

## Cabinet Committee on Performance Improvement

Meeting to be held on Tuesday, April 20<sup>th</sup>, 2021

Electoral Division affected:

All

### Digital Strategy Update

(Appendix 'A' refers)

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### Executive Summary

This report provides an update on the transition of BT Lancashire Services back into the County Council, implementation of the digital strategy and its associated action plan. It also provides an update on how ICT has supported the pandemic response/enabled home working and looks at how the actions will also help support new ways of working post pandemic.

### Recommendation

The Cabinet Committee on Performance Improvement is asked to comment on and note the contents of this report and the associated presentation.

### Background and Advice

On 1<sup>st</sup> April 2021 a new Digital Service was created bringing together the returning BT Lancashire Services ICT Services with Core Business Systems, creating a sizeable team which has been reorganised to reflect a better fitting Digital Service to meet the organisational need.

The pandemic has impacted the original intended progress on the digital strategy action plan. However, the pandemic itself has allowed significant progress to be made in other areas where progress was proving difficult to achieve so, whilst not delivering to the original plan, huge progress has been made. The following are examples of the progress made:

### Key Projects

- **COVID:** BT Lancashire Services ICT Services and Core Business Systems provided significant levels of support to the council, in enabling them to best prepare and support staff, partners and residents on COVID related activity, particularly during the first lockdown period. Approximately 60 projects of various size and complexity were robustly monitored and prioritised with staff regularly working late into the night, weekends, onsite with some on 24/7

standby. Projects included Temporary Mortuary, expansion of Registrars Service, Digital Online, Track and Trace, Integrating Partnership/Provider systems, Accommodation WiFi, copious amounts of online forms/data capture and reporting and many more.

- **Agile workforce:** at the start of the pandemic, our workforce was heavily office based. However, the decision had been taken in the previous year to issue laptops only as part of the desktop refresh, to encourage the use of agile working. This actually meant that at the start of the pandemic 60% of our workforce were already equipped with laptops and able to make the journey to working from home.
- **Equipment:** at a time when it was proving difficult to secure new equipment due to supply chain issues, BT Lancashire Services were able to secure an order for 1000 laptops, which were delivered in March and very quickly distributed to staff such as Customer Access, who were surprised how well they were able to adapt to working from home and are unlikely to revert to old working practices.

As of February this year, the number of active accounts detected on the network was:

8,766 active accounts

of these

7,227 were active laptops and 1,038 active PC's.

It is assumed that the laptop users are largely working from home. The infrastructure to enable this had already been designed and implemented by BT Lancashire Services and is known as 'Always On Virtual Private Network' (AOVPN) and this was quickly scaled up to cope with the ongoing demand.

Since the original purchase of 1000 additional laptops mentioned above, a further 850 have also been sourced and funded from the Covid-19 grant, which has enabled further staff to be in receipt of laptops. In addition, we were asked about providing laptops to schools and were able to source an initial 2,350 funded from the Covid-19 grant, which have all been distributed and have been very well received. We were able to source another 1000 laptops which will go to schools after the Easter break, which have also been funded from the Covid-19 grant.

- **Document Handling Service:** This service has made fabulous progress during the pandemic as the organisation had no choice but to adopt new ways of working. Prior to the pandemic, despite the services best endeavours, they were only scanning 45% of incoming mail. This is now at 95% of mail being scanned and is one of the areas that we will not backtrack on as this will result in the reduction of our mail van deliveries; we have already reduced this by one and will shortly be reducing by one van again. There is no longer the

need for a mail delivery around County Hall and we have redirected this resource to other duties within the Document Handling Service.

Printing habits have also changed dramatically as staff are unable to use the printers in the offices. This has meant that usage of the central print and despatch service has seen big increases in usage. This has a number of benefits such as letters being correctly addressed and sorted for collection by Royal Mail, resulting in cheaper postage charges and it is all automated.

- **Office 365:** By the end of March BT Lancashire Services will have completed a high velocity migration of over 8,500 users to Microsoft 365. This will have enabled all users with Microsoft Teams which supports improved voice and video calling, chat, and a major enhancement in the ways we collaborate and share information across the council and with partners. During the pandemic, we have enabled the County Councillors to hold all their Council meetings virtually taking full advantage of the new functionality. During the migration, we have also remotely upgraded everyone's computers with the latest versions of Windows 10 and Microsoft Office apps, so we can fully benefit from the investment in M365.
- **Networks & Infrastructure:** During 2020/21 BT Lancashire Services has delivered a major upgrade to the core wired and wireless infrastructure for the council. The new infrastructure provides faster connections and improved security, and supports the council's agile working strategy by enabling colleagues to work flexibly in council buildings, and by partnering with Govroam and GovWifi, enabling county council staff to seamlessly connect to wireless at a number of key partner sites. By the end of March, BT Lancashire Services will have installed new access points using the new service to parts of county hall and at 15 libraries and care homes. The new infrastructure will support the council to continue rolling out the faster connections to the rest of the estate over the next 12-18 months.
- **Oracle Fusion:** this is a modern and efficient cloud-based solution which will replace Oracle R12, our current HR, Payroll, Finance and Procurement system. Fusion will go live in two phases; from February 2022 for HR and Payroll, and from April 2022 for Finance and Procurement. Fusion will be introduced across the board – for the council, for Lancashire Police, Fire and Rescue, schools and academies; and for our suppliers and customers. The work to change from R12 has been in progress now for over a year with the full project mobilising in September 2020. Oracle Fusion offers seamless systems and data integration. This just means there is no need for additional layers of functionality, which ultimately create more complexity. In turn, we can trust the data and information in the system, to support better and faster decision making in everything we do. The Oracle Programme Director is part of the Digital Services Department reporting into the Chief Digital Officer.

## Consultations

N/A

**Implications:**

N/A

**List of Background Papers**

Paper	Date	Contact/Tel
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None

Reason for inclusion in Part II, if appropriate

N/A