Essex County Council

Equality Impact Assessment - head of service review

Reference: EQIA137073131

Submitted: 13 August 2019 15:01 PM

Executive summary

Title of policy or decision: Approval of the investment of £255,840 to ensure legal compliance of accessibility regulations. The Public Sector Bodies (Websites and Mobile Applications) (No. 2) Accessibility Regulations 2018 (the Regulations) which came into force on September 2018. The aim of the Regulations is to ensure public sector websites and mobile applications are accessible to all users, especially those with disabilities

Describe the main aims, objectives and purpose of the policy (or decision): Essex County Council need to procure a digital partner to build capability within the organisation to develop skills within teams to ensure websites are compliant and meet accessibility standards. The contract will be no longer than 12 months as Essex County Council (ECC) will be expected to manage accessibility compliance within the organisation from September 2020.

Secure specialist skills are required that are not currently in house, these include; content rewriting and technical redesign of websites, ensuring ECC is self-sustaining in maintaining website accessibility on an ongoing basis.

The regulations are clear that any failure to comply will be seen as a failure to make reasonable adjustments as set out under the Equality Act 2010.

ECC requires funding to ensure compliance with the regulations, this will include procuring a digital partner and securing specialist skills to meet the requirements by September 2020.

What outcome(s) are you hoping to achieve?: Transform the council to achieve more with less

Which strategic priorities does this support? - Transform the council to achieve more with less: Develop the capability, performance and engagement of our people, Re-imagine how residents' needs can be met in a digital world

Is this a new policy (or decision) or a change to an existing policy, practice or project?: a new policy (or decision)

Please provide a link to the document / website / resource to which this EqIA relates: www.essex.gov.uk/accessibility

Please upload any documents which relate to this EqIA, for example decision documents: www.essex.gov.uk/accessibility

Assessing the equality impact

Use this section to record how you have assessed any potential impact on the communities likely to be affected by the policy (or decision): This decision is likely to have a positive impact on all website users and particularly those with disabilities.

There are 2 main requirements which ECC will need to comply with:

• Meet accessibility standards - this means making ECC website 'perceivable, operable, understandable and

robust' for all users. This can be achieved by making sure it meets the international accessibility standard, WCAG 2.1 AA or its European equivalent, EN301 549

• Publish an accessibility statement - ECC has published this on the ECC Website
https://www.essex.gov.uk/accessibility

The resources required to deliver this project will, in part, be met through existing staff that have the necessary skills and knowledge to make the required changes to website code and content. In addition to this, increased organisational capacity and capability is required to address and maintain accessibility standards; this is planned to be met through the procurement of a digital accessibility partner and recruitment of a skilled team to deliver the enhancements required to the website and wider applications to ensure that the accessibility requirements are met.

ECC only has a handful of permanent staff that understand accessibility compliance and have the necessary skills to make changes to website code and content. Procuring the support of an accessibility partner will mean that we are able to increase organisational capability and capacity to address and maintain accessibility standards. Building capability within the organisation will enable ECC to move towards modernisation of Services and meet our Strategic priorities.

ECC needs to procure the right tools and training to ensure that the organisation has the right capability to identify and fix issues. Staff in Service Design, Communications and Marketing and Technology Services need an in-depth knowledge of digital accessibility. Services managing their own websites need to understand how to make their content accessible and Service Heads need to understand the importance of digital access.

Does or will the policy or decision affect:

Service users: Yes

Employees: Yes

The wider community or groups of people, particularly where there are areas of known inequalities: Yes

Which geographical areas of Essex does or will the policy or decision affect?: All Essex

Will the policy or decision influence how organisations operate?: Yes

Will the policy or decision involve substantial changes in resources?: Yes

Is this policy or decision associated with any of the Council's other policies?: Yes

Description of impact

Description of Impact. If there is an impact on a specific protected group tick box, otherwise leave blank.:
Age, Disability - learning disability, Disability - physical impairment, Disability - sensory impairment

Age

Nature of impact: Positive

Please provide more details about the nature of impact: Positive as the changes to the website are making it

easier to navigate.

Extent of impact: Medium

Please provide more details about the extent of impact: Potentially all citizens and business in Essex will be impacted if they come to the website to find out further information on ECC policies and processes. The website now has monitoring tools and software covering how citizens move from website to website and how they are moving around specific web pages. Capturing this data will allow us to understand if the website is effective for people's needs. We will then be able to respond to anything which we think needs further investigation and, following this, be able to test and then implement
changes to correct such issues.

Disability - learning disability

Nature of impact: Positive

Please provide more details about the nature of impact: Positive as the changes to the website are making it easier to navigate.

Extent of impact: Medium

Please provide more details about the extent of impact: The impact of the testing means that improvements to people's experiences using the following software will be achieved:
• Read and Write (a tool to help dyslexic users)
• Zoom Text (a tool to help users with Learning Disabilities)
• Global Autocorrect (a tool to help users with Learning Disabilities)

Disability - physical impairment

Nature of impact: Positive

Please provide more details about the nature of impact: Positive as the changes to the website are making it easier to navigate and better supports the use of assistive technology.

Extent of impact: High

Please provide more details about the extent of impact: The Impact of this testing means that improvements to people's experiences using the following software and hardware will be achieved:
• Split Keyboard (used by keyboard only users to help them interact with computers or devices)
• Dragon voice activation software (voice activation software)

Disability - sensory impairment

Nature of impact: Positive

Please provide more details about the nature of impact: Positive as the changes to the website are making it easier to navigate and better supports the use of assistive technology

Extent of impact: High

Please provide more details about the extent of impact: The Impact of this testing means that improvements to people's experiences using the following software will be achieved:
• Jaws (screen reading software)
• Zoom text (software designed for users with low vision or blindness, and/or colour blind)

Action plan to address and monitor adverse impacts

Does your EqIA indicate that the policy or decision would have a medium or high adverse impact on one

or more equality groups?: No

Details of person completing the form

I confirm that this has been completed based on the best information available and in following ECC guidance: I confirm that this has been completed based on the best information available and in following ECC guidance

Date EqIA completed: 13/08/2019

Name of person completing the EqIA: Simmone Farrell

Email address of person completing the EqIA: Simmone.Farrell@essex.gov.uk

Your function: Organisation Development & People

Your service area: Service design

Your team: Service design

Are you submitting this EqIA on behalf of another function, service area or team?: No

Email address of Head of Service: Victoria.james@essex.gov.uk