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How automation has led to zero backlog for Basingstoke and Deane Borough Council's revenues and benefits

Case study

One of Hampshire's largest local authorities, Basingstoke and Deane Borough Council serves over 185,000 residents and manages the council tax and business rates for 83,000+ households and 4,500+ business properties. It has been a Civica customer since 1995, with Civica Revenues and Benefits transforming its approach to managing debts and collections through a range of specialist automation features.

While its revenues team may be lean compared to other similar-sized councils, the impact of their work has been recognised by the Institute of Revenues Rating and Valuation (IRRV) with the prestigious Team of the Year Award 2025.

According to Lucy Gallyer, revenues operations manager at the council, the secret to their success lies in allowing automation to take care of time-intensive manual data input tasks to free up more time for the revenues officers to provide targeted support to customers. This not only enables the council to better understand customer needs and circumstances so that they can work together on appropriate payment plans, the approach has been so successful that the council can boast zero backlog in managing cases.

"The automation from Civica means that I can keep on top of everything", said Lucy Gallyer. "And because there's no backlog, the recovery is kept up to date. When recoveries are up to date, we don't need to keep contacting and chasing customers, so the benefits really do multiply."

Citizen impact

Council staff now have time to run more customer-focused initiatives that also support collections. Regular debt surgeries allow residents to drop-in without an appointment to discuss their situation in person, for example, while more visits are made to vulnerable residents where support or referrals can be offered to avoid any debts from spiralling.

Zero backlog

40% reduction in accounts being referred to enforcement agents

£2.5 million reduction in arrears outstanding

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Case study

These proactive measures have contributed to a **reduction of nearly 40%** in the number of accounts needing to be passed onto enforcement agents. Over 2024, the **arrears outstanding was reduced by £2.5 million**, helping the council to stay financially resilient.

Automated back-office tasks

Civica automation is used to run all system jobs and recovery processes from end-to-end, including everything from setting up banking processes to debt consolidation checks, electronic customer reminders and reporting.

"The recovery automation module is one of my favourites", continued Lucy. "It used to take us days to manage that process each month, manually inputting the information and then checking it all back."

Overdue council tax recovery involves three admin tasks - sending a reminder, a second reminder and then final notices. For non-domestic rates, there is only one reminder before a final notice. Then there are complaints, liability orders and court summons, as well as checking against any special arrangements in place for customers. Where previously the team had to spend hours preparing, inputting and cross-checking the data across all of these instances, often using paper records, everything around managing customer communications on debt recovery can now be automated through Civica and completed in an instant by simply checking a box.

Award winning revenues and benefits

Basingstoke and Deane's revenues team has been gradually building automation into its processes over the last decade, in particular since it upgraded to an enterprise licence for Civica Revenues and Benefits. The new contract has unlocked all of the available modules for faster and more accurate revenue and benefits administration.

Lucy said: "I realised that with Civica I had a toolkit for taking care of everything. It now includes workflow management across batch processes, daily cash reconciliation, proactive recovery, special arrangements set-up, bailiff support and a customer portal to introduce more self-serve."

The self-serve functionality not only reduces workload for the council, it improves the citizen experience. Around a third of all correspondence is now completed via online forms. 20% of these are fully automated, while most of the rest are part-automated or require minimal intervention from an officer.

Services are more accessible, and citizens can see up to date information on demand.

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