Committee(s): Digital Services Sub Committee – For Information	Dated: 03/09/2021
Subject: Web site review and Deep Dive	**Public**
Which outcomes in the City Corporation's Corporate Plan does this proposal aim to impact directly?	9. We are digitally and physically well-connected and responsive.
Does this proposal require extra revenue and/or capital spending?	Y̶/N
If so, how much?	**£ N/A**
What is the source of Funding?	**N/A**
Has this Funding Source been agreed with the Chamberlain's Department?	**Y/N** **N/A**
Report of: Bob Roberts, Director of Communications	**For Information**
Report author: Melissa Richardson, Digital Publishing and Content Strategy Lead, Communications, Town Clerks	

Summary

This report is to update Members on the launch of the corporate website and actions being taken to address teething problems around search functionality and ease of navigation.

Recommendation(s)

Members are asked to:

- Note the report.

Main Report

Background

1. The corporate website was re-launched in July 2020.

2. Overall the project was well received and delivered ahead of time and on budget of £322,016. Feedback was positive to negative by a ratio of 2:1.

3. However, Members at a previous meeting of the Digital Services Sub Committee raised concerns that the internal website search did not work as expected, that information was hard to find and that information about Members was not prominent enough.

4. This report was written to detail actions taken to address these concerns.

Current Position

5. Information on Members. A "News and Media" link on the header of the website was replaced with a "Councillors, committees and meetings" link to take users through in one click to details of elected representatives.

6. Search issues. These have been flagged to the developer and several improvements are being introduced:

    a. A search boost option is being introduced. This will allow the most relevant or important search results to be promoted to the top of the search results.
    b. The default search result will be changed from returning current pages to "all results" which will give more content and include content from the external news, jobs and mod.gov sites.
    c. Fuzzy and wildcard searching will be allowed which will return search results with similar spellings and where only part of the word is searched for.
    d. Some free text search issues are also being addressed such as a failure to recognise hyphens in words such as e-scooter.

7. Navigation issues. To address the navigation concerns a three-month trial test has been set up to display all pages under different sections (the "View All" option) instead of recommended or trending pages. This will display content more like an index or list. Navigation issues remain subjective and we will monitor feedback to see whether users prefer this option or the previous option.

Options

8. If search issues continue two possible further options could be explored:

    a. The internal search function could be replaced by a Google search for the site.
    b. An external Google search button could be incorporated into the in addition to the current internal search.

Both options would be costly and there is, at present, no budget for them.

Option (a) should be unnecessary once the search teething problems are solved.

Option (b) would produce return results from outside our own site which we could not control, may be inaccurate or critical and could take users away from our site.

We would, therefore, not recommend either of those options.

Proposals

9. We will continue to work with Zengenti, the supplier, to improve the current internal site search and would welcome any examples of issues with search which could be sent to them for investigation.

Key Data

N/A

Corporate & Strategic Implications

Strategic implications - none

Financial implications - none

Resource implications - none

Legal implications - none

Risk implications - none

Equalities implications – none

Climate implications - none

Security implications - none

Conclusion

10. While we have taken action to address concerns, we welcome further feedback.

11. Images, content and navigation routes through the pages of the website can be edited and adjusted to reflect feedback.

12. Improvements on content and maintenance on the site will continue to be carried out.

Appendices

None

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