

MTC Policy and Resources Committee 4.11.20

Report No 2 WCAG 2.1 AA Website Compliance

1. As of the 23rd September 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
2. 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. Good practice would also see councils including a plan to narrow the accessibility gap over time. The website standards that councils are expected to meet are the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.1.
3. Having consulted our existing website provider, researched other provider options, and attended a WALC webinar on the 2.10.20 on the matter, action has been taken to ensure the Councils compliance.
4. An added value 3rd party system 'Accessible' has been subscribed too, which both provides the accessibility statement required, plus enables the existing website to be accessed and used in various forms. The annual cost of this is £1140 per annum.
5. 'Accessible' will continually monitors our web site to deliver WCAG 2.1 Compliance as well as an accurate 'Accessibility Statement' detailing the changes made in order to achieve compliance.
6. Using an automated system will be cheaper in the short and long term as it deals with all new content being added to the web site as well as new standards being introduced e.g. WCAG 2.2 etc.
7. Going forward part of the accessibility plan may also include training for staff with website administrative duties both in terms of general equalities and accessibility awareness, and also in terms of monitoring the WCAG 2.1 response.