

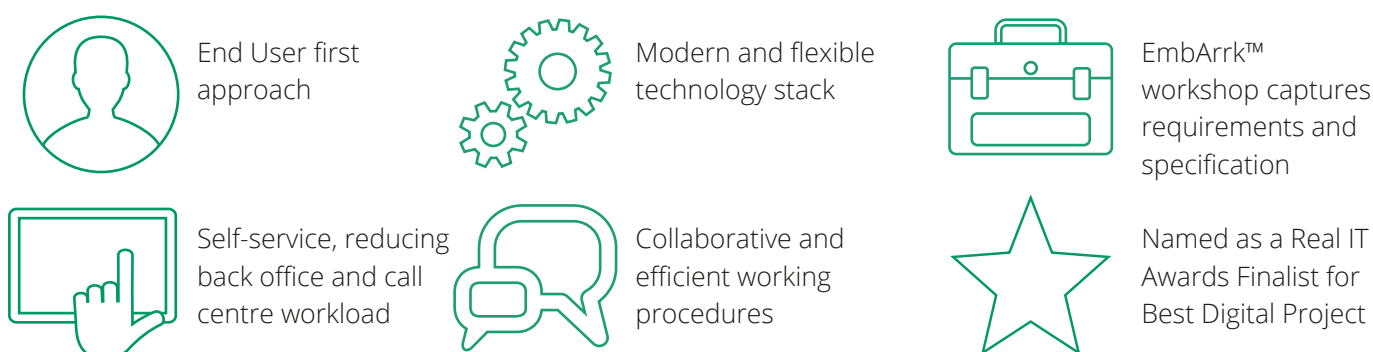
## CASE STUDY:

# TOP OF THE CLASS! EAST SUSSEX COUNTY COUNCIL DIGITISES SCHOOL ALLOCATION APPEALS PROCEDURE



East Sussex County Council engaged with Arrk Group to digitise and enhance the way it deals with its school allocation appeals procedure. The previous largely offline service offering didn't meet the expectations of today's parents, as the service wasn't available around the clock, therefore parents weren't able to check on their appeal status at a time convenient to them.

## Key Benefits



## Customer

- Located on the South Coast of the UK
- Includes the major towns of Eastbourne, Hastings, Lewes and Bexhill
- Residential population in excess of 500,000
- Manages pupil applications for around 200 primary and secondary schools

East Sussex County Council is a non-metropolitan council located on the South Coast of the UK. Covering five districts (Hastings, Rother, Wealden, Eastbourne and Lewes) of Sussex the council serves a population of over half a million residents including the major towns of Eastbourne, Hastings, Lewes and Bexhill.

The council has the statutory responsibility of allocating primary and secondary school places.

## Situation

- Paper and email based appeals process
- Part of a wider transformation programme
- Costly statutory function
- Emotive, stressful for service users

The existing process within the Council offered an entry point via an online form, but further correspondence was paper/email based. This made it challenging for parents to access status updates outside of normal office hours and to contribute further information, often resulting in requests for more information. This inefficient process was expensive for the council to provide and stressful for parents.

The objective was to redesign this process, with the customer at the heart. The experience needed to be simple, with functionality to support the customer throughout the emotive journey. The project was selected as part of a wider transformation programme. The selection was based on a clear desire by the team to change, and also a clearly defined process available for redesign. There were clear benefits that could be achieved, so the project was a strong fit.



## Challenge

- High profile project, strict time constraints
- External development requirement required
- To highlight cost areas and opportunity for savings

As a high-profile project within the organisation, timely success was vital – the project had a strict runtime, and exceeding this would have been a negative project outcome.

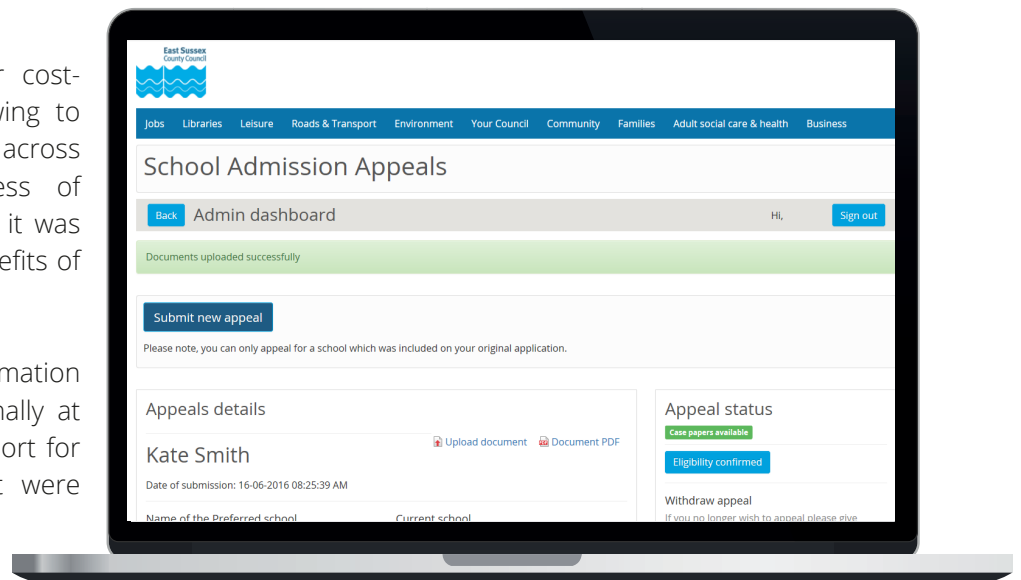
Demonstrating the potential for cost-saving was also a challenge owing to multiple cost areas and impact across multiple teams. In the process of calculating return on investment it was also possible to highlight the benefits of truly customer focussed design.

The skills required for this transformation project were not available internally at the council and so external support for the discovery and development were required.

## Outcomes

- Service launched and live on website
- Parents self-serving, reducing reliance on call centre and back office
- Finalist in Real IT Awards for Best Digital Project

Since the launch period, there has already been a significant change to the team operation. Whereas previously paper



## Solution

- EmbArrk™ project discovery
- Rapid knowledge acquisition phase
- Flexible, modern technology stack
- Joint project delivery team, collaborative approach

Initially a two-week, intensive EmbArrk™ project discovery workshop was used to capture requirements and specification as well as build consensus amongst all stakeholders.

Following the discovery workshop, a shared vision of the desired solution was formed. Arrk led a showcase event where stakeholders and organisation leads were invited to view the proposed solution.

This generated excitement within the council, based on the story that Arrk presented through the demonstration of a solution, truly designed with the customer at heart.

The solution also offered tangible service transformation for all to see, not just minor alterations.

confirmations were being printed and posted, along with case papers and similar correspondence, in recent months these have instead been uploaded for parents to access instead, at a time convenient to them.

There has also been a significant reduction in calls, already noticed within the period since the launch. This has contributed to clear details being available within the application, and with parents easily being able to access the available information that they require.

“The project delivered a high-quality solution which has proven to be a success for both customers and the service team. It is a true indicator that Digital transformation is possible in the public sector.

“Arrk Group were an essential partner in delivering this project, and I can say with certainty, that the project would not have succeeded without their involvement.”

Consortia Manager, East Sussex County Council