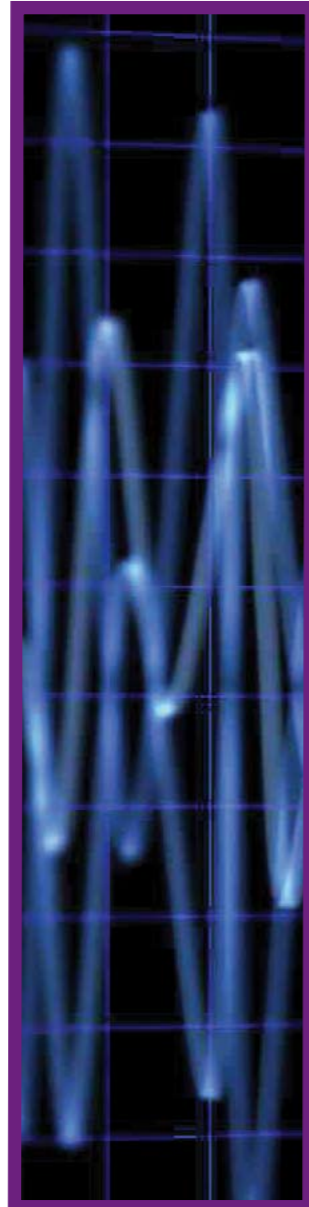


## The results

Within five months of operation the new service took its 1,000<sup>th</sup> payment (making over £154,000 collected) which suggests that it will be used to process well over 2,500 payments each year for Council Tax alone.

“Customers may now make a payment any time of day and on any day of the year, which they could only do previously if they had internet access. In 2006/7 we took a total of 3,600 telephone payments for council tax with an average call duration of 2-3 minutes. This new service now allows that time to be spent elsewhere, in such areas as proactive recovery”, said Keith.

“I would recommend a managed service as the way forward. Let Capita Software Services use their expertise to help and support you,” concluded Keith.



## About AXIS Speech Recognition

AXIS Speech Recognition (ASR) is an automated telephony solution which allows your customers to interact with your organisation. The solution is provided in partnership with Fluency Voice, whose Fluency Virtual Speech Agent (VSA) suite is integrated with the Capita Software Services card payment module.

The solution enables councils to deliver a range of services to customers including making payments, call routing to the most appropriate contact and providing answers to frequently asked questions. The caller is able to navigate quickly and easily through the options using their own voice.

### How does it work?

The customer calls a dedicated number and is taken through the available options. Guidance is provided by the speech of a 'virtual agent', to which the caller responds using their own voice. If the requested service requires authentication (e.g. when supplying account details or making a credit card payment), all responses are validated as the transaction is taking place. With security in mind, the customer may choose to use the phone keypad to input sensitive data (such as card details) to guard against details being overheard and used fraudulently.

For further details please contact your Account Manager.

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# CAPITA

# CAPITA

## Case Study

Bracknell Forest introduces  
AXIS Speech Recognition software



## Bracknell Forest introduces AXIS Speech Recognition software

With the help of Capita Software Services, Bracknell Forest Borough Council has expanded its self-service options to become the first local authority in the UK to take payments via a speech recognition system.

## Background

Described as the “Borough of Opportunity” in the high-tech heart of the Thames Valley, Bracknell Forest Borough Council in Berkshire is home to over 110,000 people and many leading IT companies. A unitary authority since April 1998, the Borough has 45,100 domestic properties, 2,200 businesses, employs 3,900 people and has a gross expenditure of £200 million.

The Council is a significant user of AXIS payment options having implemented AXIS Counter Receipting in 2001 closely followed by AXIS Internet Payments where it was one of the earliest adopters.

## The solution

For the first phase of the project the Council wanted a speech recognition service purely for Council Tax payments but it was always planning a second phase to include payment of Car Parking Penalty Charge Notices.

Having seen the speech recognition system demonstrated at the IRRV Conference, Bracknell Forest and Capita began working together from December 2006 in order to ensure a smooth implementation in line with demanding timescales. Bracknell Forest wanted the service to be live and running before the annual council tax bills were posted in March 2007. Capita provided the consultancy, project management and implementation in addition to arranging the professional recording of voice prompts to cover the Council’s supported services. Being a managed service, no significant training was required other than some basic systems administration.

In February 2007 the Council went live with AXIS Speech Recognition and became the first local authority in the UK to take payments via a speech recognition system.

## The challenge

As e-government continues to be developed, councils are implementing increasingly sophisticated automated payment systems. The Council wanted to improve its payment mechanisms and extend 24 hour payment services to those customers who do not have web access. Keith Woodman, Head of Customer Services at Bracknell Forest Borough Council, had a close working relationship with Capita and was keen to

partner with them as the first user of AXIS Speech Recognition.

“We had no facility to make payments by telephone, other than by the customer speaking to a member of staff during normal office hours. Moreover, we recognised the lower cost of taking unattended payments as compared with face to face or via a manned telephone service,” explains Keith.

Keith indicates that the majority of payments now taken

via the new service would previously have been made by the customer telephoning the Council where a member of the team would take the payment over the telephone. The Council’s main reason for implementing the new automated service was to give more choice to customers and to release staff time whilst continuing to support other payment choices such as direct debit or payment by cheque.

