

Stronger Communities Committee Report

Date: Monday 18 November 2019
Title: Communications Report
Contact Officer: Communications and Events Officer – Polly Inness

BACKGROUND

The purpose of this is to update Councillors about the progress of making the website accessibility compliant by September 2020.

WHERE WE ARE NOW

The Communications Officer has undertaken training via a webinar and due to attend a further training course in January, run in conjunction with OALC and RNIB. She therefore has a basic understanding of what is required and when, and is working towards achieving compliance ahead of the deadline next year.

WEBSITE

An accessibility statement has been added to the website and this is the default version that states that most of the website is not compliant. However, much of it actually is but the Communications Officer is in the process of auditing and checking for basic things such as descriptive links and alt text on images. For example the Council's statement says; **“Some links do not describe the landing page they are taking you to. We plan to put the full description in the link by the end of October 2019”**

She is fairly certain that all the links DO describe the destination, but to err on the side of caution while she checks, she is leaving that statement in place with a deadline by which to finish that work.

The Communications Officer aims to update the statement each month and remove all the statements that relate to areas where the Council has achieved compliance. There is a list and schedule to work to, she anticipates dedicating the equivalent of two days a week to working on this, in order to meet the deadline for compliance.

If making particular areas accessible or making things accessible in certain ways is a disproportionate burden, i.e. when considered, the impact on an organisation's size and resources is unreasonable in comparison to the benefit to be had from undertaking the work, the then Council can declare this in a statement and leave that part unfixed.

The Council cannot possibly be compliant for every disability (and this is not required by law) but it will strive to do its best to fulfil as much as it can.

CONTENT

The Communications Officer has created accessibility compliant WORD document templates (including this is one for Officers to use generically for Committee Reports) and instructions on how to create one for circulation in the office and will add instructions for converting to pdf in ways that preserve accessibility.

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT

Having declared a Climate Change Emergency at its Council meeting on 26 June 2019 – with this in mind Councillors should have due regard to the environmental impact of any decisions they make with regard to its facilities and services it operates.

RISK

In decision making Councillors should give consideration to any risks to the Council and any action it can take to limit or negate its liability.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

There is a cost for the courses and training, along with staff costs and associated resources but is accounted for within the annual Central Support budgets.

The alternative would be outsourcing the work to a web design company – however this would be at an additional cost to the Council.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Members are invited to note the report.