

# A Digital Vision for the Borough

## “Digital First for our customers, workforce and partners”

### Introduction

The introduction of new technology across all areas of our lives has fundamentally changed the way in which customers, the workforce and partners access and interact. The Council has now committed itself to working and delivering services in ways which keep pace with modern technology.

We recognise that not all customers of the Council’s services may be able to use digital methods independently. To accommodate those individuals, the Council will adopt an approach of ‘assisted digital’. The digitalisation of services will vary from department to department, and accordingly, service areas will need to consider where and how they will provide this assistance to customers.

This vision sets out our approach to addressing the challenges of delivering technology across the organisation and ensuring that the maximum benefit is derived for the Council, its workforce, customers and partners.

### Digital Customer

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

The Council will provide services and information online to members, customers 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 and responsive to customer needs. The information and data will be more accessible to customers 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;
- On-line payment facilities.

Where appropriate:

- The utilisation of the councils app, telephone forms or other suitable channels, and;
- The provision of assistance to those requiring support with digital channels.

## **Where are we now?**

The web content was reviewed and refreshed in 2012 with the ownership now delegated to individual service areas.

The number of service areas using on-line forms has steadily increased with usage increasing 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.

## **How will we achieve our vision?**

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 (GovDelivery).

The Council will look to fundamentally review all customer requests as per the digital agenda and look to develop services in the digital age.

Services will also consider options for integration into back office systems in order to maximise efficiencies and savings.

Where appropriate, the move to online solutions for customers will also be supported by departments through an 'assisted digital' approach.

Council departments should 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.

## 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 and savings 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.

### Where are we now?

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 IT projects delivered to modernise the organisation and assist staff with service delivery. These include technologies to improve IT mobility and digital communications.

### How will we achieve our 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 its fullest.

Internal staff communication and online fulfilment will be enhanced by the launch of the new ‘intranet’ in November. The new platform will improve the quality of information and functionality offered to the workforce.

The HR and Payroll Services will also continue to develop and deliver enhancements to the Myview system ensuring self-service options available to staff are maximised.

## 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 3<sup>rd</sup> sector 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.

## **Where are we now?**

The council continues to explore and respond to the rapidly increasing demands of this area of the digital agenda. Collaboration with partners has already commenced across a number of key council services including, Children's Services, Public Health, Lancashire Care Foundation Trust, Clinical Commissioning Groups.

## **How will we achieve our vision?**

Good partnership working is critical for building strong, effective relationships within and across our organisations. Within our organisation this means taking a joined-up approach to designing and delivering integrated services for the benefit of customers. 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 premises will ensure that partners are able to access and share relevant digital systems in order to deliver better outcomes for the customers.

## **Conclusion**

This digital vision underpins a number of the key corporate priorities but will require significant time and resources to develop the right approach and culture within the council that is embedded into all departmental activities and business plans.

In the current financial climate this represents a significant challenge, but it is one that we need to overcome in order to continue to deliver a high level of service for our customers and to manage the budget challenges facing the Council over the next few years.