

Resources and Fire & Rescue Overview and Scrutiny Committee

5 June 2019

Update on the launch of the new Warwickshire.gov.uk website

Recommendation

That the Overview and Scrutiny Committee considers and comments on the delivery of the new warwickshire.gov.uk website.

1.0 Key Issues

- 1.1 As part of the Digital by Design programme, a review of the main Warwickshire.gov.uk website was conducted in January 2018 by Fluent Interaction. Top customer tasks were tested to identify issues that affected both the specific service being tested and the overall website customer experience.
- 1.2 Evidence from the user experience testing was used to create and test a new visual design for the website. Five different designs were tested, with customers asked for their views. The final design resolved the issues identified from initial consultation and testing.
- 1.3 Consultation was carried out on a new navigation structure for the site. Customers were asked to group council services into categories, which were then tested to ensure services would follow a structure that followed customer expectations rather than the organisation structure. A total of 1,200 responses were received and tests completed.
- 1.4 A review of all website content was also undertaken. Content was removed if it was out of date, did not directly meet a customer demand, or duplicated content on other websites. All content was re-written to meet the new writing style and standards, ensuring it was easy to understand, directly answered customer queries, and used a single voice across our services.
- 1.5 New governance was introduced to manage content. The Digital Standards Working Group ensures editorial control, alignment with council priorities, and adherence to standards. Creating and editing web content is now performed by a central team with expertise in designing online services and content.

2.0 Website launch

- 2.1 Phase 1 of the website project was delivered on 23rd January 2019. This included the launch of the new design and site structure, and the review, re-write and publishing of half of priority content pages. The new design was applied to the top twelve online systems.
- 2.2 Phase 2 of the website project was delivered on 28th March. This included the review, re-write and publishing of all remaining content, the complete move over to the new Jadu website platform, and the roll out of the design to remaining online systems.
- 2.3 Between 29th March and 30th April, work was carried out to rectify any issues resulting from the launch of Phase 2, such as broken links.

3.0 Improvements for customers

- 3.1 All content on the site is now focused on the needs of our customers. The use of Google for the site search and a structure built through extensive consultation with visitors makes it easier for visitors to find what they need. Removing unnecessary pages reduces the risk of visitors viewing the wrong page.
- 3.2 Content is easier to understand, with technical phrases being removed or replaced. It uses a single, consistent voice that reinforces the impression of the council as a single organisation.
- 3.3 The quality of the content is now higher. The SiteImprove website quality assurance tool checks websites for quality issues and returns a quality score out of 100. The old site scored 88.8, while the new site is currently scored at 98.9. The industry benchmark for government sites is 84.6.
- 3.4 The experience for visitors using mobile and tablet devices has improved. While the old site worked with mobiles, some pages had issues which resulted in a sub-optimal experience. For example, pages were slow to load on mobiles, and some page designs forced visitors to zoom in to see content clearly. The design for the new site has taken mobile and tablet experience into account from the start, and every page now provides an improved mobile experience. This has been applied to various other systems that make up the website, such as CMIS.
- 3.5 The accessibility of the site for visitors with disabilities has improved. Accessibility considerations were included from the start, and we consulted with Warwickshire Vision throughout the design process. The site now complies with EU Accessibility Directive, Equalities Act 2010, and NHS Accessible Information Standard.

- 3.6 The time it takes for a page to load has improved by 2.3 seconds on average, which is 52% faster than the old site. There is strong evidence to link faster page load speeds with customer satisfaction. Walmart and Amazon both observed a 1% increase in earnings for every 0.1s of improved webpage speed.

Research by Shopify suggests that:

“47% of consumers expect to wait no longer than two seconds for a web page to load. After that, consumer tolerance wears and 40% of visitors will abandon a web page if it doesn’t load in less than three seconds”.

4.0 Customer feedback

- 4.1 Since the launch of Phase 2 in March, the site has seen an increase in traffic compared to the same period in 2018. There has been a 12.64% increase in users (visitors) and a 17.78% increase in sessions (visits).
- 4.2 A form at the bottom of each web page allows visitors to provide feedback on their experience and any report issues. Visitors can leave a positive, average or negative comment. The nature of the feedback mechanism inevitably means it is mainly used by customers to report problems and poor experiences. This level of negative feedback has reduced from 78.0% to 62.5% since the launch of the new site.
- 4.4 All comments left through the feedback form are reviewed and improvements made to the site if at all possible. Comments from customers include:
- “The new homepage has better options that are clearer and bigger to find compared to the smaller icons on the old homepage.”
 - “The specific part about reporting problems is a lot more helpful than what it was previously.”
 - “It is much easier to find more in-depth sections of categories such as finding councillors.”
 - “The search function could be better when you misspell a word, it doesn't retrieve any results, but will give you a suggestion of the word it thinks you're trying to search for - could these suggested results show for slightly misspelled searches?”
 - “Looks good easy to read, clear and concise, great improvement. Well done to the team.”
- 4.5 Website statistics are recorded and used to inform improvements to the site. For example, the order of links on navigation pages will be changed to list the most popular pages higher up, based on these statistics.

- 4.6 The site is monitored for readability and quality issues, and these are fixed as soon as they are identified. This ensures pages are still high quality, with no broken links, misspellings or issues that prevent visitors with disabilities accessing them. Content continues to be easy to read and understand, ensuring a high level of service to our visitors.

5.0 Timescales and next steps

- 5.1 The new site was designed and developed to recognised accessibility standards. This will be independently assessed by October 2019, with any fixes in place by December 2019.
- 5.2 The new website has functionality to run mini-sites, such as campaign websites, alongside the main warwickshire.gov.uk site. The Council's current 45 mini-sites are currently being reviewed and will be transferred to the new platform. This will ensure all sites adhere to the same high standards for accessibility, security, content and user experience as the main warwickshire.gov.uk site. In some instances, mini-sites will be closed down with no transfer. Work on this is due to be completed in April 2020.
- 5.3 The new site will support various corporate priorities, such as the prevention and early intervention programme.
- 5.4 An ongoing programme of user testing will be implemented to determine issues with individual online services visitor and identify new functionality that will further enhance the customer online experience.

6.0 Financial Implications

There are no financial implications from the report itself. The new platform and website will provide the capacity for digital solutions for much of our customer contact in the future and provides the potential to deliver both an improved customer experience and deliver efficiency savings.

7.0 Background Papers

None

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The report was circulated to the following members prior to publication:

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Other members: