



**Oldham**  
Council

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## Report to OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY BOARD

# Resident First Programme, delivering Digital by Design Update

### Portfolio Holder:

Cllr Jabbar, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance & HR

### Programme Sponsor and Senior Responsible Officer:

Ray Ward, Executive Director for Corporate & Commercial Services

### Programme Responsible Officer:

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**Purpose of**

### the Report

The Resident First Programme, also known as Digital by Design is part of our co-operative approach to making access to services easy and efficient by enabling more residents to self-serve, whilst continuing to support those who need it.

The programme design principles include:

- Increasing efficiency
- Digital First
- Thinking like a service user
- Improving Digital Inclusion
- Data to Intelligence.

### Executive Summary

This report provides an update on:

- Programme overview
- Programme priority areas
- Achievements and benefits to date
- Member engagement
- Next steps

### Recommendations

To note the progress made in Phase 2 and the priority areas for Phase 3. Comments and feedback are invited.

**Resident First, delivering digital by design  
Programme Update**

**1. Background**

- 1.2 The Resident First programme aligns with the Cooperative Services objectives of the Oldham Plan as follows;

***Putting social value and transformational outcomes at the heart of all our services***

***Reforming public services and encouraging innovation, leading to better outcomes and delivery***

- 1.3 The Programme's #ourbit #yourbit #result is;

**#ourbit** *Make access to services easy and efficient by enabling residents to self-serve while continuing to support those who need it most.*

**#yourbit** *Do it online and help others to do the same*

**#result** *Saving money where we can to allow us to invest in the services residents value most*

- 1.4 Customer service has changed hugely over the last decade, in large part due to widespread access to and the popularity of broadband, social media and smartphones. From online shopping, bill payment and web chat which helps people to solve problems almost instantaneously, people have come to expect and businesses are delivering a higher standard of customer service than ever before. Keeping pace with that change is important in order to continue to meet residents' expectations. By harnessing new technology for our benefit, we certainly can help residents more effectively than ever before and save money too.

- 1.5 Mobile technology and infrastructure is no longer as significant a barrier as in the past. Recent statistics<sup>1</sup> show that in Oldham;

- Superfast broadband is now available in 99.1% of areas
- 88.2% of residents have access to a pc or laptop
- 73% of people own a smartphone and
- 27% of people go online every day, which is higher than the National average of 25%

**2. Programme Overview**

- 2.1 Phase 1 and Phase 2 of the programme are now complete. The initial investment in the programme concentrated on improving and increasing the services accessed online. Phase 1 delivered some quick wins in a number of service areas based on

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<sup>1</sup> Digital Oldham Report 2019 – Business Intelligence Service, Oldham Council

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service and political priorities, including a re-launched website which created a solid foundation for self-service.

- 2.2 Phase 2 has concentrated on creating re-usable modular digital components that can be rolled out across the organisation (e.g. online form integrations, bookings and payments). This will increase efficiency and avoid the need to reinvent the wheel.
- 2.3 Following the programme's work the channel shift statistics are encouraging, showing an overall 10% increase in online activity and a 7% decrease in telephone contact. In the services we have worked with we have seen on average a 20% drop in calls and a 27% increase in online activity. Customer satisfaction in the service areas we have worked with has also been positive, from residents, members and staff alike.
- 2.4 Whilst there has been positive channel shift there is still much more to do. In order to ensure we meet the increasing service demand, rising resident expectations in user experience and advancements in technology, the programme is now moving into a new phase (phase 3). This will explicitly focus on deep re-design of services that exploit technology, use automation and reduce service costs.
- 2.5 Phase 3 will look to be more fundamental in changing our delivery models to transform from a mainly mediated customer service offer to a predominantly self service one. Whilst we improve our self serve offer we will also ensure our mediated offer remains resilient to ensure we improve access for all, paying particular attention to those who cannot self serve online.
- 2.6 The programme must also contribute to the Council's financial challenges and has a £2m savings target to achieve by 2020/21.

### 3. Achievements and benefits to date (Phase 2)

In phase 2 the programme has achieved the following;

#### 3.1 Highways online reporting

Highways online reporting - launched July 2018	
Achievements	Benefits
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• New online form which:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ clarifies what a pothole is</li> <li>○ prompts the resident with a street search and a map</li> <li>○ marks the specific position of the pothole on a map</li> <li>○ ensures only report a pothole on a road that the council is responsible for maintaining</li> <li>○ uploads up to three photos of the pothole</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Instantly updates the back office application</li> <li>• Sends an email to track the progress of the report online</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Easier to report using web form</li> <li>• Timely response, residents updated, expectations managed</li> <li>• 22% reduction in highway calls 6 months following go-live</li> <li>• 47% reduction in emails received at the contact centre 6 months following go-live</li> <li>• Service now available 24/7</li> </ul>

- Can still report on the phone for those that can't go online

## New reporting process

# Report a pothole

## Where is the problem?

Please search for the street, then use the map to tell us where the pothole is.

Enter the name of the street  
*Required*

 Search

Please move the marker on the map to locate the problem as precisely as possible.



**Oldham Council**  
working for a co-operative borough

🔍 Search   
 ☰ A - Z   
 👤 My Account

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Form

## Pothole Enquiry

Enter your reference number to get an update on your pothole report

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Reference number

Search

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- Report received
- Pending inspection
- Repair ordered**  
 We have investigated the problem you reported, and have scheduled a repair. We aim to complete this within 20 working days. Friday, Jul 20 2018
- Complete

### 3.2 Pest Control – booking and paying online

Pest Control - launched November 2018	
Achievements	Benefits
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Renewed comprehensive online information about pests</li> <li>Integration with back office application</li> <li>Pest control appointment book and pay online – mobile friendly</li> <li>Residents can select a morning or afternoon appointment on a date that suits them.</li> <li>Residents get booking confirmation and also reminder emails.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Easier to report using web form and increased flexibility</li> <li>Timely response, residents updated, expectations managed</li> <li>Service now available 24/7</li> <li>Officers can now plan their visits up to two weeks ahead (rather than day-to-day).</li> <li>Emails received have halved and calls reduced by a third with the website being the primary channel used</li> </ul>

# Pest Control

## Before you start

### Please note:

- This form is only for first time appointments. If you have already had a Pest Control treatment and would like to arrange a revisit, please ring [0161 770 2244](tel:0161-770-2244).
- You will need to provide an email address and a phone number to book an appointment online.
- You will need a credit or debit card to pay for the treatment.
- If you are not a home-owner/occupier you may be required to make additional payments.
- The council primarily uses your data for handling your query. All information is processed in accordance with our organisational data protection policy ([www.oldham.gov.uk/dataprotection](http://www.oldham.gov.uk/dataprotection)). We never sell your data to third parties or use it for marketing purposes without your consent.

Please confirm that you are the owner-occupier of the property where the pests are?

*Required*

I confirm

Previous

Next

# Pest Control

## Preferred booking

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
<b>25</b> Feb 2019	<b>26</b> Feb 2019	<b>27</b> Feb 2019	<b>28</b> Feb 2019	<b>1</b> Mar 2019
<input type="radio"/> 08:30 - 12:30	<input type="radio"/> 08:30 - 12:30	<input type="radio"/> 08:30 - 12:30	<input type="radio"/> 08:30 - 12:30	<input type="radio"/> 08:30 - 12:30
<input type="radio"/> 12:30 - 16:30	<input type="radio"/> 12:30 - 16:30	<input type="radio"/> 12:30 - 16:30	<input type="radio"/> 12:30 - 16:30	<input type="radio"/> 12:30 - 16:30

[Previous week](#)

Previous

Next

### 3.3 Licensing – Taxi vehicles online

Licensing – launched September 2018	
Achievements	Benefits
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Online applications for taxi drivers (new applicants and renewals) - live January 2018</li> <li>• New booking system for vehicle compliance tests - live August 2018</li> <li>• On-line applications for new taxi vehicles - live September 2018</li> <li>• Improvements to the website</li> <li>• Facility to pay for an application online</li> <li>• Facility to send group emails and text messages implemented</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improved customer journey</li> <li>• Check progress of applications, make a booking and pay online.</li> <li>• Compliance test reminder emails.</li> <li>• Better communication with customers</li> <li>• Improved data quality leading to better decision-making and resource deployment</li> <li>• Reduction in staff time</li> <li>• 32% reduction in calls</li> <li>• 49% reduction in missed appointments</li> </ul>

### 3.4 Texts/SMS - Council Tax

Texts for Council Tax - launched December 2018	
Achievements	Benefits
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Text reminders now in use in the Council tax collection process in order to support the prevention of residents entering the formal debt recovery process</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Over 100 direct debits set up in December</li> </ul>

## 4. Programme priority areas

4.1 In order to achieve the savings and the improvements to customer service our residents demand, all Council Services will potentially be affected by this change programme. In order to prioritise the services and journeys to digitise/automate and improve, a criteria has been developed which considers the following areas;

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- Ability to reduce demand
  - Ability to achieve efficiency savings
  - Ability to improve the customer experience
  - Ease of delivery
  - Service readiness and appetite

4.2 The priority areas that have been identified using the above criteria for phase 3 are as follows;

- Revenues and Benefits
- Waste
- Highways
- Environmental health and enforcement
- Environmental management / street cleaning

## **5. Engagement – residents and members**

5.1 Resident involvement in service design is very important to the programme and we will continue to engage with communities at a local level to ensure any changes to service design and the use of technology in services does not disadvantage resident access and service take up.

5.2 An equality impact assessment is in place and the programme will ensure representative service users are engaged and involved in the design and testing of changes. The programme will also seek advice from the appropriate community groups and experts to ensure those who may be disadvantaged by a digital channel, (e.g. language difficulty or a mental or physical disability) are not excluded. Where there is a need mediated support will still be offered through other access channels such as the telephone or at a face to face location.

5.3 The programme will also continue to engage members. Six member briefings have been held to date (2017 – June, September and October, 2018 - February 2018, July and November) with an open invite for all members. The sessions aim to;

- Raise awareness of programme and project aims, objectives and benefits
- Demonstrate new functionality the programme has introduced
- Listen to members feedback and support members to do their bit

5.2 There has been positive attendance and overall the programme has reached 33 members across the six sessions. Key feedback from both members and staff which the programme is incorporating continues to be:

- Ensuring residents who can't read English are supported, potentially including digital translate options
  - Ensuring we are bridging the digital divide to ensure residents can access services online and benefit from the improved service
  - Keep making it easy to report issues online and ensure other channels remain open for those who can't access services online
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5.3 The next members event takes place on 27 March 2019.

## **6 Next Steps**

6.1 The programme team are now developing the business cases and reviewing the operating models in order to deliver the change required in the priority service areas of revenues and benefits, our customer access channels and environmental services. This will determine the opportunities, the scale of digital change required and an understanding of the benefits to be achieved.

## **7. Links to Co-operative Values & Strategic links**

7.1 Oldham Place – this is a key programme to reshape our approach (between residents, the council and partners) to how residents access services at a place local to them.

7.2 The Oldham Plan – the programme contributes to delivering co-operative services by reshaping how services are accessed to better meet resident's needs.

7.3 Customer Access Strategy - the programme will rationalise and improve ease of access channels on a service by service basis based on understanding needs. For example, the improved integrated fly tipping, pothole and pest control forms will be used to take all types of request from all service users and will in turn enhance the intelligence we have available to understand and respond to demand and behaviour change.

7.5 IT Strategy – The programme is aligning to and informing the IT Strategy and Roadmap. (Nicola Strapps, Customer Development Manager)

## **8. Capital Financial Implications**

8.1 There are no additional capital implications arising from this report at this stage.

8.2 Provision to undertake phase 3 works exists within the current capital programme.

8.3 Funding required to undertake further phases of works will be addressed as part of the ICT Capital Strategy. (Jit Kara, Senior Accountant)

## **9. Revenue Financial Implications**

9.1 There are no additional revenue implications associated with this report.

9.2 Funding for the revenue elements of the initiative is by means of an earmarked reserve established at the end of 2015/16. This reserve has been incorporated within the Councils Reserves Policy. The Resident First/Digital by Design Reserve is identified as a corporate priority within the overarching Transformation Reserve. Phase 1 and phase 2 required £755k of revenue funds. Phase 3 has an allocation of £617k which will be monitored as the work progresses. (Mike Ward, Senior Accountant)

## **10. Communication Comments**

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- 10.1 A communications plan has been developed to support the delivery of the Resident First, delivering digital by design programme. Internal and external communications will be closely aligned to communication surrounding the progress of the IT strategic roadmap. We will continue to work closely with the programme team, we have identified relevant stakeholders and continue to support delivery of individual projects within the programme and we will continue to work alongside the team to ensure messages are clear and consistent. (Joe Robinson, Communications Business Partner Corporate and Commercial Services and Unity Partnership)
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