Content strategy 2019

Introduction

Users don't come to the website to read about the Council. They come when they have a specific need to do something.

Our role as website owners is to present useful and usable content so our users can efficiently achieve their goals. The site should work for everyone, regardless of their accessibility needs.

This strategy defines the Council's approach to digital content. It covers:

- Content principles
- What goes on the website
- Governance

The web team have overall responsibility for the Council website. We review this strategy regularly to ensure it is still relevant in light of changing technologies and user behaviour.

Principles

The quality of content directly affects the success of our digital channels:

Poor content leads to confused and unhappy users.

The strategy aims to:

- ❖ **provide structure and guidance for our authors**
- ❖ **ensure our content is customer-focused**
- ❖ **build trust through consistency**

Consistent, high-quality web content reduces the time and costs involved in interacting with users who are driven to contact us via other channels because they can't find what they need.

What goes on the website

Everything published on our website must have a clear user need backed up with evidence.

It should be published either:

- as guidance to help users interact with the Council
- to help users understand what the Council is doing

Barring a legal obligation, content that doesn't do one of these things shouldn't be on the website.

All content on camden.gov.uk must:

1. Be original

If the information is available elsewhere, just provide a link to the relevant website. This prevents issues with accuracy, copyright, duplication of work and outdated information.

2. Answer a question our users are asking

Every piece of content should serve a user focused purpose, and not be published just because we have the information.

Anything else will clutter the website with unnecessary information, making it harder for users to find the information they actually need.

3. Be written in language our users would use

Use plain English and avoid jargon. Remember, most users do not have the same level of understanding of council services as you.

Using users' language helps people find your pages when they search.

4. Be largely text based

Text content is suitable for screen readers, translators and other accessibility software.

As a general rule, we don't use images.

Users aren't interested in 'decorative' images that add no meaning. They can hinder the user experience by taking up space and increasing page load times - especially on mobile devices.

Tables should be used only for data.

These guidelines are based on the [LocalGov Digital Content Guidelines](#).

Content we don't publish on the website

- content that repeats or significantly overlaps with existing content
- attachments that could be published as accessible on-page content
- advice for people, businesses or specialists that isn't specific to the Council
- advertising for commercial purposes
- intranet or other services exclusively for council employees
- information or services that can be better supplied by external organisations, e.g. Shelter for housing information

Governance

We use a devolved authoring model: services are responsible for their own pages on the website. Each service nominates one or more content authors to maintain the content on their pages.

The web team review all website changes against the guidelines in this document. They make sure that all content:

- meets a user need
- is of a high quality
- meets accessibility standards
- follows our writing style guidelines
- remains relevant and up-to-date
- helps reduce internal workloads and user frustration
- helps reduce contact via other, more expensive, channels

The team review, approve and reject content on a daily basis and give feedback if there is a problem that needs attention.

The web team have final say on all web content and reserve the right to edit pages as they see fit.

Roles and responsibilities

Content authors	Web team
Responsible for their service's pages	Responsible for overall website quality and user experience
Create and update content	Manage user accounts
Check facts	Approve content before it goes live

Regularly check for broken links and remove out-of-date content	Provide advice and best practice
Both groups use analytics to inform content decisions	

Workflow