

Report of Head of Governance and Scrutiny Support

Report to Scrutiny Board (Environment, Housing and Communities)

Date: 6th November 2017

Subject: Review of the leeds.gov.uk website - update

Are specific electoral Wards affected? If relevant, name(s) of Ward(s):	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Are there implications for equality and diversity and cohesion and integration?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Is the decision eligible for Call-In?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Does the report contain confidential or exempt information? If relevant, Access to Information Procedure Rule number: Appendix number:	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No

Introduction

1. The council's corporate customer services functions, including the council's website and e-services, now falls within the remit of the Environment, Housing and Communities Scrutiny Board.
2. As such, the Scrutiny Board agreed last month to receive an update on the work undertaken by the Digital Access Team to review and refresh the leeds.gov.uk website.

Background

3. In central government the Government Digital Service has been strongly promoting user (customer) research and testing. The council's Digital Access Team has also been developing this approach for leeds.gov.uk as a means to create a modern-looking and effective website that can handle most common queries from customers. This review work has taken place during the web development freeze resulting from the council's upgrading from SharePoint 2010 to SharePoint 2013 and has therefore utilised existing staffing resources.
4. As part of this, tests were undertaken to see how easy the current website is to use: customers carried out a number of common tasks on leeds.gov.uk and their experiences were recorded so that these could be analysed. This helped to understand customers' needs and also understand where current content, design or navigation was failing and how to improve it. Other techniques used included 'tree testing' and 'card sorting' to establish how best to organise the content on the website. This helped to understand how best to arrange the content on the website.

5. The results of the research and testing led to the development of an outline prototype for the new look for leeds.gov.uk, with many of the changes being about how information is laid out on the page. This prototype was then tested both with people who did the initial usability testing and people who did not.
6. Whilst the response was overwhelmingly positive with most users saying it was much easier than the current site, some small changes were made following this testing which were built into the fully-designed prototype and sent out to all customers who had participated in testing for final comments.

Current position

7. Further to the research and development work undertaken by the Digital Access Team, the refreshed leeds.gov.uk website is now expected to go live during November 2017.
8. As the new look site does goes live, it will be mostly with current content, as refining the content is a longer process. However, the Digital Access Team has already begun this task with reviewing the content on Council Tax and highways and planning pages.
9. Work will continue with a programme of developing new content and sites based on user research and testing to order to ensure that leeds.gov.uk remains customer-focussed rather than service-driven, and up to date.
10. Representatives from the Digital Access Team will be attending today's meeting to provide a more detailed briefing on the work undertaken to-date, including a demonstration of the refreshed website prior to it going live, and explaining the future development work of the website.

Recommendation

11. The Scrutiny Board is asked to note the work undertaken to-date in reviewing the leeds.gov.uk website and provide any comment in relation to future development work of the website.

Background documents¹

12. None used

¹ The background documents listed in this section are available to download from the Council's website, unless they contain confidential or exempt information. The list of background documents does not include published works.