Southend-on-Sea Borough Council

Web Strategy

2015 to 2018

October 2015
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The implementation of this strategy will deliver the following benefits:

- A further improved Council website delivering services and information 24/7
- Better use of the website as a marketing tool
- A website which supports and complements the Council's Digital Strategy
- A website which takes advantage of innovations in technology and its application
- A website which supports the Council’s drive to improve efficiency and service delivery

1.0 Introduction

1.1 Background

The aim of this strategy is to identify the developmental direction for the Southend-on-Sea Borough Council website (‘the website’) and our plans to maintain and enhance the website’s online presence over the coming three years (2015 to 2018).

This strategy has been developed by the Policy, Engagement and Communication Group and follows on from the consultation (both internally and externally) concerning the future of the website which took place in 2013.

The primary website of the Council is southend.gov.uk. This is colloquially referred to as ‘the council website’. The website’s content management system is provided by Jadu® who host the site, provide its framework and manage its security.

On the website, the Homepage, News Centre, Events Calendar, Header, Footer, A-Z and announcements are directly managed by web services staff within Policy, Engagement and Communication.

These staff have responsibility for the overall structure of information on the site, ensuring web operational standards are met when website authors submit content for inclusion or revision and adding and removing content from the site.

Website authors throughout the Council are responsible for providing and updating website content for inclusion.

All staff are responsible for bringing to the attention of their website author suitable new content for their area of responsibility for inclusion on the website.

1.2 Scope of the strategy

This strategy solely focuses on the primary SBC website, southend.gov.uk.
The website provides a portal allowing customers to reach at least 23 specialist systems such as ‘Where I Live’ and ‘Public Access’. These can be branded to synchronise with the overall website design and the user will not realise they have been taken away from the primary site. Alternatively they can have their own branding to provide a distinction.

Regardless of their appearance, although accessed through southend.gov.uk, management of these specialist systems is the responsibility of their owner and they are outside the scope of this strategy.

In addition to the primary website, the Council has at least 16 specialist websites, 9 Twitter and 7 Facebook accounts.

These other websites and social media platforms are also not covered by this strategy and are the responsibility of their owner.

Appendix Two details the Council’s online presence, so far as it is known.

Wider issues concerning online services, their interrelation and accessibility are addressed in the Digital Strategy.

2.0 Current Position

2.1 History of the website

SBC trialled its first www.gov.uk website in 1996 and has had a continuous online presence since 2001. The current website is the sixth incarnation, having launched on 6th March 2014 following a comprehensive review and restyling after extensive user consultation. Appendix One shows how the website has evolved over time.

In the course of that evolution, accessing Council information through the website has changed from being the exception in 1996 to being the norm. Indeed it may now by some be considered a right.

2.2 Usage and customer satisfaction

In 2014/15 the website was visited 1.4 million times in total by 731,618 unique visitors viewing 4.7 million pages. 50,000 payments were made through the website and 34,000 service applications were made through online forms.

Customer satisfaction with the website is measured by a rolling survey of users who rate their experience as they use the website.

Currently customer satisfaction is below the target level of 55%.
An initial decrease in customer satisfaction was expected following the launch of the new website design in March 2014. This is in part because users' favourite bookmarked pages became redundant and it takes time for search engines such as Google to crawl through the new site and update their results. The actions outlined in this strategy and increasing user familiarity with the site are expected to improve user satisfaction and for it to reach target levels (55% for 2015/16).

2.3 Website Strategy Vision and link to Council Values

The Council’s services have been developed to fulfil the overarching vision of ‘Creating a better Southend’. Providing easily accessible, comprehensive information about Council services and how to access them supports the corporate vision. Our corresponding vision for the website is:

‘A website containing easily found information, which is useful and accessible to its customers and supports the needs of the organisation’
Our vision is underpinned by the Council’s seven values which are supported by the website in the following ways:

- **We aspire for excellence in our work**
  - We want an excellent website, high quality, accessible and useful to its users and the Council

- **We work as one organisation**
  - Our website is structured by user need, not by organisational structure

- **We are all responsible for the performance of our organisation**
  - Our website provides information about the performance of the Council

- **We are open, honest and transparent, listening to each other’s views**
  - Our website supports transparency and we listen to user feedback

- **Good customer care is at the heart of everything we do**
  - Our website content is written with what is most useful to the customer as its first priority

- **We support, trust and develop each other**
  - Our website is created by working closely with others throughout the organisation

- **We value the contribution of all our people**
  - We value the contribution made by our diverse internal and external website users and will make the website fully accessible

2.4 Policy context

This strategy takes into account, and will be monitored to ensure compatibility with, the following existing or emerging strategies, plans and policies, in particular:

- Business Continuity Plan
- Communications Strategy (Internal and External)
- Corporate Plan
- Digital Strategy
- Flood /Major Emergency Plan
- Information Management Strategy
- Social Media Strategy
- Transparency Code
3.0 Future Position – where we want to be

3.1 The purpose of the website

The website contains information about all aspects of the Council’s business. It falls into three primary types:

- getting information into the public domain;
- allowing website users to get information to the Council; and
- fulfilling a number of other aims and statutory requirements

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Outgoing Information</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Informing about our services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Issuing topical, urgent or emergency messages</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Promoting the Borough and Council</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Promoting news and marketing events</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marketing our products, services and venues</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Linking to other online services (including Council subsidiary sites)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Applications/payment for Council services and products</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Reports of location/address specific information</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reports of other problems</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Responses to consultations/giving of opinions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accessing of the democratic process</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marketing to us by third parties</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Other</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Providing 24 hour online services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supporting channel shift to the website</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Providing an accessible channel for all</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fulfilling our statutory requirements regarding publication</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Being open, transparent and accountable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Allowing re-use of our data</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
3.2 Stakeholders in the website

As an online service, the Council website is potentially available to all. Stakeholder interests can identified as:

- Residents of the Borough
- Visitors to the Borough
- Researchers/Developers
- SBC Staff and Councillors
- Other UK and International Citizens
- Businesses
- Residents of the Borough
- Visitors to the Borough
- Researchers/Developers
- SBC Staff and Councillors
- Other UK and International Citizens
- Businesses

3.2 Strategic Objectives

As a mature web presence with current styling, it is not intended to make fundamental changes to the website over the period of this strategy. The focus will be:

1. Continuously improving website content and usability
2. Improving use of the website as a marketing tool
3. Supporting the Council’s Digital Strategy
4. Horizon scanning to take advantage of innovations in technology and its application.
4.0 Achieving the Strategic Objectives

4.1 Continuously improving website content and usability

4.1.1 Web Operational Standards

With Twitter, Facebook, forums, blogs, apps and more it can be tempting to forget the more ‘boring’ subject of website content. Research shows that less than five per cent of smartphone users are still using free apps 30 days after downloading them. While these lively extras have their market, they are no substitute for a mobile device compatible website, with a solid foundation of good content, usable navigation, good connections and Search Engine Optimisation.

To be useful and appreciated by its users, a website must have the content customers are looking for in a way they can find easily. The Government Digital Service has invested substantially in researching and developing the GOV.UK website to be an exemplar of public sector websites.

Their stated aim of making digital services and information simpler, clearer and faster aligns with our own aims and their state of the art guidance for planning, writing and managing content has been used as the model for our own Web Operational Standards (WOS).

All those writing content for the Council website must follow these standards. The Policy Engagement and Communication Group are responsible for website governance and ensuring that the Web Operational Standards are applied.
4.1.2 Annual programme of content review

Content which is out of date is annoying for customers and can be misleading and could cause reputational damage for the Council. Working with service areas and content authors, web services staff will complete an annual programme of content review, prioritised by analytics, customer feedback and business priorities.

Web services staff will also annually review the structural elements of the website to ensure that they are fit for purpose and, as required, will advise on Search Engine Optimisation to make the Council’s website content as visible as possible over the wider internet.

4.1.3 Interface with other digital services

The website acts as a gateway to other online services provided by the Council. These may be other websites created by the Council, social media accounts or other digital platforms which fully or partially integrate with the website. An outline of the Council’s online presence is attached at Appendix Two.

The commissioner of any other online platform is responsible for its governance and maintenance. Any online presence other than the Council website (as defined in paragraph 1 above) is the responsibility of the provider. If it is to be integrated with the Council’s website, style and design must meet the requirements of the Web Operational Standards.

4.2 Improving use of the website as a marketing tool

The website plays a role in marketing the Council’s goods and services. In some instances the ‘customer’ has no choice because it is a requirement to use our services (such as paying for a licence) and in this instance the job of the website is to make the experience simple and reliable.

The website also acts as a hub through which customers can access other Council websites, such as Visit Southend. All Council websites should be represented on the parent website (this may only require a web link).

Increasingly however we are offering optional services where the customer has a choice of supplier. This might be goods such as memorial plaques or services such as concerts. There are also services for which there is no charge but which the Council wants to promote, for example health initiatives.

There is a well-established process for promoting news items by adding media releases to the website and reflecting important ones in the News Centre. Other than this, the use of the website for marketing purposes is under developed. For example, details of future events and significant initiatives are often not submitted for inclusion in the website or translated into on-going website content.
Currently web services staff use other available information to identify additional marketing content for inclusion on the website. This might be social media, local papers, press releases, posters within Civic 1 and externally.

A more systematic approach is required. Those wanting to market goods or services need to be convinced that the website offers them a valuable opportunity. Gaining the cooperation of relevant parties throughout the Council with regard to marketing on the website will therefore be a priority over the period of this strategy.

4.3 Supporting the Council’s Digital Strategy

This strategy runs concurrently with the Digital Strategy in which the website is identified as a key part of the business transformation architecture with regard to engagement with and delivery of digital services.

4.3.1 Requirement for responsive design

The Digital strategy highlights the need to expand the availability of online services suitable for mobile devices and smart phones as these have a greater potential reach than other electronic channels.

The website has a responsive design (which changes format to match the type of device being used). This was a fundamental requirement of the latest review of the website and is crucial in providing equal access to it (more detail on this is included in the Equality Analysis at Appendix Three). The Achieve on-line forms which support the website are also responsive.

Movement away from the website to other platforms should not be a backward step and any systems commissioned should be in a responsive format.

4.3.2 New or enhanced online functions

As part of the Digital Strategy, a number of functions have been identified as requiring an on-line option, needing enhancement of the existing on-line facility or benefiting from greater promotion of their availability.

In particular, an improved Citizen Account service is being commissioned and an expansion in use of the Abavus App.

Web services staff will work with the lead officers concerned to, as appropriate:

- Contribute to the planning and development of new services
- Promote new and existing initiatives
- Integrate software systems within the website
- Amend existing website content in favour of new options
4.3.3 Channel Shift

The above initiatives are part of the drive to ‘shift’ customers’ method of contact from telephone to online contact. The drive for ‘Channel Shift’ is being led by Customer Services, supported by ICT.

Web services staff will work with the lead officers to ensure that:

- Where the shift is to the website, the corresponding content is fit for purpose
- Where the shift is to an alternative online platform, the new service is integrated appropriately with the website and easy to locate

4.3.4 Open Data

The Digital Strategy identifies the benefits of providing ‘Open Data’ to stimulate creative thinking and innovation amongst interested parties such as commissioners, the voluntary sector, business leaders and academics. This would potentially allow co-produced service solutions at reduced or zero cost, reduce the cost of responding to Freedom of Information requests and align with the government’s transparency agenda.

Web services staff will work with the lead officers to integrate and promote open data within the website.

4.3.5 Business Continuity and Emergency Planning

The Digital Strategy highlights the need to ensure vital systems can be accessed in the event of a business continuity disruption. In such an event the website is likely to play a fundamental role in keeping both staff and the public informed.

Similarly, the website plays a crucial role in communicating urgent public messages in emergency situations such as flooding and severe weather.

Web services staff will work with the relevant lead officers to, as appropriate, prepare advance website content and Content Management System (CMS) user instructions to be activated in the event of a disruption or emergency.

5.0 Horizon scanning to take advantage of innovations in technology

Digital services are constantly evolving and, although the primary focus with regard to the website will be to maximise the potential of what we already have, web services staff will, throughout the course of this strategy, keep informed of new products and innovations and scan the horizon for possibilities which could benefit website customers and the organisation.
6.0 Strategic risks

6.1 Effect of channel shift on customer satisfaction

While channel shift through the Digital Strategy will be welcomed by many because it will make even more services easily available online 24/7, there are those for whom the website would not be their first choice of contact method.

We will try to make the website experience for these customers as easy and beneficial as possible but as they will be going against their preferences there may well be a negative impact on customer satisfaction where they are concerned.

The impact on customer satisfaction of moving away from the website to other online platforms is difficult to predict.

6.2 Service availability

In numerical terms, the website is the major provider of information about Council services. In an emergency situation, its role is critical in informing staff and public. Its availability is a crucial factor. By having the website content hosted by the major provider Jadu, the risk of the service being interrupted is minimised (in 2014/15 availability of the website did not fall below 99.89%).

The potential availability of other online platforms will vary according to their hosting arrangements and is not covered by this strategy.

6.3 Branding

Branding is important as a means of informing users that they are on the Southend-on-Sea Borough Council website. It is used to give assurance that the information on the site is authentic and reliable.

The website is branded in accordance with the corporate identity guidelines and conveys the brand of the whole Council rather than an individual team or service area.

In diversifying to other online platforms (such as those shown at Appendix Two) there is a risk that the corporate brand is diluted and the cohesive recognisable SBC online presence reduced. This will need to be taken into account when subsidiary digital platforms are commissioned.

7.0 Support and resources needed to deliver the strategy

Development and operation of the Council’s website is resourced through a combination of internally and externally sourced resources. Key resources include:

- Website Operations (including the maintenance of the Content Management System) – Web Operations Advisor x 1, Web Officer x 2
• ICT Resources to provide development work, internet connectivity and Firewall security and to maintain associated integrated systems
• Resources from system owners to support and maintain non-website based online platforms (both existing and in development)
• Content Authors from across the Council who provide content for the site
• A managed hosting environment and service (Jadu). The hosting service provides the CMS and its technical support ensuring 99% availability of the Council’s website
• In addition, the Council works with a number of companies who provide specialist components such as e-forms, online payments, web performance monitoring and website security testing
• Management arrangements are established and financed from revenue provision.

8.0 Workforce Issues

The actions outlined in this strategy build on existing arrangements and there is unlikely to be a negative impact on the workforce. Web services staff are skilled in the use of Jadu and in the required content standards. Any on-going training needs will be addressed in the performance management process.

The web developer role lies with ICT and concerns have been expressed that there is currently a gap in knowledge concerning the maintenance of applications related to the website.

9.0 Evaluation and Review

This strategy covers the period from April 2015 to March 2018. In the intervening period it will be reviewed annually by Policy, Engagement and Communication Group to monitor progress against its objectives and to reflect any adjustments that might need to be made.

10.0 Communication of the Strategy

This strategy will be made available on the Intranet and will be brought to the particular attention of those directly concerned such as Content Authors and ICT.

11.0 Contact Information

Any queries, suggestions or comments in relation to this Strategy should be addressed to Val Smith; Senior Knowledge and Information Advisor; Policy, Engagement and Communication Group.

12.0 Equality Analysis

An Equality Analysis for this strategy is attached at Appendix Three.
Welcome to Southend-on-Sea Borough Council's home page!

Southend is the largest town in Essex and has much to offer as a visitor destination and a commercial centre. It has grown into a vibrant seaside resort which offers an attractive environment for both visitors and residents.

Please send us your comments, both positive and negative (we can take it!). Click on the comments button below, type your message in the window provided and send it to us.

Southend Borough Council
P.O. Box 6
Civic Centre
Victoria Avenue
Southend-on-Sea
Essex SS2 6ER

(01702) 215000

Appendix One

Evolution of the Southend-on-Sea Borough Council Website (1)

December 1996 (Closed 1998)

New Site April 2001
Appendix One

Evolution of the Southend-on-Sea Borough Council Website (2)

Change of format September 2002

Change of format 2005
Appendix One

Evolution of the Southend-on-Sea Borough Council Website (3)

**New Jadu Site 2011**

**Current Jadu Site March 2014**
## Digital Platforms linking with the SBC website (April 2015)

### LINKED SYSTEMS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Where I Live</th>
<th>Planning Portal</th>
<th>On the Move</th>
<th>Jobs in Schools</th>
<th>Tender Opportunities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Councillor Directory</td>
<td>Public Access</td>
<td>Stopford</td>
<td>Public-I TV</td>
<td>Fostering &amp; Adoption embedded</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elgin</td>
<td>Achieve/Firmstep</td>
<td>Consultation Portal</td>
<td>PAYE.net/Capita</td>
<td>Traffic Cameras</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minutes System</td>
<td>MySouthend</td>
<td>E-petitions</td>
<td>ELF (Northgate)</td>
<td>Available Parking Spaces</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Abavus App</td>
<td>Reed</td>
<td>School Admissions</td>
<td>VIP Tree</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Other SBC WEBSITES

- Southend Interfaith WG
- Active Southend
- SHIP
- Children’s Partnership
- Excellence in Social Care
- OnSouthend
- Visit Southend
- Southend Independent Living
- Marine Activities Centre
- Sameru
- Invest in Southend
- South Essex Homes
- The Forum
- Cycle Southend
- Southend Museums
- Business Southend

### The Website

southend.gov.uk

### TWITTER

- Southend Council
- Southend Connexions
- Southend Museums
- Southend Library
- Tickfield Centre
- Visit Southend
- Better Southend
- Cycle Southend
- Southend CDRP

### FACEBOOK

- Southend Council
- Southend Connexions
- Southend Museums
- Southend Libraries
- Tickfield Centre
- Cycle Southend
- Southend Community Safety Partnership

### YOUTUBE

- Southend Council
- Southend Connexions

### OTHER SOCIAL MEDIA

- Tickfield Centre Linked In
Appendix Three

Equality Analysis

Southend-on-Sea Borough Council

Web Strategy

2015 to 2018
1. **Background Information**

1.1 Name of policy, service function or restructure requiring an Equality Analysis:


1.2 Department:

Corporate Services

1.3 Service Area:

Policy, Engagement and Communication

1.4 Date Equality Analysis undertaken:

05 August 2015

1.5 Names and roles of staff carrying out the Equality Analysis:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Role</th>
<th>Service Area</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Val Smith</td>
<td>Senior Knowledge and Information Advisor</td>
<td>Policy, Engagement and Communication</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amy Wiseman</td>
<td>Web Operations Advisor</td>
<td>Policy, Engagement and Communication</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rob Nelson</td>
<td>Web Officer</td>
<td>Policy, Engagement and Communication</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1.6 What are the aims or purpose of the policy, service function or restructure that is subject to the EA?

In volume terms, the website is the primary provider of information about Council services. The vision of the strategy is to provide a website containing easily found information, which is useful to its customers and supports the needs of the organisation.

1.7 What are the main activities relating to the policy, service function or restructure?

The website contains information about all aspects of the Council’s business. It falls into three primary types:

- getting information into the public domain;
- allowing website users to get information to the Council; and
- fulfilling a number of other aims and statutory requirements
The Web Strategy sets out the Council’s ambitions for the website over a three year period (2015-2018).

2. **Evidence Base**

2.1 Please list sources of information, data, results of consultation exercises that could or will inform the EA.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source of information</th>
<th>Reason for using (e.g. likely impact on a particular group).</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ONS 2011 Census data –</td>
<td>The website covers services relevant to all residents of the borough, businesses, visitors, researchers/developers and potentially all UK and international citizens who have internet access.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Age</td>
<td>Census data will inform the requirements of both local and wider website users.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Disability</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Race/Ethnic Origin</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Religion/belief</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Sex, Gender</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Sexual orientation</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Other socio-economic impacts – such as literacy (including English as a second language), dwelling type, and language</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GovMetric Equalities Report 2014</td>
<td>Feedback provided through the GovMetric system gives insight into experience of the website in relation to protected characteristics.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MOSAIC socio demographic data</td>
<td>MOSAIC provides a detailed understanding of citizen’s likely location, demographics, lifestyles, cultures and behaviours. This can then be applied to SBC households. It includes likely access to and attitudes towards digital technology including the internet.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Website Public Consultation 2013</td>
<td>The results of this public consultation provide insight into the priorities of website users and their requirements of a website.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accessibility Standards</td>
<td>These provide advice on how to ensure websites meet accessibility standards in relation to protected characteristics.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GOV.UK Website guidance</td>
<td>This provides comprehensive advice on how to make websites clear and easy to access for all users</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
2.2 Identify any gaps in the information and understanding of the impact of your policy, service function or restructure. Indicate in your action plan (para 5) whether you have identified ways of filling these gaps.

The evidence base above applies to UK citizens but not an international audience. Although the website can be accessed overseas its focus is on the Borough and therefore this lack of information is not significant.

3.0 Analysis

3.1 An analysis and interpretation of the impact of the policy, service function or restructure should be undertaken, with the impact for each of the groups with ‘protected characteristics’ and the source of that evidence also set out against those findings.

3.2 ‘Protected Groups (also known as groups with ‘Protected Characteristics’):

The **Equality Act 2010** introduced the term ‘protected characteristics’ to refer to groups that are protected under the Act. These groups are: age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnerships, maternity/pregnancy, race, religion and belief, sex, sexual orientation.

3.3 In addition, the Council has identified the need to assess the impact of a policy, service function or restructure on carers, looked after children (as part of the age characteristic) as well as the socioeconomic impact of different groups, such as employment classifications.

Note: Summary socio economic classifications include:

- Occupational socio-economic classification (simple)
- ONS socio economic classifications (more detailed)

3.4 Initial assessment of a perceived impact of the policy, service function or restructure. The impact can be positive or negative (or in some circumstances both), none or unclear:

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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Impact - Please tick</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Positive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age (including looked after children)</td>
<td>Y</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disability</td>
<td>Y</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender Reassignment</td>
<td>Y</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marriage and Civil Partnerships</td>
<td>Y</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maternity/Pregnancy</td>
<td>Y</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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Val Smith          Policy, Engagement and Communication  Page 21
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Affected protected characteristics:</th>
<th>Y</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Race</td>
<td>Y</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Religion and Belief</td>
<td>Y</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sex</td>
<td>Y</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sexual Orientation</td>
<td>Y</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carers</td>
<td>Y</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Socio-economic</td>
<td>Y</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Descriptions of the protected characteristics are available in the guidance or from: EHRC - protected characteristics

3.5 Where an impact has been identified above, outline what the impact is of the policy, service function or restructure on members of the groups with protected characteristics below:

3.5.1 Information available relating to all Council Services

Affected protected characteristics: All

The information published on our website covers all services offered by the Council. It includes content relevant to all protected characteristics. Website content is written from the perspective of the customer and structured with their likely interests being put first (rather than the structure of our organisation).

The website publicises our commitment to Equality and Diversity both as a service provider and as an employer. It also provides information to inform the decisions of those wishing to understand the demographics of the Borough and its national context.

3.5.2 Access to services

Affected protected characteristics: All

For some, it might be physically difficult to leave the house and travel to a Council venue. This could be because of:

Having a disability related to age
Having restricted mobility, for example wheelchair users
Pregnancy
Having young children in buggies/prams
Being unsafe to travel (likely to trip or fall)
Fear of crime, particularly for women
For others, a face to face or telephone interaction might be difficult. This could be because of:

- Their ability to cope with stressful situations
- Fear of the unfamiliar
- Cultural expectations such as women and men interacting
- Sensitivity and privacy requirements during gender re-assignment
- Previous negative experience (race/homophobia/fear of violence)
- English not being their first language

Some may be restricted in the time of day they are able to access services and consequently be unable to contact the Council during office hours. This could be because of:

- Working hours
- Studying hours (especially Young Carers)
- Prayer, Sabbath, Festival or other faith commitments
- Needing Medication/medical attention at set times
- Parenting/caring responsibilities (particularly women/lone parents)
- New mothers needing to breastfeeding/rest
- Caring for a disabled child or adult

Access to transport might be limited, especially for those:

- Too young or old to drive
- Affected by disability
- Without daytime access to a family car (for example women in a one car household)
- Not living near regular public transport
- On a low income (especially the young and the old)

For those who for whatever reason would prefer not to contact the Council face to face or by telephone, the website allows people to access Council services 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

This can be at a time and place which suits the user, enabling them to schedule accessing services and information around other commitments and in these circumstances the website can be the most convenient way of accessing information.

### 3.5.3 Help from a third party

**Affected protected characteristics: All**

Where for any reason people find it difficult to use the website themselves, a website format makes it easy for others to find out information on their behalf. This applies whether or not those concerned are in contact in person with each other.
3.5.4 Accessibility of website content

3.5.4 (1) Use of Plain English, Easy Read and ICONS

Affected protected characteristics: Age, Disability, Race, Socio-economic

The GOV.UK website is seen as an example of excellence and includes advice for writing accessible websites. We have based our Web Operational Standards on these guidelines.

This includes using plain English throughout, written for a target reading age of twelve.

This means that the language used on the website is suitable for as many users as possible. This allows for differing levels of literacy or the ability to process complex information, in particular because of age or disability.

In addition, the use of plain English makes it easier for those whose first language is not English to understand and makes it more likely that the site will translate accurately into other languages when required.

For those who have learning disabilities, a specialist section of the website has been created (in consultation with service users) in Easy Read format.

Icons are used throughout the site to separate information (similar to using bullet points). The icon used broadly reflects the subject matter and acts as a visual navigation aide, supplementing the text.

3.5.4 (2) Stereotyping, inclusive language, representing diversity

Affected protected characteristics: All

The website provides services for all, by its nature reflecting the diversity of the Borough. Web Operational Standards give guidance on the ‘house style’ for the website. The language used is inclusive, reflects diversity and avoids stereotyping. In particular:

- While including content relating to faith, it does not assume a belief or otherwise in God
- Unless referring to a service for a specific gender, the term ‘you’ and ‘your’ is used, rather than ‘he/she’ or ‘his/her’
- When referring to couples, the term ‘spouse or partner’ is used rather than ‘husband or wife’
- Content is not aimed more at one sex than another, there is no dominance.

Images are only used on the website where they add value to the text. This reduces the likelihood of the website appearing to be aimed more at one group
than another. Where images are used, if they include people it is ensured that they reflect diversity and avoid stereotyping of any kind.

3.5.4 (3) Formatting Options

Affected protected characteristics: Age, Disability, Race

For people with manual dexterity or other physical disabilities, a website can be a preferred method of contact because it can be accessed from a place of their choice using equipment adapted to the needs of the individual.

For those who cannot hear or who have hearing impairments, Video content is only accepted with an accompanying sub transcript. The user can choose the access location to maximise their hearing.

For those who cannot see or who have visual impairments, the website is equipped with an audio function to listen to the site rather than having to read it. The presentational style can be adapted to suit individual needs. This includes colour, contrast and text size/font. The creation of ‘stuck points’ on carousel options is avoided by providing navigational arrows. Alternative text is included for images and hyperlinks to assist those using screen readers.

Adaptation of colour, contrast and text size/font also helps make the site easier to for those with Dyslexia and similar conditions.

Those requiring access to the website in a language other than English can use the Google Translate option to view the site in the language of their choice.

3.6 Access to the internet

Affected protected characteristics: Age, Disability, Sex, Carers

The website can only benefit those who are able to access it. MOSAIC is a software tool we have under licence which provides a detailed understanding of the likely demographics, lifestyles, cultures and behaviours of each domestic household in the Borough. It includes probable access to and attitudes towards digital technology, including the internet.

Examination of the data shows that of the sixty six MOSAIC Types there are eight represented in the Borough which are most likely to find using the internet a challenge.
* Types A04, G26 and G27 are not found in the Borough

These eight Types are applicable to 12,928 households of the 79,079 in the Borough, a total of 16%.
For these Types, MOSAIC data indicates the following in relation to protected characteristics:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type</th>
<th>B09</th>
<th>F25</th>
<th>I37</th>
<th>F22</th>
<th>F23</th>
<th>F24</th>
<th>N57</th>
<th>N59</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Age 71 plus</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age 61 plus</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Single</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More likely to be female</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unpaid carer</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Very bad health</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Limited physical activity</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Have driving licence</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Financially comfortable</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>N</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No resident children</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of SBC households</td>
<td>1034</td>
<td>2505</td>
<td>229</td>
<td>2641</td>
<td>2977</td>
<td>1736</td>
<td>1091</td>
<td>715</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

For these groups it is important that communication channels with the Council other than the internet remain available. Analysis of alternative service delivery options form part of the digital strategy channel shift considerations.

MOSAIC data also shows that those likely to be parents of children under 18, including lone parents, are likely to be proficient in browsing the internet.

Similarly, those in financial stress are still likely to be regular internet users.

### 3.7 Responsive design

**Affected protected characteristics: All**

Because of the growing popularity of the use of mobile devices, the website has been specially designed to be responsive to mobile formats such as smartphones and tablets. This means that the presentation of the image changes to display its content in an easily followed format on different screen sizes.
This means that the accessibility of website content is not compromised for those using mobile devices.

MOSIAC shows that 60% (47,203) of households in the Borough are likely to have access to the internet through a smartphone and 42% (33,145) through a tablet (some households will have multiple devices).

During 2014/15 of those viewing the SBC website, 60% used a PC or laptop, 25% a mobile phone and 15% a tablet.

The website being a responsive design which adapts itself to different screen sizes is important for all these mobile device users.

A further significant factor is that there are 36,845 households in the Borough who are likely to consider themselves to be in financial stress.

* Types A01, A02, G28, G29 and I38 are not found in the Borough

Deprivation is however not likely to inhibit the use of the internet as a method of access as there is no correlation between it and the frequency of internet access:
Of these who consider themselves to be financially stressed, 86% are likely to use a smartphone and 53% a tablet. This might be because it is less expensive to use this type of device along with free Wi-Fi or bundled mobile packages than to have conventional PC and landline. As these households are more likely to rely on primary Council Services, it is particularly important that a mobile friendly design is provided for their use.

Those with a nomadic lifestyle either by choice or necessity are less likely to be identified by the MOSAIC system. They are unlikely to have access to a landline and are more likely to use a mobile device through which to access the website.

3.8 GovMetric – barriers to participation

Throughout our website we collect customer feedback through the GovMetric system. This captures service user experience when browsing the website. The target baseline satisfaction level is 55%. The information shown relates to the website before it was re-designed and was given a responsive format.

Information is recorded against the protected groups/characteristics shown below:

Age

The group most satisfied were those aged under 17 (76%) and the least those over 80 (32%). Other age groups rate the service around the baseline except those aged 18 to 29 (43%).
Disability

Both those with and without a disability rated the service at 49%.

Ethnicity

The most satisfied were those describing themselves as Indian (90%), Other Ethnic Group (50%) and White (49%). Least satisfied were those describing themselves as Gypsy/Irish Traveller (27%) with dissatisfaction mainly relating to the time taken to find information.

Nationality

The most satisfied were those who classified themselves as Irish (70%) and the least those who classified themselves as Welsh (43% but a sample size of only 7 people) or English (40%). Other groups rate the service around the baseline.

Gender

Male customers rated the service at 47% while female customers rated it at 53%. The difference appears to be males rating the site more harshly for the time taken when using it.

Religion

The most satisfied were those of the Hindu faith (63%) and the least those of the Sikh faith (0% although there were only 4 ratings) and those who were Buddhist (36%).

Sexual Orientation

Of those who provided information concerning their sexual orientation, 53% of heterosexual/straight customers rated the Website service as satisfactory, as did 56% of lesbian customers, 19% of gay men, 31% of bisexual customers and 45% of those of other sexualities. Reasons for dissatisfaction from those who are gay or bisexual are across all service aspects with no prominent cause.

3.9 Socio-economic Factors

Exclusion from community life

The website helps users to get involved with the community in general as it publicises events and news. It also enables residents to engage with the Council through consultation opportunities and broadcasts of meetings of Full Council.

People new to the area
The website provides a wealth of information easily accessible to those new to the area. This includes social and geographical information as well as practical advice about council services.

**Help out of poverty/support economic independence**

The website contains information about how to access financial support and also promotes job opportunities at the Council. The use of alternative text for images and hyperlinks helps those who have disabled the display of images to minimise cost.

**Promote health and wellbeing**

The website contains information related to general health and wellbeing and promotes health campaigns, local and national.

In the event of an emergency, advice is provided through a ‘banner’ which appears on each page of the website. Examples are during flooding, severe weather or service disruption.

**Access to housing**

The website contains information about who is eligible for social housing and how it can be applied for. It also covers housing benefit and advice for private tenants.

**Safeguarding children and adults**

What to do when there are concerns about the safeguarding of children or adults is explained on the website, as is the help available to those at risk of domestic abuse.

**Human Rights**

There is no identified conflict between the Web Strategy and human rights.

4. **Community Impact**

A community cohesion impact assessment is not required.

5. **Equality Analysis Action Plan**

5.1 What actions have you considered/taken to mitigate unlawful prohibited conduct or unwanted adverse impact, or to promote improved equality of opportunity or good relations?

Providing a website which is accessible to all potential users will provide equality of opportunity. This includes meeting accessibility standards with regard to disability, using plain English and clear structure and providing translation options.

The question of access to services for those not likely to use the website is not part
of this equality analysis (it is instead part of the digital strategy channel shift considerations).

5.2 Set out what action will be taken to ensure
- A full analysis of the impact of the policy, service function or restructure is undertaken and/or
- What action will be taken to mitigate/address identified negative impacts

The web strategy will be reviewed annually and this equality analysis refreshed alongside it.

Signed: ………………………………………………………………………………………………

Head of Service: ……………………………………………………………………………………
Appendix Four

High Level Action Plan

(A more detailed working action plan will be developed on approval of the strategy.)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Objective: Continuously improving website content and usability</th>
<th>Action</th>
<th>Lead by</th>
<th>Year 1</th>
<th>Year 2</th>
<th>Year 3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Web Strategy, Equality Analysis and Web Operational Standards to be agreed</td>
<td>Policy, Engagement and Communication</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Web Operational Standards to be implemented</td>
<td>Policy, Engagement and Communication</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Annual review of website content to be implemented and enforced</td>
<td>Policy, Engagement and Communication</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Structure of website to be annually reviewed</td>
<td>Policy, Engagement and Communication</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New systems linked to the website to be in responsive design format</td>
<td>System Commissioners</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advance website content to be prepared for activation in the event of a disruption or emergency</td>
<td>Policy, Engagement and Communication</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regular monitoring of user satisfaction and the reasons behind it</td>
<td>Policy, Engagement and Communication</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Objective: Improving use of the website as a marketing tool</th>
<th>Action</th>
<th>Lead by</th>
<th>Year 1</th>
<th>Year 2</th>
<th>Year 3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Scope the marketing potential of the website and its likely users</td>
<td>Policy, Engagement and Communication</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Work with likely users to gain cooperation and remove barriers to participation</td>
<td>Policy, Engagement and Communication</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Objective: Supporting the Council’s Digital Strategy</th>
<th>Action</th>
<th>Lead by</th>
<th>Year 1</th>
<th>Year 2</th>
<th>Year 3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Support ICT in the provision of new online services</td>
<td>Policy, Engagement and Communication</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Action</td>
<td>Lead by</td>
<td>Year 1</td>
<td>Year 2</td>
<td>Year 3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>--------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>--------</td>
<td>--------</td>
<td>--------</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Support Customer Services in the drive for further Channel Shift</td>
<td>Policy, Engagement and Communication</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Integrate and promote open data within the website</td>
<td>Policy, Engagement and Communication</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Objective:</strong> Horizon scanning to take advantage of innovations in technology and its application.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Keep informed of new products and innovations which could enhance the website</td>
<td>Policy, Engagement and Communication</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Make a case for the provision of enhancements as required</td>
<td>Policy, Engagement and Communication</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Objective:</strong> Risk Management</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minimise the risk of service interruption by having the website hosted by a major provider (currently Jadu). Regularly monitor availability.</td>
<td>Policy, Engagement and Communication</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The effect on the corporate brand to be taken into account when subsidiary digital platforms are commissioned</td>
<td>Platform Commissioners</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The impact on customer satisfaction of moving away from the website to other online platforms to be monitored and highlighted as appropriate</td>
<td>Policy, Engagement and Communication</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Knowledge gap in web developer role to be filled</td>
<td>ICT</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Other</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Web Strategy to be reviewed annually to monitor progress against its objectives and to reflect any adjustments that might need to be made.</td>
<td>Policy, Engagement and Communication</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>