

Council website the best in Scotland?

The City of Edinburgh Council is the first local authority in Scotland to achieve the highest ranking – four stars – for its website.

SOCITM (Society of IT Managers) undertake an independent audit of all local authority websites in the UK each year. The results are published in their 'Better Connected' report published today providing a benchmark across local government in the UK and a source of good practice.

This announcement makes the Council one of only nine local authorities in the UK to achieve the coveted four star rating. It is listed as one of the top 20 most developed Council websites in the UK. The Council has risen to four stars from the two star ranking it received from SOCITM in 2010.

Among the praise given by the assessors, they described the website as 'a joy to use' with 'content so clear' and 'a site head and shoulders above the rest of Scotland'.

The SOCITM survey of usability is carried out by a team of independent reviewers who consider 136 questions, followed by six shorter surveys on specific topics. The research is supplemented by seven additional sets of data, supplied by partner organisations. Accessibility, readability and resilience are also tested.

Andrew Unsworth, the Council's Head of e-Government, said: "A tremendous amount of effort has gone into developing our website over the last year to ensure that we improve customer service. It is great to receive such high praise from experts in the field but I am conscious that there is still plenty of room for improvement and development of the site."

☒ Councillor Phil Wheeler, Convener of the Finance and Resources Committee, said: "This is an outstanding achievement by the Council and our staff. The use of our website as a customer facing tool is critical as much more business is now conducted online. This also brings savings to the Council and the fact that the new site, launched last year, is paying for itself through lower operating costs is a bonus in such tough financial times. The praise we have received is a great boost for the Council and confirms that when it comes to working online we are certainly moving in the right direction."