London Borough of Barnet,
2 Bristol Avenue,
Colindale,
London NW9 4EW
16 April 2021
Our ref: 7136608

Thank you for your request received on 17 March 2021, for the following information:

The TFL Streetcare web facility at https://streetcare.tfl.gov.uk/ ("TFL Problem Tool") works well. It loads quickly, does not require users to waste time registering account, and it is possible to notify TFL of a problem in less than a minute. This is consistent with modern technology and public expectation for a website used regulars by many Londoners to help keep our city in good shape.

In contrast the Barnet Council 'Report A Problem' web tool ("Barnet Problem Tool") suffers from many drawbacks. It requires the unnecessary registration of personal user information prior to reporting a single piece of graffiti and is powered by outdated technology which takes a very long time to reload each page and several minutes to submit a single problem. Furthermore, it is impossible to see if a problem has already been reported by someone else, or whether it has been acknowledged by the Council and is planned to be fixed. There are other advantages that the TFL Problem Tool has over the Barnet Problem Tool which are too numerour to list here. There are many problems in the borough of Barnet and so there is a pressing need for people to be able to notify these to the council efficiently which is not possible with the current Barnet system.

It is therefore of public interest to understand why Barnet Council are unable to replicate the success of the TFL Problem Tool. What lessons can be learned and what is it about the TFL solution that needs to be replicated by Barnet Council?

It should be obvious that this request is being made to both organisations in this transparent manner so that information can be shared to benefit of Londoners, and for the purposes of working out how to save taxpayer money and at the same time deliver better public services. This is clearly in the public interest.

REQUESTS TO BARNET COUNCIL:

1. Please summarise who created the Barnet Problem Tool, when they did this, how much it cost (to the extent this is known or can be easily estimated, either financially, or by other metric such as developer hours). Please identify if the developer(s) were employed internally by Barnet Council, by another public

sector entity, by a private contractor, etc, and name them. If it was developed by Barnet council's outsourced function run by a subsidiary of Capita please state the name of the relevant company. Please identify if the same, or any other developer is entrusted with maintaining the Barnet Problem Tool to keep it working well, and explain details of who does this (if different from the original creator of the tool).

2. If the Barnet Problem Tool makes use of any standard or readily available platforms / tools / APIs as part of its implementation please identify what these are (so that it may be better understood how to implement improvements to the system).

3. Please summarise the server arrangements for the Barnet Problem Tool (since this appears to be inadequately resourced).
(a) Is this run on a server, or multiple servers machines?
(b) Are these owned by Barnet Council, a private company (if so state which), and is there involvement from a cloud service provider such as AWS, Microsoft Azure, Google Cloud Provider, or other (and state which)?
(c) Where are they located?
(d) Are their any Service Level Agreement / Key Performance Indicator provisions applicable to the performance of the Barnet Problem Tool that mandate any particular response time (e.g. updating a page in less than 1 second during normal load, or ability to submit a form in less than 1 minute)?

4. Please provide contact details (name, role, email address

We have processed this request under the Freedom of Information Act 2000.

Response

The council holds the information requested and it is attached/ the answers to your questions are below

1. Please summarise who created the Barnet Problem Tool, when they did this, how much it cost (to the extent this is known or can be easily estimated, either financially, or by other metric such as developer hours). Please identify if the developer(s) were employed internally by Barnet Council, by another public sector entity, by a private contractor, etc, and name them. If it was developed by Barnet council's outsourced function run by a subsidiary of Capita please state the name of the relevant company. Please identify if the same, or any other developer is entrusted with maintaining the Barnet Problem Tool to keep it working well, and explain details of who does this (if different from the original creator of the tool).

The Councils outsourced IT partner, Capita delivered and maintains our online forms. There has been investment in The Councils website, Myaccount and online form products over the last couple of years and we always aim to make improvements to improve our digital offer, where it is viable to do so. Please provide more specific feedback on the specific issues and we will investigate. Forms are not commissioned individually so we are unable to break down the cost of a singular form.

Details on the Capita contract can be found at the link below

https://open.barnet.gov.uk/dataset/23d3v/customer-and-support-group-csg-contract

2. If the Barnet Problem Tool makes use of any standard or readily available platforms / tools / APIs as part of its implementation please identify what these are (so that it may be better understood how to implement improvements to the system).

It is possible to interface with the online forms via APIs and we do this on several of our forms

3. Please summarise the server arrangements for the Barnet Problem Tool (since this appears to be inadequately resourced).
(a) Is this run on a server, or multiple servers machines?

The server capacity is tested regularly and we will add resources if there is a surge in demand. Please provide more details in regards specific issues faced as we rarely have significant performance issues

(b) Are these owned by Barnet Council, a private company (if so state which), and is there involvement from a cloud service provider such as AWS, Microsoft Azure, Google Cloud Provider, or other (and state which)?

Our forms are a hosted solution provided by Capita.

(c) Where are they located?

Hosted in the UK in a shared data centre

(d) Are their any Service Level Agreement / Key Performance Indicator provisions applicable to the performance of the Barnet Problem Tool that mandate any particular response time (e.g. updating a page in less than 1 second during normal load, or ability to submit a form in less than 1 minute)?

All our forms are included in overarching KPI's which include availability. We do not have individual KPI's per form

4. Please provide contact details (name, role, email address)

Barry May Head of Customer & Digital services

Further information

If you are interested in the data that the council holds you may wish to visit Open Barnet, the council's data portal. This brings together all our published datasets and other information of interest on one searchable database for anyone, anywhere to access.   http://open.barnet.gov.uk/

Advice and Assistance : Direct Marketing

If you are a company that intends to use the names and contact details of council officers (or other officers) provided in this response for direct marketing, you need to be registered with the Information Commissioner to process personal data for this purpose. You must also check that the individual (whom you wish to contact for direct marketing purposes) is not registered with one of the Preference Services to prevent Direct Marketing. If they are you must adhere to this preference.

You must also ensure you comply with the Privacy Electronic and Communications

Regulations (PECR). For more information follow this Link   www.ico.org.uk

For the avoidance of doubt the provision of council (and other) officer names and contact details under FOI does not give consent to receive direct marketing via any media and expressly does not constitute a 'soft opt-in' under PECR.

Your rights

If you are unhappy with the way your request for information has been handled, you can request a review within the next 40 working days by writing to the Information Management Team at: foi@barnet.gov.uk. Or by post to Information Management Team (FOI) London Borough of Barnet, 2 Bristol Avenue, Colindale, NW9 4EW

If, having exhausted our review procedure, you remain dissatisfied with the handling of your request or complaint, you will have a right to appeal to the Information Commissioner at: The Information Commissioner's Office, Wycliffe House, Water Lane, Wilmslow, Cheshire, SK9 5AF (telephone: 0303 123 1113; website www.ico.org.uk). There is no charge for making an appeal.