

Bolsover District Council

Customer Service and Transformation Scrutiny Committee

12th October 2020

Update on the Council's Website Redevelopment

Report of the Leader

This report is public

Purpose of the Report

- To update members of the Committee on the progress and implementation of the new Council website.

1 Report Details

- 1.1 In 2019, it was agreed that we would undertake a review of the Council's website as it was deemed to be not mobile friendly, not easy to navigate or use and did not meet accessibility standards. It also contained far too many pages and documents that were not required and the search facility was not operating how it should.
- 1.2 Research was undertaken looking at other council websites and what was deemed as best practice, with the least maintenance required. From this research we developed a template that contained a simple A to Z of services rather than a departmental or service specific structure. This was done for two reasons:
 - To save any unnecessary maintenance as and when departmental responsibilities changed.
 - The end user does not know (or really want to know) how a council is structured, they just want the information they are looking for.
- 1.3 The new website was launched on Friday 18 September 2020 and the initial feedback has been very positive.
- 1.4 The new site has a number of different functionality within it, including:
 - **Mobile** - The website is mobile compatible.
 - **Home Page** - The home page has been designed purposefully so the large search bar is the first thing you see. It is a lot more intuitive than our previous search engines. When you have typed in the first three letters the search results will start to appear.
 - **A to Z** - Rather than having a traditional structure we have opted for an A to Z of services which gives us greater flexibility and freedom to add or delete pages and is also easier for the end user to follow. The text on the pages has been considerably stripped back to reduce the amount of non-essential information, to make it easier for the end user to get the information they require and better for those using mobile phones. This

'stripped back' approach will continue with any new or additional pages. There is also some overlap on the A-Z with pages as customers may look for information under different letters.

- **Promoted Services** – We have six boxes underneath the A to Z. These can be swapped around periodically but are reserved for the main services our website users request.
- **News and Events** – The latest news and upcoming events appear at the foot of the page.
- **Pages** – You will see as you click on the relevant pages they may just be a single category or have a number of pages underneath them. Each of these pages has a contacts, documents and links box where we can add pertinent information.
- **Accessibility** – The government have introduced new accessibility guidelines that we must adhere to and this also includes all documents. This includes the design, content and documents and we are working with ICT to ensure we are fully accessible. We have contracted a company to undertake some testing on the new site and once the report is received we will rectify any issues.
- **Documents** – We had over a thousand documents on the previous website, most of which have been removed as they are out of date or do not meet accessibility guidelines. However, some documents remain that don't meet these guidelines as we have a legal responsibility to provide these and we will work to rectifying these so they meet the guidelines by specified dates.
- **Speech** - We are also currently testing the facility of being able to 'Search by speech' (microphone button in the search bar). This should work on Google Chrome but not necessarily in any other browsers. We would encourage anyone with a microphone enabled device to try this out and give us some feedback. It works best in a quiet room without any background noise.

2 Conclusions and Reasons for Recommendation

- 2.1 It is recommended that members note the website update.

3 Consultation and Equality Impact

- 3.1 Consultation was not required but best practice and research on other council websites was undertaken.

4 Alternative Options and Reasons for Rejection

- 4.1 Continue to use the previous website. This was rejected due to the structure, number of pages and documents that would have had to have been stripped back/deleted/reconfigured which would have taken more resources to do.

5 Implications

5.1 Finance and Risk Implications

5.1.1 Costs associated with the website have been officer time and the purchase of a few plug-ins (events module and Document Manager) which have been met from existing budgets.

5.1.2 New accessibility guidelines have been introduced which mean we have also had to contract a firm to undertake some more rigorous testing (see 5.2.1 below). At the time of writing this report, the cost is unknown as it is based upon number of pages and documents to be tested.

5.2 Legal Implications including Data Protection

5.2.1 New regulations have come into force which means from 23 September 2020, every new public sector website will need to meet certain accessibility standards and publish a statement saying they have been met. The aim of the regulations is to ensure public sector websites and mobile apps are accessible to all users, especially those with disabilities.

5.2.2 We have undertaken testing on the new site and it meets current legislation and requirements. However, we have contracted a company called Silktide to undertake some rigorous testing so we can ensure we meet all the necessary legislation.

5.3 Human Resources Implications

5.3.1 None identified

6 Recommendations

6.1 That Members note the report and the progress made on the implementation of the new Council website.

7 Decision Information

<p>Is the decision a Key Decision? A Key Decision is an executive decision which has a significant impact on two or more District wards or which results in income or expenditure to the Council above the following thresholds:</p> <p><i>BDC:</i> <i>Revenue - £75,000</i> <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Capital - £150,000</i> <input type="checkbox"/> <i>NEDDC:</i> <i>Revenue - £100,000</i> <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Capital - £250,000</i> <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <i>Please indicate which threshold applies</i></p>	No
<p>Is the decision subject to Call-In? (Only Key Decisions are subject to Call-In)</p>	No
<p>Has the relevant Portfolio Holder been informed</p>	Yes
<p>District Wards Affected</p>	All
<p>Links to Corporate Plan priorities or Policy Framework</p>	All

8 Document Information

Appendix No	Title
Background Papers (These are unpublished works which have been relied on to a material extent when preparing the report. They must be listed in the section below. If the report is going to Cabinet (NEDDC) or Executive (BDC) you must provide copies of the background papers)	
Report Author	Contact Number
Communications, Design and Marketing Manger	

Report Reference –