

**FROM:** Audit and Risk Manager

**SUBJECT:** Website Management

**TO:** Chief Executive

**DATE:** 6 June 2019

**C.C.** Head of Finance  
HR Manager  
Marketing & Communications  
Manager  
Website Services Manager  
Portfolio Holder (Cllr Day)

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## 1 Introduction

1.1 In accordance with the Audit Plan for 2019/20, an examination of the above subject area has been undertaken and this report presents the findings and conclusions drawn from the audit for information and action where appropriate.

1.2 Wherever possible, findings have been discussed with the staff involved in the procedures examined and their views are incorporated, where appropriate, into the report. My thanks are extended to all concerned for the help and cooperation received during the audit.

## 2 Background

2.1 This is the first specific audit of the management of the Council's website, although certain aspects will have been covered in other audits such as Customer Access Facilities.

2.2 The website is managed by staff within the Media team, although there are content editors within all departments of the Council.

## 3 Scope and Objectives of the Audit

3.1 The audit was undertaken to test the management and financial controls in place.

3.2 In terms of scope, the audit covered the following areas:

- Policies and procedures
- Development and digital transformation
- Content management
- System access
- Accessibility and availability
- Customer surveys, performance management and analytics
- Procurement.

3.3 The audit programme identified the expected controls. The control objectives examined were:

- Staff are aware of what should and shouldn't be included on the Council's website
- The Council's website allows appropriate interaction and self-serve functionality
- The Council's website accurately reflects changes in Council processes
- Customers are able to obtain relevant, up-to-date information on Council services
- Only appropriate staff can update and publish information on the Council's website
- Customers can access the website on their chosen device
- Customers with disabilities can access the information / services they require
- Customers can access the information / services they require on a 24/7 basis
- The Council is aware of the 'usability' of the website
- The Council is aware of customer experience of using the website
- The Council makes appropriate access channels available to customers
- Value for money is achieved via the appropriate procurement of services relevant to the development and management of the Council's website.

## 4 Findings

### 4.1 Recommendations from Previous Reports

4.1.1 This is the first audit of this topic and, as such, this section is not applicable.

### 4.2 Policies & Procedures

4.2.1 The Website Services Manager (WSM) advised that the Digital Strategy is the main driver for the website. Whilst this does not go into detail about exactly what should or shouldn't be on the website, it highlights that there is a shift towards 'digital by default' with integrated web forms being the preferred method of achieving customer self-service. In short, therefore, if something can be done online, then the relevant service should aim to ensure that it is included on the website.

4.2.2 The strategy (amongst other things) is available to all staff via the intranet on the Website Guidance and Policy page.

4.2.3 The current strategy covers the period 2015-2019. The ICT Services Manager advised that a new strategy will be written following the identification of the (new) corporate priorities, with the process starting once the new administration is in place (i.e. following the Council elections in May).

4.2.4 There is no separate strategy for the future development of the website, with this being covered under the abovementioned digital strategy. This sets out overall, strategic, themes including:

- Digital Customer – Enabling customers to get the services and information they need online (by providing services and information online to residents and businesses in a user friendly way), and

- Digital Workforce – Staff will have the digital tools and skills required to deliver services effectively and efficiently (delivering positive outcomes for our customers by giving staff access to the data and the most appropriate technology).

- 4.2.5 Digital transformation is being performed via a number of distinct projects. A report was presented to Executive on 6 February 2019 setting out the digital work programme for the current financial year along with progress against the projects for 2018/19. These include a number of website-related projects along with a list of web forms that have been set up or updated during the last financial year.
- 4.2.6 Links to relevant procedural guidance, the user manual for the content management system (Jadu), and Moodle training are included on the Website Guidance & Policy intranet page. There is also a link to the Jadu user manual through the system itself.
- 4.2.7 The WSM advised that the guidance is to be reviewed regarding accessibility (see 4.6 below) as part of a wider review of the topic. He also suggested that the Moodle training is out of date with some (minor) changes being required. However, as these are in hand, it is not considered that a formal recommendation is warranted.
- 4.2.8 The WSM also highlighted that he would provide one-to-one training with users if required and that he would not provide users with their log-in details until they had either attended a session with himself or completed the Moodle training.

### 4.3 **Development & Digital Transformation**

- 4.3.1 The WSM advised that different elements of the site (including the 'sub-sites' for the Royal Spa Centre and the Royal Pump Rooms) are developed by different people.
- 4.3.2 The main site development is undertaken by Jadu. However, whilst contracts are in place with them for the website's content management system and the ongoing support for forms used, any future 'major' developments such as an upgrade to the 'form' system and website rebranding would incur extra costs. That being said, the WSM highlighted that 'patches' supplied by Jadu will often add new 'tweaks' or features.
- 4.3.3 The WSM suggested that future development work could be placed via another contractor, but advised that this would probably be costlier due to the need for them to get acquainted with the system and our website and Jadu may also charge for implementing the work on their system.
- 4.3.4 Where smaller developments are proposed, these can be undertaken in-house, either by the WSM, ICT staff, sub-site 'managers' or individual content editors (if the development is content-related).
- 4.3.5 The Application Support Manager (ASM) advised that ICT staff do not do any specific development of the site itself, as they do not have the relevant

system knowledge. However, they undertake development of in-house applications hosted by other servers that are then linked to the website.

- 4.3.6 These applications are included on the website based on an agreed programme of works which is agreed by the ICT steering group with this programme being reported to Executive (as per 4.2.5 above).
- 4.3.7 The WSM highlighted that self-service and service request forms are in place for various different 'interactions' and these are detailed on the Do it Online page of the Council's website. He advised that these are a combination of the Council's own in-house applications, Jadu forms and other external systems accessed via external links.
- 4.3.8 Some of the forms listed are in PDF format. These, ideally, would be converted to online forms, but the WSM suggested that it would be a big job to transform some of the more complex forms, and it would require a more advanced form system with the ability to save and create accounts on the Council's website.
- 4.3.9 He also advised that, at present, the majority of forms are standalone with no direct interaction with back-office systems, although there are some (non-Jadu) forms that are directly linked to the system and populate the system accordingly. Forms relating to third-party products such as CIVICA Open Channel are also to be included which will fully integrate with the CIVICA Open Revenues system.
- 4.3.10 The Exchequer Manager confirmed that, at present, web forms are in place which, when completed, create a work item in the relevant queue for someone to deal with. However, CIVICA Open Channel has been purchased which includes similar web forms (which have been customised for the Council's needs) and these will automatically input the details onto the system. However, if there are any issues with the information supplied, a work item will be created instead.
- 4.3.11 A number of forms for Council Tax have been created and internal testing has been performed on two of these (advisers are taking the details over the phone and are then completing the forms themselves as if the customer was completing them directly). The expectation is that all relevant Council Tax forms will be live within a couple of months.
- 4.3.12 The WSM advised that the main focus so far has been to remove email addresses from the website and replace these with forms, making sure that information required is obtained and goes to the correct staff member, with integration being the next step. This requires ICT application support and is ideally where the Council wants to get to, but is not there yet.
- 4.3.13 The ASM confirmed that an integration which will take info from Jadu and will process data for importing directly onto the CIVICA APP system (regarding waste management etc.) is now being worked on and testing will be undertaken to ensure that the correct information is captured. She also commented that other systems may not, however, allow for this level of integration so it may not be possible for all services to go digital in this way.

- 4.3.14 The WSM advised that there is nothing formal in place for services to request new on-line services. They would get in touch directly with himself, ICT, or members of the Media Services team. He also highlighted that some proactive work is undertaken, reviewing the website to identify where email addresses are included and then contacting the service to see if the information could be provided on a form as opposed to directly contacting the officer / team. A spreadsheet is being maintained of the contact forms that are in place and / or are being worked on.
- 4.3.15 The WSM confirmed that internal testing is undertaken on the forms before the go live on the website and provided details of two recent pieces of work:
- Reporting and enquiry forms for the Green Space team – all forms were checked and then a live test was undertaken to ensure that relevant information was being obtained and the information was going to the correct person.
  - Building Control – internal testing and direct user testing on site at Riverside House with customers who had come in to process a transaction.
- 4.3.16 The WSM also advised that usability testing software has recently been acquired, and testing has been undertaken on the Elections pages. Now that the software is in place, it is anticipated that regular user testing will be undertaken.

#### 4.4 **Content Management**

- 4.4.1 The WSM advised that the usability testing referred to above also encompasses navigation, i.e. how easy it is for a user to navigate to the correct page on the website. He also highlighted that the annual 'Plain English' review covers navigation of the website and the last report raised no issues over this aspect, highlighting a number of features that were best practice. With the new usability testing software in place (see 4.3.16 above), the WSM advised that he is planning to undertake a couple of usability tests a month going forward.
- 4.4.2 'Card sorting' software had been used by the WSM's predecessor when the website was being created to show how the menus should be structured and the WSM advised that an ongoing restructure of the leisure pages has used an internal card sorting exercise (although these pages have not yet gone live).
- 4.4.3 He also advised that, in his old job, he undertook a six-monthly web page review process, but this would take a lot of work to set up as pages are not individually assigned at present and it would need about 20% of site being rebuilt. This 'issue' was flagged when he started at the Council and intends to send an email to all content editors as part of the accessibility review that is to be undertaken (see 4.6 below) to advise them of the need to regularly review their content.

- 4.4.4 Staff within each service area are responsible for making sure that content remains appropriate / up-to-date. Users are split between two main groups – those who can create content and those who can publish and the ‘publishers’ have to review the content before it goes live on the website. The majority of users are only creators but there are generally publishers in each service area and workflows on Jadu show who can create (edit) and publish content for each part of the website.
- 4.4.5 A specific software system (Silktide) is in place to flag any issues with accessibility, broken links, spelling errors and profanities. The WSM advised that he logs onto Silktide two or three times a week, although weekly reviews are formally diarised.
- 4.4.6 The front page of the Council’s website includes (amongst other things) details of events that are being held along with news items. Events are automatically archived when the date has passed but news items stay on the site although they are moved onto an archive which is retained on the site.
- 4.4.7 A sample of content editors was chosen and they were each asked how they maintained their pages, ensuring that they remain up to date and relevant. Whilst each member of staff had their own processes, all were considered appropriate.

#### 4.5 **System Access**

- 4.5.1 A list of staff with access to Jadu was obtained. This showed the general level of access that each user has, along with the ‘areas’ that they can edit.
- 4.5.2 Access permissions can be set at an individual level or the user can be assigned to a specific role, and permission can be further amended to allow different levels of access (read only, edit, delete, publish) to different elements of the system.
- 4.5.3 The WSM advised that, historically, there had been nothing formal in place in terms of an approval process for access to be provided to Jadu. Individuals either approached the WSM to request access, with no approval being required from their manager, or he was providing access to some staff members who had contacted him to ask for updates to be undertaken and, instead of doing it himself, he would provide the member of staff with access so that they could do it. The WSM also advised that he emailed all authors when he started in the role to ascertain if they still needed access, whether the pages they had access to were still relevant, and whether they needed any refresher training.
- 4.5.4 A new form has now been introduced (available via the intranet) to ensure that an audit trail can be maintained to show who has been provided with access. However, this is very new and had not been used at the time of the audit.
- 4.5.5 The WSM advised that he receives no formal notification of leavers or staff changing their roles and, as such, there is no formal process of removing / amending user access. However, he highlighted that a user cannot log on to

the system if they are not logged on to the Council network and ICT will remove this access when someone leaves the Council.

- 4.5.6 He also highlighted that a user 'audit' was planned and it was confirmed that this was a yearly recurring appointment on his Outlook calendar. This was to be undertaken following the completion of this (internal) audit to see if there was any further information that needed to be included in the email that was to be sent out to users as part of the process.
- 4.5.7 As highlighted above (see 4.5.5), the system is held on the Council's network, so network access is required before system access can be gained by users. The WSM advised that this has been a fairly recent change as he used to be able to access it externally.
- 4.5.8 The ASM advised that this had come about following the last PSN IT health check which had found an issue with the Jadu administration interface. This highlighted that there was a lack of two factor authentication and this was solved by restricting access to internal IP addresses.
- 4.5.9 The ASM also advised that the annual health checks include penetration testing, both from an external perspective and an internal one (i.e. once someone is inside the network) and this helps to ensure that access to the system is secure.

#### 4.6 **Accessibility & Availability**

- 4.6.1 The WSM advised that the website had been designed to meet the accessibility standards that were in place at the time (Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.0 AA). He suggested that the themes and overall set up meet this, but individual items of content might not.
- 4.6.2 A new standard has now been introduced (WCAG 2.1) and the Council's website has to be compliant by 23 September 2020, subject to any issues of 'disproportionate burden' (e.g. if it would take too long to make a page compliant or it would be too costly to do so, then an exemption can be 'claimed'). The WSM advised that a couple of areas of the Council's website do not meet this standard at present.
- 4.6.3 A review of the website's accessibility is to be undertaken by an external company to ensure compliance, although an internal review can also be undertaken using the Silktide software that the Council uses. The WSM had also drawn up an accessibility review plan.
- 4.6.4 There is a requirement to include an accessibility statement on the Council's website to reflect what doesn't meet the (current) standard and why. Upon review of the website, this was found to be in place.
- 4.6.5 The WSM also highlighted that web browsers allow you to view the webpage as it would appear on any given device (using the F12 key) and this can be used to confirm that the Council's website can be appropriately used on any device. He also suggested that most browsers are now standardised using 'future-proofed' technologies. The only issues tend to be with outdated

browsers and there always has to be a trade-off between maintaining compatibility for a few users with the costs of doing so.

- 4.6.6 As per the accessibility review plan referred to above, training is to be provided to relevant staff to raise awareness of accessibility. In terms of specific queries raised, the WSM highlighted that:
- The design of the site is keyboard friendly for those who may struggle to use a mouse, with movement between fields possible via the tab key. This was tested as part of the audit and was found to work as described.
  - The WSM advised that Jadu requires 'alt text' to be entered for any images used and form fields to be labelled and this was confirmed to be the case upon review.
  - The website meets the relevant contrast ratios set out in WCAG 2.0 AA (although does not yet meet the 2.1 standard), and colours, text sizes etc. can be amended by the user via the accessibility page on the website. Text sizes and zoom control can also be amended via the inbuilt browser settings.
  - Pause buttons are included on scrolling media to allow users the opportunity to read all information on the individual screens, although the WSM highlighted an issue with the position of some of the promotional text when reviewing the Royal Spa Centre page on the website, with the 'labels' on each screen not covering all of the relevant text that was included on the images.
- 4.6.7 The WSM advised that the website can be updated from home if required (as long as the network access is available) using an RSA token. However, if electricity goes down at Riverside House (as was the case with the recent fire), the website will also go down.
- 4.6.8 In these instances social media updates will be posted by the Digital Content & Social Media Officer. Warwickshire County Council's website also includes a page that can be made live if the Council's website goes down which will be referred to on the social media posts.
- 4.6.9 Two external alert systems are also in place:
- Eggplant monitors the health of the server (e.g. if the site is slow) although the WSM advised that, whilst alerts are generated, this is used more for performance reporting than alerts.
  - Uptime Robot (a free, online tool) provides a simple dashboard and sends emails to the WSM's personal and work emails highlighting any issues.
- 4.6.10 The WSM advised that there are monthly reboots plus other times when server maintenance or an upgrade is required and the website will be taken down. Planned items are put in his calendar and an announcement will be placed on the website with a news item being created to advise that the site will not be available. This was evidenced for the last regular maintenance (18 March 2019). Announcements will also be placed on social media.
- 4.6.11 Reboots are undertaken overnight (between 01:00 and 03:00) to ensure that disruption to customers is minimised, with the timing of other maintenance



(including patching) being dependant on whether someone has to be in office. The WSM advised that the website analytics will be checked to see if anyone is currently on the site prior to the site being taken down.

#### 4.7 **Customer Surveys, Performance Management & Analytics**

- 4.7.1 As previously highlighted (see 4.3 above), some user testing has been undertaken with regards to specific pages of the Council's website. The WSM advised that he wants to undertake more testing now that the usability software is in place and plans to undertake two tests a month.
- 4.7.2 Pop-up surveys are used on the Council's website and the results from these are collated onto a spreadsheet with this information being summarised to (try to) get an understanding of the customer satisfaction levels. However, the WSM was unsure whether these presented an accurate picture due to the small percentage of overall visitors that completed the surveys.
- 4.7.3 The WSM highlighted that the responses are 'scanned' for any obvious issues but feels that more could be done with the responses, especially with regards to flagging any compliments received and forwarding these to the relevant service.

#### **Advisory**

**The production of management reports from the survey responses received should be considered to flag up any issues raised and compliments received.**

- 4.7.4 The WSM advised that visitor numbers are obtained via Google analytics, with reports being generated as and when necessary. Visitor statistics are placed on the website and information is also provided to the Marketing & Media Officer (MMO) who produces an 'infographic' for the intranet.
- 4.7.5 The MMO also sends a link to the information to SMT on a quarterly basis, although she advised that this will be done monthly in the future in line with the new Marketing & Communications Strategy, which was presented to (and approved by) SMT on 30 January 2019.
- 4.7.6 The WSM also compiles customer service statistics on a spreadsheet, giving details of overall figures, form completions, and details of individual pages. However, again, the WSM feels like this is a data dump at the moment and nothing is generally done with the data obtained.

#### **Advisory**

**The production of management reports from the customer service statistics should be considered to allow management to evaluate the website performance.**

- 4.7.7 In terms of comparisons with other access channels, the WSM was unsure how previous figures had been compiled, although the Business Support and Development Manager (BSDM) compiles phone call figures for his service

area (Neighbourhood Services), with this being carried forward from when he had been responsible for the management of the Warwickshire Direct Partnership arrangement.

- 4.7.8 The BSDM advised that he has produced a report for SMT which looked at what the Council would have to do differently given the increase in the number of houses being built and this covered the use of different access channels to some extent. He also advised that a Business Support measure is to be included in the Service Area Plan for Neighbourhood Services which will cover the number of contacts through different access channels and this will be compiled in conjunction with the WSM. This will be reviewed monthly with quarterly reports being prepared for the Head of Neighbourhood Services) although this has yet to be undertaken.
- 4.7.9 The WSM also highlighted that the Contact Us page on the Council’s website had been redesigned to refer to the forms available before phone numbers etc. so that customers are directed towards the Council’s preferred contact methods.
- 4.7.10 An analytics tool (Crazy Egg) is also used. This gives detailed page analytics, page heat maps and A/B testing (where two slightly different version of a page can be tested to see which one performs better). These tools will help guide decision making when building pages or content.

**4.8 Procurement**

- 4.8.1 With the exception of the main, ongoing, support contract, most items of expenditure are fairly minor. However, the WSM advised that he had recently procured two software ‘systems’ in relation to quality and performance monitoring and three quotes had been obtained in relation to these procurement exercises.
- 4.8.2 Some other prices had also been obtained in these instances via ‘standard’ fees that are published on the websites for the companies. Evidence was provided which confirmed that this process had been followed.
- 4.8.3 There was also a cost related to the implementation of the new website form builder included on the cost centre. The WSM advised that this was placed via Jadu as they are the existing provider of the system.

**5 Conclusions**

- 5.1 Following our review, in overall terms we are able to give a SUBSTANTIAL degree of assurance that the systems and controls in place in respect of Website Management are appropriate and are working effectively.
- 5.2 The assurance bands are shown below:

Level of Assurance	Definition
Substantial Assurance	There is a sound system of control in place and compliance with the key controls.

Level of Assurance	Definition
Moderate Assurance	Whilst the system of control is broadly satisfactory, some controls are weak or non-existent and there is non-compliance with several controls.
Limited Assurance	The system of control is generally weak and there is non-compliance with controls that do exist.

5.3 No formal recommendations are included. However, two (related) 'issues' were identified where advisory notes have been reported. In these instances, no formal recommendation is thought to be warranted as there is no risk if the action is not taken. However, if the changes are made, the existing control framework would be enhanced:

- The production of management reports could be considered to make better use of the information obtained in relation to customer surveys and customer service statistics.

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