



## West Lancashire Borough Council Annual Review 2011 – 2012



### Foreword

This is the first Annual Review delivered by One Connect Limited to West Lancashire Borough Council on the ICT and Revenue and Benefit Services. This review focuses on; our achievements, performance and growth along with the achievements of our people, levels of customer service and the quality of services which we now deliver on behalf of West Lancashire Borough Council.

The principle of *'the customer at the heart of everything we do'* is the philosophy of the Company and is beginning to be firmly embedded in the services we now deliver. Working with West Lancashire Borough Council, the focus of One Connect Limited has been on working towards service and performance excellence. The drive has been on; performance, customer service, maximising the benefits of all forms of investment (in people, systems and services) and to set out a roadmap of business transformation and lower costs. The Contract with West Lancashire Borough Council was signed in July 2011 and commenced on the 1 October 2011. This Contract is designed to deliver; guaranteed up front savings, reduce future investment costs, deliver improved services to customers, deliver added value and to help to build strong relationships between all parties. This is a truly ground breaking Agreement for all three parties engaged (Lancashire County Council, West Lancashire Borough Council and One Connect Limited) and is a 'game changing event' for local government.

We anticipate the next twelve months will continue to be challenging and exciting. To deliver and maintain customer service excellence and to consistently deliver high quality services will be demanding but as a forward thinking organisation we will continue to seek out new ways of working and thinking and to implement innovation and new practices to stay ahead of the competition.

David McElhinney  
Chief Executive  
One Connect Limited

## 1. About One Connect Limited

1.1 One Connect Limited began operations on the 16 May 2011. It is a limited liability company which is jointly owned by BT (60%) and Lancashire County Council (40%). It was established as a true joint venture company operating at arms length from each shareholder. It was set up to transform services in a challenging financial climate to enable provision of the best possible value for money services to all the people of Lancashire.

**“To make a real and positive difference to the people, schools, businesses and organisations of Lancashire and to be recognised as an exemplar of partnering in the UK.”**

**Mission Statement**

1.2 It began on Day One with 861 staff and **four core services** as defined within the initial scope of the Partnership; Customer Access, Human Resources and Payroll, Information and Communications Technology and Procurement. This was added to on 1 October 2011 with the securing of the ten year contract with West Lancashire Borough Council to include its; Revenue Service, Benefits Service and ICT Service.

1.3 The first trading year of One Connect Limited has witnessed a strong financial performance. Revenue was around £50.9 million, the Sales Order Book stands at over £480 million. Now over 1200 people are engaged in all its business activities. The Partnership now delivers some form of service to each District of Lancashire and other key players in the County (eg. Police, Fire and Education).

One Connect Limited prides itself on **exceeding expectations**, focusing on performance and using this **intelligence to continually shape our strategies and to drive up performance** and reduce waste. It is about **putting the customer at the heart of the organisation** and getting better each year in every possible way.

**“We will place the customer at the heart of everything that we do. We will listen to our customers and stakeholders, invest in our people and we will achieve and exceed service excellence.”**

**Vision Statement**

## 2. West Lancashire Borough Council Partnership

2.1 In **July 2011** a Contract between Lancashire County Council and West Lancashire Borough Council was signed.



One Connect Limited will deliver against this agreement. This is a 10 year contract to deliver shared; Revenues, Benefits and ICT Services on behalf of West Lancashire Borough Council. This saw the creation of a **Shared Service from 1 October 2011** with over 80 staff transferring to One Connect Limited. This Contract has a total order book value worth over £29 million to the Partnership over the next ten years.

2.2 This Agreement is the **first time** that a Council has joined a Partnership (BT or non BT) post contract on such a scale. This positive result was achieved by the strong level of commitment across the three organisations.

*“The partnership is playing a very important role in contributing to savings and helping the Council to balance its budget. It is providing value for money while maintaining service delivery. We are delighted to have been a first adopter amongst District Councils. Joining up services in this way brings great benefits for local people as service users and taxpayers.”*

**Councillor Ian Grant, Leader, West Lancashire Borough Council.**

2.3 Other key, and innovative, elements of the Agreement include:

- ✦ A double secondment model for over 80 West Lancashire Borough Council employees from the Borough Council to the County Council and then seconded into One Connect Limited. A first of its kind.
- ✦ A **Shared Services Agreement** between West Lancashire Borough Council and Lancashire County Council to deliver these services through its partner One Connect Limited.

- ✦ A set of fundamental principles agreed for all the parties which are viewed as key to the creation of a successful and long term relationship for all parties.
- ✦ The establishment of a Shared Services Board with representation from the senior leadership of all the delivery parties to:

- Review the implementation and delivery of the Services.
- Monitor service delivery and performance.
- Carry such other activities and functions allocated to it under this Agreement.
- General discussions on; future opportunities, working together and building relationships.



This includes the senior political and managerial leadership of West Lancashire Borough Council and the Chief Executives of both the County Council and One Connect Limited.

*“We have to meet and then exceed the expectations of our customers, irrespective of the point of contact and who delivers services. Working with West Lancashire Borough Council, One Connect Limited and the County Council we are all part of a new way of thinking and a new way of working. Importantly where the customer is placed at the heart of all organisations.”*

**Councillor Geoff Driver, Leader, Lancashire County Council.**

- ✦ A monthly Quality of Service Report which includes the following information in respect of the services provided:
  - A synopsis of the services delivered.
  - Performance against both Contractual and Non-Contractual Service Levels.

- Any service performance issues and any proposed corrective actions with a timetable for any part of the service which does not meet the Service Level and preventative action timetable (if any) to allow service levels to be met in the future.

This Partnership is a truly ground breaking Agreement for all three parties engaged and is very much a ‘game changing event’.

*“Through the combined efforts of working together, innovation, lower costs, continuous improvement and a clear focus on the needs of the citizen and businesses. It is not an option it’s a must. The Partnership is about delivering these and then more. We must deliver service excellence and in collaboration for the; benefit of the people, businesses and organisations of Lancashire.”*

**Phil Halsall, Chief Executive, Lancashire County Council.**

2.4 Working together in partnership has already helped to bring to West Lancashire Borough Council; lower costs, new ideas, additional expertise and a fresh perspective to the services and as a result, a number of immediate improvements have now been implemented. These include:

- ✦ Fundamental review of key controls including; CRB checks on fraud staff, authorisation for amendment to landlord bank accounts and assistance to the Council in ensuring that valid purchase orders exist before invoices are paid. The projects will improve financial control and compliance, protecting the Council's interests.
- ✦ Detailed assessments of the services have been completed, highlighting a number of historic issues and practices affecting performance; this has been provided to West Lancashire Borough Council and will be used as a further vehicle for service improvement.

2.5 In June 2012 **Lancashire Place** (former Greetby Building in Ormskirk) opened. This three-floor building will house around 300 staff. It has been completely refurbished (at a cost of £2 million). This has been funded by the County Council.



2.6 Around **170 staff** from One Connect Limited will transfer from County Hall, Preston to Lancashire Place. This is a major boost to the local economy and job market. **Lancashire Place** is now the **Payroll Centre** of One Connect Limited.



2.7 West Lancashire Borough Council has also benefited from the Investment of around **£0.6 million** into creating a revenue and benefits ICT platform (Northgate) to serve the planned business growth in the sector, based at Lancashire Place.

2.8 The platforms will provide a scalable solution capable of expansion to an expanded shared services environment.

2.9 By reviewing and redesigning workflow processes and refreshing staff knowledge there will be a major opportunity to enhance services to the customer whilst improving operational efficiency.

2.10 New platforms will also provide additional resilience and improve system availability such that system down time impacting on customer service can be largely eliminated.

2.11 The following is a summary of the key components of the proposed solution architecture:

- ✦ The solution will employ the Northgate Revenues and Benefits, and Civica EDM applications.
- ✦ Hosting platforms will be reused / shared / expanded to provide the required application environments for One Connect Limited Revenue and Benefits Service.
- ✦ Northgate will be engaged to carry out a data conversion and migration exercise from the current West Lancashire Borough Council core applications (Capita Academy and Civica CTAX and NDR) to Northgate Revenue and Benefits.
- ✦ Civica will be engaged to carry out image and index conversion / migration from the current West Lancashire Borough Council scanning and workflow application (Northgate Information@Work) to Civica.
- ✦ Outgoing One Connect Limited Revenue and Benefits Service print fulfilment services will be consolidated to provide a scalable solution capable of supporting other customers.
- ✦ Batch interfaces will be developed (based on Northgate and Civica standard interfaces) suitably amended to meet One Connect Limited Revenue and Benefits Service requirements, where appropriate.
- ✦ One Connect Limited has a portfolio of bespoke software which provides additional functionality to that provided by the core Northgate Revenue and Benefits product. An exercise will be undertaken to identify which key items will be required for the One Connect Limited Revenue and Benefits Service solution, whilst minimising bespoke development. For example:
  - Electronic payment/adjustment notification files for landlords.
  - Bill formatting.
  - eBilling.
  - Specialised reporting.

### 3. ICT Service Highlights and Review of 2011/2012

3.1 A culture of performance and service excellence is being embedded across the ICT business and its five key work towers.

3.2 Key ICT successes and highlights of the first six months include:

⌘ In December 2011, ICT launched a new consolidated Helpdesk system, HP Service Manager (HPSM), which delivers improved performance by removing duplication and providing better management information. This supports the Connect2ICT Service Desk. This allows:



- All support calls from West Lancashire Borough Council staff to be recorded and managed for the first time.
- A facility to store information on all ICT software and hardware assets in one place.
- A knowledge base of 'known resolutions' so that ICT staff can fix faults more quickly.
- Tools to ensure that all changes are controlled, so reducing the risk of disruption to services.
- A means of identifying recurring problems so that the root cause can be addressed.

The HPSM project was delivered in record time despite involving fundamental changes to ICT processes as well as a significant training programme for ICT staff.

3.3 The ICT Service Desk within One Connect Limited has enabled support staff to focus on fault fixing as opposed to call logging and enabled continued assistance to be provided with office moves during major refurbishment works.

3.4 The upgrade of West Lancashire Borough Council's website was agreed in March 2012. This update will provide new servers for both the Intranet and Internet along with an updated version of the current Alterian Content Management System.

*"The Council produces a detailed annual improvement plan for the website with the aim of making it the first choice for customers who want to access council services. We will deliver the 2012/13 plan in close collaboration with our new partners Lancashire County Council and One Connect Limited, with whom we've been working successfully in an innovative joint venture since October 2011."*

**Councillor Westley of West Lancashire Borough Council**

3.5 A detailed '**health check**' of the ICT infrastructure has been undertaken and immediate action taken in key areas. This included:

- ⌘ A rebuild of the Council Tax server.
- ⌘ The back-up systems and the power supply to the Data Centre, all of which have **reduced existing risk of significant service failure.**
- ⌘ A project is underway to encrypt all 96 West Lancashire Borough Council laptops, providing greater security and reducing the risk of loss of data.
- ⌘ A change in practice means that such improvements are now routinely conducted outside normal working hours so reducing downtime to the business.

3.6 One Connect Limited has converged the West Lancashire Borough Council network this replaces the existing 'hub and spoke' design and merges the voice and data networks, so reducing duplication and increasing network resilience. In addition this has increased bandwidth to sites in some cases by as much as ten-fold.

3.7 As well as hardware improvements One Connect Limited ICT has continued to apply upgrade to systems that support key council services including; Housing, Revenues and Benefits, Licensing and Environmental Health, and Elections. One Connect Limited has sought to provide innovative solutions to improve the way in which the council carries out its business, the pilot projects underway on Video Conferencing and for Unified Messaging provide good examples of these.

3.8 Table (3.1) highlights the ICT performance against target for the contract. It can be seen that for all categories of call for all months ICT Service performance has either met or exceeded the target in 2011/2012.

SLA	Target %	October 2011 %	November 2011 %	December 2011 %	January 2012 %	February 2012 %	March 2012 %	Performance 2011/2012 %
Priority One	99	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
Priority Two	95	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
Priority Three	95	96	96	98	97	96	95	96
Priority Four	95	96	98	97	98	98	99	98
Priority Five	95	Not measured	100	100	100	100	100	100

Table 3.1: ICT Performance 2011/2012

## 4. Revenue and Benefit Service Highlights and Review of 2011/2012

4.1 The Department of Work and Pensions (DWP) Automated Transfers to Local Authority Systems (Atlas) Phase 2 software functionality was tested and implemented into a live environment as part of the Capita Benefits software system. This will extend the delivery of transactions for a range of DWP benefits electronically to the Council's Benefits Service. The Service anticipates that the DWP funding for implementation will be made available to One Connect Limited and a proposal is being produced to support this.

The average time to process all Benefits items for was 8.877 days.

4.2 It has been identified that around 800 landlords and claimants were currently paid by cheque. A wide range of creditors and Council Tax/NNDR refunds are also paid by cheque. An action plan has been initiated to convert payments to BACs commencing from January 2012. In addition, it was found that around 60% of the purchase orders received by the creditor's team did not have a supporting purchase order within the system. A report was provided to the Council to support joint efforts to resolve this issue and it was agreed that this will be reported to the Council on a regular basis to help the Council in addressing this issue.

4.3 In December the DWP confirmed its decision (following consultation with local authorities) regarding the future location and management of local authority fraud services when the Single Fraud Investigation Service (SFIS) comes into being from 2013. This confirmed that fraud staff will remain under the management of local authorities but will operate under SFIS targets and processes; this situation will continue until at least 2015 when the matter will be reviewed.



4.4 December also saw consultation on a DWP paper that confirms that it is intended new data sharing powers enabled by the Welfare Reform Bill will ensure no additional consent is required to share information between: DWP, Housing Benefits (as at present) and also Fairer Charging, Residential Care Charges, Disabled Facilities Grant and Homelessness. The powers are due to become available from April 2012. The consultation period ended on 13 January 2012.

**Year end Revenues processes were carried out with around 60% less system downtime compared to previous years due to new ways of working.**

4.5 The year end processing for Council Tax and Housing Benefits was completed on time and with no major issues. Over 60,000 Benefit Notifications and Council Tax and Business Rates bills were produced and sent out to customers. This is the first time this process was run outside of normal operational hours for the service, thus avoiding the need for downtime as was the previous process.

4.6 Initial steps have commenced to encourage a single view of the customer by providing staff in local taxation with the ability to view benefit details so that they can better advise on rebates due on bills. Around 10,000 customers with rebated bills will now enjoy a quicker and more complete service.

4.7 The implementation of server rationalisation, virtualisation plans and consolidate backup strategy.

4.8 At year end downtime was reduced from four days to one and a half days.

4.9 All staff have been provided with new 22" screens to enable them to better use the document management and other applications available to them.



4.10 Looking to the future One Connect Limited staff have been working closely with the Council to help assess options for local policy and to commence designing consultation and implementation plans.

4.11 Tables (4.1) and (4.2) highlight the Revenues and Benefits Service performance against target for the contract in 2011/2012.

No	Detailed Definition of SLA	Target	Performance 2011/2012
1.	<b>NI 181 – Average time to process all items</b>	12 days	<b>8.77 days</b>
2.	<b>Overpayment Recovery of Housing Benefit overpayments (payments received) pa.</b>	£170,000	<b>£186,926</b>
3.	<b>Benefit Fraud Sanctions &amp; Prosecutions</b>	45	<b>47</b>
4.	<b>Benefits Local Authority Error Overpayments – Lower Threshold YTD</b>	Below £174,233	<b>£108,668</b>

Table 4.1: Contractual Targets - Benefits and Counter Fraud

No	Detailed Definition of SLA	Target	Performance 2011/2012
5.	<b>Council Tax: Collection Rate (BVPI 9)</b>	98.06%	<b>98.06%</b>
6.	<b>Council Tax: Previous Years Arrears</b>	24.46%	<b>25.41%</b>
7.	<b>NNDR Collection rate current year (BVPI10)</b>	97.77%	<b>97.67% (1)</b>
8.	<b>Sundry Debtors</b>	£5,768,616	<b>£7,582,641</b>

Table 4.2: Contractual Targets – Revenues

(1) NNDR was 0.1% below target due to prevailing economic conditions.

## 5. Key Plans for 2012/2013

Plans are well underway to continue to improve during 2012 / 2013. These include:

- 5.1 The implementation of Northgate and Civica applications is the key foundational step in creating scalable, future facing platforms for revenues and benefits shared services in Lancashire.
- 5.2 The platforms operated by West Lancashire Borough Council for revenues were at the very end of their lifespan having been in use for approximately twenty years. The user base for these revenues systems is so small that it is possible that their continued viability will be questioned in the coming years.
- 5.3 The current West Lancashire Borough Council legacy practice of having different unconnected databases for Council Tax, Housing and Council Tax Benefits creates a fragmented service with no consolidated view of people and property. This in turn creates a risk of error and organisational 'silos' between revenues and benefits that do not serve the customer well.
- 5.4 The migration to new systems will break down these barriers and support service transformation.
- 5.5 The first system to be implemented is the Civica document management and workflow system. This will provide highly configurable workflow enabling a degree of automation in the distribution, reporting and processing of data that is not available to West Lancashire Borough Council at present. By ensuring that all work is captured within the workflow system it will be possible for the first time to have a completely accurate picture of work volumes, throughput and efficiency including real-time data. This will provide managers with the tools that they need to optimise operational performance. This system will go live in September following a major programme to migrate from the existing system, configure new workflow processes specifically designed for the new environment and extensive staff training.

- 5.6 The second phase of the programme will see the three existing systems for Council Tax, Business Rates and Housing and Council Tax Benefits replaced by a single system. The new core system will provide a single people and property database, provide for extensive automation of billing, recovery and management reporting. It will equip the service with a future facing platform that will continue to develop to meet the challenges of localisation and continuous improvement. This system is targeted for go live in November of this year following several rigorous data conversion cycles, data cleansing, testing and training.

- 5.7 One Connect Limited has transformed a formally derelict building in Ormskirk into a state of the art accommodation for staff to work. The building has been completely refurbished to a high standard with new furniture, kitchen and dining facilities, meeting and training facilities for staff.

The branding of One Connect Limited and SPIRIT has been rolled out across Lancashire Place including; wall graphics, window vinyls and achievement posters. This not only helps to reinforce SPIRIT and embed it across the workforce, but also helps to create an inspiring and enjoyable environment for our people to work in.



- 5.8 A new Communications Room has been created to the highest standard in Lancashire Place which will accommodate all the necessary network switches and cabling for the building. The Communications room will also initially host a number of servers until One Connect Limited have commissioned and built a new data state of the art centre at County Hall at which point all server equipment will be migrated for added security and business continuity.
- 5.9 A project to virtualise servers was accelerated through One Connect Limited. By April 2012 the original 28 servers at West Lancashire Borough Council were reduced to 17, with the corresponding reduction in support, licensing, power and



accommodation costs. In addition it will improve business continuity and increase options for future service delivery.

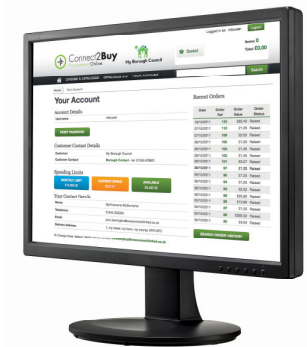
- 5.10 2012 will see the mobilisation of the major Service Improvement Programmes for West Lancashire Borough Council revenues and benefits. This will see out dated systems replaced with class-leading solutions. The current fragmented approach where three separate systems exist for Council Tax, Business Rates and Housing and Council Tax Benefits will be replaced with a single core system.
- 5.11 The current document management system which has limited functionality will be replaced with a new document management and workflow system and will enable automation of many aspects of work distribution, document indexing and performance monitoring for in excess of 125,000 items per year.
- 5.12 These systems will enable a single view of the customer, provide new simpler processes and provide a resilient platform for shared services with optimal levels of availability.
- 5.13 The opportunity to improve services to customers will be further enhanced by the implementation of an integrated telephony service so that customers are no longer passed between staff and are able to receive very high levels of first point of contact resolution. Around 76,000 Council Tax and Business Rates calls and 32,000 benefits calls are received annually.
- 5.14 The current telephony service is fragmented. A limited number of functions are provided by the West Lancashire Borough Council contact centre for Council Tax only. However the staff within these functions have no access to update Council Tax systems so must pass on data captured from the customer to the 'back office' for it to be processed or transfer the call. In addition the contact centre cannot respond to any cases that have reached a recovery stage and bills produced contain the 'back office' telephone number. This is inevitably confusing for customers who receive different numbers and talk to different teams about their bill depending on the stage of recovery.
- 5.15 The Contact Centre has no access to benefits systems or processes and does not provide any benefit information to customers. These customers must call a

dedicated team in the 'back office'. If the contact centre comes across a benefit issue (over 20% of all West Lancashire Borough Council Council Tax payers receive benefit) this creates an immediate hand-off. This means passing the customer to another officer and team to speak to about their bill.

- 5.16 A consolidated telephony service will be developed that will put the customer's needs at the heart of its design. It will ensure that advisors are fully equipped to provide the range of information through high-quality training, integrated platforms and processes. It will be possible to achieve improvements in the quality of resolution and to significantly improve customer satisfaction. At the same time reductions in call handling time will result, ensuring that efficiency is improved whilst delivering an enhanced service.
- 5.17 **Procurement Portal - Connect2Buy**

The **Connect2Buy** Procurement Portal provided by One Connect Limited is about enabling beneficiary organisations to order goods and services via online catalogues whilst benefiting from the economies of scales of Lancashire County Council's buying power. It allows them to benchmark their own supplier costs and to price challenge One Connect Limited prices. The County Council receives no financial benefit from this Portal.

A marketing pack was produced to promote the launch of the Connect2Buy Portal. This includes all the information potentials users need to know, including the Connect2Buy Benefits and Features and a draft set of terms and conditions.



This has been sent to the West Lancashire Borough Council and an initial meeting has been held to discuss the portal in more detail. This opportunity to sign up to the Connect2Buy portal will be developed further in 2012/2013.

## 6. Adding Value

- 6.1 Although BT has a very significant business in Lancashire, the partnership with One Connect Limited, presents an excellent opportunity to move to a different level – by working together to align the activities and strengths of the County Council, BT and the Beneficiary Organisations to create a real change to targeted areas of the community where market forces won't on their own deliver the regeneration that is needed. We also believe that this partnership can and will act as a catalyst for regeneration by bringing new, high value jobs to Lancashire and creating a county-wide infrastructure that supports new ways of working.
- 6.2 One Connect Limited is part owned by BT. BT is a very significant employer in Lancashire with **2,400 BT people working in the County**. This employment equates to an annual output of £878m and **GVA of £415m in the County**. Furthermore, BT has invested in **'state of the art' contact centres** in Blackburn, Lancaster and Skelmersdale and recently announced, Accrington. Skelmersdale also hosts a key software development facility.
- 6.3 In an average year BT spends over £500 million with suppliers across Lancashire.
- 6.4 One Connect Limited had already initiated a Service Improvement Plan to redesign Lancashire County Council's network arrangements to provide a more resilient and cost-effective solution. The requirements of West Lancashire Borough Council were immediately fed into this project and by May 2012 this work was complete. Not only will this improve business continuity arrangements, the bandwidth to 85% of West Lancashire Borough Council sites will be available to be increased by up to eight times.
- 6.5 BT has significant spend with many third party suppliers to provide a wide array of products and services for both its own internal use and also for onward sale. Through the use of professional procurement services and the vast volume of business it places, BT is able to negotiate highly competitive prices with its suppliers. BT is willing to make these prices available to the County Council and the beneficiary organisations who use the Procurement Portal.

## 7. Our People, Our Place of Work

As an employer of choice, One Connect Limited places a great emphasis on the development, performance and well being of its workforce – current and future.

To support our commitment, a Workforce Matter Strategy has been developed around seven broad themes.



This strategy provides a framework to help realise the potential of all our people, provide an environment which positively promotes high performance with the right level of support and challenge to individuals so they will do their best and feel their contribution is rewarded. Over the first year of the partnership, we have placed a considerable amount of time and energy on 'Workforce Matters'. Highlights include:

### Values and Behaviours



We have developed and implemented a set of corporate values and supporting behaviours which help to shape how our employees work together as individuals and teams. This has been developed around the theme of 'SPIRIT'. A set of symbols have been introduced to represent and brand each of our SPIRIT values.

This branding has been applied across the workplace to help create a positive and attractive working environment which encourages our people to live by SPIRIT.



## Learning and Development



Connect2Learn, a Learning Management System, was introduced and is available to all One Connect Limited people. The system has been tailored and branded specifically for One Connect Limited.

It hosts an online catalogue which is helping to improve access to training and allows our people to search and booking training instantly. It also provides a personal development plan for each member of staff enabling them to track their learning and empowering them to progress with their own development.



## Communications

Communications plays a fundamental role within our business operations. We are continually working to make improvements in the way in which we communicate and ensuring these are opportunities for our people to provide their feedback. Our work in this area includes:

A Staff **Intranet** has been established to inform and update all our people on corporate information and news. The site serves as a platform for key applications which staff need to access i.e. Oracle Self Service.



The first **management conference** took place to allow managers from across all areas of One Connect Limited to be updated with details around our targets, performance and business activities.

A **Staff Forum** has been set up to provide communications to those staff who do not belong to a trade union. The forum is chaired by the Chief Executive and includes staff from areas of One Connect Limited who have been elected by staff to act as representatives. These representatives taking any issues, concerns or questions raised by staff to the quarterly meeting and report back the outcome.

Throughout the year, the Chief Executive and Service Area Directors conducted a series of **workplace visits**. This allowed staff to speak directly to the Senior Management Team providing opportunity for them to ask questions.

**Connect Talking**, a quarterly internal newsletter has been established to provide our people with a regular feed of company news, forthcoming initiatives and key events. The newsletter also includes people stories to encourage our staff to get to know their colleagues in other areas of the business.



## Reward and Recognition

To celebrate and reward the contribution and achievements made by our people, we have developed a reward and recognition framework. This sets out our approach to recognition and the channels which will be implemented to ensure our people have opportunities to give and receive recognition.

During 2011/2012, the first SPIRIT awards were introduced. These provided opportunities for our people to nominate their colleagues and teams for one of the twelve award categories (six individual and six teams) which are centred around SPIRIT. This ensures people who are living by our values are rewarded for doing so.

Over the next year, we will continue to implement the reward and recognition strategy with plans to introduce a staff suggestion scheme and an electronic thank you tool.