Lancaster District Digital Strategy

*T*ech *H*ealth *I*nnovation *N*ature *K*nowledge

The THINK Vision

1. We aim to make the Lancaster district the best it can be by using digital methodologies and best practice in order to deliver transformation at the Council and throughout the whole district in Technology, Health, Innovation, Nature and Knowledge.

2. We aim to be a Gigabyte district which supports and benefits all of its citizens and businesses; including the growing technology sector through key partnerships between universities, health, councils, voluntary sector and private sector.

3. We will also transform our own service provision in order to meet rising demands and expectations by using data to improve services, widen access, tackle exclusion and save money through more efficient processes.

4. Over the next ten years, working with partners and using the THINK methodology and strategy, the Lancaster district will be:

A smart district

- World Class Connectivity – a Gigabyte region with a full fibre network and 5G throughout which will be the best place for start-ups whilst maintaining and growing our existing digital businesses and supporting all businesses and organisations in the area. We will do this through collaboration with all our stakeholders to continually improve the area for the benefit of all.

A green district

- Striving to address the climate emergency by using technology to reduce carbon emissions in the district.

A healthy district

- Working with the Health Innovation Centre and NHS anchor institutions to develop technology for health and promote healthier lifestyles.

A clean district

- Using digital technology to improve emptying bins, measure air quality and provide citizens with easy ways to report issues with public realm.

A fair district

- Using technology to better understand our customers, improve community engagement, address exclusion and deliver community wealth and social value.

THINK Tech

We will use technology as a catalyst to enable change and inform and deliver best practice in all the council's key areas of delivery. Technology around the district will be used to improve our citizens' well-being.

THINK Health

We will ensure that digital best practice, partnerships with e.g. the Health Innovation Campus and use of modern technologies move us towards becoming a beacon of ever improving health outcomes.

THINK Innovation

We will ensure that we enable digital innovation in our district through visionary digital leadership, collaboration with the community and business, and developing deeper relationships with education providers.

THINK Nature

To counter the climate emergency, we will use cutting edge and innovative solutions to encourage green thinking and develop green technologies to reduce the district's carbon emissions.

THINK Knowledge

We will ensure that we become a knowledge organisation in order to better serve our customers and meet increasing demands and expectations.

THINK at the Council

To deliver our transformational vision, we need great digital connectivity and a strong and improving culture of collaboration, but we also need to change our work and working practices at the council to become more agile and more efficient at service delivery.

The **THINK** Vision is a bold one, capable of making significant changes to the Council, the district and to the well-being of all our citizens.

The vision is built on three building blocks. These are the things we will need to focus on to deliver the above outcomes. We need to work on **connectivity** and make Lancaster a gigabyte district. We need to **collaborate** with all those with a stake in the future of the district's success and we need to **change** the way the Council delivers its services focussed around our customers' needs. These building blocks form the basis of our digital strategy.

Connectivity

Why is it important?

6. Digital transformation requires excellent connectivity in the form of full fibre broadband and 5G mobile technology. This will create the conditions for transformational change and assist the Lancaster district to become a place of choice for digital and high tech businesses. High speed broadband across the region will also assist the Council and other partners to improve well-being of citizens through more accessible services and projects which promote innovative, healthier, greener and fairer outcomes.

What have we done already?

- We are working to create a definitive fibre map covering the whole district in order to understand where we have good connectivity and where it needs improving.

- We have commissioned a 'Creating Infrastructure' report which sets outs our connectivity requirements to act as a specification for work required to establish a vehicle to provide a full fibre network for the district.

- We have been working to improve our existing Wi-Fi network, providing new Wi-Fi hotspots at our Museums with a view to creating a Wi-Fi corridor from the train station to Dalton Square where the Council's City, Coast and Countryside service is freely available.

- We have started planning for Dalton Square connectivity improvement to include a new digital exchange and possibility of new fibre ducts extending past the Dukes and onto the Canal Quarter site.

- We have established a good working relationship with Lancaster University with a view to sharing connectivity ambitions. The University has gifted us their e-campus software which will allow us to provide real time content and information on screens throughout the district. This is already installed in Salt Ayre and will be rolled out more widely over the next year.

What will we deliver?

- Completion of infrastructure works in Dalton Square and the Canal Quarter site to include ducts and chambers in order to extend full fibre from a Digital Exchange delivering data centre capacity for the public and private sector with high speed resilient fibre broadband.

- A procurement process which will deliver an open access network, giving us the conditions for a more than gigabit 5G city via broadband, full fibre and 5G.

- A One Dig policy to ensure that we consider connectivity alongside all of our own and our partners' infrastructure projects.

- Full deployment of the e-campus screens coupled with the re-development of the iLancaster app in order to provide easy access to real time, quality information from the Council and partners throughout the district.

- Once full connectivity is achieved, we will work on plans to utilise this technology to provide best outcomes in health, innovation, nature and knowledge as set out on the previous page.

- We will sign the Government's Local Digital Declaration which affirms our commitment to harness digital technologies to improve the lives of our citizens.

Collaboration

Why is it important?

7. If the Lancaster district is to become a Gigabyte region which attracts high value businesses and delivers benefits to all citizens, then we will need to work closely with our key stakeholders to make this happen. The universities in particular but also businesses, health, transport and the third sector have a stake in delivering and utilising great connectivity and it is important that we work together to achieve this.

8. The Digital Strategy and the THINK brand provide a focus around which we will work with all our stakeholders to drive forward our digital and technological ambitions. A number of key partnerships have already been formed but we will continue to work to make this Strategy one which is adopted by all of our partners.

What have we done already?

- We have developed the THINK brand and principles and have received widespread support from key partners including both universities as well as representatives from the Health Service, the business community and local organisations.

- We have established a LUCID (Lancaster's Universities and Council Infrastructure and Digital) Working Group which meets regularly and has already resulted in the sharing of Lancaster University's e-campus system which is being rolled out through the district.

- We have started working on Memorandums of Understanding with key partners including the universities and Digital Lancashire in order to ensure that we work to the same vision.

- We are working with over a dozen councils sharing digital and agile knowledge and best practice. Locally, we are working with Wyre, Blackpool and Lancashire Councils on areas of joint interest.

- Our first THINK event will take place in Lancaster Town Hall on 28 November 2019 where we will meet with members of the business community to launch our digital vision and seek their input and support.

What will we deliver?

- Creation of a THINK Board with membership from all key stakeholders representing all sectors to drive forward this strategy as a shared ambition for the district.

- Regular THINK Tank workshops with all partners to tackle shared issues and ambitions including sessions on the digital economy, digital inclusion, health outcomes and green technology.

- Development of a collaborative workspace in Lancaster open to all stakeholders, possibly using the area of the Storey to be vacated by the Visitor Information Centre for which a capital bid will be made.

- Development, with partners, of our e-campus system in order to provide prominent digital signposting to services, information, promotion and support.

- Working with relevant partner organisations (such as CAB and CVS) and taking account of the Government's digital inclusion strategy, we will create an action plan for using digital technologies to improve well-being amongst excluded and vulnerable communities.

- We are aiming to host a Smart Cities Conference during 2020.

Change

Why is it important?

9. The Strategy seeks to use digital methodologies to implement significant change at the Council in order to meet rising demands and expectations from citizens at a time of reducing finances. This change will focus around our customers in order that they can easily connect with the Council at time and place of their choosing enabling them to tell us once and expect us to get it right first time. In order to deliver such change we will use technology such as the internet to transform our services and ensure that we promote more and better community participation and engagement.

10. Digital technologies will allow the Council to work in a more agile way which has the capacity to deliver significant savings from rationalisation of office space. It will also provide opportunity to reduce carbon emissions via reducing unnecessary travel, optimising routes for waste collection and litter bins and using digital technologies around paperless working.

What have we done already?

- Set up a Customer Service Strategy Board to evaluate the best way to meet citizens' needs for interacting with the Council.

- Appointed Community Connectors who, using agile technology, are able to respond to individual citizen and community organisations' needs face to face.

- Working with community interest groups to tackle digital exclusion through support and mentoring.

- We are rolling Wi-Fi out across Council buildings to support staff mobility and agile working as well as improving coverage of the free City, Coast and Countryside network.

- We are updating and improving our mobile device offering and implementing agile software such as Microsoft Teams to support mobile working and paperless initiatives.

- We are about to launch a new intranet and are working towards a self-serve portal which enables most frequently undertaken activities to be automated freeing up officer time.

What will we deliver?

- Improving the ability for customer to self-serve via a web portal to provide interaction with the Council at a time and place which suits the customer.

- Further expansion of the Wi-Fi capability in order to provide social outcomes such as providing subsidised coverage in social housing schemes.

- Digital impact assessment on all council documents.

- Widen access to mobile technology to all officers and members.

- Working with Lancaster University's research ethics team to develop a framework to ensure that any data collection undertaken on public land is transparent and open and that results are anonymised and re-usable for community benefit.

- Develop a Council digital task group to consider ideas to overcome organisational challenges.

11. A full digital action plan which will be regularly updated is included on our website at www.lancaster.gov.uk/digital