development, we engaged with the existing customer base who were invaluable for user research, and for creating use cases.

Prioritisation of features was key, and this was driven by conversations with existing customers as well as usage data logged in the existing system. Whilst the existing system was extensively feature rich, we found a number of features that were completely unused. These features never made it onto our backlog.

# 1. Cycle

Hi guys,

Here's a bit of information and a record of the work we're planning on completing during this cycle. We can come back to this when we have our cycle update meetings to act as a little reminder for ourselves.

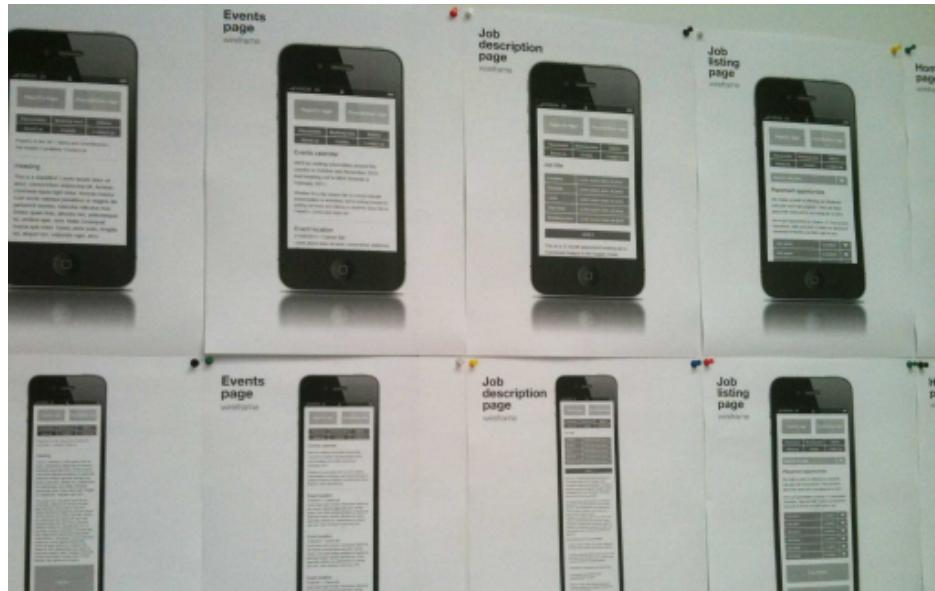
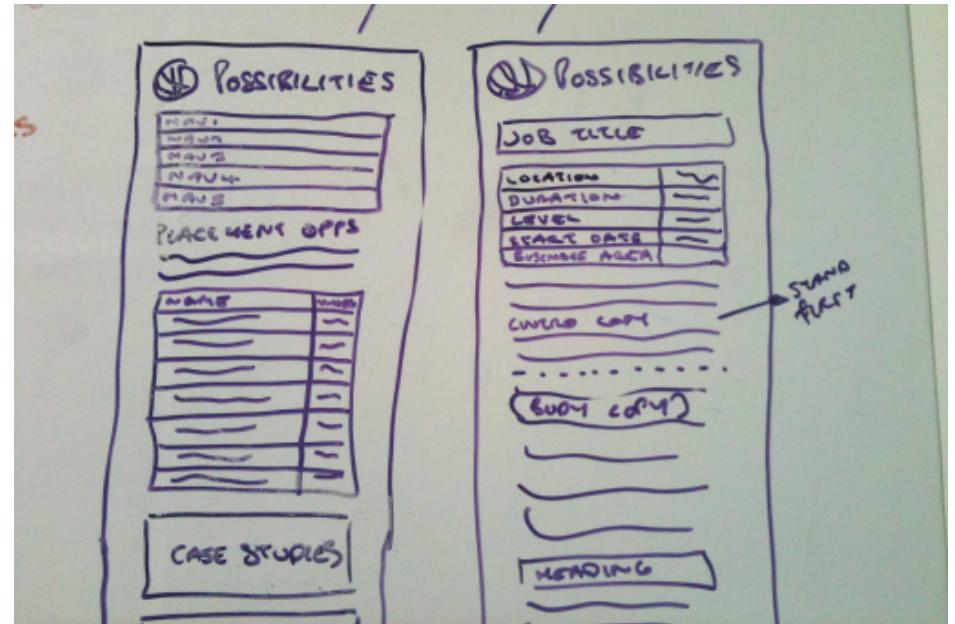
A big aim of this cycle is to move towards a live environment by setting up a Google server. This will be fantastic as it means that we'll be moving towards a process of 'getting it done' rather than 'getting it perfect'.

The work we're aiming to complete within this cycle is shown below:

- ▼ 1. Creating and managing an account
  - 1.1 User goes through a sign up process.
  - 1.2 A user's account is created.
  - 1.3 An email notification is sent when account is created.

# Wireframing

## Sketching, lo-fidelity prototyping & storyboarding for hospitality job listings



## **The project (contd.)**

As a small development team, we were working in a highly collaborative way throughout the entire project. Whilst working with 2 x full stack developers, I was responsible for the information architecture, UI and UX design, as well as product ownership and management.

I created a design system, named Optic, that worked across a website builder, account system, and site management system. Creating this design system enabled my colleagues to apply a consistent and coherent UI whilst I continued to work on information architecture for further features.

Secure a domain X

Build your brand by getting a memorable domain name that sets you apart from the crowd.

Menu Label (Static)

Menu Label (Static)

Menu Label (Static)

Secure a domain X

Build your brand by getting a memorable domain name that sets you apart from the crowd.

**Choose an available domain**

Menu Label (Static)

Menu Label (Static)

Menu Label (Static)

Menu Label (Static)

Secure a domain X

Build your brand by getting a memorable domain name that sets you apart from the crowd.

**Choose an available domain**

Secure a domain

Build your brand by getting a memorable domain name that sets you apart from the crowd.



Trial Upgrade

The image displays a variety of UI components and color swatches. At the top left, there are two buttons: a green button labeled 'Secure Your Domain' and a grey button labeled 'Not now, thanks'. To the right is a dark grey rectangular area with a small white icon. On the far right, there is a vertical stack of three color swatches labeled 'Menu Label (Active)', 'Menu Label (Hover)', and 'Menu Label (Static)'. Below these are three rounded rectangular buttons: a blue one labeled 'Trial' and 'Upgrade', a red one labeled 'Live' and 'Go Offline', and an orange one labeled 'Offline' and 'Go Live'. The bottom section features two rows of typeface specifications. The first row shows the text '5XL' with the following details: Typestyle (bold), Typeface (Roboto), Weight (Bold), Size (48px), and another Size value (59px). The second row shows the same text '5XL' with the following details: Typestyle (regular), Typeface (Roboto), Weight (Regular), Size (48px), and another Size value (59px).

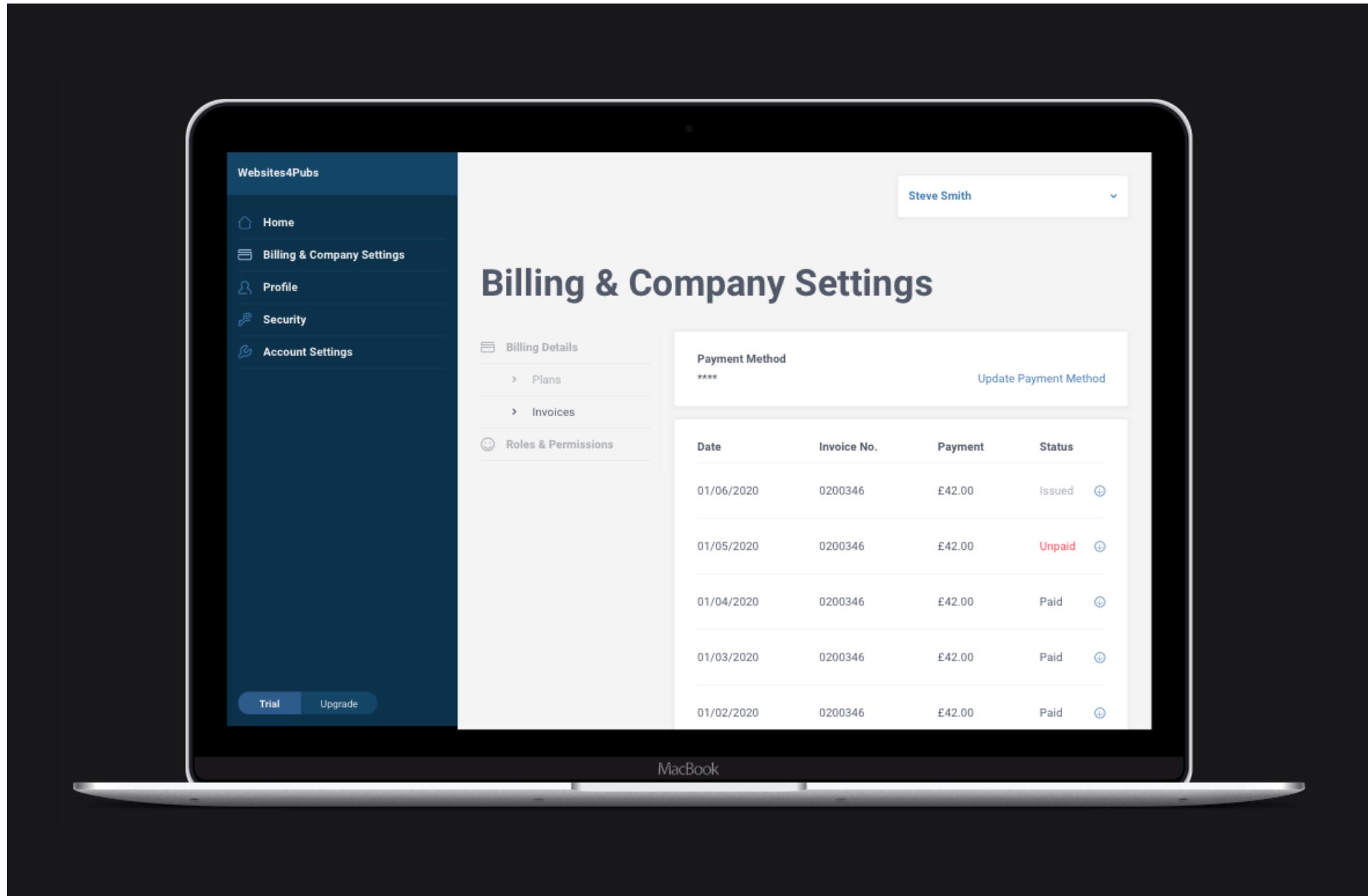
Typestyle	Typeface	Weight	Size	Size
<b>5XL</b>	Roboto	Bold	48px	59px
<b>5XL</b>	Roboto	Regular	48px	59px

## **Are you sure?**

This is an example of supporting text for an overlay. It's important that a description is supportive of the primary heading/question. This may include additional information a customer needs to know in order to make the correct decision for their situation.

Oops. No, cancel that!

Yes, I'm 100% sure!



## **What was learnt**

With a small team, building a new product whilst keeping an existing one going is hard... really hard. At times, the existing product would require more of our time which would be really important to keep existing customers loyal, but this would also stop us from progressing the new product further - a double edged sword.

# Case Study - Colchester Borough Council

Improving the customer experience of self-serve transactions at local government level.



## **The challenge**

colchester.gov.uk serves 20,000 residents each week in carrying out many self-serve transactions, inc; reporting missed bins, paying council tax, reporting anti-social behaviour, + many more!

Prior to me joining Colchester Borough Council, there was a push to move away from a previous website supplier (and contract) which led to a rapid program of design and development. During that time, consideration for quality assurance, usability, web standards, accessibility, and user experience, was sacrificed for speed of delivery.

*"Your site would not let me register to vote.  
Your site only took me to 'How to Register to vote'.  
The start of the first page was not visible and  
my address was not recognised!"*

**Anonymous Colchester Resident**

## The project

With such a vast program of work being delivered in such a short period of time, there was some reluctance to acknowledge and address the apparent issues.

Through the use of overwhelming negative customer feedback and user testing, I was able to peel away the reluctant barriers and begin to bring stakeholders along a different journey. This journey was one of improving the customer experience.

I proposed to move away from the 'big bang' approach to website design. Rather than rip up what had been done and go on a 2 year+ crusade to design and develop a new site, I suggested that we approach the redesign in an iterative manner.

This iterative manner began by highlighting patterns across the site; recurring page types, transactions, processes, and user journeys. Improving these patterns would make highly noticeable changes to the website.

[Breadcrumb link](#) > Breadcrumb current page

## Service name goes here

### Use this service to:

- Do something
- Do something
- Do something

### Before you start:

- You will need something
- You will need something
- You will need something

**!** This is an important message and is to be used for highly important information that a user needs to know before doing a transaction (e.g. being responsible for their privacy when using a public computer)

[Start now >](#)

[Breadcrumb link](#) > Breadcrumb current page

Service name goes here

## A useful and informative confirmation message

Include a reference number if applicable

e.g. **ULW7833P**

### What happens next

- Something that is going to happen next (e.g. We have sent you a confirmation email).
- It might be something else like (e.g. Your transaction will be processed and we will contact you via email once it has been approved, completed, and processed).
- Any other information that will be useful for a user.

[Home](#) > [Allotments](#) > Apply for an allotment

Apply for an allotment

## Do you agree to the allotment tenancy [terms and conditions](#)?



I accept the [terms and conditions](#)

[Continue](#)

### Payment summary

12 month allotment fee  
2 x additional keys  
+ concession

Amount to pay

**£82.39**

Apply for an allotment  
**Do you live in the Colchester Borough?**

Yes  No

[Continue](#)

Home > Careers > Current opportunities

## Current opportunities

**Marketing Officer**

Salary	Contract type	Contract hours	Closing date
£23,406 to £29,862	Fixed term contract for 2 years	37 hours per week	August 7th 2019

**Assistant Marketing Officer**

Salary	Contract type	Contract hours	Closing date
£20,444 to £24,046	Fixed term contract for 1 year	37 hours per week	August 2nd 2019

**Purchasing and Income Apprentice**

Salary	Contract type	Contract hours	Closing date
£4.35 an hour for age 16-17 £0.15 an hour for 18-20 £7.70 an hour for age 21-24	Apprenticeship	37 hours per week	August 2nd 2019

**Contact and Support Adviser - Housing**

Salary	Contract type	Contract hours	Closing date
£17,363 to £20,444 pro rata for part time hours	Permanent	Either part time working 22.2 hours or Full Time - 37 hours per week	July 28th 2019

**Things you need to know when making an application**  
[View information](#)

Home > Allotments > Apply for an allotment

## Your details

Please provide the following details to secure your plot.

First name

Last name

Telephone number

Email address

Your address  
 Please enter your postcode and select your address.  
  
[Find address](#)

[Continue](#)

Apply for an allotment  
**Payment summary**

12 month allotment fee  
 2 x additional keys  
 + concession

**Amount to pay**  
**£82.39**

[Continue](#)

Recycling and rubbish > Report your missed bins

## Report your missed bins

### What have we missed?

We should have collected your household rubbish, glass, cans, tins, and food waste. Let us know what we missed.

Black bags / wheelie bin  
 Cans and tins  
 Glass  
 Food waste

[Continue](#)

## Do you receive any benefits?

You are entitled to a concession on your part of your allotment tenancy fee if you receive any of the following benefits:

- Universal Credit including qualifying for free prescriptions
- Income Support
- Job Seekers Allowance
- Employment and Support Allowance
- Guaranteed Pension Credit
- Child Tax Credit
- Working Tax Credit with a disability element (you must have an income for tax credit purposes of £15,276 or less)

Yes  No

[Continue](#)

## **The project (contd.)**

A design system was developed in order to create much needed consistency that was not previously present. As an example of the situation, during a review of the current website, I recorded 15 different action styles (buttons and links) on a single page - this resulted in customers having to work extremely hard to know where to interact with the site.

We consciously and blatantly took inspiration from the Gov.uk design system which GDS actively encourage. Central Government have spent a lot of time and money to create a design system (and service language) that meet the needs of customers. Rather than ignore their learnings and start again, we intelligently used the Gov.uk design system to inform our own.

This design system has been used to improve not only the many transactions on the website but also drive important changes to improve the web templates used for presenting information to customers. A number of landing pages, series and content pages have been created to roll out to the 4,000+ pages on colchester.gov.uk.

## Page Templates Before

**COUNCIL TAX**

Register for Council Tax and manage your account online. Choose when most suits you to pay your bill or benefit of a change of circumstances and upload supporting documents. Find out about the help available if you are struggling with payments as well as general advice on money matters.

REGISTER

APPOINT

PAY

REPORT

UPLOAD EVIDENCE

DISCOUNTS AND EXEMPTIONS

INFO AND ADVICE

MY ACCOUNT

HOME

**Single Person Discount Review**

If you are currently in receipt of a SSP, Single Parent Tax Credit or Income Support, you may receive a letter from us asking for details of your circumstances and the amount you receive.

It is very important that you complete this letter and return it to us either by email or through the post.

Please do this as soon as possible in the discount being calculated.

### ★ Most Popular Articles

**DISABILITY REDUCTION**  
disability reduction info  
Disability Reduction for people with a disability

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**CHARITY EXEMPTION**  
charity exemption info  
Information on what to apply for as an exemption if you are in charity

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**CHANGES TO HOUSING BEN...**  
housing benefit info  
Information about Housing Benefit and changes to how we pay it

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We would love to hear what you think about our new site, tell us if you have any comments or suggestions for us. If you have any questions, or if you experience any issues while using the site you can let us know via the feedback form.

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- [Our Services](#) [Headphones Of Information](#)
- [Amphora](#) [Celebration Ambassadors](#)
- [Small Just You](#) [New Bases Baden-Gesellen](#)

### Contact:

- [Reson House, 31 Sheepen Road, Colchester, Essex, CO3 9PL](#)
- [Contact Us](#)
- [Colchester Library & Community Hub, Spring Street](#)

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**Money Advice Service**

**MONEY ADVICE SERVICE**

A free and impartial independent advice service to help you manage your money

**IN THIS ARTICLE**

About the Money Advice Service and what help they provide.

The Money Advice Service helps you manage your money. They do this directly through their own free and impartial advice service. They are an independent service set up by government.

They provide:

- Advice and guides to help improve your finances
- Tools and calculators to help you keep track and plan ahead
- Support in person, over the phone and online

They can also help with the following:

- Debt and borrowing** – what to know before you borrow, take control of debt, mortgages and debt problems and help with loans
- Managing money** – how to manage your money, from maintaining a bank account, managing money, building credit and saving savings
- Saving and investing** – how to save money, types of savings, how to invest money and types of investment
- Reducing redundancy** – employment basics, redundancy, benefits at work and self-employed
- Prioritise your debts** – if you have several debts, find out which ones to pay back first

You can contact the [Money Advice Service online](#) or by phone on **0800 1367777**.

**Related Articles**

**Quick Links:**

<a href="#">Jobs</a>	<a href="#">Help Us Get it Right</a>
<a href="#">Our Services</a>	<a href="#">Freedom of Information</a>
<a href="#">Jurybox</a>	<a href="#">Calderdale Jobadvisers</a>
<a href="#">Great Airedale</a>	<a href="#">Harmless Gender-Stereotypes</a>

**Contact:**

Brewin House, 13 Sheepen Road,  
Oldham, Greater Manchester, OL9 9PS

[Contact Us](#)

Calderdale Library & Community Hub  
Opening Times

**Info:**

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**Council Tax Enforcement Frequently Asked Questions**

**FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS**

FAQs related to reminder notices and fiscal reminder notices.

### IN THIS ARTICLE

- MOUs Related to Council Tax Reminders

I am moving house, what do I need to do?

I am an owner-occupier and I have tenants occupying a part of my property. What can I do?

Can I change my Council Tax payment date and frequency (monthly, fortnightly or weekly)?

What can I do if I cannot pay?

Am I entitled to a discount or exemption?

What is Single Person Discount?

We are students, how do I notify Colchester Borough Council about this?

I am experiencing financial hardship, where can I find help?

[BACK TO TOP](#)

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# Page Templates After

The homepage features a large banner at the top with a video player showing a person riding a bicycle. Below the banner, there's a section titled "Budget challenge" with a sub-section "Due to the impact of COVID-19, Colchester Borough Council will have over £10m less to pay for services." A call-to-action button "Find out more" is present. The main content area is titled "Welcome to Colchester Borough Council" and includes a "Latest news" section with a "Colchester Museums come to your home" link. Below this are several service links: "Planning, building control and local land charges", "Recycling and rubbish", "Council Tax", "Benefits and support", "Make a payment", "Housing", "Your local community", "Parking and travel", "Environmental and animal services", and "Leisure, events and museums". Each service link has its own "Important notice heading goes here" placeholder.

This page displays a search bar at the top and a breadcrumb navigation "Search-colchester.gov.uk > Services & Information > Council services". The main content is a list of council services categorized by letter from A to Z. Each category has a placeholder "Important notice heading goes here" and a "Find out more" link. The "A" section includes links like "Cabinet", "Car parks", "Cars (abandoned)", "Cemetery and crematorium", "Change of use", "Clinical waste", "Collection of large items", "Collection of waste and recycling", "Commercial waste", "Committee meetings", "Complaints", "Composting", "Conservation areas", "Consultations", "Coronavirus", "Contaminated land", "Council housing", "Council meetings", "Council tax", "Council tax support", "Councillors", "Country parks", "Customer service award", and "Customer service centre". The "D" section starts with "D".

This page shows a breadcrumb navigation "Search-colchester.gov.uk > Services & Information > Council services > Council services by A-Z > Council services current page". The main content is a single article titled "Maecenas tempus, tellus eget condimentum rhoncus". It includes a "Contents" sidebar with links to "Unrelated page link", "Current page link", and "Unrelated page link". The article text is placeholder text: "Maecenas tempus, tellus eget condimentum rhoncus. Sem quam semper libero, ut amet adipiscing sem neque sed ipsum. Nam quam nunc. Id blandit vel luctus pulvinar, hendecet id, libero. Maecenas nec odio et ante tristique tempor. Donec vitae sapien ut libero remensis feugiat. Nullam quis ante. Etiam sit amet eris erigat enim fusce fusce fusce. Fusce. Duis leu. Sed fringilla massa ut amet nibh. Donec metus sagittis magna. In". The page footer includes "Page last reviewed: 6 August 2018" and "Next review due: 6 August 2022". Navigation links "Previous" (to "Unrelated page link") and "Next" (to "Unrelated page link") are also present.

## **What was learnt**

I have learnt that whilst our initial approach was to iterate fast and hard, Local Government does work at it's own pace. Rather than push against this and potentially fail to bring stakeholders along the journey, we have been iterating in the background with a dev site. Once in a position to be given the green light, a program of pushes to the live site will be rolled out that will make dramatic and instant improvements to the customer experience on colchester.gov.uk.

Thank you.

Rob McCarthy