

Full Council

Date:	16 June 2020
Title:	Website Accessibility Audit
Contact Officer:	Lizzie Fuller, Committee Services Officer

Purpose of the Report

To provide an update on progress towards compliance with the website accessibility regulations.

Action Required

To consider whether to proceed with an Accessibility Audit on the Town Council's website.

Background

1. The Town Council's website is an important source of information for residents, visitors, businesses, staff, councillors and other councils.
2. The Public Sector Bodies (Websites and Mobile Applications) (No.2) Accessibility Regulations 2018 were introduced on 23rd September 2018 and require public sector websites to be compliant with the international accessibility standard WCAG 2.1 AA and publish an Accessibility Statement by 23rd September 2020, stating their level of compliance with the standards.
3. The regulations contain exceptions to complying with international standards, for example, if in doing so it would create a disproportionate burden on the council. Certain documents do not have to be made accessible such as content that is not needed for active administrative purposes or updated after 23rd September 2019. Office files that are not primarily intended for use on the web are also exempt.
4. Over the past few months, Officers have been working with Connect Internet Solutions, the Town Council's website supplier, to resolve various content and coding-based accessibility issues which could be identified using a simpler automated audit. Officers have also attended various training courses on the subject in preparation.
5. A full audit of the website will test against WCAG 2.1 Level AA (including level A) and W3C HTML5 and CSS3 standards, using automated and manual testing. The audit will produce a summary report detailing the level of compliance, and a detailed list of issues with recommendations for their resolutions.
6. The results of the audit will mean the Town Council can be confident in its accessibility statement and its website can be as accessible as possible.

7. Carrying out a comprehensive audit, whilst incurring a cost to the council and not a requirement of the regulations, will ensure our website is accessible as possible. Accessible websites improve the user experience for all users, not just those with a disability or impairment.

Resource Appraisal

- It should be noted that a budget of £4000 was allocated, for the audit last year based on a quote from May 2019. An updated quote – attached – was provided in May 2020 and included testing all page templates, rather than a small sample, which is the reason for the price increase.
- The cost of a full website accessibility audit will be £8,435 +VAT, which includes:
 - Audit of the Town Council's website, delivery of a full report, automated testing of all discoverable pages, testing of a representative sample of page templates and manual checking of issues identified.
 - Project Initiation Meeting and Results Feedback Meeting with Connect Internet Solutions.

Risk Assessment

- Compliance will be monitored by the Minister for the Cabinet Office, however the Town Council is more likely to receive complaints from members of the public who cannot access the website due to inaccessible content.
- The Town Council has a duty to comply with the Equality Act 2010 and Disability Discrimination Act 1995.

Legal Powers:

- Local Government Act 1972 Section 142

Recommendation:

It is recommended that Thame Town Council authorise the £8,435 from reserves for Connect Internet Solutions to carry out an Accessibility Audit on the Town Council's website.