



EXECUTIVE BOARD DECISION

REPORT OF:	Executive Member for Resources
LEAD OFFICERS:	Deputy Chief Executive
DATE:	12 October 2017

PORTFOLIO/S AFFECTED:	ALL
WARD/S AFFECTED:	All
KEY DECISION:	YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

SUBJECT: Blackburn with Darwen Digital Strategy

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The attached Digital Strategy sets out the Council's approach to addressing the challenges of delivering technology across the organisation, and ensuring that the maximum benefit is derived for the Council, its workforce, partners, customers and residents.

It is the Council's ambition that where possible, all services and interactions should be capable of being delivered digitally, although we do recognise that not all customers of the Council's services may be able to use digital methods independently. To address this, the Council will adopt an approach of 'assisted digital'. The digitalisation of services will vary from service to service, and accordingly departments will need to consider where and how they will provide this digital assistance to their customers.

We will review our existing processes and practices to ensure we make best use of the technology available whilst also ensuring that our digital services are delivered in user-friendly ways.

The Strategy aligns with the 6 key priorities of the Council in order to make more efficient use of tightening budgets and to continue delivery of quality services to the citizens of the borough. The strategy outlines four separate strands, covered further below;

- Digital Customer,
- Digital Workforce,
- Digital Partners and
- Digital Borough

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

That the Executive Board:

- Notes the report and the attached Digital Strategy document.

3. BACKGROUND

The introduction of new digital technologies across all areas of our lives has fundamentally changed

how we use services, how we work, how we interact through and how services are delivered to us. The Council understands that it has to change to keep pace with this digital shift and the expectations of its citizens, workforce and partners. Indeed, the Council sees that it has a duty to lead and help support this technological and cultural transition within the borough and the wider society.

These new developments offer huge potential for the Council in respect of working more effectively as an organisation and in supporting residents in the new digital age.

The financial climate within which the Council operates is also a significant driver in our approach to digital. The adoption of this strategy across the council will reduce waste and duplication that can result from the traditional channels of contact. It will also enable services and processes to be reviewed to make best use of available technologies and deliver digital services in user-friendly ways to improve the customer experience.

This report and the attached strategy outlines the approach to be taken by the Council in respect of digital transformation now it has committed to working and delivering services in ways which keep pace with modern technology. The 4 strands in the strategy are:

Digital Customer

“Enabling customers to access the services and information they need online.”

The Council will provide services and information online to members, customers, partners and businesses through a number of key mediums including the web, online accounts, forms, apps and social media.

Digital Workforce

“The Council will recruit, support and develop employees with the necessary digital skills to allow technology to be used effectively within the organisation, ensuring that value for money is maximised and services are delivered efficiently.”

Modern technology and solutions will be delivered to staff to support efficiencies within the organisation. As part of the implementation of technology, staff will be given the support to develop skills to use it effectively.

The Council will develop a culture of embracing and using technology at every opportunity with Directors and Heads of Service promoting modern working within their respective areas.

Digital Borough

“The Council will engage with partners using digital platforms in order to collaborate and deliver services to our customers.”

Modern digital services will be delivered to citizens to support efficiencies and to enable them to consume services at a time that suits them. As part of the implementation of digital services, citizens will be given the support to develop skills to use it effectively.

Digital Partners

“The Council, in conjunction with partners, will actively support and provide citizens with access to online facilities and the necessary digital skills to allow them to fully engage in the digital world.”

Collaborative working with partners in the 3rd sector, business and other public sector organisations is increasing with requirements to provide ‘joined up’ services to the customers. To meet these challenges, digital platforms for secure sharing of data, communication and interoperability of systems are a key enabler for these new services.

A New Approach

The Council has been delivering digital solutions for a number of years and has endeavoured to ensure that these support a common goal. However, there has been a realisation that a lack of dedicated resources to drive the programme has resulted in the pace of change being slower than is required. In addition, the support for staff and services to change and the ability to measure the impact of change has also been missing.

Given these constraints, a new assisted digital approach will be taken in order to co-design digital services with customers, staff and partners. This approach will also give the programme governance with Management Board acting as the sponsoring group and the Deputy Chief Executive chairing the Programme Board. Updates will be provided to Members through the Executive Member Resources reports. Any changes requiring decision will be made by senior officers, relevant Executive Members or Executive Board as required.

4. KEY ISSUES & RISKS

Given the size of the programme there are a number of risks which are documented in the Programme Initiation Document. However, the key risks are highlighted below

- Lack of resources to deliver the programme and work streams;
- Lack of buy-in by leadership, members and staff;
- Resistance to change, and;
- Lack of digital leadership and skills within the Council.

It should also be noted that there is a significant risk to the Council's ability to continue delivering the current range of services if this change programme is unsuccessful.

These risks are monitored, managed and mitigated where possible through the programme board governance.

5. POLICY IMPLICATIONS

The adoption and implementation of this strategy will require departments to carefully consider policy implications in their respective areas.

6. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

Funding was allocated within the 2017/18 Budget approved by Finance Council in February 2017 to a reserve to support digital transformation. If any additional funding is required arising from specific recommendations made in the implementation of the Digital Strategy, such requests will be scrutinised and considered as part of the project prioritisation process and approvals sought in line with the Council's financial procedures.

7. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

Delivery of individual projects related to the strategy will require individual Equality Impact Assessments to ensure services are equally accessible to all.

8. RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

At present, the Digital Programme has seconded two business analysts to undertake reviews with departments and document digital roadmaps. Any further resource requirements will be considered by the Programme Board.

9. EQUALITY AND HEALTH IMPLICATIONS

Please select one of the options below. Where appropriate please include the hyperlink to the

EIA.

Option 1 Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) not required – the EIA checklist has been completed.

Option 2 In determining this matter the Executive Member needs to consider the EIA associated with this item in advance of making the decision. *(insert EIA link here)*

Option 3 In determining this matter the Executive Board Members need to consider the EIA associated with this item in advance of making the decision. *(insert EIA attachment)*

10. CONSULTATIONS

Whilst public consultation has not been sought on the strategy, a number of detailed discussions have taken place with departments within the council and with key stakeholders organisations within the Borough.

Consultation and communication with staff, trades unions, members, service users and partners will be a key element of the projects delivered under this strategy to ensure digital services are delivered in the most appropriate way going forward..

11. STATEMENT OF COMPLIANCE

The recommendations are made further to advice from the Monitoring Officer and the Section 151 Officer has confirmed that they do not incur unlawful expenditure. They are also compliant with equality legislation and an equality analysis and impact assessment has been considered. The recommendations reflect the core principles of good governance set out in the Council's Code of Corporate Governance.

12. DECLARATION OF INTEREST

All Declarations of Interest of any Executive Member consulted and note of any dispensation granted by the Chief Executive will be recorded in the Summary of Decisions published on the day following the meeting.

VERSION:	1.0
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CONTACT OFFICER:	Andy Ormerod and Shane Agnew
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DATE:	5 th October 2017
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BACKGROUND PAPER:	Digital Strategy
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