Report of the Director   Decision to be taken after
of Policy and Resources   28 January 2014

NORTH LINCOLNSHIRE COUNCIL

POLICY AND RESOURCES CABINET MEMBER

"ENHANCING THE WEB CHANNEL" PROGRESS UPDATE & NEXT STEPS

1. **OBJECT AND KEY POINTS IN THIS REPORT**

1.1 To provide an update on progress with the delivery of the "*Enhancing the Web Channel*" programme and to outline proposed next steps.

1.2 The key points in this report are:

   ➢ A report detailing proposals for enhancing the web channel was approved by the cabinet member for policy and resources in May 2013
   ➢ A new council website was launched on 31 October 2013
   ➢ A progress update is provided together with proposed next steps

2. **BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

2.1 A programme of enhancements to the council's website was approved in May 2013. It was informed by:

   ▪ customer use of the former website and previous search history
   ▪ known issues with structure and layout, search results, number of pages
   ▪ feedback from the annual SOCITM "better connected" survey
   ▪ best practice in the sector
   ▪ visitor profiles, including the 50% growth in website visits from mobile devices and smart phones
   ▪ council priorities associated with the channel shift project

2.2 The principal aim was to improve accessibility of key information and the services most frequently used by customers.

2.3 The key activities associated with the programme included:

   ▪ a new functional design for the council website to focus on "top tasks" as used by customers
   ▪ a structure to make the most frequently accessed pages available with the fewest number of "clicks"
   ▪ simplified information about our services, eligibility criteria and access to them
   ▪ an improved in-site search facility
   ▪ a mobile first approach to ensure that all information is available via all device types
   ▪ customer rating and comment functions for all website pages

2.4   With the support of web authors across the council, the new website went live on 31 October 2013.

2.5   Early heat maps of activity already highlight a far wider and even spread of customer clicks across all of the links on the home page (appendix 1). The former site had a significant number of links and functions that were seldom used by customers (appendix 1).

2.6   Over 170 customer feedback comments have so far been received using the new "rate and review" functions. Of these, 150 have been specifically used to improve the website. An illustration of feedback is included at appendix 2.

2.7   After an initial surge at the time of launch, the volume of customers comments is now steady at around 2-3 per day. Most of these are now positive or helpful in improving the performance of the website.

2.8   Customer page ratings received to date are rated overall as "Good" by the system. This is an excellent early finding for a recently launched website.

2.9   The SOCITM customer survey results for November 2013 indicate that more customers have rated their experience of the enhanced website as positive rather than negative.

2.10 An update on progress against the original action plan together with next steps and refreshed actions is set out at appendix 3.

3.   **OPTIONS FOR CONSIDERATION**

3.1. **Option 1** – Approve the updated web enhancement programme for implementation in 2014/15. This is informed by:

   - The Lesson Learnt and Follow On Actions reports from the 2013/14 project
   - Existing planned work such as intelligent mapping, further search engine optimisation (SEO), minor revisions to the design, disabled access.
   - Review of changes made during 2013/14 at the 43 four-star rated council's from the 2013 Better Connected National Survey
   - Customer feedback
   - Any actions identified in the forthcoming SOCITM 2014 Better Connected National Survey

3.2. **Option 2 -** Do nothing.

4.   **ANALYSIS OF OPTIONS**

4.1   Option 1 –Implement the 2014/15 web enhancement programme:

   Advantages
   - Ensures the website is continuously improved and developed.

- Maximises our ability to be "better with less" by providing on-line services that are so good that customers will prefer them to traditional, more expensive channels (eg. face-to-face, call centre)
- Maximises our ability to actively shift customers to our on-line services through a series of cross council campaigns, thereby reducing ongoing costs.

Disadvantages
- Resource requirements

4.2 **Option2 – Do Nothing:**

Advantages
- No resource implications

Disadvantages
- Potential for improved on-line services is not maximised
- Potential for Channel Shift / Better with Less is not maximised and operational costs are not reduced.

5. RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS (FINANCIAL, STAFFING, PROPERTY, IT)

5.1 Development and implementation of a 2014/15 programme of website enhancements will be led by the Digital Services team. This is currently included as a key activity in the team's work plan.

5.2 This work will also require input from other stakeholders i.e. Communications, Customer Services, Customer Insight etc. However these areas are already actively involved in the aims and themes of the project, specifically: Better With Less, Reducing Ongoing Operational Costs and Channel Shift.

5.3 Service area web authors will be required to further review and revise their content

6. OUTCOMES OF INTEGRATED IMPACT ASSESSMENT (IF APPLICABLE)

6.1 No issues or concerns as a result of the assessment.

7. OUTCOMES OF CONSULTATION AND CONFLICTS OF INTERESTS DECLARED

7.1 None

8. RECOMMENDATIONS

8.1 That progress to-date as set out in the report is noted;

8.2 That the 2014/15 programme of further web channel enhancements and actions is approved; and

8.3   That a further update report is submitted on receipt of the SOCITM 2014 "Better Connected" survey results.

DIRECTOR OF POLICY & RESOURCES

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Background Papers used in the preparation of this report
"Enhancing the Web Channel" Cabinet Member Report: May 2014

New Homepage Heat Map of Customer Clicks:
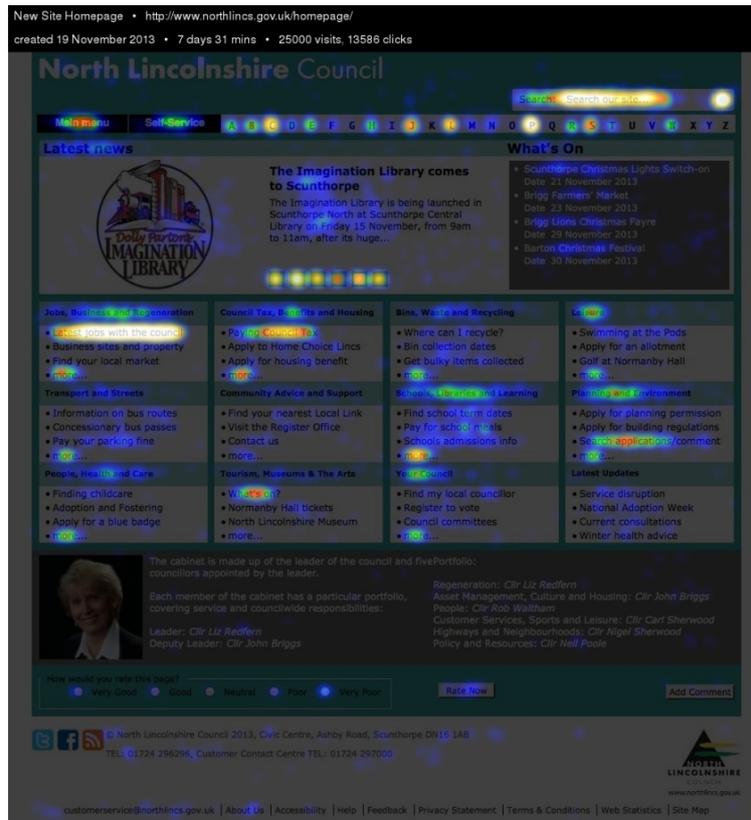
Previous Homepage Heat Map of Customer Clicks:
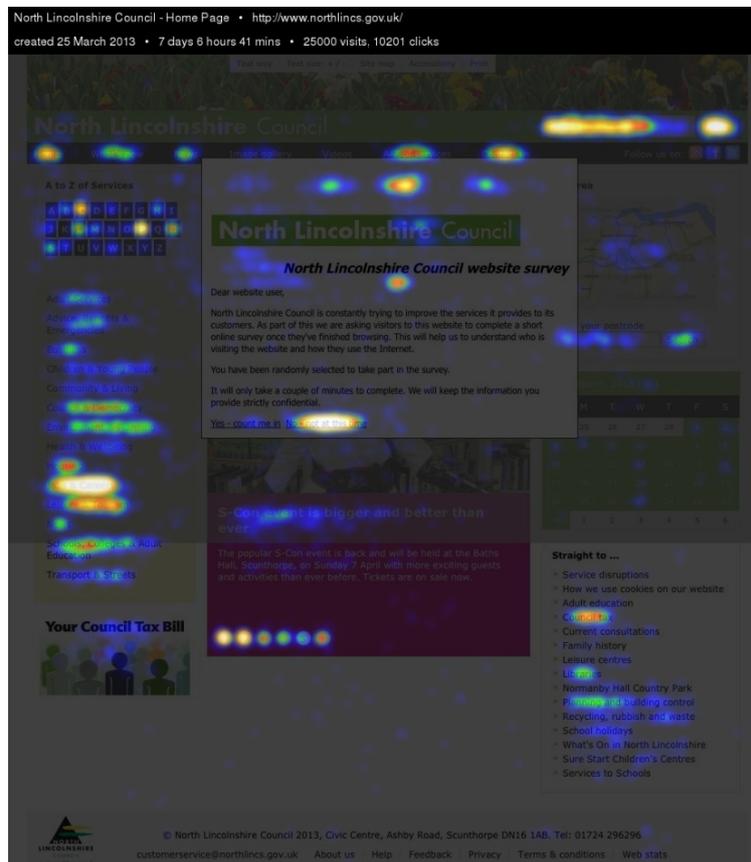
Examples of Positive Customer Feedback:

"I always use my iPad to make online payments, this new application is much easier to navigate. I found instantly what I needed. I even took the time to explore further because it was that easy to use. Thank you."

"Good make over much more intuitive"

"Easy to use website"

"This is now much easier to read and find what you are looking for. Thank you."

"First time I have used the online service and I found it excellent and very easy to navigate. Thank you."

Examples of Customer Feedback That Has Helped Improve The Website:

"I can't find any prices for swimming sessions at the pods"

"Where is the pay button?"

"The telephone number for the Environment Agency is incorrect"

"Shouldn't Public Transport be included in the index under "P"?"

"Too much text – will put off those who are less literate"

"Enhancing The Web Channel" Programme & Action Plan
Position Statement & Refresh: December 2013

ID	Action	Responsibility	Timescale	Status
"Restructure of Website Content"				
1	A focus group comprised of elected members, customer facing staff and other interested staff will be held to identify what is used, what works well and to identify opportunities to improve existing services or to deliver additional high volume services online	Customer Insight, Communications	Early June 2013	**Complete** *(However approach was changed to use external feedback rather than officers / elected members)*
2	A new governance matrix needs to be developed and agreed to set the rules for content on the web: ➢ We are able to identify the highest volume activities for each service (top tasks) using our existing reporting tools ➢ We are able to identify our legal obligations using the Local Government Publication Scheme ➢ The Fous Group task (1) will also inform this process of any opportunities to provide additional high volume services	Digital Services, Information Governance, Customer Insight, Communications	Mid June 2013	**Complete**
3	All web authors will be retrained in the new governance principals and the council style guide / plain English	Digital Service	**End July 2013**	**Complete**
4	All web content will be reviewed against the new governing principals and the style guide to ensure that any unnecessary content is "weeded out" and that retained information is appropriate for our customers needs / journey. Key words will be added to all retained information to ensure that multiple phrases can be used to produce the expected search results (eg. bin, waste collection, wheelie bin, dust bin, wheeled bin). Additional short term resource within Digital Services will support all council web authors during this task.	All service area web authors Digital Services	End October 2013	**Complete**
5	Large volumes of similar content will be identified (eg. news, cabinet papers) and consideration given to whether this may be better stored on a separate microsites to refocus the main website on transaction content	All service area web authors Digital Services	End October 2013	**Complete** *(Retained on the old website as an interim measure. Replacement included in the draft 2013-15 work plan)*
6	Consideration will be given to changing the look and feel of the website where necessary based on existing reporting information detailing where customers click	Digital Services Communications	End October 2013	**Complete**

	key pages and the requirements for mobile web			

"Self Service (quick click)"

Digital Services have developed a suite of e-forms over the last five years with around 100 forms now been in live operation. In January 2013 a Self Service Portal (quick click) was launched to replace the top 50 e-forms by volume of use. The Self Service Portal (quick click) also provides a customer account for service requests and status updates allowing a register once approach and historic customer view of all their service requests. Since the launch of the Self Service Portal (quick click) in January 2013 3,694 users have registered and between them they have made 4,908 requests for council services

ID	Action	Responsibility	Timescale	Status
7	The Phase II development will provide additional service request types the Self Service Portal (quick click) for Waste Management jobs. It will also provide improved mapping functionality.	Digital Services Waste Management	End June 2013 **Mid August 2013**	**Complete**
8	The Phase III development will provide additional service request types the Self Service Portal (quick click) for Neighbourhood Services jobs.	Digital Services Neighbourhood Services	End October 2013 **End January 2014**	**On Target**

"Bespoke Experience For Customers With Mobile Devices"

ID	Action	Responsibility	Timescale	Status
9	Develop a prototype for a separate mobile website based on a "top tasks" approach with a link to the full website	Digital Services	End June 2013	**Complete**
10	Develop a prototype for responsive web design that would able all retained web content to be presented correctly on any device. This would be achieved by the development of a reduced number of new templates for web authors to manage their content	Digital Services	End June 2013	**Complete**
11	Agree future approach	IT Strategy Board CMT Digital Services Communications	Mid July 2013	**Complete**
12	Development of templates and / or mobile website	Digital Services	End July	**Complete**

"Smartphone Apps"

ID	Action	Responsibility	Timescale	Status
13	A "Third Party Apps" statement will be added to the council website	Digital Services	End August 2013	**Complete**

"Duplication of Content / Duplication of Effort"

ID	Action	Responsibility	Timescale	Status
14	Ensure that duplicated content is removed from Intralinc and that the information on the web is accurate and relevant for customer needs	Service Area Intralinc Authors Service Area Web Authors Digital Services	End October 2013 **End March 2014**	**On Target.** *(included in the draft 2013-15 work plan***)**
15	Develop a replacement "electronic bookshelf" for the remaining Intralinc content eg. policies, procedures etc.	Digital Services	End October 2013 **End March 2014**	**On Target** *(Included in the draft 2013-15 work*

				plan)
16	Decommission Intralinc	Digital Services Service Area Intralinc Authors	End October 2013 **End June 2014**	**On Target** *(Included in the draft 2013-15 work plan)*

"Engagement with SOCITM"				
ID	**Action**	**Responsibility**	**Timescale**	**Status**
17	SOCITM's Web Assistance Service will be engaged with the share our plans with the intention of their endorsement or suggested improvements	Digital Services	End June 2013	**Complete**
18	SOCITM's "Learning From Better Connect 2013" event will be attended to understand their expectations for improvements and the format next years survey	Digital Services	15th May 2013	**Complete**
19	SOCITM's "Building The Perfect Council Website" event will be attended to understand their expectations for council websites	Digital Services	11th July 2013	**Complete**

NB. Dates in bold were revised from the original plan without significant detriment to any project deliverables or outcomes