

# Performance, Finance and Customer Focus Overview and Scrutiny Committee



Date of meeting:	22 January 2020
Title of Report:	<b>TWWW Update – Focus on Digital</b>
Lead Member:	Councillor Jon Taylor (Cabinet Member for Education, Skills and Transformation)
Lead Strategic Director:	Andy Ralphs (Strategic Director of Customer and Corporate Services)
Author:	Peter Honeywell (Transformation Architecture Manager)
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Your Reference:	<a href="#">Click here to enter text.</a>
Key Decision:	No
Confidentiality:	Part I - Official

## Purpose of Report

This report provides the panel with a more in depth analysis of the factors considered as the Council moves to providing more services through digital delivery.

## Recommendations and Reasons

That the panel consider the data and analysis in the report as background for future recommendations arising from The Way We Work programme.

## Alternative options considered and rejected

The report explores the different options to digital services.

## Relevance to the Corporate Plan and/or the Plymouth Plan

The effective delivery of user led digital service delivery supports the Corporate Plan objectives in a number of ways through:

Listening to customers and communities and responding to their needs to provide convenient and relevant digital services with alternative options for those who can't access them

Providing quality public services through maximising the savings available from digital delivery in order to protect services that can't be digitised

Spending money wisely by using digital services where customers are not detrimentally impacted

## Implications for the Medium Term Financial Plan and Resource Implications:

The cost reductions associated with digital delivery are embedded in many of the planned changes across the Council to help deliver the MTFP. Digital is an enabler of these changes and as such there is no single figure that can be provided to represent the contribution digital is making to the MTFP.

**Carbon Footprint (Environmental) Implications:**

Digital delivery offers the opportunity to reduce face to face contacts which will reduce carbon emissions from travel. It also offers the opportunity for the Council to reduce accommodation and the associated emissions from our estate.

**Other Implications: e.g. Health and Safety, Risk Management, Child Poverty:**

*\* When considering these proposals members have a responsibility to ensure they give due regard to the Council's duty to promote equality of opportunity, eliminate unlawful discrimination and promote good relations between people who share protected characteristics under the Equalities Act and those who do not.*

The report describes how as digital services have been and will continue to be developed the Council will protect and maintain options for people who are otherwise unable to access these services.

**Appendices**

*\*Add rows as required to box below*

Ref.	Title of Appendix	Exemption Paragraph Number (if applicable) <i>If some/all of the information is confidential, you must indicate why it is not for publication by virtue of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 by ticking the relevant box.</i>						
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7
A	TWWW Update – Focus on Digital							

**Background papers:**

*\*Add rows as required to box below*

Please list all unpublished, background papers relevant to the decision in the table below. Background papers are unpublished works, relied on to a material extent in preparing the report, which disclose facts or matters on which the report or an important part of the work is based.

Title of any background paper(s)	Exemption Paragraph Number (if applicable) <i>If some/all of the information is confidential, you must indicate why it is not for publication by virtue of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 by ticking the relevant box.</i>						
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

**Sign off:**

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Originating Senior Leadership Team member: Peter Honeywell (Transformation Architecture Manager)											

Please confirm the Strategic Director(s) has agreed the report? Yes

Date agreed: 16/01/2020

Cabinet Member approval: Councillor Jon Taylor (Cabinet Member for Education, Skills and Transformation) Verbal

Date approved: 21/01/2020

## **TWWW Update – Focus on Digital**

### **Background and Purpose**

This paper describes the rationale and approach to digital services that the Council is taking as part of The Way We Work Programme. Previous updates to the panel have explained how digital is part of the programme without fully explaining why it is so important.

The paper also provides a description of the new Assisted Customer Service Support scheme which protects customers who might otherwise be in danger of digital and even social isolation.

### **What do we mean by Digital Services?**

Replacing conventional manual delivery of services with digital service delivery changes in at least three aspects of how we work. Firstly, it can change the way customers access the service, making services available to customers digitally over the internet means that they no longer need to travel to meet a PCC member of staff or call during the opening hours for our services. Instead, wherever a customer is and at whatever time of day they need to access a service it is available to them over the internet on a mobile phone, PC or laptop. Secondly, it can change the way that a customer request is delivered – digital services can automate what is currently manual work performed by staff in the Council. An example of digital automation of work might be through taking each of the customer requests for missed bins and creating schedule for picking them up, with the technology looking at addresses and using digital map to create the best route around the city. The same software could also be used to send a message to customers telling them when their bin should now be collected. Finally, digital delivery of services also allows for the easy and free capture of data about services and how they are delivered. Analysing this data can lead to other opportunities for the Council, for example mapping data about reported incidents of fly tipping can identify hot spots and lead to better targeting prevention and enforcement activities.

To successfully deliver digital services requires the Council to recognise that it can impact, customers, staff, managers and even Members. This means that a digital service is partially about technology and also it is about helping users to adapt to the change and helping them understand the new capabilities it offers them.

### **Benefits and Outcomes**

Taking a customer focused approach to the digitisation of more of our services will achieve the following benefits:

- Cost savings – benchmarks show that whilst face to face interactions cost between £10.53 and £14.00 and calls cost between £3.39 and £5 per call, digital transactions cost between £0.08 and £0.17 per interaction. In 2012 Government Digital Services (GDS) estimated the annual savings to central government were in the region of £1.7bn to £1.8bn per year.
- Access to services 24/7
- Status updates on progress to complete a service request
- Ability to see and manage multiple requests at the same time

As already described there are other benefits to the Council that come from the ability to capture and analyse data that digital services create. Over time digital services should become our first stop to find resources to help inform decisions and to identify problems and opportunities in service delivery.

### **Customer Experience**

Analysis of the channel mix for services that are digitised shows that somewhere between 50 and 60% of our customer base have an active preference to digital services and will seek out digital services where they exist to interact with the Council. Evidence of this was found when the Register Office published the replacement/duplicate certificate service online the process went live 5pm one evening with no marketing and by the following morning 17 orders for additional certificate had been received

and paid for. This experience has been replicated with subsequent releases of digital services since then.

We also know that during periods of peak call volumes at the contact centre when customers have to hold before they can talk to an advisor, reminding customers with recorded announcements that the service they need to access is available online can result in over 90% of our demand for a service being handled online.

This is not to say that all customers will actively use or even prefer to access services digitally. Customer Services and The Way We Work programme have been working to understand customer preference and identified the following reasons that digital might not be first choice for all our customers:

Customer concern	Response	Estimated % of customer base
<b>“Unable to access digital services and unable to rely on friends and family to do so for me”</b>	Additional Customer Service Support Scheme (see Appendix A) – Any customer who is spoken to by Customer Services will be assessed to see whether they should be identified as needing additional support to ensure that we recognise them as being unable to access digital services and that they get straight through to an agent in the contact centre when they call. The number of these customers is anticipated to be small say a couple of thousand across the city.	Less than 1%
<b>“Unable to access digital services”</b>	Access to digital services can be provided in Libraries and Job Centres for those who are able to get out of their house. For those who are unable to travel they will be encouraged to ask for help from friends and family. 60 appointments for Assisted Digital Support sessions are now available in libraries each week specifically for customers who can't access digital services or don't have the skills or confidence to do so.	Uncertain currently being researched
<b>“Unwilling to access digital services”</b>	Where a customer has access and the skills to use digital services but is unwilling to use them because they prefer to talk to someone they will find that calling the contact centre may take longer at busy times for them to get through to an agent and that the recorded messages on lines going into the contact centre are constantly promoting the benefits of digital and encouraging them to try it.	Uncertain currently being researched
<b>“In the habit of calling PCC”</b>	Where a customer is simply just in the habit of calling the contact centre they will also find that it may take longer at busy times for them to get through to an agent and that the recorded messages on lines going into the contact centre are constantly promoting the benefits of digital and encouraging them to try it.	Likely to be around 30%

<b>“Don’t trust that service requests raised digitally are responded to”</b>	The first response for these customers is to recognise that where we fail to meet customer service standards that we will put a fix in place to ensure that it doesn’t happen again – regardless of how the request was made. We also need to assure these customers whether a request is made digitally or via the contact centre, there is no difference to how we respond, indeed in most instances service delivery is identical regardless of the channel it is presented on.	Varies according to services accessed may be as high as 10%
<b>“Don’t feel confident using digital services”</b>	Training and confidence building for people without these skills is available in libraries and elsewhere across the city. Sign posting to these services will be offered by staff working on the phones or providing face to face service. More specific technical skills are offered to residents by On Course South West.	Likely to be 5% to 10%
<b>“Can’t find the digital service I need”</b>	Our website can make finding things more difficult than necessary, in the very short term one way to solve this is to use Google to search for the service you need and to follow their link to the right page. This should only be necessary before we have had a chance to analyse customer usage and redesign the site to better meet customer needs.	Varies according to services accessed may be as high as 10%

Whilst the issue of data security has not been raised by customers as a reason for not using the Councils digital services it is thought likely that over time this could become a challenge for us. The mitigation for this risk will be to continue to invest in the data security measures that currently protect our systems and to be prepared to explain what measures we take to protect their data if they ask.

## Appendix A - Additional Customer Service Support Scheme

The Digital Experience Programme (part of the council’s modernisation portfolio) will see us maximising the use of technology to deliver better and more cost-effective services; by co-designing our online services with our customers they will be fit for purpose and therefore the preferred option for the majority.

Increasing digital uptake will reduce the need for more expensive customer channels but it is vital that no one is excluded from accessing our services.

In December we launched a new initiative to ensure those customers who cannot, and will never be able to get online, are supported to easily make phone contact with us. Eligible customers will have their phone number registered so when they call the Contact Centre from this number they will be routed directly to a customer service agent who will deal with their enquiry.

Customers will be assessed and offered the service if they:

- cannot get online (no device or internet access)
- cannot be reasonably expected to get assistance at a local library or other community facility

- have no support network to help them (no family, friends, neighbours or carers to help)

As an example of the application of this service, Contact Centre staff have recently helped a housebound and partially sighted resident register for this additional customer service support. Due to health issues he is unable to leave the house but does not have a permanent carer in place. He does have some support from a friend but this person does not have digital skills.

It is important to note that we will actively encourage customers to seek assistance from family, friends and carers to support the Council's mission to 'make Plymouth a fairer city where everyone does their bit'.

It is equally important to note that whilst we are on our journey to increase digital uptake, we will robustly promote our online services and encourage their use but will always have other channels available for our customers.

## **Appendix B – TWWW Programme Structure**

This appendix describes how the programme is structured to deliver the digital changes required by the Way We Work Programme.

### **Digital Experience Programme**

The Digital Experience Programme within TWWW has been established to focus on the business changes required to realise the maximum benefits from the technology investments to support digitisation of the Council. The lessons learned within PCC and elsewhere show that technology focused change investments generally fail to deliver sustained benefit delivery as users and customers either don't understand how to use the technology or haven't been bought into the process of change and reject it.

Better understanding who our customers are that have negative reactions to digital services and targeting the interventions described in the responses above is one of the key responsibilities of the Digital Experience Programme within TWWW.

### **Digital Delivery Programme**

This programme of work within TWWW is focused on the technology choices and delivery for digital services supporting the Council. In the operating model this programme will be focused on changes to the technology and data as well as the assets that we rely upon for digital services. The LFFN project falls within scope of this programme as does the work to improve the digital services supporting Council Tax and all the work to implement the changes that are being proposed by the Service Reviews. As part of this programme the Digital Services team currently reporting into the Service Centre will move reporting lines to become part of the Transformation structure.

In addition, this programme is also responsible for developing the organisational capability to use the data that digital services can provide to help support decisions and identify opportunities to create value for the Council and Plymouth. Turning our data to intelligence requires consciously deciding on how we will organise and develop the staff with these skills across our services. It is also likely to require an investment in technology services to capture, store and analyse the data that we have across our business. Whilst the initial work done by this programme will focus on the changes required by PCC, increasingly it is planned to align this work across partners in the city to further maximise return on public sector investment.