Principle Decision Report

Decision below £250k

Subject:	Council Web Team: Bolstering Capacity
Decision maker: Senior Officer	Shelley Kipling, Chief Executive
Decision date:	2 November 2026
Report author:	Fran Lautman, Assistant Director of Customer Experience Gordon Lee, Web Services Manager
Ward (s):	N/A

Reason for decision

The Council's Web Team currently consists of two permanent officers - a Team Manager and a Senior Officer. The team is responsible for the day-to-day management and development of the Council website, Council service microsites and staff intranet.

Current capacity provides limited resilience during periods of leave or absence and means resources must be carefully prioritised between day-to-day content updates and development work.

The additional capacity will oversee and overhaul of content on the website to ensure it's written in Plain English, meets accessibility standards and is easy to use. There is also an opportunity to make better use of the Council's digital channels to reduce avoidable telephone, email and face-to-face contact. Additional capacity would allow the Council to use customer contact and web data to identify high-demand services and improve digital information and transactions around resident needs.

Approval is therefore sought to strengthen the Web Team with one additional Senior Content Officer and two Content Officers for a fixed term of 20 months.

Recommendation(s)

Approve the addition of one Senior Content Officer and two Content Officers to the Web Team for a fixed term of 20 months.

1. Background

1.1 The Council's Web Team has been part of Customer Operations since 1 October 2026. The team currently has two permanent officers responsible for managing and developing the Council website, service microsites and staff intranet.

1.2 The current structure provides limited capacity and resilience and restricts the amount of proactive development and improvement work the team can undertake. The small team also provides limited resilience during periods of annual leave or other absence.

1.3 With two permanent officers, much of the Web Team's available capacity is required to maintain existing websites and respond to day-to-day requests. This limits the team's ability to proactively review and improve high-demand customer journeys, develop new digital transactions and use customer data to identify opportunities for channel shift.

1.4 Several services have identified a need for additional web content capacity. Rather than creating separate web resources within individual services, it is proposed that this capacity is provided centrally through the Web Team. This will provide a consistent approach to content, accessibility, plain English, user experience and digital development across the Council.

1.5 The Council website is an important route for residents to access information and services often acting as the front door to Council support and services. Where digital services work well, residents should be able to find the information they need, complete transactions and track requests without needing to telephone, email or visit the Council

1.6 Improving digital services therefore provides an opportunity to improve the resident experience while reducing avoidable demand through more resource-intensive channels.

2. Proposed approach

2.1 Additional capacity would allow the team to take a more proactive and evidence-led approach to improving Council services. Web analytics, telephone demand, email contacts and other available customer data would be used to identify services and customer journeys where there is the greatest opportunity for improvement.The team would work with services to understand why residents contact the Council and identify where better information, simpler processes or digital transactions could meet that need

2.2 The approach would be: **Understand demand → identify priority journeys → improve the digital service → measure the impact → continue to improve.**

2.3 This will ensure that resources are focused on improvements that respond to demonstrated resident needs rather than individual service requests alone.

2.4 A business partnering model is proposed, with Content Officers working closely with service areas. One Content Officer would support Adults and Children, with the other supporting Resources and Place.

2.5 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.

2.6 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.

2.7 The expanded team will:

- analyse web, telephone, email and other customer contact data to identify priority services and customer journeys
- review and improve high-demand web content and customer journeys
- work with services to identify opportunities to move appropriate contact and transactions online
- work alongside the IT Development Team to develop and improve online transactions

- support the development of the Council's customer account and opportunities for residents to track requests and applications
- work directly with service areas through a business partnering model
- maintain and improve content on the Council website, microsites and intranet
- ensure content meets accessibility, plain English and Council standards
- monitor the impact of improvements, including changes in digital use and assisted contact.

3. Alternative option(s) to be considered

Maintain the current Web Team structure

3.1 The Council could retain the existing two-person Web Team. This would avoid the additional staffing cost but would significantly limit the team's ability to undertake proactive service improvement and channel-shift activity alongside its existing responsibilities .Available capacity would continue to be focused primarily on maintaining existing services and responding to day-to-day requests.

Provide additional web capacity within individual services

3.2 Individual services could employ or identify their own staff to manage web content. This would provide additional capacity but risks creating inconsistent approaches to content, accessibility, plain English and user experience. It could also duplicate specialist web resource across the organisation. A centrally managed team, working with services through a business partnering model, provides additional capacity while maintaining common standards and allowing work to be prioritised using Council-wide customer demand.

Do not undertake proactive content management and channel-shift work

3.3 The Council could continue to provide existing digital services without a coordinated programme of improvement. This would reduce the opportunity to use customer demand data to identify avoidable contact and improve services. Residents may continue to use telephone, email or face-to-face channels where their needs could otherwise be met through effective digital self-service. Content would be out of date and inaccurate.

4. Consultation

4.1 This decision will be presented to Group Leaders for consideration.

5. Risks

5.1 Delivering channel shift will require services to work with the Web Team to review and improve existing customer journeys and web content. If services are unable to provide the required input, some improvements may take longer to deliver.

5.2 Some digital improvements will depend on development work or changes to other Council systems. Competing priorities and limited technical capacity could affect delivery timescales.

5.3 There is a risk that additional digital services do not reduce other forms of contact as expected. Using customer contact and web data to set priorities and measure the impact of changes will help manage this risk.

6. Implications

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<td>Financial</td>
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<u>Revenue Implications</u>

The report seeks approval for the addition of one Senior Content Officer and two Content Officers to the Web Team on a fixed-term basis for 20 months, at an estimated total cost of approximately £253k

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<tr><th>Year</th><th>2026/27</th><th>2027/28</th><th>2028/29</th><th>Total</th></tr>
<tr><td>Grade 8</td><td>£23,660</td><td>£58,440</td><td>£14,950</td><td>£97,050</td></tr>
<tr><td>Grade 6</td><td>£18,950</td><td>£46,810</td><td>£12,020</td><td>£77,780</td></tr>
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<tr><td>Total</td><td>£61,560</td><td>£152,060</td><td>£38,990</td><td>£252,610</td></tr>
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The table above includes the 2026/27 pay award of 3.3% and an annual increment for each post every April, however, it excludes any future pay awards.

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.

(Matthew Kearns, Finance Manager)
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People	The proposal is supported as it seeks to address a recognised resilience and capacity risk within a small specialist team currently comprising two permanent posts. The creation of one Senior Content Officer and two Content Officer posts on a fixed-term basis will support a more strategic and proactive approach to service improvement through business partnering arrangements with directorates. This will in turn allow for service improvement and savings opportunities in the medium term as we drive towards greater digital and self serve options for residents. As these are fixed-term appointments, the Council will need to ensure compliance with fixed-term employee legislation, fair recruitment processes and appropriate workforce planning arrangements. Redundancy costs may apply if individuals have continuity of service, which will require forecasting in due course. Clear success measures should be established to evaluate the impact of the additional capacity and inform future decisions regarding the sustainability of these posts beyond the 20-month period. (Eleanor Devlin, Assistant Director of Workforce and Organisational Culture)
Legal	The Council has the power to determine its staffing structure and make arrangements for the discharge of its functions, provided the proposal is implemented in accordance with the Council's Constitution, approved decision-making processes and applicable legislation. As the proposal relates to the creation of fixed-term posts, any employment law implications arising from those arrangements should be considered, to the extent not already addressed in the People implications section. (Pamela Nsofor, Solicitor)
Equality impact including implications for Children and Young People	N/A (Jonathan Downs, Corporate Policy Lead)

Has the relevant Legal Officer confirmed that the recommendations within this report are lawful and comply with the Council's Constitution?	Yes
Has the relevant Finance Officer confirmed that any expenditure referred to within this report is consistent with the Council's budget?	Yes
Are any of the recommendations within this report contrary to the Policy Framework of the Council?	Yes

Report author sign-off	Gordon Lee
Role	Web Services Manager
Date of sign-off	05/10/26

Report author sign-off	Fran Lautman
Role	Assistant Director of Customer Experience
Date of sign-off	05/10/26

Approval	
Officer approval sign-off	
Role	
Date of sign-off	

Approval	
Member(s) approval sign-off	
Role	
Date of sign-off	