

Lancashire County Council

Cabinet Committee on Performance Improvement

Minutes of the Meeting held on Tuesday, 20th April, 2021 at 2.00 pm - Virtual Meeting

Present:

County Councillor Geoff Driver CBE (Chair)

County Councillors

K Iddon	A Atkinson
M Green	P Buckley
C Crompton	P Williamson

1. Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from County Councillor Parkinson, County Councillor Gooch and County Councillor Turner.

2. Disclosure of Pecuniary and Non-Pecuniary Interests

No pecuniary or non-pecuniary interests were disclosed.

3. Minutes of the Meeting held on 2nd March 2021

Resolved: That the minutes of the meeting held on 2nd March 2021 be confirmed and signed by the Chair.

4. Digital Strategy Update

A report was presented by Glyn Peach – Chief Digital Officer, providing an update on the transition of BT Lancashire Services back into the county council, implementation of the digital strategy and its associated action plan. The report also provided an update on how ICT had supported the pandemic response/enabled home working and looked at how the actions would also help support new ways of working post pandemic.

Covid – the Cabinet Committee noted that, whilst not being able to deliver to the original digital strategy action plan due to the Covid pandemic, significant progress had been made through BT Lancashire Services ICT Services and Core Business Systems providing a significant level of support to the county council. Over 60 projects had been set up and key projects were outlined as follows:

Establishment of an IT system for the temporary mortuary facility; provision of assistance to the Registrars Service to modernise their IT systems to the new way of working from home; working in partnership with other authorities on the

early Track and Trace solution; integrating Partnership/Provider systems and sharing data with NHS, Public Health England, Adult Social Care and other authorities; provision of an electronic service to enable Lancashire residents to continue to connect with Lancashire County Council.

Agile working – due to the pandemic, the number of laptop users had to be upscaled very quickly and the number of desktop users descaled. In addition to providing Members with laptops, approximately 1,850 laptops had been issued to staff and couriers had been used to collect the devices from County Hall and deliver them. BT Lancashire Services had worked very quickly to enable people to connect to the county council network remotely, resulting in over 8,500 staff working from home. This had been a seamless transition due to the efforts of BT Lancashire Services staff and accolades had been received for this work. In addition to the provision of laptops to staff and Members, 3,350 laptops had been issued to children at Lancashire's schools.

Document Handling Service – prior to the pandemic, only 45% of incoming mail was being scanned so the postal/printing system had had to be modernised to make it more efficient. As a result, 95% of mail received by the county council was now being scanned and emailed onto relevant colleagues. In addition, the majority of printing had been migrated to the post room to be printed and sorted for collection by Royal Mail, which had significantly reduced postal charges.

Office 365 – the Digital Services Team had worked with Microsoft, BT Lancashire Services, Communications and other partners to enable the swift deployment of Office 365 to all staff and Members. A significant amount of housekeeping had been completed in preparation for this and any security issues had been dealt with.

Networks & Infrastructure – during 2020/21, a major upgrade to the core wired and wireless infrastructure had been delivered for the county council which provided faster connections and improved security. The county council had partnered with Govroam and GovWifi, enabling staff to seamlessly connect to wireless networks at a number of key partner sites. Access points had been installed at parts of County Hall and at 15 libraries and care homes and would be rolled out to the rest of the estate over the next 12-18 months.

Oracle Fusion – this was a modern and efficient cloud-based solution which offered seamless systems and data integration. Oracle Fusion would replace Oracle 12, the county council's current HR, Payroll, Finance and Procurement system, which was due to expire at the end of 2021. A significant project was currently underway for this and the new system would go live in February 2022 for HR and Payroll, and from April 2022 for Finance and Procurement. Fusion would be introduced across the county council, Lancashire Police, the Fire and Rescue Service, schools and academies, and for our suppliers and customers.

County Councillor Crompton expressed concern about the large number of 'missing' accounts detected on the network. It was explained that some of these devices were being retained to help with activities, for example, the upcoming

elections, and others were not currently active due to some staff being on maternity/paternity leave or long term sick leave. However, some laptops were currently being stored in cupboards not being used so accounts for these would be disabled after 3 months until they could be re-enabled. Previously, it had not been uncommon for officers to have the use of 2 devices although, going forward, an Asset Management System would be introduced to locate devices and ascertain who was using them. A single device policy had now been prepared and adopted and efforts would be concentrated on enforcing this policy and bringing these numbers down.

County Councillor Buckley acknowledged that the issue of software licences had been dealt with but queried whether we had been over-licenced or under licenced and whether we were up to date with the licences or having to spend more on them. It was reported that on leaving BT Lancashire Services, we may have found that we did not have the right licences and that, if we had been under-licenced, this would have had a massive financial impact. It was reported that there had been some anomalies where we had the wrong licences in some cases but that this had now been rectified. The Cabinet Committee noted that, on balance, everything had been migrated accurately and that, going forward, the county council were in a strong financial position on this.

The Chair asked whether the issue in relation to Oracle and Lancashire Constabulary had been resolved. Committee were informed that the partner organising the data migration and loading from the old system to the new was going to use an offshore resource to help with some of the transaction activity. This had been sufficient for Lancashire County Council Information Governance rules, although Lancashire Constabulary had been concerned about security as personal details of former police officers would have been able to be accessed. In order to overcome this challenge, an on-shore supplier has had to be used although it was reported that some of the work was being done in-house. The Cabinet Committee noted that any extra costs incurred for using the on-shore supplier would be borne by Lancashire Constabulary.

County Councillor Crompton queried how easy it would be to incorporate systems when moving towards unitary authorities and the cost implications of this. It was reported that this was much easier to manage using a modern platform and that, as Oracle was one of the largest businesses in the world supporting a large number of councils, it would not be an issue to bring organisations together to use one system. We currently paid for however many licences we needed per month, per person and were contracted to this fixed number for 3 years. After that, it would be possible to move to a rolling 12 month licence model. Members were assured that the county council was in a good financial position to deal with any changes, as IT within the county council had been subject to a large financial investment.

As there was currently only a small component of staff working on-site at the moment due to Covid restrictions, Members of the Cabinet Committee would be invited to take a tour of the new Digital Service at a later date.

The Chair wished to place on record his thanks to Glyn Peach, Gabby Nelson and their team for all their hard work and for running a difficult operation very smoothly.

As it was the Chair and County Councillor Atkinson's last meeting, the Chair expressed his thanks to all Officers and Members of the Cabinet Committee for working together to do their best for the county council and for the residents of Lancashire, and wished everyone well for the future.

Resolved: That the Cabinet Committee on Performance Improvement note the update on the Digital Strategy as provided in the report and the associated presentation.

5. Urgent Business

There were no items of Urgent Business.

6. Date of Next Meeting

The next meeting of the Cabinet Committee on Performance Improvement would be held at 2.00pm on Thursday 1st July 2021.

L Sales
Director of Corporate Services

County Hall
Preston