



Harrow Council
moves to the cloud
with Taranto for
parking
enforcement

Taranto helps Harrow with its digital-first strategy

Harrow council has become the latest council to adopt Taranto's parking enforcement solution, joining 13 other London boroughs as Taranto users. The system went live in October 2023 and now has 12 back-office licences and 40 handhelds in operation which are used by Civil Enforcement Officers (CEOs) on the streets of the borough. Ben Jones, Harrow Council's Head of Digital has led the implementation project as part of Harrow's digital strategy.

Ben has driven many digital transformation projects, and commented that the Taranto implementation was the smoothest project he's ever worked on. "We have been really impressed with the Taranto solution and the responsiveness of their project team. The move to Taranto has been a really good experience and although we haven't yet fully utilised the technology, we are already starting to see the benefits of the system."



"The Taranto system was flexible enough to work with the way we want to work and integrates with our existing system."

Ben Jones, Head of Digital

A modern, cloud-based parking enforcement system

Harrow decided to move to Taranto as they wanted a more modern, cloud-based parking enforcement system with less reliance on manual processes. They were looking for a flexible solution that can be scaled in line with future parking enforcement changes. The council wanted to adopt greater use of cameras to identify problem parking remotely and also to enable CEOs on the street to have digital devices seamlessly linked to the back-office system.

The Taranto system uses smart Android devices, streamlining PCN issuance by integrating with all the applications necessary issue a parking ticket. The handhelds enable CEOs to look up number plates via the DVLA interface in a single, seamless action. Previously, CEOs had to check vehicle number plates from several different systems.

Taranto improves productivity and efficiency of both enforcement on the street and in the back-office. According to Ben Jones, the new handhelds are not only easier to use, but also cheaper to replace as they are standard Android smartphones. Also, new recruits can easily be issued with new devices and there is no need to order expensive dedicated handhelds.

A collaborative approach

Harrow's digital team worked with Taranto's implementation team to roll the system out. According to Ben Jones, the collaboration between Taranto and his team has worked extremely well and the project has gone according to plan. Ben Jones commented: "Taranto has a very professional approach to helping us transition from the old system to the new platform. As well as a well-designed, robust product, they also used the right project management tools and guided us through the roll out. We knew that we needed to change to a new digital system and Taranto has delivered what we wanted."

"The Taranto implementation has been the smoothest project I've ever worked on." Ben Jones, Head of Digital

Automation of manual processes

In the back-office, many of the previous manual processes have now been automated such as generating postal batches, DVLA enquiries and statutory documents. The administrators are not only more productive, but there's fewer opportunities for human error.

The users in the back-office have been very open to change and keen to accept the new system. Taranto has guided them through the move to the new system, with thorough testing of the system to ensure that the Taranto system connected with the existing process. Extensive training was provided as part of the project to help the back-office administrators and CEOs familiarise themselves with the functionality of the new system. As the system is digital, the council can now use single sign-on into the back-office system which adds ease of use as well as greater security.

Seamless integration

The Taranto system not only integrates easily with stationary cameras, but its flexibility also interfaces with Harrow's existing back-office applications, as well as the customer-facing portal. This portal has been developed by Harrow's digital team inhouse to enable motorists to pay or appeal PCNs online. Although Taranto has its own customer portal, Harrow wanted to keep its existing system that is in line with the council's digital-first strategy which is accessed via the council website. One of the benefits of the Taranto system is its flexibility to interface with existing APIs so that councils can retain their other systems such as debt management, printing functions, cameras or number plate recognition.

Online payment portal

Ben Jones commented: "At Harrow, we are passionate about offering really easy customer journeys and we developed an online portal that shows camera evidence and enables motorists to pay their PCN in just a few clicks. We wanted to keep our existing portal as it is unique to Harrow, and the Taranto system was flexible enough to work with the way we want to work and integrates with our existing system."



Harrow no longer offers a contact centre for parking tickets to be paid by phone and anyone who incurs a PCN must pay online. According to Ben Jones: "Harrow has really been at the forefront of channel migration and we've moved people from payment by phone to online. This enables us to deliver a better immediate service online without the costs of delivering telephone services that were not adding value to residents as all correspondence had to be in writing.

This drive to online transactions is all part of the council's digital strategy which encourages citizens online. The council does offer telephone services for council tax, benefits and housing but all other services such as parking, planning and waste management are offered online. This strategy does put pressure on Harrow to get its online services right, which is why the council selected Taranto, with its Platform-as-a-Service environment to deliver its new parking enforcement system.

The importance of people and culture

When choosing a parking enforcement partner, Ben Jones stresses that it's not just important to have a product that offers the right functionality, the people who work with the client are just as important. "Changing to a new platform can be challenging but everyone at Taranto has guided us through our transition journey and now that the system is live, BAU is just as it should be."

Taranto has not only supported Harrow in moving to the new system, but the company culture works well with Harrow. Taranto has a comprehensive social value programme and when a new local authority goes live with Taranto, the company plants trees on the client's behalf.

Harrow now has 25 saplings that have been planted in one of The Future Forest Company's forestry projects and will help to improve the natural environment. "We really appreciated the fact that Taranto is concerned about the environment and wants to make a difference. Their sustainability policies show that Taranto is a company with values similar to ours," said Ben Jones.

Looking to the future

This scalable solution will enable Harrow to build on the digital platform and expand the camera enforcement operation. Harrow are also looking at adopting Taranto's permit system which will enable the council to manage its controlled parking zones more effectively, as well as provide a better user experience through Taranto's online customer permit portal. This approach will reflect Harrow's digital-first policy.

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