DRAFT

Blackburn with Darwen Council
Digital Strategy
2017/2020

"Digital First for our Customers, Workforce, Borough and Partners"

Contents

Background

The introduction of new digital technologies across all areas of our lives has fundamentally changed many things, from how we purchase services, how we work, how we interact through to 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. Reviews will seek to make best use of the technologies available whilst also ensuring that our digital services are delivered in user friendly ways. This digital strategy sets out a vision and commitment which will support the key Council objectives of

1. Council objectives of Creating more **jobs** and supporting business growth
2. Improving **housing** quality and building more houses
3. Improving **health and well-being**;
4. Improving outcomes for our **young people** – education and skills
5. Supporting and helping the most **vulnerable people**
6. **Making your money go further** – supporting households in difficult financial times through efficient and effective use of Council tax.

Key Drivers

The drivers for implementing a digital strategy are detailed below and are led by the changing environment within the Council and its interactions with citizens and partners taking into account the wider changing technological advances in delivering services.

- **Access to digital systems:** greater demand for citizen access to systems from any location 24/7
- **Value for money:** Reductions in the Council budgets
- **Shared Services:** An increase in capability and options to share services with other Authorities/ Partners will mean citizens need to be as digitally enabled as possible to react to changing service delivery models.
- **Digital Exclusion:** Citizen digital skills gap which could impact future service delivery models and disadvantage some sections of society.

Current Picture

Digital technology and the opportunities it provides have become a key consideration in service planning and policy development across the Council. There have been a number of digital projects delivered to modernise the organisation and assist staff with service delivery. These include technologies to improve workforce mobility, customer digital interaction and communications. The Council website was last reviewed and refreshed in 2012 with the ownership now delegated to individual service areas and the number of service areas using online forms has steadily increased month on month. Whilst there has been progress made in the provision for customers online, the contact through this channel remains the lowest compared to other more traditional methods of contact such as telephone, email and face to face.

The Council continues to explore and respond to the rapidly increasing demands of collaboration and partnership working. Collaboration with partners has already started across a number of key services including: Children's Services, Public Health, Lancashire Care Foundation Trust and Clinical Commissioning Groups.

There have been a number of digital and change programmes delivered to modernise the organisation and assist citizens with service delivery however the pace and breadth of these changes has meant that a number of services are yet to fully engage with a digital approach.

Strategic Strands
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.

Customers and businesses will be able to access our transactional services 24 hours a day, from any location and from any device. These online services will be designed to ensure that they are accessible, user-friendly, responsive to customer needs and make best use of the technologies available. The information and data will be more accessible through online Council channels, increasing accessibility and transparency.

The Councils target is to provide online functionality for all of its services. This will include:

- The provision of clear, concise and up to date information on all services offered by the Council;
- The provision of smart online forms for all service requests or applications;
- The provision of contact email addresses for all services areas, and Online payment facilities.
- The utilisation of the Council's app, telephone forms or other suitable channels, and;
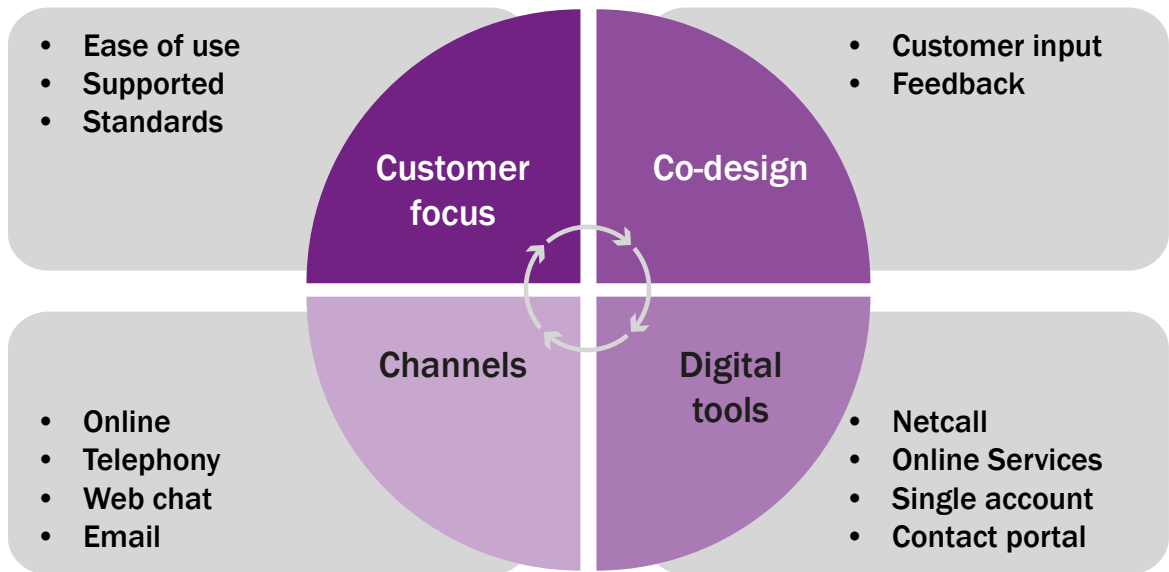- The provision of assistance to those requiring support with digital channels.

How we will achieve our Digital Customer vision

Delivering services online and through digital means will be the first option for Council services, with the website, social media, and the customer portal becoming the primary means for contacting the Council. This approach will drive the customer contact from traditional channels such as, face to face, postal and telephone contact, to online delivery which meets the expectations of our customers through improved processes and better user experience and delivers departmental savings through cheaper and more efficient channels.

We recognise that not all users of the Council's services may be able to use digital services independently. To accommodate those individuals, the Council will adopt an approach of 'Assisted Digital'. Departments and service areas should consider how they will provide this assistance at the same time as they are digitally transforming their services.

Strategic Strands
Digital Customer

| Ease of use • Supported • Standards | Customer focus | Co-design | Customer input • Feedback |

- Ease of use
- Supported
- Standards

Customer focus

Co-design

- Customer input
- Feedback

Channels

Digital tools

- Online
- Telephony
- Web chat
- Email

- Netcall
- Online Services
- Single account
- Contact portal

Priorities	What we will do
» We will embed into services the regular review and updating of information online, ensuring the website is user-friendly and up to date. In addition, the Council will continue to investigate opportunities for building upon our existing usage of social media and digital information provision.	» Increase the availability of digital access to transactional, advice and information services across the Council
» The Council will look to fundamentally review all customer requests as per the digital agenda and look to develop services in the digital age.	» Redevelop the website to have a focus on simplified transactional forms, access to local and personalised information and improved opportunity to feedback to the services
» Services will also consider options for integration into back office systems in order to maximise efficiencies and savings.	» Develop a social media approach that allows for a greater range of interaction between the Council services and the customers
» Where appropriate, the move to online solutions for customers will also be supported by departments through an 'assisted digital' approach.	» Work towards a single account for citizens to allow access to Council services
» Council departments will develop and adopt robust measures of customer data to be used as business intelligence to measure digital progress and to inform policy development, service planning and transformation of services.	» Expand the number of services available online to citizens and businesses
	» Implement standard approaches to call handling across the Council services
	» Ensure assistance is available for those who need it.

Strategic Strands
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.
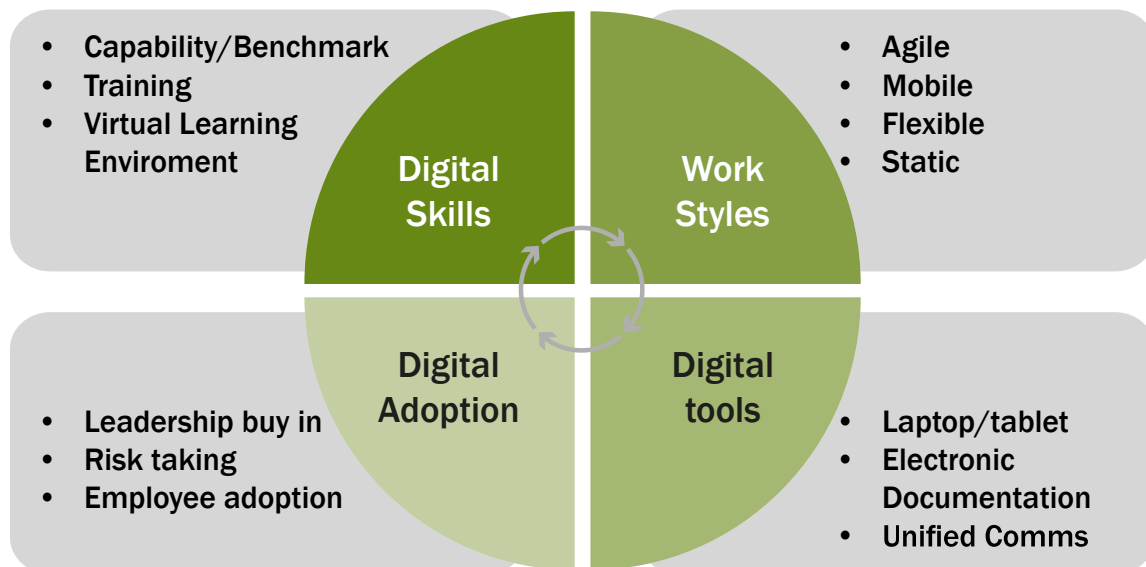
How we will achieve our Digital Workforce vision

Following the introduction of key IT projects, the challenge facing departments is to move beyond basic uses of email and telephone and the adoption of a new culture where technology is exploited and used to it fullest. Internal staff communication and online fulfilment will be enhanced using digital tools and the HR, Payroll and Finance Services will also continue to develop and deliver enhancements ensuring self-service options available to staff are maximised.

Strategic Strands
Digital Workforce

• **Capability/Benchmark** • **Training** • **Virtual Learning Enviroment**	**Digital Skills**
Work Styles	• **Agile** • **Mobile** • **Flexible** • **Static**
• **Leadership buy in** • **Risk taking** • **Employee adoption**	**Digital Adoption**
Digital tools	• **Laptop/tablet** • **Electronic Documentation** • **Unified Comms**

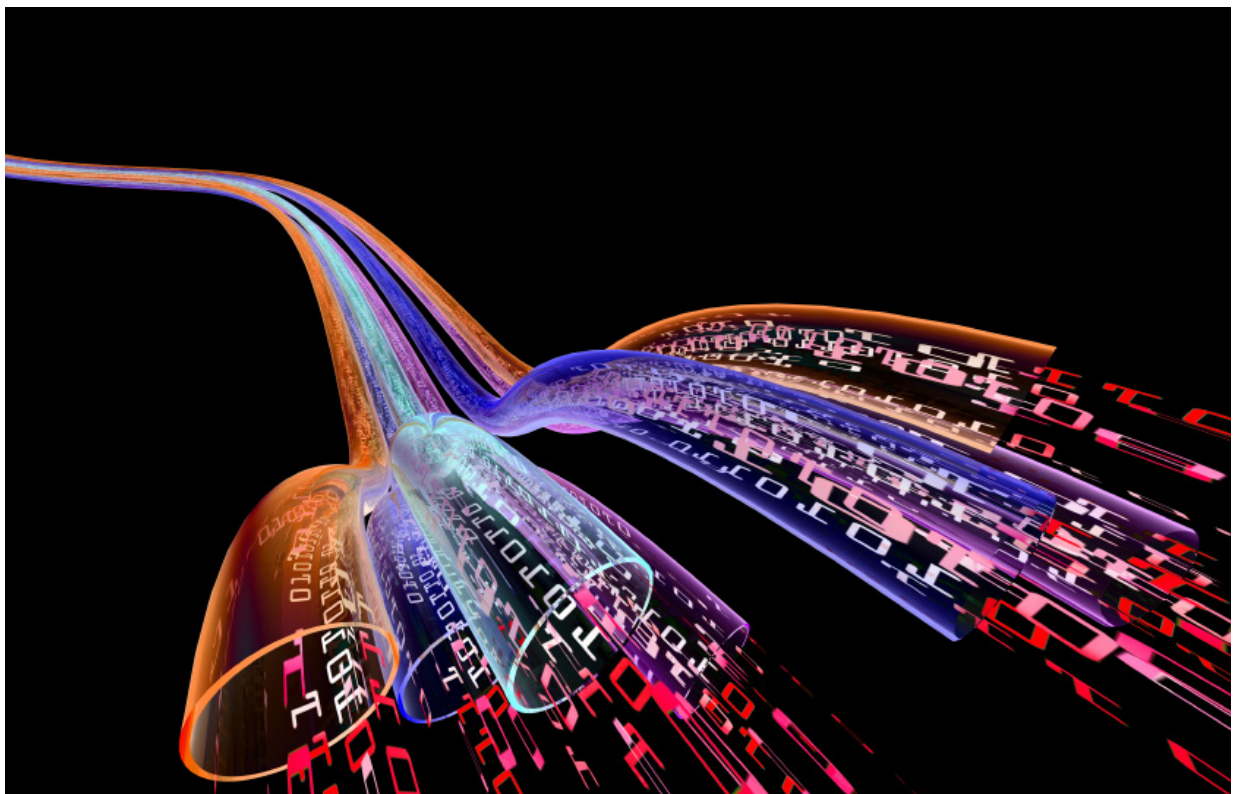| Priorities	What we will do
» Develop a digital workforce which is mobile using the most appropriate technologies to support service delivery » Employees can use the standard digital tools offered » Employees to have the digital applications they need over and above the standard applications » Create digital champions within the portfolios/departments » Reduce the cost of service delivery via digital engagement » Ensure employees have adequate capabilities and skills in digital service delivery to enable greater efficiencies and improved services to the customer.	» Establish a baseline ICT requirement for all applicants at recruitment and selection stage Ensure employees have adequate ICT capabilities and skills by undertaking a skills analysis » Deliver digital training through complimentary methods in order to maximise impact (I.e. online e-learning). » Internal employee communication and online fulfilment will be enhanced by the launch of the new 'intranet'. » The HR and Payroll Service will continue to develop and deliver enhancements to employee and manager self-service » Develop 'digital champions' to locally support the development of employee skills. » Develop metrics in order to measure the impact of this strategy » Establish and communicate best practise use cases of existing technology and how it is being used to meet workforce needs.

Strategic Strands
Digital Borough

"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."

Modern digital services will be delivered to citizens to support efficiencies and to enable them to access 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.

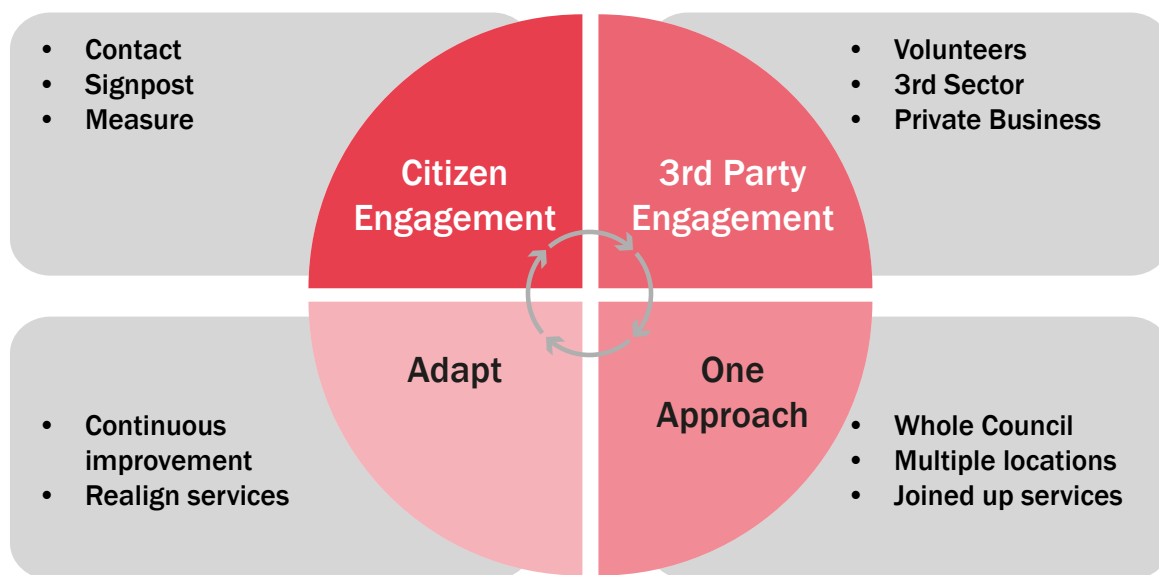## How we will achieve our Digital Borough vision

In a world where there is an increased drive towards digital service delivery, the Council needs to ensure that they support their citizens to ensure that they have all barriers to digital engagement removed. Research suggests that there are four key barriers, and more than one may affect individuals at any one time:

1. **access:** the ability to connect to the internet and go online
2. **skills:** the ability to use the internet and online services
3. **confidence:** a fear of crime, lack of trust or not knowing where to start online
4. **motivation:** understanding why using the internet is relevant and helpful.

Strategic Strands
Digital Borough

- **Contact**
- **Signpost**
- **Measure**

Citizen Engagement

3rd Party Engagement

- **Volunteers**
- **3rd Sector**
- **Private Business**

Adapt

One Approach

- **Continuous improvement**
- **Realign services**

- **Whole Council**
- **Multiple locations**
- **Joined up services**

Priorities	What we will do
» Develop a digital borough which affords all citizens the opportunity and access to engage with the digital world	» Establish a baseline of digital support across the borough, both the Councils offerings and key partners
» Develop and promote online facilities for residents of the borough	» Ensure citizens have adequate digital capabilities and skills by undertaking a skills analysis and reviewing in conjunction with current and future needs and service delivery models.
» Support citizens in the use of standard digital services offered. i.e. web forms	» Deliver digital training through complimentary methods in order to maximise impact (I.e. online e-learning) in collaboration with our partners
» Create digital champions within key customer facing departments	» Create 'digital champions' across Council services and partnerships
» Reduce the cost of service delivery via digital engagement	» Develop the 'digital champions' to locally support the development of citizen skills.
» Ensure citizens have adequate capabilities and skills in order to access digital service.	» Develop metrics in order to measure the impact of this strategy
	» Link to current best practice, national digital trends and initiatives such as the national Libraries strategies.

Strategic Strands
Digital Partners

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

Collaborative working with partners in the third sector, business and other public sector organisations is increasing and providing '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.
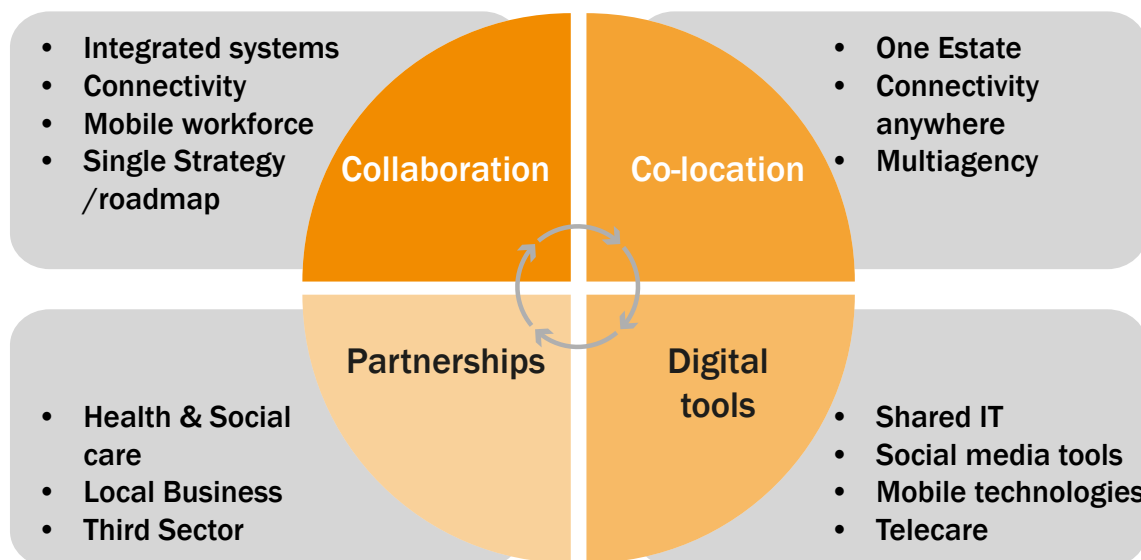
How we will achieve our Digital Partners vision

Partnership working is critical for building strong, effective relationships within and across our organisations. Within the Council this means taking a joined-up approach to designing and delivering integrated services for the benefit of service users. Excellent communication and multi-disciplinary team working are key elements to successful partnership working within an organisation and fundamental to ensuring a streamlined approach to the delivery of services.

The development of high quality, co-ordinated services across different settings and sectors requires our organisation and partners to work collaboratively with each other. This will include working across organisational boundaries between statutory, voluntary, community and independent sectors. Through the use of collaboration platforms, digital enablement of Localities will ensure that partners are able to access and share relevant digital systems in order to deliver better outcomes for the citizen.

Strategic Strands
Digital Partners

- **Integrated systems**
- **Connectivity**
- **Mobile workforce**
- **Single Strategy /roadmap**

Collaboration

Co-location

- **One Estate**
- **Connectivity anywhere**
- **Multiagency**

Partnerships

Digital tools

- **Health & Social care**
- **Local Business**
- **Third Sector**

- **Shared IT**
- **Social media tools**
- **Mobile technologies**
- **Telecare**

Priorities	What we will do
» To work closely with partners to build digital approaches to service design and implementation of digital collaborations	» Using social media tools and linking up with established digital communities to assist in decision making and policy development.
» To adopt digital approaches as an integral part of all business development	» We will build on existing partnerships through the Chamber of Commerce and the Hive to reach out further to our local businesses and ensuring that we maximise the impact of local innovation and growth.
» That the workforce is able to evolve in terms of technological advances	» Work closely with partners in health and social care across Pennine Lancashire to build on existing digital approaches.
» To ensure that digital training service is fully available and utilised by the organisation	» Review existing local strategies and approaches in conjunction with emerging regional and national developments.
» To ensure that the business exploits existing digital investment where appropriate.	» Look with partners to develop online self-assessment options for citizens.
	» Develop in conjunction with partners an integrated, multi-agency case management system.
	» Promote digital health and social care solutions for citizens; i.e. telecare/ telehealth.
	» We will continue to build digital partnerships across* primary secondary and further and higher education to promote innovation.
	* The voluntary sector.