


LONDON BOROUGH OF CAMDEN	WARDS: All
REPORT TITLE Our approach towards building an accessible website	
REPORT OF The Chief Experience and Information Officer	
FOR SUBMISSION TO Disability Oversight Panel	DATE 05/12/23
<p>SUMMARY OF REPORT</p> <p>The purpose of this report is to share the approach to making digital products accessible and to seek support on building a network or community to assist with accessibility testing throughout the lifecycle of a digital product.</p> <p>Local Government Act 1972 <input type="checkbox"/> Access to Information</p> <p>No documents that require listing have been used in the preparation of this report.</p> <p>Contact Officer:</p> <p>Patrick Nsionu, Product Manager, Corporate Services. 5 Pancras Square London N1C 4AG, 0207 974 6704</p>	
<p>RECOMMENDATIONS</p> <p>That the Panel:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Comment on any specific actions that can be taken to help establish a network of interested disabled residents that can participate in ongoing accessibility testing of new and existing digital products. 2. Note and comment on our approach towards ensuring any new digital products are accessible by default as set out on this report and the appendix. 	

Signed: The final report must be signed by an Executive Director or Director (of partner organisation if applicable) before it is submitted to Committee Services for inclusion on a committee agenda.

Date: 25/11/23



Tariq Khan CDIO

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1. The purpose of this report is to outline our approach towards designing and developing an accessible website, specifically www.camden.gov.uk. This includes the steps we take towards designing content, developing components of a website, testing existing products and research of best practices.

2. The background to the report

- 2.1. of Camden digital products should be accessible by default to everyone.
- 2.2. Accessibility ensures people with disabilities can fully engage with our digital products and have equal access to services and support that Camden council provides its citizens.

3. Why we must do it.

- 3.1. On top of ensuring we remain inclusive and diverse as an organisation, as a accessibility regulations introduced in 2018. This includes products that are public-facing and used internally by Camden employees (e.g., an intranet).
- 3.2. To make products legally compliant, we must:

Meet the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.2 AA standard and aim for the AAA standard where possible. The Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (known as WCAG) are an internationally recognised set of recommendations for improving web accessibility. The Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) consist of three levels of acceptance criteria: A, AA, and AAA. However, it's important to note that some criteria may only have A or AA standards. The WCAG 2.2 AA standard is like a set of rules to make websites user-friendly for everyone. It helps ensure that websites are designed in a way that's easy for people with different abilities to use. They explain how to make digital services, websites, and apps accessible to everyone, including users with impairments to their vision, hearing, mobility and thinking and understanding.

Test for accessibility issues, using a combination of automated and manual tests.

Publish an accessibility statement that explains how accessible your product is.

4. Research with users with access needs

- 4.1. In the UK, almost 1 in 5 people have a disability of some kind. Many more have a temporary condition like an illness or injury. We try to include one

person with access needs in every 5 people we research with, but building a consistent and steady network will ensure we involve people with access needs, including disabled people, in every round of user research.

4.2. We also consider learning and hidden disabilities, physical disability, visual disabilities, and temporary or permanent access needs. Involving people with access needs in user research does not just help identify accessibility issues it shows up general issues that affect everyone.

4.3. The intention behind this report is to seek comments from the panel on how we can collaborate with partners and citizens to form a permanent network of testers that will remove the challenges in recruitment for participatory design and share our approach to making digital products accessible. It will also ensure we involve disabled people as experts in their experiences from a

the start. As well as the sharing of expertise between the designer and the user, rather than one party being directed by the other.

5. Current risks and challenges

5.1. Our current digital estate did not meet parts of WCAG 2.1 AA conformance following our last audit, which was conducted on a set of specific pages, agreed between Camden and the RNIB, across camden.gov.uk and other core digital services, including the Camden Account, Planning Application service, and the Camden Council News website. Many of the issues were discovered on sites not developed by camden.gov.uk teams. We will collaborate with these external partners to improve their accessibility. Following accessibility regulations, we have [published the existing issues](#) we have on our current website and intend to resolve as many of these issues as part of the redesign of www.camden.gov.uk.

5.2. By October 2024 there will be an updated version of the current accessibility guidelines. We must be prepared and ready to ensure that we update our designs and website to meet any new or updated requirements.

6. What are we doing as part of the redesign of www.camden.gov.uk?

6.1. We are due to launch a redesigned version of www.camden.gov.uk in either December 2023 or January 2024. As part of the project to deliver this we have carried out an external audit in May 2022 with the Royal National Institute of Blind People (RNIB) on the current version of the website. We conducted this external audit to identify major issues that must be resolved in the upcoming redesign of camden.gov.uk. It has become the basis for setting our key priorities.

6.2. We have also adopted website components already developed by the Government Digital Service and implemented into our own design system. Our design system is a library of components and tools that only permits accessible tools to build our website. Each component has undergone rigorous testing, and we developed a test version of the Council Tax webpages on camden.gov.uk which we launched in January 2023 to act as a

proof of concept to ensure we are only building new websites that is accessible to all.

7. Finance Comments of the Executive Director Corporate Services

A separate

significant investment is required to meet the accessible standard.

8. Legal Comments of the Borough Solicitor

The accessibility regulations build on the Councils existing obligations to people who have a disability under the Equality Act 2010. They impose an obligation on a public sector body to make its websites and mobile applications more accessible, to the extent that this does not impose a disproportionate burden. It also contains a further obligation for a public sector body to publish an accessibility statement on compliance with the accessibility requirement and keep that statement under regular review. It also sets out the requirement for a public sector body to make a disproportionate burden assessment and specifies the type of factors that must be taken into account when making such an assessment should this apply.

9. Environmental Implications

There are no environmental impacts to report.

10. Appendices

Making digital products accessible for Camden citizens (PowerPoint slides)

REPORT ENDS

Environmental Implications

Where the decision has or might have an impact on the climate then explain how those impacts have been mitigated here. Please interpret this widely. This might include:

energy use - has energy demand been reduced as far as possible, is the residual energy requirement met through renewable energy sources? Is the approach to delivery now less carbon intensive than before?

air pollution -

as possible? How have we ensured that the proposal does not place vulnerable residents closer to sources of air pollution? How has low emission transport been prioritised over fossil fuel-based transport? Have we avoided unnecessary transport impacts in this decision, for example by procuring from local suppliers or through improved consolidation of deliveries?

environmental policy: Does the supplier have a strong environmental policy that evidences that their operations are performed in a way that minimises their environmental impact?

resource efficiency have food miles and the use of single use plastics been minimised? Is the proposal or design sufficiently adaptable to ensure longevity? Has the option to reuse or re-purpose the existing asset been considered? How has resource efficiency been achieved?

climate resilience is the proposal designed to adapt to and protect residents from the impacts of climate change, for example, if it is a development proposal are the buildings designed to minimise solar heating gains, reduce surface water run-off and improve water efficiency. How are vulnerable residents protected from climate impacts?

The intention is to reduce the impact of our decisions on climate change, air pollution and the wider environment.

To enable lawful decision making, it is important that we identify in the report when environmentally positive choices increase costs. When the costs of positive environmental action are considered to be higher, it is also important to identify the costs of environmental inaction so that a balanced decision can be taken.

The Head of Sustainability, Air Quality and Energy has developed an e-learning module to help officers write the Environmental Implications section of reports which can be found here [Course: Learning resources: Environmental Stewardship \(learningpool.com\)](https://learningpool.com). It explains how the Constitution now places a duty on the Council to consider the environmental impact of decisions. It also guides people through how their project might impact the environment and what they could do to mitigate.

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