

Report Title	Customer & Digital Strategy 2025-28 update
Meeting	Executive
Meeting Date	29 October 2026
Report Author	Sarah Astin-Wood and Stephanie de Looze
Directorate	Chief Executive's
Lead Executive Member(s)	Cllr Ammer
Wards Affected	All
Public. Part Exempt, or Fully Exempt	Public
Appendices (if any)	None

1. Executive Summary

- 1.1 This report outlines a progress overview of the delivery of Pendle Borough Council's Customer & Digital Strategy. It is the first of a quarterly progress update to Executive.

2. Recommendations

For the reasons set out in this report, Executive is recommended to:

- 2.1 Note the progress made in the delivery of this strategy.
- 2.2 Continue to champion the strategy delivery, to help facilitate improved service delivery to Pendle residents alongside modernised, effective and efficient ways of working for staff.

3. Information: the Rationale & Evidence for the Recommendations

Our Customer & Digital Strategy has been launched with the strapline of: *Connected Pendle: Digital Together* in all its activity.

It is monitored monthly via a delivery plan that is actioned by Pendle Borough Council and Liberata Customer Services staff. The key areas of progress to date are detailed below.

3.1 Website upgrade

The Website Upgrade project will replace the Council's existing website platform with a modern, accessible and future-ready solution that supports improved customer journeys, easier access to online services and greater integration between information, forms and digital services. The upgrade also addresses the planned decommissioning of the Council's current website template by Jadu within the next 12-18 months, ensuring the Council maintains a secure, supported and sustainable platform while continuing to deliver the objectives of the Customer and Digital Strategy.

The project continues to progress positively. Approval has been received for the proposed hosting solution, and the Council is currently awaiting contractual documentation from Jadu. Once received, contracts will be reviewed through the Council's legal processes before formal agreement and commencement of the implementation phase.

Following contract completion, work will begin with Jadu to establish the hosting environment, implement the required Central 4 upgrade, and prepare the User Acceptance Testing (UAT) environment for development of the new website. A detailed delivery roadmap will be agreed once implementation timescales have been confirmed with Jadu's technical and development teams.

The project will provide a modern, secure and resilient platform that supports improved digital services, enhanced customer experience and the future delivery of the Council's Customer and Digital Strategy objectives.

3.2 Customer Feedback project

The Customer Feedback Project has been established to ensure that all customers accessing our services can provide feedback on their experience. It is now generating valuable insight into how residents experience the Council's online forms and digital services. Initial feedback has been positive, with customers recognising the convenience of accessing services online while also highlighting areas where improvements can be made.

The findings are helping to identify recurring themes, including opportunities to improve form design, introduce additional functionality, enhance guidance content and provide greater visibility of case progress. This evidence-based approach ensures that future improvements are driven directly by customer needs and experiences.

The first quarter report was reviewed by CLT on 6 October 2026, with the findings set to inform service improvement plans and prioritisation of future digital development work. The project will support the delivery of more accessible, user-friendly services and help ensure that customers can interact with the Council more effectively online.

Webform feedback headline figures (Q2 2026 - based on 327 responses)

- 78% found forms Easy or Very Easy to use
- 84% found forms Easy or Very Easy to understand
- 78% found forms Easy or Very Easy to find
- 22% reported experiencing issues while completing a form.

3.3 Improved Customer Journeys

Insights gathered through the Customer Feedback Project are providing a clear understanding of the barriers and pain points experienced by residents when accessing online services. This evidence is enabling the Council to take a targeted approach to improving customer journeys, focusing on areas that will deliver the greatest benefit to users.

The work aligns closely with a number of wider transformation initiatives currently underway across the Council, including service redesign projects such as Taxi Licensing, and will help ensure that digital services are developed around customer needs from the outset. The findings will also play a key role in informing the design and structure of the new Council website as work progresses.

By adopting a customer-led approach, the Council will be better positioned to deliver simpler, more intuitive and accessible services, improving customer satisfaction and reducing avoidable contact across service areas.

3.4 Digital Inclusion

Digital inclusion sessions have been organised with partners and held across Pendle to support residents with their digital access to services and to build confidence.

More information on the sessions and a digital support directory can be found on our Community Support Hub, which provides a host of valuable advice and guidance for residents: [Digital and Online Support | Pendle Borough Council](#)

Twenty devices provided by Ability Net have also been allocated to residents, aged 55 and over, through Peter Birtwistle Trust to enable their digitally excluded residents access on-line services. SIM cards have also been made available via the Good Things Foundation.

To date, three digital inclusion sessions have taken place in Colne, Barnoldswick and Earby with another Colne session planned in the library in November and Nelson library in December. To date, approximately 50 residents have been supported with accessing Pendle Borough Council and wider services. Other partner organisations such as Citizens Advice East Lancashire, Christians Against Poverty, Pendle Primary Care West and East, Advocacy Focus and Newground have been involved in delivering these sessions to support residents.

3.5 **Digital Approach for Elected Members**

An implementation plan is being drawn up following the Executive decision to introduce a digital by default, paperless approach to Council, Executive, Committee and Working Group meeting papers for Elected Members. To support this approach, all Members will have devices.

3.6 **Cyber Essentials (+) Accreditation and training**

The council has achieved Cyber Essentials basic accreditation and is working towards Achieving Cyber Essentials Plus accreditation. This is important for strengthening an organisation's cyber security posture and demonstrating that effective technical controls are in place to protect against common cyber threats.

The accreditation provides independent assurance that key security measures, such as secure configuration, access controls, malware protection, and vulnerability management, are operating effectively. This helps reduce the risk of data breaches and service disruption, supports compliance with regulatory requirements, enhances stakeholder confidence, and can improve eligibility for public sector contracts and other business opportunities where recognised cyber security standards are required.

Cyber security training is essential for officers and Elected Members alike. It is delivered through an online platform, KnowB4, with various modules to help inform and equip staff and Members with the knowledge to avoid any potential cyber threat.

According to the [UK Government's Cybersecurity Breaches Survey 2025](#), 93% of UK businesses and 95% of charities experienced phishing attempts in 2025, up from 84% in 2024. Even with better tools, smarter technology and stronger defences, people remain the most common way cybercriminals gain access to an organisation, and so awareness and knowledge is key.

3.7 **Customer & Digital Strategy Performance**

Delivery of the Customer & Digital Strategy continues to demonstrate positive progress, with increasing use of digital channels and generally positive customer feedback across key service measures.

Key indicators include:

- 68% of customer contacts are now completed online, compared to 32% through manual channels, supporting the strategy objective of increasing digital self-service. (This is up from 63% for the 25/26 period)

Source = Baseline Tracking Data (Date range is comparing current annual stats compared to previous years)

- Between April and August 2026, the Council handled 143,209 customer

contacts, of which 102,449 were completed through online channels.

Source = Pendle Customer Contact Tracking Data (Date range 1 April 2026 – 31 August 2026)

- 78% of customers found it easy or very easy to contact the Council.

Source = Service Department Customer Feedback (Date range 13 August – 30 September 2026)

- 67% agreed that information provided was clear and understandable.

Source = Service Department Customer Feedback (Date range 13 August – 30 September 2026)

- 58% were satisfied with the overall service received.

Source = Service Department Customer Feedback (Date range 13 August – 30 September 2026)

- 78% found online forms easy or very easy to use, while 84% found forms easy or very easy to understand.

Source = Web Form Customer Feedback (Date range 1 July – 30 September 2026)

- 78% found online forms easy or very easy to locate, supporting improvements to the customer journey and website navigation

Source = Web Form Customer Feedback (Date range 1 July – 30 September 2026)

Overall, performance indicates continued progress towards the strategy's aims of improving access to services, increasing digital channel adoption, and delivering a simpler and more accessible customer experience for residents.

4. Link to Council Plan Priorities: (Providing High Quality Services and Facilities, Proud and Connected Communities and Places, Good Growth, Housing and Healthy Communities and Preparing for Local Government Reorganisation)

4.1 Providing High-Quality Services and Facilities:

The work to deliver the Customer & Digital strategy described above, is with the aim to improve the provision of Pendle Borough Council's services both by improving and streamlining the customer journey and by increasing the efficiency and effectiveness of staff in providing services and carrying out their job roles.

4.2 Proud and Connected Communities and Places:

Customer engagement and feedback is key to supporting improvements to the way we deliver service: online, over the phone and in person.

4.3 Preparing for Local Government Reorganisation:

A modern and scalable digital platform will support future organisational and service changes, ensuring the Council can respond effectively to evolving requirements.

5. Implications

5.1 Financial Implications

Funding for website hosting and upgrade project has previously been identified and approved within existing budgets. Any future expenditure will be managed through established project governance arrangements.

5.2 Legal and Governance Implications

Website Upgrade: contracts with Jadu will be subject to review through the Council's legal and governance processes prior to agreement.

Customer Feedback is collected and managed in accordance with the Council's data protection and information governance requirements. Currently feedback is collected on an anonymous basis.

Any proposed changes arising from the delivery work will be implemented in line with existing governance, accessibility and data protection requirements.

5.3 Climate and Biodiversity Implications

Improved digital services may help reduce the need for paper-based processes and unnecessary customer travel to Council offices.

5.4 Human Resources Implications

No staffing implications other than the commitment of staff to engage in our digital journey for service improvements.

5.5 Equality and Diversity Implications

An Equalities Screening Assessment has been completed for key projects.

6. Consultation

6.1 Relevant stakeholders have been consulted for each workstream.

7. Alternative Options Considered

7.1 There are no alternative options to consider as this report is purely to outline strategy progress.

8. Statutory Officer Sign off (please put an x in the relevant box below)

Section 151 Officer	
Monitoring Officer	X

9. Background Documents

[Customer and Digital Strategy](#)

[Digital and Online Support | Pendle Borough Council](#)

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