



City of Westminster

Housing, Finance and Customer Services Policy and Scrutiny Committee

Date:	27 September 2018
Classification:	General Release
Title:	Digital Transformation
Report of:	Ben Goward, Bi-borough Chief Information Officer
Cabinet Member Portfolio	Housing, Finance and Customer Services
Wards Involved:	All
Policy Context:	Digital transformation
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1. Executive Summary

The report is to brief the Committee on the planned improvements to the Westminster City Council website, the Report It functionality, and the changes to the Council's Digital programme.

2. Key Matters for the Committee's Consideration

- Improvements to the Report It and My Account functionality
- Westminster City Council contact centre move to the strategic IT platform
- Redesign of the Westminster website.
- Restructuring digital delivery to be Council Service-driven

3. Background

The current Westminster City Council (WCC) Digital programme has been in place since May 2017. The programme has focused on delivery of:

- The “Contact Strategy”, providing an analysis of call and email volumes. A breakdown by Council Service is provided, as well identification of how customer behaviour is driven. This includes the website containing approximately 164 telephone numbers and 200 email addresses.
- Development of multiple business cases to drive transformation, and ultimately savings within Council Services.
- The strategic IT platform for My Account and Report It functionality. The platform was implemented in January 2018. It now has 25 journeys, with 17 of those being customer-facing, and 3 integrations to business systems.

With recent Senior Officer changes, it has been agreed that the delivery of digital initiatives will move to the Council’s IT department. Council Services will incorporate digital initiatives into their roadmaps and will take ownership of benefits.

4. Report Its and My Account

Since the implementation of this initial phase, without any promotion, there has been significant uptake with approximately 8,000 accounts registered, and 16,000 cases created.

The technology behind the functionality, Evolve, is new to market, with Westminster City Council being ‘early-adopters’ and the first customer. Evolve sits on a Microsoft platform, Dynamics 365. The functionality of Evolve is developing, with 6-monthly upgrades delivering a range of functionality improvements. For example, in the current release, the only way to record a customer address is to use the My Account registration functionality. With the next release, currently being implemented, we will have the ability to capture an address as part of the journey, meaning we can make all forms available to guest users with an option of registration at the end of the journey.

There has been feedback from Councillors and customers that the Report It forms are not as user-friendly as they should be. This was particularly apparent in feedback from Councillors Tim Barnes and Andrew Smith on 26 July 2018. The feedback included that other Councils had implemented better solutions years before WCC had chosen to go with the Evolve platform. The areas of concern were:

- The need to register prior to using some of the forms
- The performance of the mapping feature, and whether it is needed for some of the forms

- The look and feel, particularly when accessing via mobile devices.

To address the feedback, we will:

- Implement technical fixes improve overall performance across all devices. We are also seeking approval from Council Services to implement immediate changes to allow Guest account access to all journeys. We aim to complete this by 29 September 2018.
- Using an external agency, undertake detailed user research. We will focus on 4 or 5 key journeys and identify common standards which to apply to all. This will involve engaging 300 to 400 customers via a survey, interviewing 20 to 30 customers, interviewing the WCC contact centre, and Councillors. A schedule and final proposal from the external agency is awaited. However, we aim to commence this in the first week of October 2018.
- Purchase a tool to enable higher-quality testing, across a range of devices using emulation. This will allow us to identify where some devices have issues rendering the forms. We have seen examples where a form works on one type of phone / browser but performs poorly on others. The current mechanisms for receiving feedback do not capture data about the type of browser, phone or tablet used. We will also change the current feedback form on the website to include optional contact details and allow us to interact directly with the customers.

5. The Contact Centre platform

The current system Customer Relationship Management system used by the WCC contact centre is provided by Lagan Technologies, at a yearly cost of approximately £135k per annum. A procurement has taken place to identify a partner to implement a solution on the strategic Council platform, Microsoft Dynamics 365, into the WCC contact centre. This will bring the same customer database across the contact centre and the website and will bring an “omni-channel” experience to our customers. The business case is in development, and subject to a positive case, we will seek Member approval to proceed. Furthermore, there is opportunity to consolidate the platform with other arms of the Council, such as City West Homes, and provide a “joined-up” customer experience across Council services.

6. The Westminster website

The current WCC website was implemented in 2014 and drew on the style and success of the award winning GOV.UK website by using statutory design principles. The website receives between 700,000 and 800,000 unique page views per month, with the homepage receiving close to 500,000 per month.

After the homepage, the next five most popular pages over the last three months are listed in the below table.

	Jun	Jul	Aug
jobs.westminster.gov.uk/	156141	166875	101696
revenuesbenefits.westminster.gov.uk/	32678	54624	51371
appeals-parkright.westminster.gov.uk/	31197	30349	29734
myaccount.westminster.gov.uk/	19620	22786	20571
registrars.westminster.gov.uk/	14948	15898	16038

However, many journeys on the website have been evolved to suit the needs of Council Services rather than users. The experience when carrying out transactions is fragmented. To address the root causes of the issues, beyond the aesthetics, work has commenced to revisit user journeys and interactions.

An external agency, Rainmaker, has been commissioned to review of the website through customer research, and provide a view of what customers hope to achieve when visiting. The first 4 of the 5 'lightning sprints' has covered the following:

- Homepage
- Find It
- Apply & Pay
- What's New in Westminster

The 5th sprint, underway from 17 September 2018, is focusing on a major transaction 'Life Stage – Moving into Westminster'.

Incorporating the outputs from the customer research, a technical plan for implementation, as well as addressing the underlying technology will be developed. The Council's Westco design team are producing web branding guidelines prior to implementation of changes.

The underlying technology, the Drupal 7 web platform, was released in 2009. A version 8 was released in 2015, and a version 9 is expected later this year. Following clarity on the customer requirements, we will assess options and begin work to move to a new platform. A procurement for the new platform will be undertaken, and we are setting our implementation timescales on experience by other local authorities with exemplar websites. We will also classify the site into components, with reusable web assets and templates, allowing for automated testing and deployment of sub-sites.

7. Restructuring digital delivery

The delivery of digital initiatives will move to the Council's IT department, and Council Services will incorporate digital initiatives into their roadmaps with ownership of benefits. The four roadmaps to be agreed by the end of the calendar year will be:

1. Growth, Planning, and Housing (GPH) & City Management and communities (CMC)

2. Adults Social Care & Health
3. Children's Services
4. Corporate Capabilities, covering the web-platform, the Dynamics 365 platform, and all corporate-wide services

IT will have four small programme teams, each responsible for delivery against their roadmap, and digital initiatives will be managed together with major system changes.

The immediate priorities are:

- Delivery
 - Proceed with ENW Phase 1, E-consultation, and Noise SMS (subject to final approval)
 - Launch the project to move Contact Centre to the strategic platform
 - Usability enhancements to My Westminster & Report Its, in line with wider website
- Financial
 - Review business case proposals with Services & Finance
- Organisation
 - Reshape the team to fit within cost envelope for 18/19, with greater proportion of delivery resources
 - Hire the Head of Digital Delivery (Band 5) within IT
 - Build resource profile for 19/20 – focusing on Permanent and Fixed Term

The future phases will cover:

- Development of the vision and roadmap per Council Service
 - Facilitating ELT reviews of each service roadmap, identifying commonalities & dependencies
 - Bringing the roadmaps together with wider IT initiatives, into a holistic corporate approach
- Build of future IT capacity and strategy
 - Development skills and platforms
 - Corporate design and architecture standards
 - IT & Digital delivery to become common
- Full website redesign & re-platform

- Channel strategy resolution & implementation in partnership with Policy, Performance, and Communications

8. Target Timescales

29 September 2018	Guest-access feature across all Report It journeys
29 September 2018	Completion of the user-research and design phase across the Westminster website
01 October 2018	Commencement of user-research and design specific to Report It & My Account. Note. subject to commercial agreement with an external agency
26 October 2019	Analysis and procurement launch for replacement of the Westminster web platform
23 November 2018	Implementation of immediate optimisations from outputs of website-wide design phase
21 December 2018	Implementation of the outputs of the design phase specific to Report It and My Account
25 January 2019	Procurement of new Westminster Web Platform
29 March 2019	Move of the Westminster contact centre to the strategic platform
26 July 2019	Subject to procurement, completion of the website rebuild on the new Westminster Web Platform

If you have any queries about this Report please contact

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APPENDICES:

N/A

BACKGROUND PAPERS

N/A