



Kent CC's HWRC Booking Service.

Case study document.

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Who we are.

We're on a mission to improve access to public services. With our industry-leading GovBook automation platform, we've facilitated over 25 million citizen interactions and helped over 100 public sector departments improve the citizen experience, reduce costs, and increase operational efficiency.

Our experience.

By collaborating with some of the UK's most forward-thinking waste teams, we've developed an award-nominated HWRC Booking System that delivers average annual savings of £450,000 and achieves a 1000% return on investment across over 100 sites.

Accreditations.



We're a G-Cloud 14 Supplier, our solutions meet the WCAG 2.2 AA, and we hold accreditations for ISO27001 and Cyber Essentials Plus. We also guarantee an up-time of 99.95% or higher. Find out more [here](#).

The challenge.

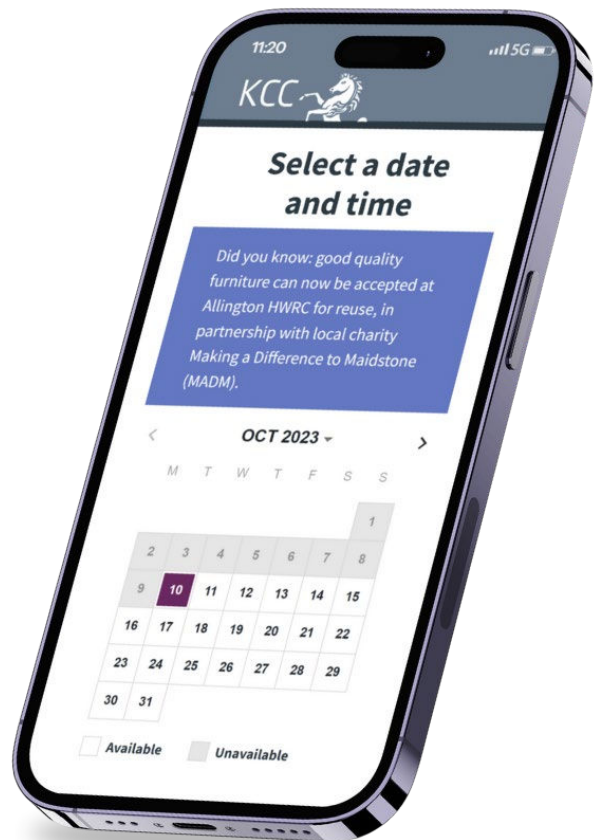
Kent County Council (KCC) faced several challenges in managing its 18 Household Waste Recycling Centres (HWRCs). These centres serve 1.6 million residents and handle approximately 145,000 tonnes of waste per year.

The COVID-19 pandemic intensified these difficulties, as public health measures required reduced site capacities, enforced social distancing, and introduced additional traffic management protocols to ensure public safety. As a result, KCC opted to trial a HWRC Booking System.

While COVID-19 presented unprecedented challenges, it also served as a catalyst for modernising Kent's HWRC operations. During the pandemic, the trialing of a booking system highlighted deeper, long-standing operational inefficiencies. This experience underscored the urgent need for a more efficient, sustainable approach to waste management.

Key challenges identified included:

- Unauthorised Use: Facilities were frequently misused by non-residents and businesses, placing unnecessary strain on resources intended for residents.
- Traffic and Congestion: Long queues and traffic disruptions frustrated visitors and created inconveniences for residents and neighbouring businesses.



The challenge continued.

- Operational Inefficiencies: Irregular visitor patterns led to under/over-utilised staff and uneven resource allocation across sites, reducing operational efficiency.
- Escalating Costs: Rising operational expenses highlighted the need for a more strategic and cost-effective approach to managing waste services.

Recognising the opportunity to address these issues, KCC permanently implemented the booking system in 2021 as a cornerstone of its HWRC transformation strategy.

The system was designed to boost operational efficiency, lower costs, and improve the visitor experience. This ensures Kent's HWRC network can meet current demands while remaining agile and adaptable to future challenges.

The solution.

To tackle these challenges, we partnered with KCC to develop a flexible and tailored HWRC booking product. This system is designed around five key components:

1. The customer journey
2. The admin portal
3. The on-site check-in app
4. The analytics suite
5. The integration layer

The solution continued.

The customer journey.

The online booking process is designed to be quick and user-friendly. According to a recent survey by Kent, the entire process typically takes less than two minutes to complete. Kent enjoys total control over the data collected during bookings through customisable question sets and business rules, ensuring a tailored and efficient experience. Users receive personalised guidance messaging and criteria-based progressions to help them select the right options, with the added convenience of indicating whether on-site assistance is needed. Key features such as address lookup, DVLA lookup, and DIY Waste declarations further streamline the journey and stop misuse at the point of booking. Kent residents benefit from same-day or even same-hour bookings, supported by automated communications for confirmations, service updates, and amendments. Soon, they'll also be able to create a HWRC user account, enabling them to store details to avoid repeated data entry, update information, upload permit or voucher documents, and much more. This approach delivers a seamless and efficient booking experience for residents, as evidenced by a recent survey in which over 96% of users reported finding the booking process easy to navigate.

The admin portal.

The admin portal empowers staff to efficiently oversee scheduling, resource allocation, communications, and reporting across multiple sites, services, waste streams, and vehicle types. Time-saving features, such as a mass email panel, visitor alert lists, and banned lists, have helped Kent staff streamline admin processes.

The solution continued.

Additionally, staff now have complete control over the service, enabling them to customise slot allocations, manage bookings, configure locations on a site-by-site basis, edit customer-facing forms, update communication workflows, and adjust business rules. These tools ensure the system remains flexible and aligned with operational needs.

The on-site check-in app.

This mobile/tablet check-in app lets site staff see what's going on across the Kent network with real-time booking updates, visitor category alerts, vehicle of interest notifications, out-of-borough flags, high usage flags, banned lists, real-time reports, and a no-booking feature. Kent's staff can also add notes to a booking, amend booking information, and more to reconcile information for accurate reporting.

The analytics suite

Kent's waste management team has access to a wealth of actionable data via the system's analytics suite. They can explore interactive dashboards, generate customisable CSV reports, and utilise pre-built reports on various data points and KPIs. These include waste stream trends, resident usage, site utilisation, booking metrics, and much more.

The integration layer

The booking system also features a REST API layer, enabling seamless integration with other systems within Kent's enterprise architecture. This connectivity enhances workflows, automates tasks, and reduces operational silos.

The solution continued.

The implementation process:

The implementation process was a collaborative and iterative journey. We worked closely with key stakeholder groups to co-create a flexible product that aligned with Kent County Council's (KCC) strategic goals.

The platform was introduced through a phased rollout: initially, KCC trialled the system, and once its benefits became clear, they decided to procure it for long-term use.

Upon renewal, KCC continued the phased rollout to streamline operations while engaging and educating residents on its use. This involved deploying a Minimum Viable Product and establishing continuous feedback loops for system refinements.

Using data collected from residents and staff, we collaborated with KCC to develop new features and functionalities that delivered demonstrable value.

This approach led to the creation of a best-in-class system that provides an intuitive user experience, achieving high adoption rates and strong customer buy-in.



Hannah Allard

Waste Insight & Development Manager
Kent County Council

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"We're so proud of this product; it has really transformed the service we deliver to our customers. If you're thinking about it, I would really encourage you to try and get the booking system in."

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The results.

Kent's HWRC Booking System has delivered impressive results, driving success across key strategic focus areas, including operational efficiency, financial performance, environmental sustainability, and user satisfaction.:

Notably, the council achieved an extraordinary 700% return on investment, saving over £1.4 million and earning industry acclaim with a prestigious Digital Impact Award nomination.

Cost savings and economic impact.

Kent's booking system has generated over £1.4 million in cost savings. These savings are driven by:

1. Increased site efficiency
2. Decreased tonnage
3. Reduced misuse
4. Lower communication costs

Since its implementation, one of Kent's providers has achieved annual savings of over £170,000 thanks to new operational efficiencies. With better management of demand and insights into usage trends, Kent can now resource the sites efficiently and mitigate peaks and troughs.

The system has also reduced the amount of waste processed through Kent's network, contributing to the **tonnage** savings mentioned above. This reduction is largely driven by innovative rules, alerts, and workflows that empower site managers to better control site usage and prevent or charge out-of-borough residents and traders who misuse the sites.

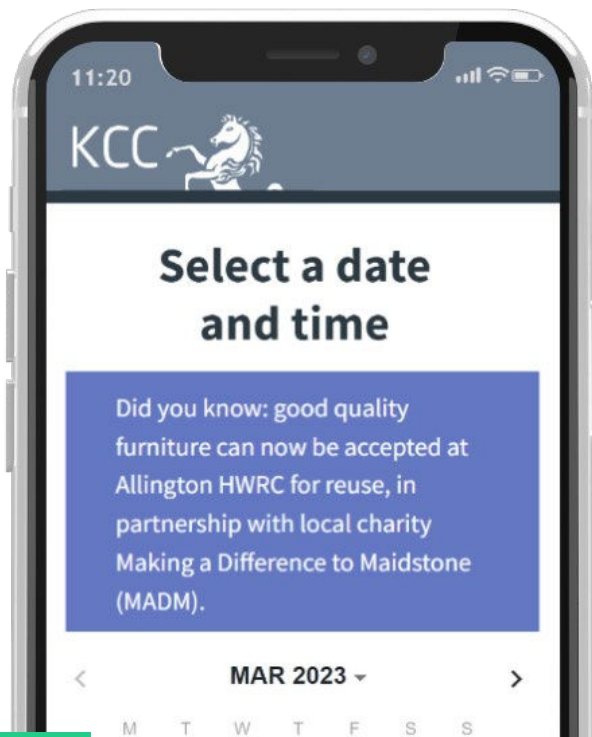
The results continued.

Beyond curbing misuse, Kent has noticed a positive shift in customer behaviour. Residents visit less frequently but bring slightly larger amounts of waste per trip. Since the system was introduced, there has also been a notable increase in reuse and resale activities, further contributing to the reduction in tonnage.

Kent has achieved savings by digitising customer communication. In the past, closing sites for maintenance or emergencies required a full-scale communications campaign—site signage, press ads, leaflets, and more.

Now, with the booking system's block booking, bulk cancellation, and mass email features, Kent can simply prevent bookings in advance, update the website, and send an email to customers—dramatically cutting communication costs.

Building on this success, Kent has integrated its restricted vehicle/voucher scheme with the booking system to reduce printing costs. They are also considering an invest-to-save project to integrate the HWRC booking system with ANPR technology.



700%

Return on Investment

£175,000

Efficiency savings

£1.3 million

Material savings

The results continued.

Customer satisfaction.

One of Kent's greatest successes lies in its commitment to user-centred design. By leveraging a dynamic, calendar-based booking application —rather than a static form-based product—Kent has been able to continually collect and act on resident feedback, shaping a fit-for-purpose service that meets the needs of its community.

This is demonstrated in their recent HWRC Satisfaction Survey, where:

- 98% of all bookings were made online
- 96.3% found it easy to make a booking
- 73.9% used the 'on the day' booking option (a feedback-based enhancement)
- 97% booked the exact date they wanted
- 96.1% were satisfied or extremely satisfied with the booking experience

Residents also cited no queues, enhanced communication, and increased support from site staff as additional service enhancements.

Environmental benefits.

Kent has achieved a 5% increase in monthly recycling rates thanks to the system enabling staff to dedicate more time to educating visitors and reducing waste contamination.

By promoting more efficient vehicle usage, the system has also increased the average waste load per vehicle by 16 kg, resulting in fewer trips. Combined with reduced queuing times—and fewer idling vehicles—this has significantly lowered Kent's CO₂ emissions.

Beyond operational enhancements, the system's advanced communication tools have empowered Kent to effectively deliver recycling messages and spearhead targeted waste prevention initiatives, including the impactful "Nothing Wasted" campaign.

The results continued.

Operational efficiency.

AI-powered tools and automated scheduling have transformed the visitor experience by optimising slot allocations and virtually eliminating queues. Controlling the number of site visits allows Kent to allocate staff more effectively, preventing overstaffing or understaffing and reducing unnecessary overtime expenses. With a predictable inflow of waste, staff can also efficiently plan the use of site equipment and transport vehicles. This proactive approach has not only reduced wasted capacity but also helped to avoid the costly disposal methods associated with unexpected surges in volume.

Sophisticated analytics tools further these advancements by delivering clear, actionable insights that drive smarter decision-making. By leveraging data on waste trends and resident behaviour, the system has enabled more informed budgeting, optimised resource allocation, and modelling strategic cost-saving initiatives. With detailed information on waste types and volumes at the district and ward levels, Kent can design targeted education and outreach programs. These initiatives reduce waste management costs and streamline on-site processes, fostering more efficient and sustainable operations.

Kent's booking system has also consolidated the council's systems and processes. Now, bookings, communications, permits, and accounts are all seamlessly managed within a single, centralised platform.


An award-nominated system.

Not only has the HWRC Booking System transformed KCC's waste management strategy, but it has also gained external recognition. Its nomination for the LGC Digital Impact Award highlights its role as a benchmark for public sector innovation.



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