


LONDON BOROUGH OF CAMDEN	WARDS: All
REPORT TITLE An update on the Camden website and citizen experience	
REPORT OF Chief Experience and Information Officer Executive Director Corporate Services	
FOR SUBMISSION TO The Resources and Corporate Performance Scrutiny Committee	DATE 14 January 2025
<p>SUMMARY OF REPORT</p> <p>This report outlines the current performance and work to date and ongoing to improve the camden.gov.uk website and related citizen experience.</p> <p>Local Government Act 1972 – Access to Information</p> <p>No documents that require listing have been used in the preparation of this report.</p> <p>Contact Officer:</p> <p>Louise Brown, Head of Digital Products and Services on behalf of Tariq Khan, Chief Experience and Information Officer 5 Pancras Square London N1C 4AG</p> <p>Telephone: 020 7974 6020 Email: louise.brown@camden.gov.uk</p>	
<p>RECOMMENDATIONS</p> <p>That the Committee notes the contents of the report.</p>	

Signed: 
Tariq Khan, Chief Experience and Information Officer
Date: 24/12/2024

Purpose of Report

The Resources and Corporate Performance Scrutiny Committee has requested an update on the council's work on the Camden.gov.uk website and the work being undertaken to improve design and performance.

1. Background and research into camden.gov.uk performance

1.1. Context

For many of our residents and businesses, their first interaction with the council is online—whether for parking permits or council tax. Local Government Association surveys show that websites are the second most popular way people find out about council services after word of mouth. Camden's last website designs were over five years old, and with tech evolving and user expectations changing, it was time to update the design, content, and technology.

In the past three years the Digital Products and Services team was formed, then embarked on research and testing of new designs for Camden.gov.uk as detailed in last year's report.

The redesign of Camden.gov.uk went live in April 2024. The goal was to improve standards of usability including accessibility standards and content updates and design. Upholding and improving standards of accessibility required by law, namely the Public Sector Bodies (Websites and Mobile Applications) (No. 2) Accessibility Regulations 2018, is essential.

Since the redesign we have monitored impacts on traffic, user satisfaction and call centre logs.

Work continues on a daily basis to improve the ongoing management of the content, functionality, performance and environmental impact of our digital estate, of which camden.gov.uk is the main asset that we manage.

2. Outcomes

2.1. Since the redesign, user satisfaction surveys show higher scores for the site's look, feel, and content clarity 3.2/5 compared to the old site rated 2.5/5.

We regularly review feedback regarding the site from users as well as complaints that come through to us, and endeavour to resolve issues as quickly as possible.

The redesign has not changed the high level of understanding that users have of our information. But we've seen an increase in how quickly users can find the information they need.

Alongside higher user satisfaction overall, we have seen the following results and will continue to monitor for further improvements or issues;

Page load time reduce by 66% (~600ms to ~200ms) – which should reduce time taken by residents as well as environmental impact

Downtime reduced by 71% (Downtime in six months post redesign launch ~ 43 Mins, downtime in prior six months ~ 145 Mins)

Appendix 1 contains more detailed notes on changes to engagement with the website since the redesign.

A change was made to the labelling of Camden Account on the homepage from “sign in/register” to “Camden Account” which appears to have caused some confusion with a small section of users. The team are currently planning to reverse this change in the next month once they have some more insight and evidence that this is the source of the account issues. .

2.2. Ongoing content improvements

Our aim is to better serve our citizens with faster, more efficient information and services alongside enabling data evaluation and regular insight to better understand needs, problems and behaviours.

To this end there has also been significant redesign of content in the following areas:

- Families and Local Offer content and information architecture (IA – how content is labelled and structured to ease navigation)
- Building control and Pest control, resulting in a drop in calls to Contact Camden
- Violence against women and girls, with relevant content added to the community safety section including a new IA
- Leaseholder services service charges, major works step-by-step guide, new contact form and letter prototypes delivered and tested
- Housing IA reviewed and redesigned including new data-led landing pages
- New section created for 'Get involved' to deliver against requirements of housing regulations
- Licensing:
 - New online contact form to better triage contact into the Licensing team - due to launch early 2025
 - Updates to licensing content pages
- Elections and voting, including updated pages and IA
- Recycling and rubbish, including updated pages and IA
- Digital Inclusion, including updated pages and IA
- Creation of Greener Camden campaign content
- CATS:
 - Green badge and Substitute badge pages updated
 - Plusbus and Scootability trigger emails

- Minor updates across all sites to improve accuracy and usability, including updated content on sites like Camden Rise.

2.3. Engaging with citizens

In order to inform website updates we always endeavour to speak directly with residents and their representatives.

In the past twelve months, the following groups have been interviewed and consulted for relevant areas of the site to gain insight into what is needed and to test language, labelling and content overall:

- Homelessness lived experience group
- Domestic abuse lived experience group
- Resident Action Day - 6 x tenants
- Residents Panel - 7 x 1:1 interviews and review of repairs content changes
- Tenants - mailout to 'opted in' tenants by the housing engagement lead. They did tree tests and card sorting to test information architecture
- Leaseholders 1:1 interviews
- Local Offer parent groups
- Family Hubs attendees
- Foster carers

2.4. Next steps for citizen experience work

A renewed strategy for the digital, data and technology teams at Camden has again emphasized the importance of the citizen experience, the tools and data our teams use to help citizens alongside our ongoing work to improve standards of digital accessibility.

There are two high priority initiatives that the teams will be working on in the coming year, namely:

- 1) Priority user journeys – taking into account various stats, we are prioritising key tasks that are more difficult for citizens to complete evidenced by contact centre call logs and statistics that we can see on the website. At the moment the team are analysing the information around how citizens are able to pay and challenge a Penalty Charge Notice (PCN) online. The complexity is often around the integration and designs of different platforms developed by external partners. Our goal is to make these externally developed sites as accessible and usable as possible, using our design systems and standards to make consistent, improved user experiences that are easy to understand.
- 2) Citizen interaction toolset – this team are focused on ensuring that teams that deal with citizens share and have access to relevant data (for example, using our Customer Relationship Management [CRM] tool) and that can offer different ways to suit different types of questions. For example, the team has been trialling the use of web chat for leaseholder services, having identified

them as a digitally savvy group who would benefit from a faster turnaround of information via a webchat than relying on information on the page and phones only.

3. Equalities Impact and Disability considerations

The accessibility statement on the website has been updated to reflect the improvements and deeper understanding of the challenges around digital accessibility across Camden.gov.uk.

We have also briefed specialist accessibility companies to assist us in the new year with specific research conducted with disabled residents, which we hope to integrate into all our user testing when possible (e.g. residents with visual impairment which requires the user of high levels of magnification or screen readers).

4. Finance Comments of the Executive Director Corporate Services

The Executive Director Corporate Services has been consulted and has no comments to add.

5. Legal Comments of the Borough Solicitor

The Public Sector Bodies (Websites and Mobile Applications) (No. 2) Accessibility Regulations 2018 impose an obligation on a public sector body to make its websites and mobile applications more accessible, to the extent that this does not impose a disproportionate burden. They also contain a further obligation for a public sector body to publish an accessibility statement on compliance with the accessibility requirement and to keep that statement under regular review. The Regulations also set out the standards that a public sector body's website or mobile application must meet to be presumed to be in conformity with the accessibility requirement.

6. Environmental Implications

As detailed above, reducing page load time for the new designs will reduce the environmental impact of Camden.gov.uk.

REPORT ENDS

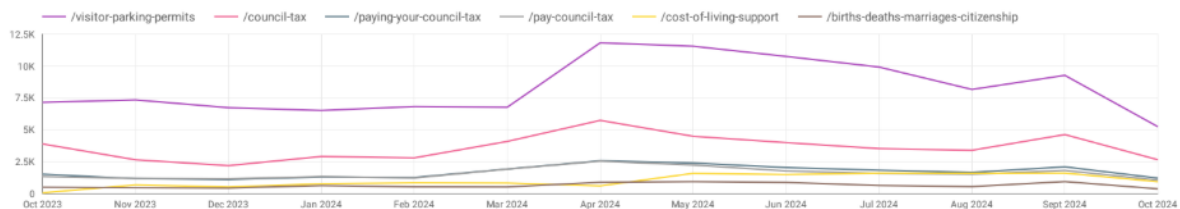
Appendix 1

Enhanced engagement on CGU after redesign

The pages referenced on the graph below have seen significant increases in traffic since April. Their increase is not related to Organic Traffic, it's instead due to being reached through internal linking.

Analysing the user journeys for these pages, we can notice the increase of sessions in which visitors first visited the homepage, then clicked on the 'Popular Tasks' links, the landing page cards, or the 'All Services' button before reaching

these pages. Having these elements on the homepage have helped citizens find these pages easier.



Engagement with the Homepage content

The engagement rate for the Homepage has increased by 33% YoY. (6 months data May-Nov 2024).

The number of visitors scrolling down to 75% of the Homepage has increased by 47% YoY, indicating improved engagement. While 53% of visitors still interact only with the top 25% of the page (above-the-fold), the shift in behaviour is nevertheless encouraging.

The change in the layout and the links to popular sections provided on the 'above-the-fold' section the Homepage, have had an impact on the behaviour of our visitors.

Search post-redesign

The homepage, apart from being the page where most visitors start their user journey, it is the page where most searches are performed. Prior to the redesign, search was a prominent feature in the layout of the homepage.

Old search usage: The internal search feature used to be use in average on 50% of visits to the homepage, and an average 5.76% of the total sessions to the site.

New search usage: After redesign launch, these figures have shifted to 5% avg of visits to the homepage, and 3.6% of total sessions including internal search.

Analysing sessions recordings of the homepage, we can see how visitors make use of the 'Popular Tasks' banner instead of reaching out for the search feature as soon as they land on this page.