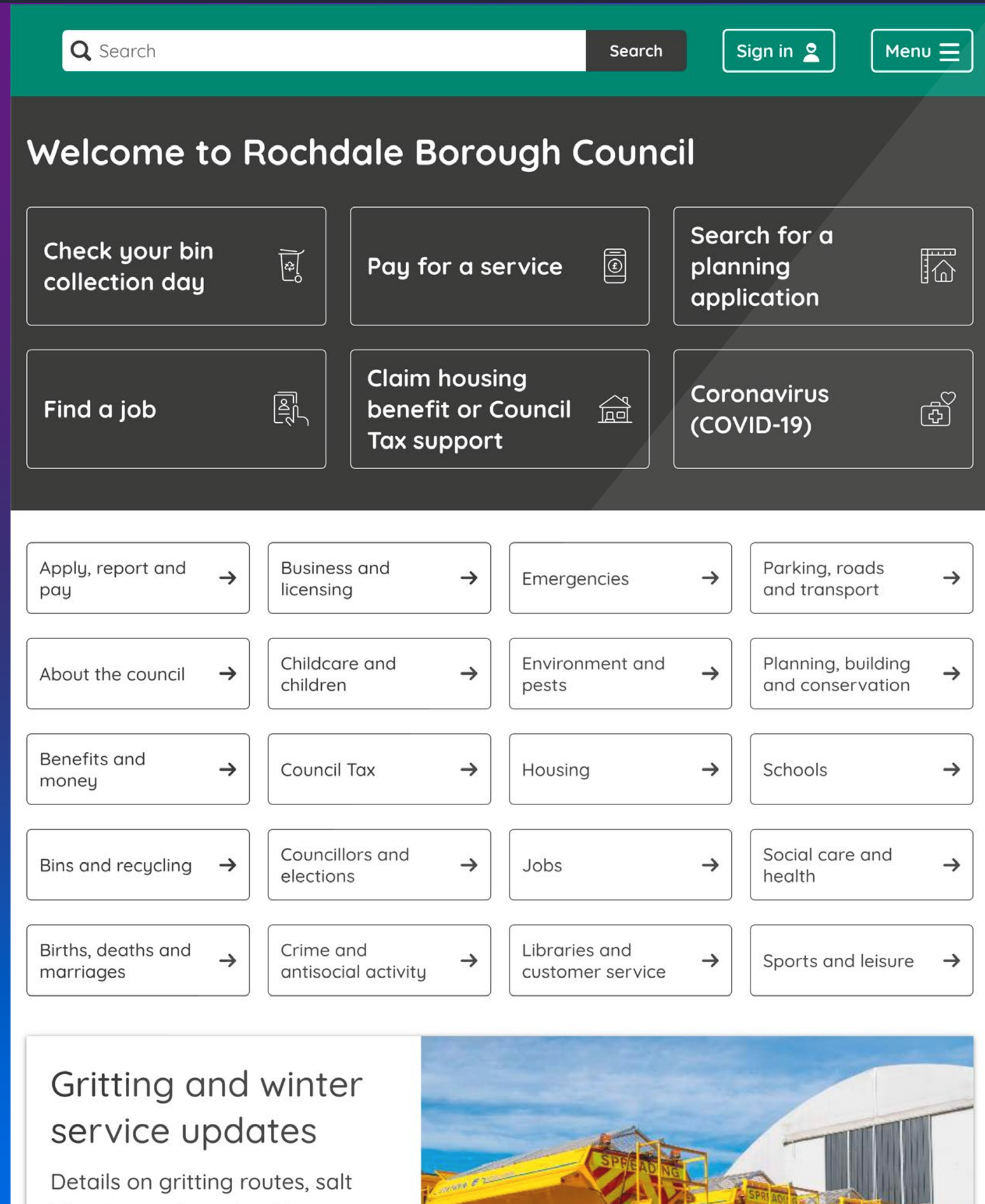




DRIVING AWARD-WINNING, ACCESSIBLE, DIGITAL SERVICES INTO THE COUNCIL AND COMMUNITY

A Rochdale Borough Council Case Study

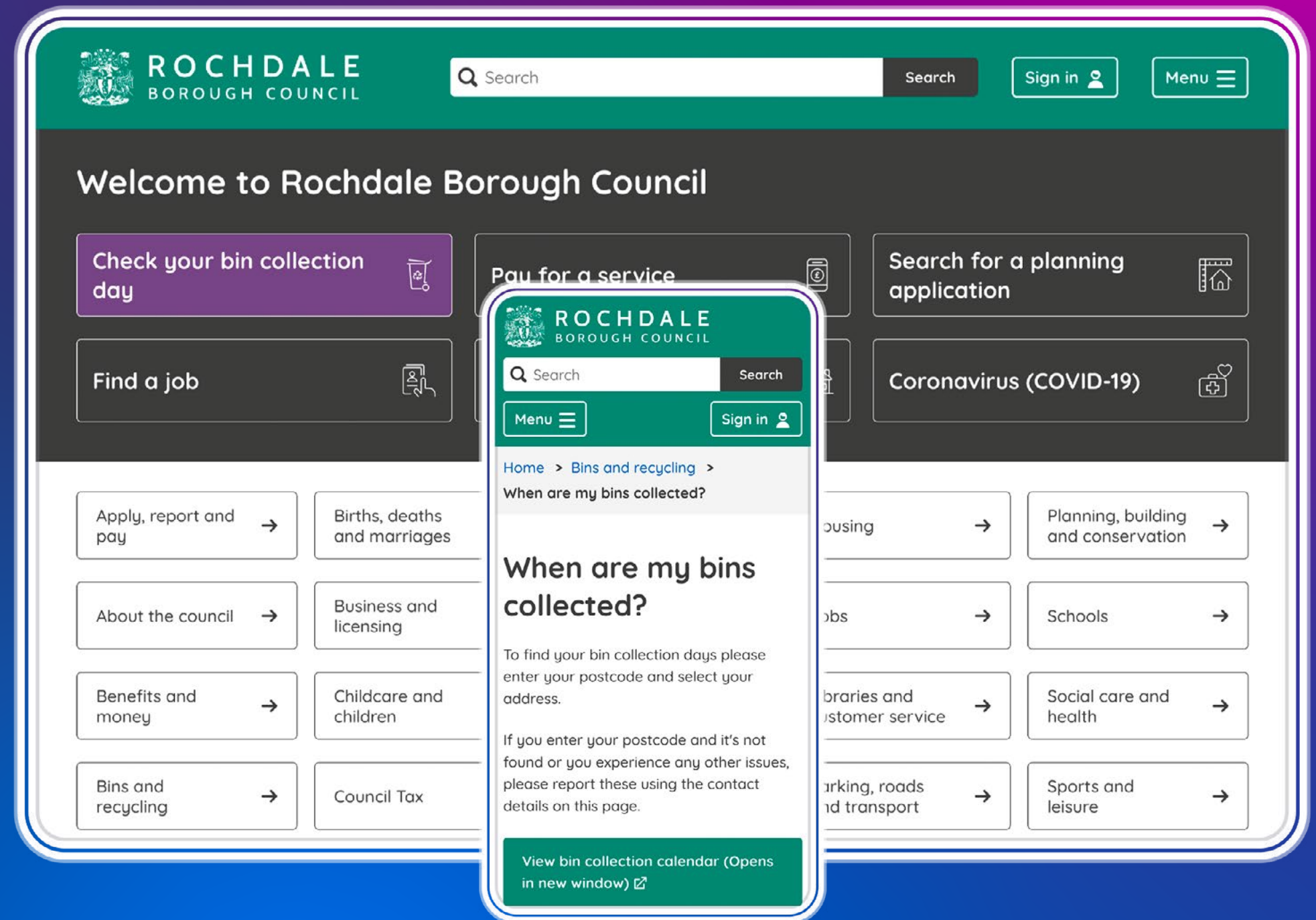


FOCUSED ON MAKING A DIGITALLY INCLUSIVE COMMUNITY

As part of [Rochdale Borough Council's](#) ambitious Customer Transformation Programme to improve citizens' access to digital services, they were determined to enable as many of their citizens' as possible to be able to access important, and sometimes vital services and information, online.

They were on a mission to ensure their digital front door, the website, was accessible, responsive, and usable for their whole community - so no one is left behind.

Digital inclusion was not a negotiation and with the digital team striving for accessibility, launching a website that wasn't accessible, simply wasn't an option.



THE CHALLENGE

To provide an accessible, centralised and seamless experience, Rochdale Borough Council had a big project in front of them.

With the need to move their existing website off of Sharepoint to rebuild and redesign using not only accessible, responsive design, but usable and effective content using plain English to reach as many of its citizens as possible.

This wasn't just a website redesign project, but a reinvention of how they delivered services online, connecting their website to their back-office systems through the use of online forms and effective workflows.

They needed stakeholders on board to ensure the council knew this couldn't be a 'lift and shift' exercise.

This was a huge project to improve service delivery and deliver a better customer experience.

The new web portal needed to make it easier for citizens to access important and vital services - wherever and whenever they need to, including at crucial times.

The project was ongoing during the Global pandemic, a difficult time to manage change and this project, but the council were determined that at a time where citizens couldn't visit them, that as many people as possible in the community could access and self-serve services digitally.

Rochdale Borough Council's main aims were to:

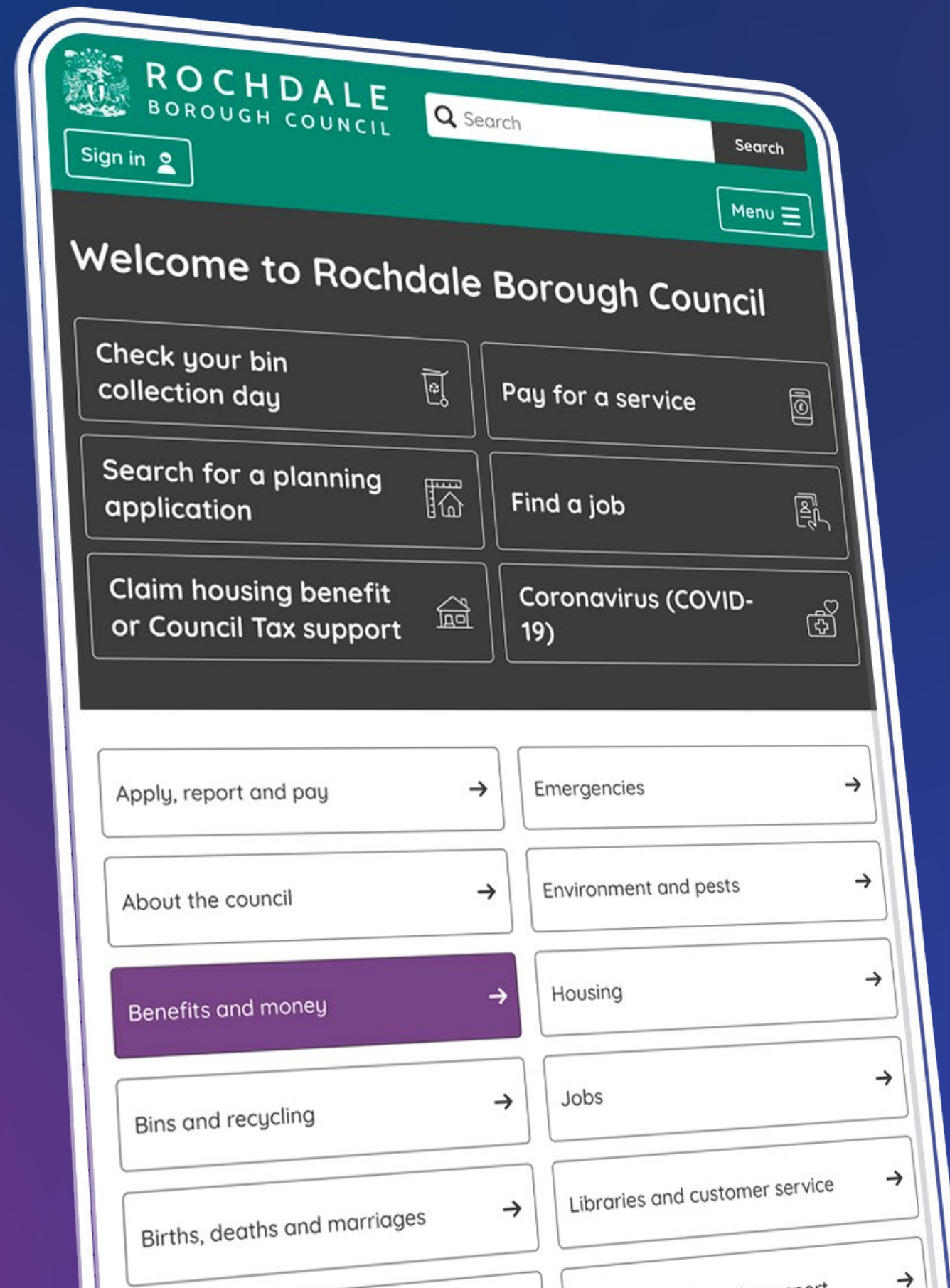
1. To make the website the main channel of contact choice (instead of expensive channels).
2. Deliver an accessible digital front door via its website, using plain english so that all citizens in the community could use the website with ease.
3. Create a customer and outcome focused design to improve the overall customer journey.
4. Create a 'platform' for more personalised and sophisticated 'end-to-end' services that could be deployed in the future.
5. Provide a website where citizens can self-serve to reduce avoidable contact, freeing up the council to focus on other important services.
6. Save the council money and encourage investment.
7. Ensure citizens can access the website from anywhere, on any device using a responsive, accessible design.
8. Make the design modern and fresh looking to represent the direction of the borough.
9. Ensure the website is highly secure, while optimising it to make it faster to improve the digital experience.
10. Provide a basis to connect other important back-office systems, as well as a MyAccount and CRM.

THE SOLUTION

The council's strategy was to focus on the user - their citizens. They worked backwards from user needs to establish what citizens needed from digital services from the council.

Digital inclusion was at the forefront of Rochdale's programme, and they needed to build something iteratively, that would meet and exceed accessibility requirements, but also create a platform for much more advanced, end-to-end digital services to be deployed that were easy for citizens and businesses to use.

Rochdale, using [Jadu Central](#) (Jadu CMS and Forms solution) and working with the [Jadu design team](#), created a bespoke, accessible experience that went beyond 'fit for purpose', to deliver an excellent, accessible, customer experience so that citizens chose the website as it's contact channel of choice.



Smarter and dynamic content management

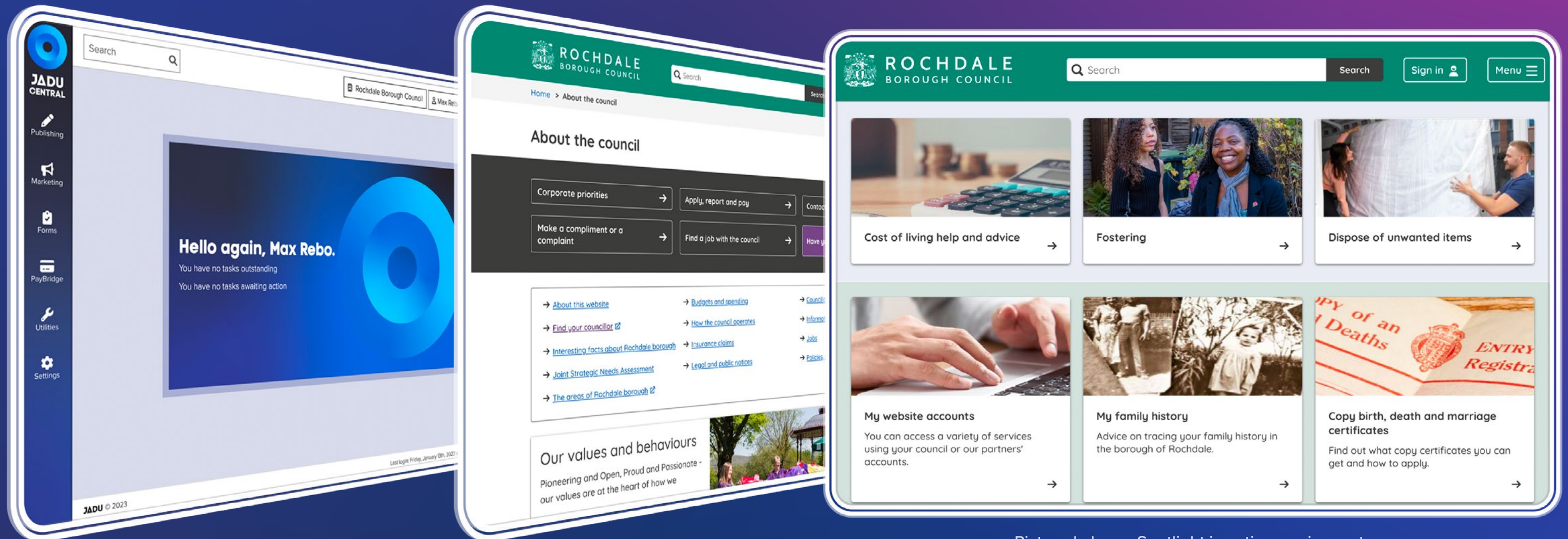
The solution needed a flexible use of functionality to create personalised, dynamic, accessible content.

With the newly developed 'Spotlight' widget, Rochdale can do just that supporting their content strategy.

The Spotlight widget displays clear signposts to content and services, which can be reused on multiple homepages.

In short, you update the widget once and this updates all instances of the same widget throughout the website.

This development resulted in saving the council time and money on developing or creating new items each time.



Pictured above, Spotlight in action as signposts.

Not only that, Rochdale implemented **Cludo**, a new site search engine in Jadu Central through the **Jadu Integration's Hub** and designed with Jadu a new intuitive navigation and user journey so citizens can find the content and services they need quicker and easier.

Jadu's forms solution in Jadu Central enabled a fully integrated, end-to-end seamless customer journey.

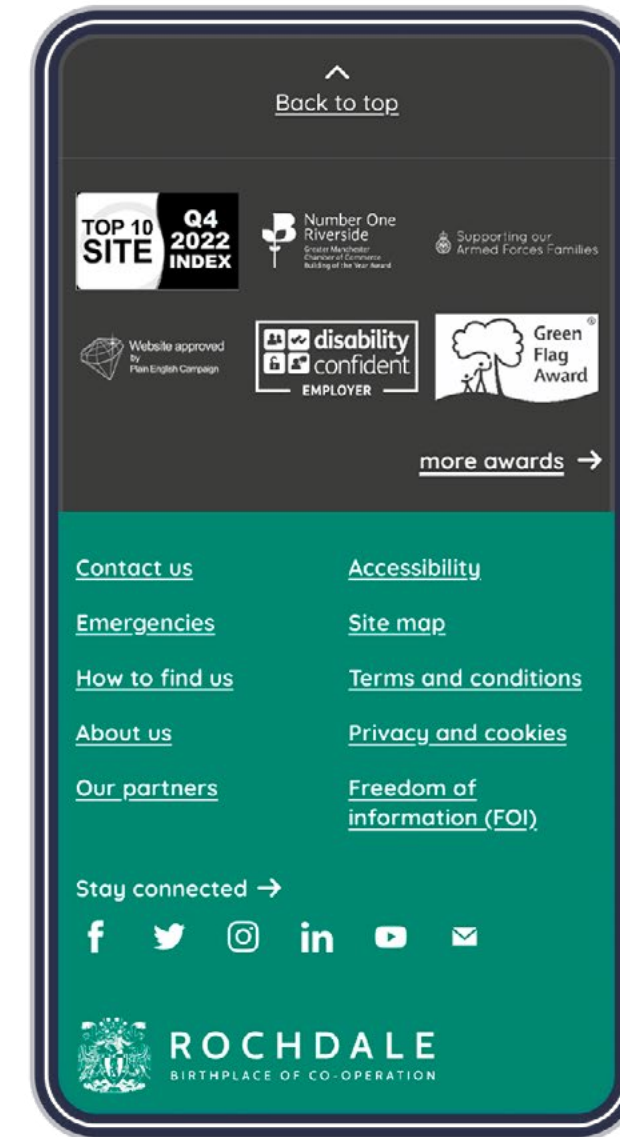
Rochdale also wanted to use the website as an enabler to create subsites from one centralised place to enable a 'family of hosted services'.

Jadu's Galaxies functionality in Jadu Central offered the solution needed to do this effectively.

Thorough test plans were in place to ensure the desired accessibility and design standards were achieved.

Communication was key throughout this project, and Rochdale were clear to only involve relevant stakeholders at the right time throughout the project.

Having a project manager and using a methodological approach was crucial to ensure all details, revision and updates were documented so progress could happen.



/// Gemma was a fantastic Project Manager, communicating with us throughout the project to ensure that our project kept to scope and delivered on time”.

- Rahna Riley, Digital Services lead,
Rochdale Borough Council

THE RESULTS

Rochdale Borough Council as part of their wider Transformation Agenda launched an accessible website to enable digital inclusion within their local community, (during the Global pandemic).

The website is **WCAG 2.1 AA** accredited, delivering an accessible and inclusive experience to citizens

More citizens are now able to access key services digitally with over 7500 pages updated to better service citizens. This was vital during a time where face-to-face contact was unable to happen.

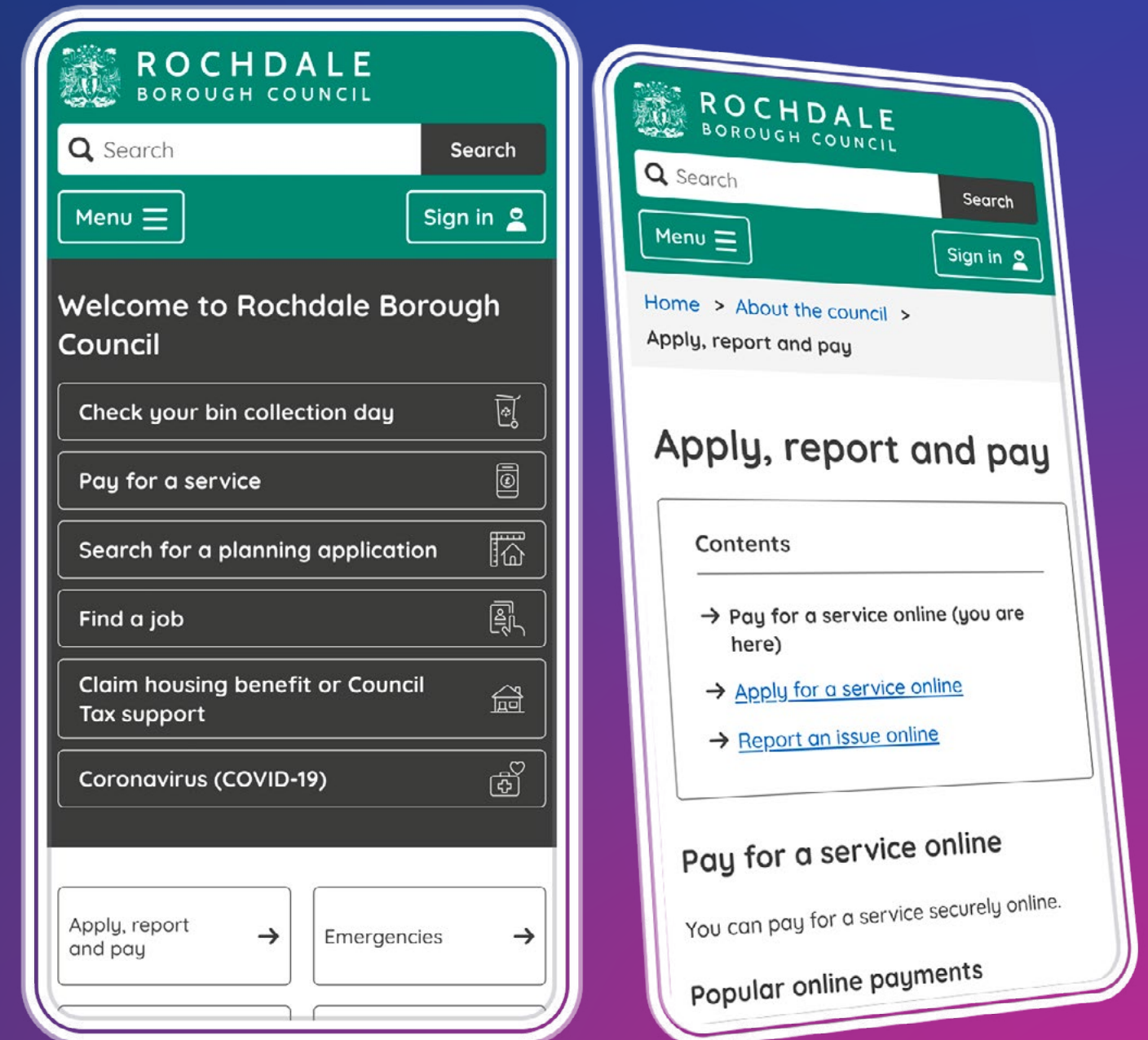
The website is now also the busiest access channel and continues to grow with 6+ million page views in 2021 which is a 10% increase on the year before. In addition, online payments saw a 13% increase reaching over £7M transactions. Over 35K online forms for other services were submitted too, a 23% increase!

The council have also achieved awards within their first 6-12 weeks of going live, including the Internet Crystal Mark for plain English and first place in the country in the Sitemorse Local Government INDEX.

Security was of course incredibly important and the website is more secure using HTTPS.

The new, responsive design also means that the 60% + citizens who access the website using their mobile phones can access the website from wherever they are and on any device.

Rochdale Borough Council continues to think of new and innovative ways to focus on making their community more digitally inclusive and we can't wait to see what's next.



THE RESULTS IN NUMBERS

- ★ Council's busiest access channel - 6M+ page views
- ★ Increase in online payments - £7M+ online payments submissions
- ★ Increase in other service transactions - 35K+ online forms submitted, a 21% increase
- ★ Better serving citizens online, 7500 pages updated.

ACCESSIBILITY WINS

- ★ WCAG 2.1 AA accredited, delivering an accessible and inclusive experience to citizens.
- ★ Within 6 weeks of going live they achieved the Internet Crystal Mark for plain English.
- ★ Within 13 weeks of going live they achieved first place in the country in the Sitemorse Local Government INDEX.

JADU

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