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Oswestry Town Council

Report from the Town Clerk, Office Manager and Administrative Assistants to Council – 22nd July 2020

Website Accessibility

Purpose

To set the steps that this Council has undertaken, and the further action that is required, in order for the website to be compliant with accessibility regulations relating to the public sector.

Background

The Public Sector Bodies (Websites and Mobile Applications) Accessibility Regulations 2018 requires public sector bodies, which includes local councils, to ensure reasonable adjustments are made to websites so they are accessible to people with various disabilities. These include:

- Impaired vision
- Motor difficulties
- Cognitive impairments or learning disabilities
- Deafness or impaired hearing

From 23rd September 2020 all local council websites will have to comply with regulations.

Local councils need to make reasonable adjustments to their websites and operations so people can access information. They are required to include an accessibility statement on their website setting out to what extent they meet the requirements and what alternative arrangements are available.

The website standards that councils are expected to meet are the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.1.

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Accessibility statement

The Council must provide an accessibility statement on the website.

This statement will need to cover:

- Whether the website is fully, partially or not compliant with accessibility standards;
- If it's not fully compliant, which parts of the website or mobile app do not currently meet accessibility standards and why (e.g. they are exempt, or it would be a disproportionate burden to fix things);
- How people can get alternatives to content that's not accessible to them;
- How to contact the Council to report accessibility problems — and a link to the website that they can use if they're not happy with your response;
- Anything else that would be helpful for people to know about, such as plans and work in progress toward greater compliance.

Timing

At the least, councils should have a plan of action and an accessibility statement in place by the 23 September 2020.

Non-compliance

If councils do not comply, they could receive requests by member of the public for compliant information. If the council fails to do this, it could be reported to the enforcing body, in this case the Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC). The EHRC would most likely send a letter asking the council to comply. If this is unsuccessful, councils could be requested to develop an action plan as to how it will move towards compliance.

Oswestry Town Council Response

The Council has:

- Undertaken a self-assessment using readily available website accessibility tools;
- Requested a gap analysis from the website provider;

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- Commissioned a third-party assessment from a Shropshire charitable organization for the visually impaired.

As a result of this work immediate steps have been taken to:

- Improve the accessibility of Council documents (previously documents have been scanned and these cannot be read by reader tools);
- Changed the structure of reports, minutes and agendas to make it easier to navigate documents;
- Implement changes to the website to improve the structure of the front page;
- Started an on-going review of website content.

The draft Accessibility Statement is attached at **Appendix A** to this report and highlights (as known) that the website is partially compliant but requires some improvements. Users can:

- Increase and decrease page magnification (zoom) using Ctrl and + or -;
- Access pages with tab button on keyboard;
- Use a reader to access information;
- Increase and decrease font size using settings; and
- Easily access all links and downloads as they have titles.

A number of improvements are needed for example:

- Colour contrast between background colour and text colour needs reviewing;
- The map for councillor wards doesn't show streets clearly (which ward do I live in);
- Unable to search PDF documents but can search in news stories;
- Not all pictures have text explaining them;
- All documents need descriptive headings and correct heading levels.

The findings of the audit are satisfactory and demonstrate a good level of compliance and some of the improvements are readily implemented.

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That said, there are a number of technical improvements required which are not easily implemented due to the age of the website infrastructure. Although the website has a modern feel, it was built in 2010 and therefore needs a rebuild. A quotation from the web provider has been requested and a project will be scoped accordingly. This will be an opportunity for a full review of the website, its current and future uses.

Summary

Elected members are asked to endorse the Accessibility Statement for Oswestry Town Council shown at **Appendix A** and approve its publication on the Council website ahead of the 23rd September deadline. Council are asked to authorize the Town Clerk to make any necessary adjustments to the statement should additional issues arise.

Arren Roberts – Town Clerk

Sandra Trevor – Office Manager

Louise Humphreys – Administrative Assistant

Jo Williams – Administrative Assistant

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APPENDIX A

Accessibility Statement for Oswestry Town Council

This accessibility statement applies to **Oswestry Town Council**.

Our website has been designed to be as accessible as possible to all users, if you have any problems accessing the content please let us know so that we can make the site user friendly for everyone. Users can:

- Increase and decrease page magnification (zoom) using Ctrl and + or -;
- Access pages with tab button on keyboard;
- Use a reader to access information;
- Increase and decrease font size using settings; and
- Easily access all links and downloads as they have titles.

[AbilityNet](#) has advice on making your device easier to use if you have a disability.

How accessible this website is?

We know some parts of our website are not fully compliant however, we are currently undertaking a review, working in line with the [NALC Website Accessibility Requirements](#) and altering some of the generic parts including navigation link, colours etc to comply with new government legislation effective from 23rd September 2020. The Public Sector Bodies (websites and mobile applications) Accessibility Regulations requires public sector bodies which includes local councils to ensure reasonable adjustments are made to websites, so they are accessible to people with various disabilities.

A number of improvements are needed for example:

- Colour contrast between background colour and text colour needs reviewing;
- It is currently not possible to search PDF documents;
- Not all pictures have text explaining them;

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- All documents need descriptive headings and correct heading levels.

Feedback and contact information

If you need any information on this website in a different format, please do not hesitate to contact us.

Telephone: 01691 680222

Email: enquiries@oswestry-tc.gov.uk

Post: Oswestry Town Council
The Guildhall
Oswestry
Shropshire
SY11 1PZ

We'll consider your request and get back to you in 10 working days.

Reporting accessibility problems with this website

We're always looking to improve the accessibility of this website. If you find any problems or feel that we're not meeting accessibility requirements, please contact us as above.

Contacting us in person

Our offices have audio induction loops, please contact us before your visit.

Enforcement procedure

The Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC) is responsible for enforcing the Public Sector Bodies (Websites and Mobile Applications) (No. 2) Accessibility Regulations 2018 (the 'accessibility regulations'). If you're not happy with how we respond to your complaint, [contact the Equality Advisory and Support Service \(EASS\)](#).

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Technical information about this website's accessibility

Oswestry Town Council is committed to making its website accessible, in accordance with the Public Sector Bodies (Websites and Mobile Applications) (No. 2) Accessibility Regulations 2018.

Compliance status

This website is partially compliant with the [Web Content Accessibility Guidelines version 2.1](#) AA standard, due to:

- non-compliances - this means the content in question is in scope of the regulations, but there's an accessibility problem.

Non-compliance with the accessibility regulations

A number of improvements require a technical re-build of the Council's website to improve accessibility we are working with our website developer to put in place a timetable and action plan.

PDFs and other documents

Some of our PDFs and Word documents are essential to providing our services and we have already made significant improvements to ensure that these are accessible. However, improvements are needed for example, we have PDFs with information on how users can access our services, and forms published as Word documents. By September 2020, we plan to either fix these or replace them with accessible HTML pages.

The accessibility regulations [do not require us to fix PDFs or other documents published before 23 September 2018](#) if they're not essential to providing our services.

Any new PDFs or Word documents we publish will meet accessibility standards.

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Preparation of this accessibility statement

This statement was prepared on the 14th of July 2020 and presented to Council on the 22nd of July 2020.

This website was last tested in June 2020. The test was carried out by Pauline Rose, Manager of the Vision Technology & Training Shropshire service. Testing and reviews have been undertaken following advice provided by NALC and training provided by the SLCC. The website has been reviewed by the Councils web provider and developer.