

# Selected Case Studies

2018 - 2020

Rob McCarthy

My approach to design and leadership is to keep it simple and effective, with a focus on delivery and high attention to detail.

To make great products that work for people, I have collaborated with passionate teams.

# My approach to delivery

Discover and research

Develop and understand company goals, product vision and user needs

Plan features and establish a roadmap for delivery

Wireframe, prototype and test

Create design systems, pattern libraries and production ready user interfaces

Provide team leadership, coaching and mentoring, technical handover, and stakeholder management

Assure quality

Release / launch / deliver

Analyse data, learn and iterate

# 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  
an established customer base.

**My role(s):** Product Lead / Manager, Information Architect, and Digital Designer

**Project length:** 12 months

# The project

Websites4Pubs had a fully functional website builder for the pub industry, but the system was a decade old. The system had become bloated with features, the UI had been left untouched, and customer acquisition 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.

At the early stages of the project, we engaged with existing customers who were invaluable for user research, and for creating use cases. The prioritisation of features was key to managing ‘the possible’, 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 unused. These features never made it onto our roadmap.

# Roadmapping

Using 6 week cycles to set achievable delivery goals.

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.

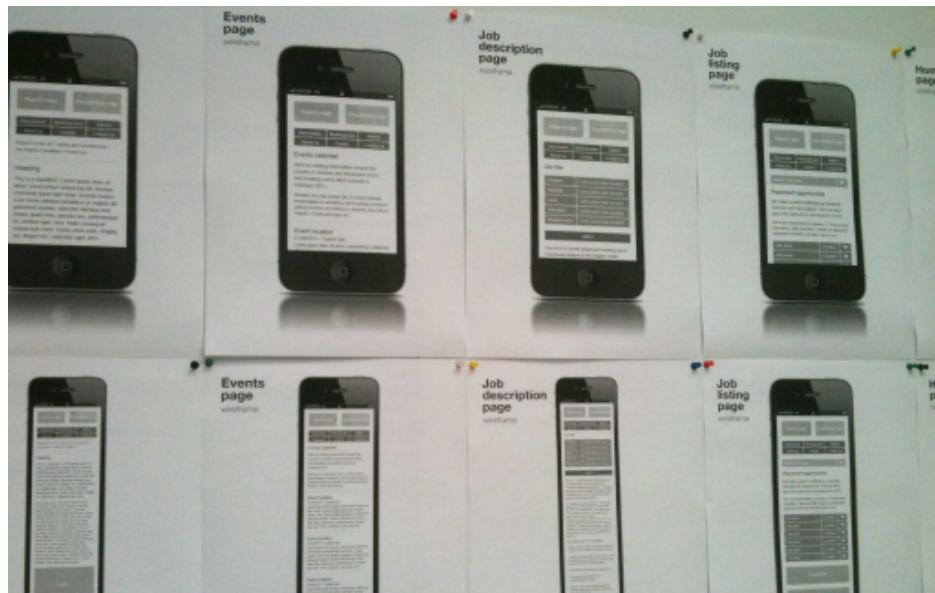
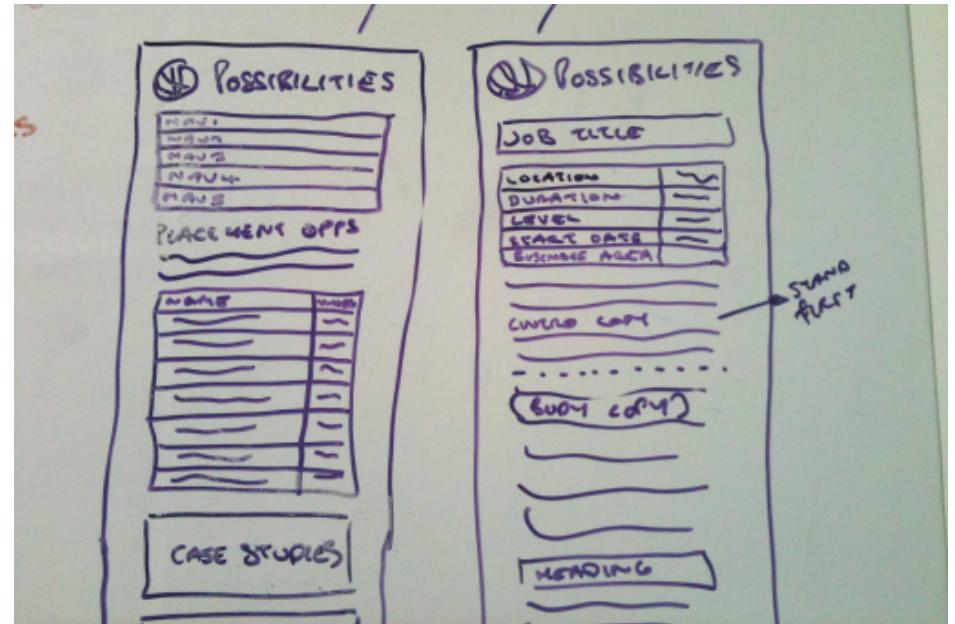
A big aim of this cycle is to move towards a live environment by setting up a Google server. This will be fantastic as it means that we'll be moving towards a process of 'getting it done' rather than 'getting it perfect'.

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 (cont.)

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

# Design system

Card layout, menu items, and toggle options.

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 X

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

[Choose an available domain](#)

Secure a domain X

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

[Secure Your Domain](#) [Not now, thanks](#)



Menu Label (Static)

Menu Label (Static)

Menu Label (Static)

Menu Label (Static)

Trial  Upgrade

Menu Label (Active)

# Design system

## Notifications, and typography.

This is an urgent instruction which has to be done. It cannot be dismissed and it may go onto multiple lines if required.

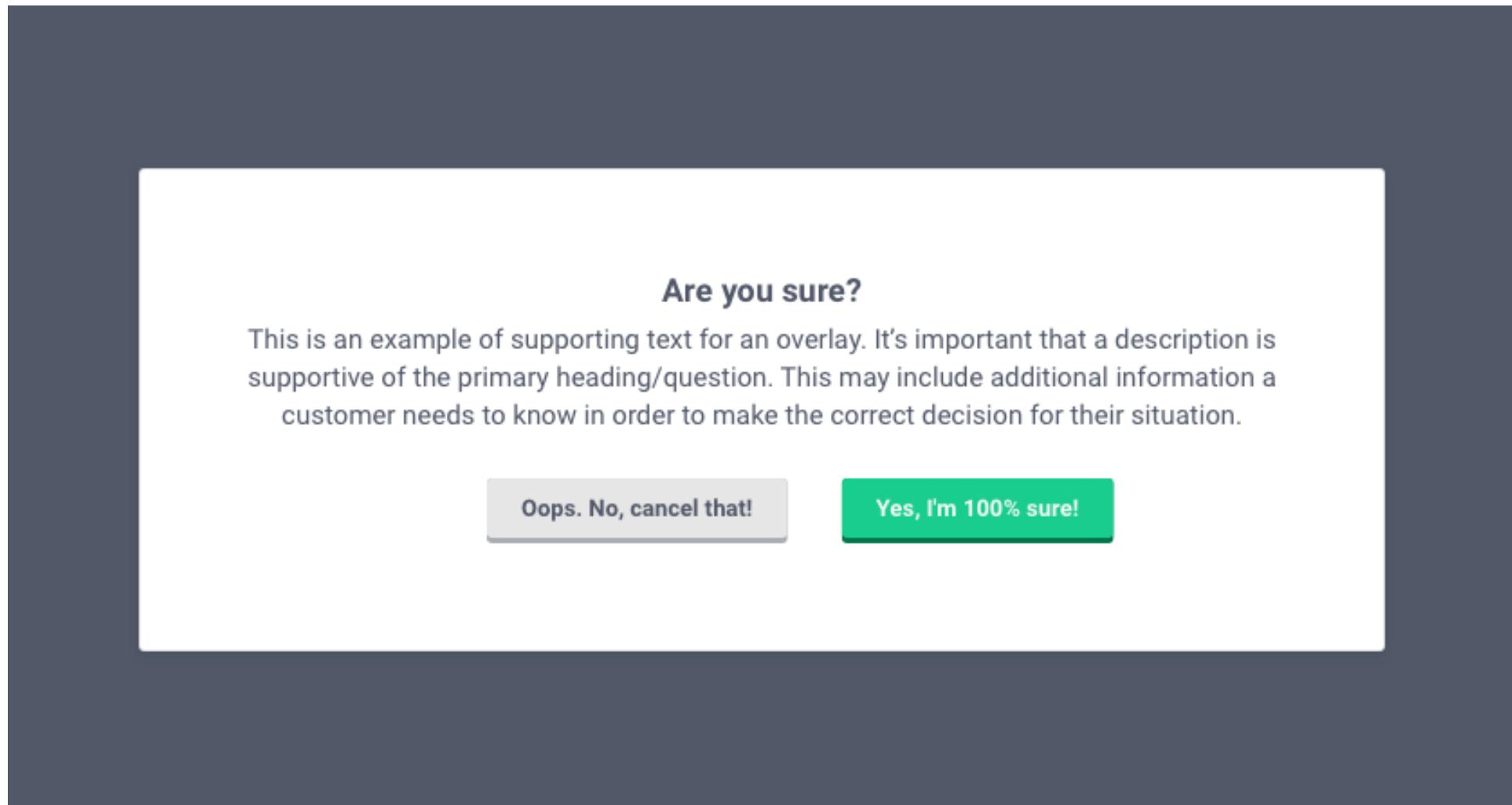
Live      Go Offline

Offline      Go Live

Typestyle	Typeface	Weight	Size	Size
5XL	Roboto	Bold	48px	59px
5XL	Roboto	Regular	48px	59px
2XL	Roboto	Bold	28px	39px

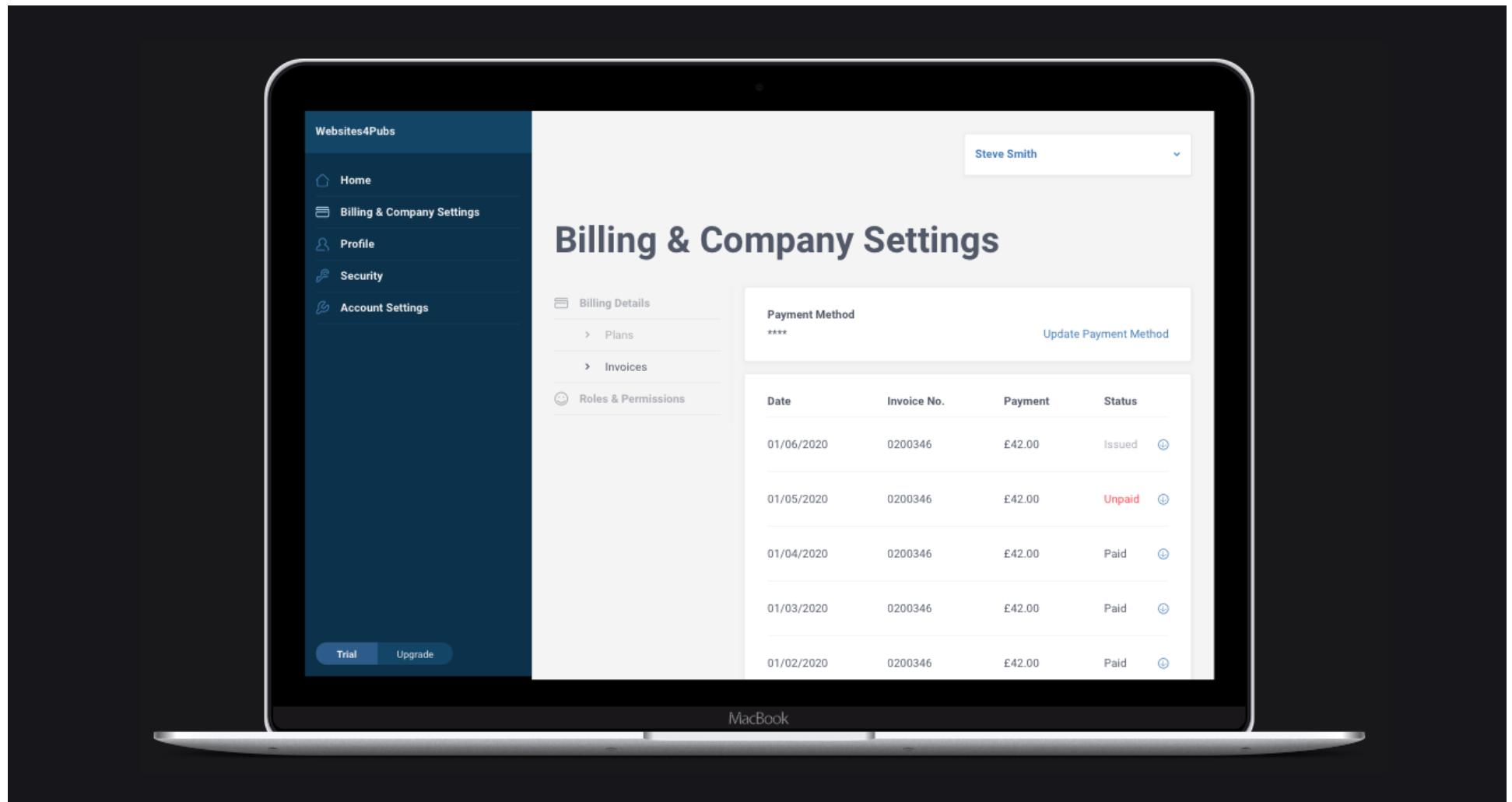
# Design system

## System prompts and messages.



# User interface

## Application of the design system.



# 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 keeping existing customers, but this would prevent 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 185,000 residents each week in carrying out many self-serve transactions, inc; reporting missed bins, paying council tax, reporting anti-social behaviour, + many more!

In 2016, Colchester Borough Council made a move away from a previous website supplier which led to a rapid program of in-house design and development. During that time of speedy digital transformation, consideration for quality assurance, usability, web standards, accessibility, and user experience, was heavily sacrificed for speed of delivery.

**My role(s):** Digital Project Manager, Digital Designer

**Project length:** Ongoing

## Customer feedback

Feedback was measured at 90% negative for UX.

*"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 programme of work being delivered in such a short period of time, there were a number of issues with the website, notably to the usability and UX. But with 70 different service areas, 5,000+ web pages, and 4,500 inaccessible PDFs - where do you start?

I needed to bring stakeholders along the journey I was proposing. I was keen for the Council 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 project 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. We also analysed customer feedback in combination with website analytics, so we could prioritise (a) where the most pain for customers was, (b) where the most pain/contact was for the organisation, and (c) where improvements would have the biggest impact - this created our roadmap.

# Pattern library

## Self-serve transactions and processes.

- Cans and tins
- Glass
- Food waste

Home > Recycling & Rubbish > Recycling & Rubbish Collection Information

### Recycling and rubbish collections

## What is your home address?

Postcode  
CO1 2TT [Change](#)

Select an address

72 addresses found [Can't find your address?](#)

[Continue](#)

Email address

Use a valid email address as you'll be required to verify via email.

**Enter a valid email address**

Home > Recycling & Rubbish > Recycling & Rubbish Collection Information

## Recycling and rubbish collections

Use this service to:

- Check what day to put your recycling and rubbish out for collection
- Download a recycling calendar
- Another reason for using this process

[Start now >](#)

# Pattern library

## Notices, updates, and messages.

### Important notice heading goes here

Text to support the important notice goes here and [includes a link](#) to direct users to relevant support information.

### Important notice heading goes here

Text to support the important notice goes here and [includes a link](#) to direct users to relevant support information.

### Housing Benefit and Local Council Tax Support

Some significant changes have been announced by the Government to offer financial support to residents impacted by coronavirus.

FEATURED



Can't find the service you are looking for?

[View all our services by A-Z](#)



### Download a recycling equipment voucher

Before visiting your local recycling bag and container stockist, you will need to [download a recycling equipment voucher](#).

# Pattern library

Cards, confirmation messages, and navigation.

**54.63%**  
of our waste has been  
recycled since April.

## Support for residents

Service changes, benefit advice,  
and latest news.

[View support](#)

## Payment summary

Amount to pay

**£82.39**

## Subscribe

Subscribe to receive updates from Colchester Borough Council on a range of topics, inc: borough news, election updates, committee information + much more.

Enter your email address

Subscribe

## A useful and informative confirmation message

Include a reference number if applicable  
e.g. ULW7833P

## Primary link

Maecenas tempus, tellus eget  
libero, sit amet adipiscing sem

## Primary link

Maecenas tempus, tellus eget  
libero, sit amet adipiscing sem

## Primary link

[Secondary link](#)

[Secondary link](#)

[Secondary link](#)

# Photography

Injecting personality into the Council.



# The project (cont.)

A pattern library was developed in order to create much needed consistency that was not previously present. As an example, during a review of the website, we recorded 15 different action styles (buttons and links) on a single page - this inconsistency in usability results 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 pattern library has improved the usability of many self-serve transactions as well as drive improvements to 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 5,000+ pages on colchester.gov.uk as part of the overall implementation roadmap.

# Page templates

## Inc. home page, services listing page, and content page.

The image displays three side-by-side screenshots of the Colchester Borough Council website, illustrating different page templates:

- Home Page:** Shows a large banner for a "Budget challenge" due to COVID-19, followed by sections for "Latest news", "Services", and "Important notice headings".
- Services Listing Page (A-Z):** Shows a search bar and a list of council services from A to H, each with a brief description and a "Read more" link. A sidebar provides search tips and links to service lists.
- Content Page:** Shows a large banner with the heading "Maecenas tempus, tellus eget condimentum rhoncus", followed by a "Content" section with links to service lists, and two "Important notice heading" boxes.

# What was learnt

With 70 different service areas, this project had 70 different stakeholders.

This was a lot to manage but I learnt the importance of having a roadmap laid out at the start, not only to communicate the stages of implementation, but to also communicate the overall strategy, vision and goal of the project. In addition to a roadmap, we also defined a set of digital principles that we would ensure the project adhered to.

With the roadmap and principles created, we were able to communicate and involve the project stakeholders whilst managing their input carefully. This has been so important on this project due to the scale and breadth of the Council's different service areas.

Thank you.

Rob McCarthy

## 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.

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.

Rob McCarthy

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## Education

### **2006 – 2009**

BA (hons) Interactive Design at University of Lincoln, UK.

## Experience

### **June 2019 - Present**

Digital Projects & Web Manager at Colchester Borough Council

[colchester.gov.uk](http://colchester.gov.uk)

My responsibilities are to lead and manage the work of the Web Development Team, co-ordinate work involving digital development across the organisation, and align plans and strategies across the Digital Development Team.

An additional part of my role has been to gradually adopt the GDS Design System into the colchester.gov.uk website, whilst also working with the Digital Development Team to begin adopting the GDS Service Manual. Both of these responsibilities have been self-initiated and are in their infancy stages of adoption.

### **October 2012 - May 2019**

Digital Designer & Product Lead at WDL / W4P

[websitedesign.co.uk](http://websitedesign.co.uk) / [websites4pubs.co.uk](http://websites4pubs.co.uk)

I held multiple roles with varied responsibilities including Project Lead, Digital Designer and Information Architect.

I have created a design system and wireframed all features of an application. Also, as the Project Lead on the application, I created and ran 6 week project cycles, provided progress reports to the wider team, as well as making key decisions.

As a Digital Designer and Information Architect my duties included running kick-off meetings with clients, creating user journeys and wireframes in both sketched and digital prototype format, creating high-fidelity website designs for use by Web Developers, as well as presenting completed designs to clients.

## Experience (cont.)

### **October 2011 - October 2012**

Digital Designer at New Digital Partnership

ndp-studio.com

As a Digital Designer I was involved in kick-off meetings with clients and team members, initial wireframing and sitemap creation, as well as final production-ready designs for websites and other digital materials (e.g. email marketing templates). NDP was a Drupal (CMS) based agency and we worked with a number of charities (e.g. War Child), businesses and organisations on their digital presence.

### **February 2011 - October 2011**

Designer at Hoop Associates

uxblondon.com

Whilst working at Hoop Associates (now UXB London) I was involved in a number of projects with high profile clients, including Crossrail, PepsiCo, Bupa, Harry Potter (Bloomsbury Publishing) and Carbon Trust. My duties involved working on a range of digital and print materials for project pitches, artworking print-ready files, wireframing user journeys, as well as designing materials with the use of brand guidelines.

### **August 2010 - December 2010**

Designer at Thirdperson

thirdperson.co.uk

My first venture into the world of London agencies was working as a Junior Designer at Thirdperson alongside directors, senior designers, project managers and copywriters. Unfortunately, due to the loss of contracts, redundancies came into effect shortly after I occupied the position.

Projects completed whilst at Thirdperson included branding and identity, campaign advertising, internal communications, print and digital.

Clients included BP, Jersey Telecom and Wave Telecom.

Rob McCarthy

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Dear Hiring Manager,

I am applying for the role of Senior Product Designer that you are advertising and given my 10 years of digital design and leadership experience, I believe I would be suitable for the role.

Over the past 10 years working in the digital industry, I have developed a wide range of relevant and practical skills that include:

- Information architecture, inc. user journey mapping and wireframing.
- Lo-fidelity design and prototyping.
- Creation and implementation of design systems/pattern libraries.
- Hi-fidelity user interface design.
- Extensive experience with UI design tools such as Sketch, Invision and Adobe Creative Suite.

Throughout my different roles as a designer, digital consultant, product manager, and digital lead, I have acquired a number of transferrable skills including:

- The ability to successfully communicate at a number of technical levels.
- Competently manage stakeholders throughout a project.
- Provide coaching and mentoring with team members.
- Set the vision and values to provide guidance and direction.
- Balance commercial and non-commercial priorities.
- Have a highly proactive approach with a focus on delivery.
- Keen eye for detail without losing sight of the bigger picture.

Rob McCarthy

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Over the years I have worked collaboratively with multidisciplinary teams involving digital consultants, information architects, designers, front-end and back-end developers and programmers, project managers and digital marketers. I have also worked with a wide range of clients in both B2B and B2C markets including global brands, start-ups, charitable organisations and local government. Notable clients that I have worked with over the past 10 years are; Bupa, PepsiCo, NHS, Bloomsbury, Carbon Trust, BP, Jersey Telecom and Colchester Borough Council.

Currently I am working in UK local government where I have the opportunity to work on challenging digital transformation tasks that directly serve residents within my local community. Specifically, I have recently been working with a team to overhaul the customer experience of the colchester.gov.uk website and the many online services and transactions (e.g. planning applications, reporting missed bin collections, allotment allocation, paying council tax, and much more).

By gathering user feedback through online surveys, as well as identifying pain points for users through heat-mapping, analytics, and screen recordings, we have built a new strategy and approach for the website's customer experience. With buy-in from senior stakeholders, we've begun to create a design system based around the GOV.UK and GDS library which is currently in the process of being implemented.

More information about me can be found on my personal website, along with recent examples of my work - <https://robmcc.co.uk/>

I'm keen to learn more about the role and I welcome any questions about my application.

Many thanks,

Rob McCarthy