

Committee	FINANCE COMMITTEE
Date	12th August 2019
Agenda Item	16

Website Accessibility

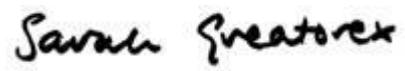
Web accessibility is the inclusive practice of ensuring there are no barriers that prevent interaction with, or access to, websites on the World Wide Web by people with disabilities. When sites are correctly designed, developed and edited, generally all users have equal access to information and functionality.

- Clickable items in text should be real words describing the information which will result when clicked. Blind users can then hear the words describing rather than “click here”
- Text should be enlargeable up to 300% so that those with poor eyesight are more likely to be able to read it
- It should be possible to navigate by keys rather than mouse for those who do not have the dexterity to control a mouse
- For deaf and hard-of hearing users, videos should be captioned or there should be a sign language version
- Flashing effects should be minimised to avoid causing seizures in users
- Text should be made as simple to read as possible, to help those with dyslexia or learning difficulties

The legislation relating to this was in the Disability Discrimination Act of 1995. The question of the accessibility of websites to those with disabilities has become an issue only more recently, due to the ever-increasing use of the internet as a source of information. The Government Digital Service (GDS) is the inspectorate, which will make automated access to websites belonging to public bodies, to see if they are complying. Local authorities are unlikely to be penalised by the GDS. However, the real danger in not making our website as accessible as possible to those with disabilities is that disabled users may go to litigation against councils who do not make reasonable adjustments for disabilities.

The Receptionist and the Town Clerk at HTC have recently undertaken detailed training from SLCC on the need to ensure that our website is as accessible as possible to those with a range of disabilities, and on preparing an accessibility statement which must be placed on the website. We have until September 2020 to be compliant, and it is likely that we may not be able to be compliant in all areas, if that would place a disproportionate burden on the council. We can state in our accessibility statement what we can and cannot do. We have found that there are many aspects of our website which are already compliant, although there is some work to be done. Most of the work to be done is of a technical nature and we would suggest that we should ask our IT providers to do this for us. They have been asked for a quotation for the work.

Recommendation: that HTC asks Lexden Computers to provide a quote and that this item will then be included in the budget for 20/21 on the website to comply with the legislation on website accessibility.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Sarah Greatorex". The script is cursive and somewhat informal.

Sarah Greatorex

Town Clerk