Emergency Powers Decision Report

Council Web Team: Bolstering Capacity

Decision Maker: Chief Executive

Service Area: Customer Experience
Directorate: Resources
Report Author: Fran Lautman, Assistant Director of Customer Experience
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Date of Decision: 2 November 2026

1. Power to make the decision

The decision is being taken under the authorisation contained in Section 9C – Delegations to Specific Officers of Part 3 (Responsibility for Functions) of the Council Constitution for the Chief Executive to take any emergency decisions in respect of the Council's executive functions which cannot be delayed until the next Cabinet meeting.

2. Decision Sought

To approve the bolstering of Web Team capacity. This will increase resiliency and ensure a council wide review and re-write of all content ensuring content is written in Plain English, meets accessibility standards and is easy to use.

3. Reason for urgency

The current Web Team capacity is not sustainable to both sustain and develop the website. This leads to limited development and minimal content changes.

The aim is to make digital services easier for residents to use from start to finish. Where appropriate, residents should be able to:

- find clear and accurate information quickly
- understand what they need to do
- complete applications, requests and reports online
- use their customer account to view and manage their interactions with the Council
- track the progress of applications, reports and issues

- receive appropriate updates without having to contact the Council for progress information.

Increasing Web Team capacity will allow the Council to:

- use customer and web data to identify and prioritise opportunities for channel shift
- reduce avoidable telephone, email and face-to-face contact
- make more Council services transactional online where appropriate
- improve the quality and accessibility of online information
- make it easier for residents to find information and complete tasks
- improve the use of the customer account so residents can track their interactions with the Council
- provide dedicated support to service areas through a business partnering model
- maintain consistent standards for accessibility, plain English and user-centred content
- provide greater resilience for the day-to-day management of Council websites
- measure the impact of digital improvements and use this evidence to inform further work.

4. Risk(s) of not taking the decision

Content will remain inaccurate and of our date in some instances resulting inconsistent advice and guidance.

Limited/ no capacity to meet the needs of services.

5. Financial impact if decision not taken forward

If approval is not granted, the Council will avoid the estimated cost of circa £253,000 associated with the fixed-term posts.

If approval is not granted, the Council will avoid the estimated cost of circa £253,000 associated with the fixed-term posts. However, this may result in reduced capacity within the Web Team to deliver planned digital and web development activities, potentially leading to delays in project delivery, increased reliance on external resources, missed opportunities to improve customer access to online services, and a reduced ability to realise any associated efficiency savings or service improvements.

6. Statutory Officer clearances

a. Section 151 Officer

Name Lee Walsh

Date 05/06/26

Comments

The report seeks approval to establish one Senior Content Officer and two Content Officer posts within the Web Team on a fixed-term basis for 20 months at an estimated total cost of £253k. The additional capacity will increase resilience within the Web Team and support a council-wide review and rewrite of website content. It will also provide the foundations for further development and improvement of the Council's website.

The proposal will be funded from within existing Resources Directorate budgets in 2026/27. Funding requirements for 2027/28 and 2028/29 will be considered as part of the annual budget-setting process and incorporated into the Corporate Priorities budget, subject to approval.

b. Monitoring Officer

Name Alex Bougatef

Date 05th October 2026

Comments
The exercise of emergency powers should be undertaken in consultation with the Leader or Deputy Leader of the Council. However, the Council has not yet appointed a Leader or Deputy Leader for the current municipal year so it is not possible to consult them. In addition, there is no certainty about when a Leader or Deputy Leader will be appointed as the Council has failed at successive meetings to do so. For the reasons given in the report an urgent decision relating to the report is required and it cannot await the appointment of a Leader and Deputy Leader at some undetermined future date.