

Dorsetforyou.com – Bringing communities together

- **The dorsetforyou.com project is the only integrated, multi-authority portal of its kind.**
- **Before the partnership was set up, the website manager had issues to resolve in terms of administration: editors were able to change the design and layout, with no formal approval process, leading to branding and design consistency issues.**
- **Dorsetforyou.com selected GOSS iCM to manage content on the site.**
- **On its launch, dorsetforyou.com was a finalist in the 2005 e-government national awards.**
- **Dorsetforyou.com has made a total annual saving of around £200,000.**

Creating a partnership



Dorsetforyou.com is a partnership between four local authorities that aims to provide information about services across Dorset for residents, businesses and visitors.

The partnership was created in response to research showing that people are often unsure which tier of local government (county, district/borough or town/parish) provides which service. This means citizens have to visit several different websites to find the information they need, which can be a lengthy and confusing process.

The portal enables Christchurch Borough Council, Dorset County Council, East Dorset District Council, and West Dorset District Council to provide one point of access to local information and transactional services, delivering the benefits of integrated local Government.

Martin Bottomley, Website Manager at dorsetforyou.com explains, ***"We wanted to create a joint website that would improve customer satisfaction, produce greater efficiencies through economies of scale and create joint procurement opportunities given that there is one website with four partners, rather than four individual websites."***

Client requirements – service delivery

The ultimate vision of the partnership is to provide access to services and information through a variety of channels, to give people who live and work in Dorset greater choices so that they will be able to contact dorsetforyou.com in ways they find convenient, depending on their lifestyle, location and needs. The aims were to:

- Provide improved search facilities.
- Ensure that Government guidelines were met.
- Provide a more interactive method for the public to access the services they require online.
- Enable site contributors from across each council to upload information directly, thus speeding up information flow, saving costs and placing the ownership of the site content in the hands of the relevant people.
- Provide sufficient access to the website to supply content, yet be restricted enough to ensure design and content guidelines are followed.

The target audience for the website includes residents, businesses, visitors, staff and councillors and external partners such as parish councils and suppliers. One of its major objectives is to provide access to council services to rural communities in the Dorset area.

The dorsetforyou.com project is the only integrated, multi-authority website of its kind. Where all of the other local authority web portals act much like mini-search

engines, directing the site's visitors to content on other local government websites, Dorset's website provides all of the local information from all of the local bodies in one place.

For this concept to work effectively, the website's manager had issues to resolve in terms of administration. Firstly, editors were able to change the design and layout, leading to branding and design consistency issues. Secondly, there was no formal approval process, so content was often inconsistent from one area of the site to the next. This led to difficulties in managing content and an inability to create and implement site wide changes.

Selecting GOSS Interactive

By implementing GOSS iCM (intelligent Content Management) Web Content Management system from GOSS Interactive the Dorset councils were provided with:

- An effective, interactive and informative website that provides timely and comprehensive information to its target audience.
- A Web Content Management system that enables an unlimited number of appropriate staff and other contributors to easily create and maintain content throughout the website.
- A scalable and flexible site, that delivers an open framework for future development.
- A website which offers rapid, tangible cost benefits by automating, processing and re-purposing information.
- A website to draw a wider audience by ensuring that information is up-to-date, informative and personalised.

The portal uses Java Server Pages (JSP) on top of a Microsoft platform. The most powerful and useful features of the portal are considered to be online job

applications (of which 15,000 have been received) and access to the planning applications review service.

The Dorset-wide contact process enables users to communicate with around 350 departments across four councils through the website.

Over achievements

Following its launch in April 2005, website traffic statistics reported 75,000 unique users and 142,000 visits in the first month.

Page views exceeded the combined statistics of the original four individual councils' websites. The councils' targets, based on the traffic to their separate sites, sought 50,000 unique users, 100,000 visits and 2 million page views. The initial uptake was 30% over target and reflects the successful time spent planning and implementing the system by dorsetforyou.com, GOSS Interactive and other stakeholders. In September 2005 alone, 100,000 people visited the website. By 2009 figures had settled at around 110,000.

Dorsetforyou.com migrated from GOSS iCM version 7 to GOSS iCM version 8 in 2009. Traffic levels have remained largely stable at around 20,000 repeat visitors each month. Having bedded in a major restructure of content in 2008, dorsetforyou.com are planning to improve analysis of visitor statistics in 2009, focusing on areas such as single-page visits referred by search engines.

The website was a finalist in the prestigious 2005 e-government national awards. . When first launched, the website's concept and potential benefits attracted the attention of the national press. The Guardian newspaper described the project, as "a giant leap forward in e-Government."

The savings add up

Warwickshire County Council's research into the impact of this approach identifies that 55% of those using such a website would contact their local authorities through other communication channels, were the website not available. The study estimates that five minutes could be saved per site visitor, taking a staff cost of £10 per hour, the annual saving is around £230,907.

Martin Bottomley explains: ***"This figure does not include additional savings gained by customers downloading their own information rather than requesting it to be posted to them (e.g. staff time, printing and posting costs). We currently don't have any accurate information about this, but (non-cashable) efficiencies in year one of the dorsetforyou.com project will be around half a million pounds."***

Taking away the costs, the dorsetforyou.com project has made a total annual saving of around £200,000. A number of other related solutions and services, including support, were also purchased, such as search and taxonomy and website monitoring tools to help dorsetforyou.com comply with the Government's e-GIF standards. If each partner had procured everything individually, this would have cost each local authority four times as much.

Accessibility a key requirement

The website has achieved high accessibility scores for A and AA compliance, helped by the accessibility validations integrated into GOSS iCM. These are set to force content contributors to adhere to a prescribed standard (A, AA or AAA) prior to publishing information.

The Shaw Trust also completed a full accessibility audit in October 2008. Dorsetforyou.com is currently working on implementing the recommendations



and has included compliance with accessibility guidelines as a contractual requirement when procuring web applications.



Successful partnership: its most powerful element

To ensure the success of such a project you need the right partners in place. Each partner must be able to compromise and fully participate in the project for the public's benefit. This is why the partnership with GOSS Interactive has helped to make the project so successful.

Rob McCarthy, Managing Director at GOSS Interactive comments, ***“Our knowledge gained from working with local authorities from all over the UK has helped us to create this one site, joining key information from four local authorities together, in one place. The success of working in partnership with so many stakeholders and deploying GOSS iCM across so many contributors has rightly been recognised by being a finalist in yet another award.”***

The potential savings, evidential site statistics, development of a simplified and customer-centric process for the delivery of information and area-wide services, show how invaluable a website like dorsetforyou.com could be to other councils around the UK. What has also been unusual is that the website uses a .com domain name rather than the traditional .gov.uk suffix.

Home page



A-Z of services | Find your nearest | Site map | News | Accessibility | Contact us


You are here: Home

Browse our services

- ▶ Advice and benefits
- ▶ Business and economy
- ▶ Community and living
- ▶ Council and democracy
- ▶ Education and learning
- ▶ Environment and planning
- ▶ Health and social care
- ▶ Housing
- ▶ Jobs and careers
- ▶ Leisure and culture
- ▶ Transport and streets

Information about services across Dorset for residents, businesses and visitors

Photography competition



The dorsetforyou.com summer photography competition is now underway with the theme 'summer fun'. Send us your entries and see our great list of prizes.

Contact your council

Popular links

- ▶ Job vacancies
- ▶ Libraries
- ▶ Online services
- ▶ Planning application search
- ▶ Recycling at home
- ▶ Report highway defects
- ▶ Sports, clubs and centres
- ▶ Tourism and travel
- ▶ Weymouth Relief Road

News



11/06/09: Archaeologists uncover unique burial pit

10/06/09: Where should 700 new homes be built?

09/06/09: Durlston's Great Globe gets a facelift

05/06/09: East Dorset Chairman's best friend is named


26/05/09: Quomps pool opens for final paddle before planned SplashPark replaces it

[▶ More news](#)

Featured content





- ▶ Weymouth Relief Road blog
- ▶ Market days and farmers' markets
- ▶ 2009 election results
- ▶ Tackling the economic downturn
- ▶ Weymouth Transport Package for the 2012 Games
- ▶ Dorset Pictures Online - buy archive prints from Dorset History Centre

Find your nearest



Enter your postcode to find information about where you live

Dorsetforyou.com is a partnership between the following Dorset councils
[Christchurch Borough Council](#), [Dorset County Council](#), [East Dorset District Council](#) and [West Dorset District Council](#)



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Public services all in one place

Search results

The screenshot shows the search results page on the Dorsetforyou website. At the top, there is a navigation bar with links for 'A-Z of services', 'Find your nearest', 'Site map', 'News', 'Accessibility', and 'Contact us'. A search bar on the right contains the text 'enter keyword' and a 'Search' button. Below the navigation bar, the breadcrumb trail reads 'You are here: Home > Search results'. On the left side, there is a 'Browse our services' menu with various categories like 'Home', 'Advice and benefits', 'Business and economy', etc. The main content area is titled 'Search results' and contains the following text: 'Here are the results of your search. A search of the whole website has been made but these results do not include council meetings, downloads (e.g. Adobe PDF and Microsoft Word documents) and Dorset councils that have their own website.' Below this, it states 'Search results: 1-10 of 369 documents for recycling on Dorsetforyou.com'. There is a 'Current search:' field containing the word 'recycling' and a 'Go' button. A 'Recommended pages' section follows, listing 'Civic amenity sites' and 'Recycling (waste)'. An 'All search results' section is also present with a 'next >>' button. At the bottom, there are two search results: 'Office waste recycling - Dorset For You' and 'Recycling at home - Dorset For You'.

dorsetforyou.com

A-Z of services | Find your nearest | Site map | News | Accessibility | Contact us

enter keyword Search

You are here: Home > Search results

Browse our services

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- Business and economy
- Community and living
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- Education and learning
- Environment and planning
- Health and social care
- Housing
- Jobs and careers
- Leisure and culture
- Transport and streets

Search results

Here are the results of your search. A search of the whole website has been made but these results do not include council meetings, downloads (e.g. Adobe PDF and Microsoft Word documents) and Dorset councils that have their own website.

Search results: 1-10 of 369 documents for **recycling** on **Dorsetforyou.com**

Current search:

Recommended pages

[Civic amenity sites](#)
There are numerous household recycling centres around the county where you can take your household waste for recycling.

[Recycling \(waste\)](#)
General information and advice on recycling and available facilities.

All search results

[next >>](#)

[Office waste recycling - Dorset For You](#)
The following companies offer a one-stop shop for office waste recycling, ...

[Recycling at home - Dorset For You](#)
Recycling at home is really simple and it is something that everyone can do.

ENDS