

6. Quality of content

The effectiveness of a website is ultimately determined by the quality of its content. Content that is published without thought or planning frustrates users, discredits the organisation and lets the rest of the site down.

Before publishing content, think:

- Who is the audience and what are their needs? 'The public' is too imprecise to help determine appropriate content, style and language; 'parents', 'young people', 'consumers' are more appropriate examples
- What is the purpose? Why are you writing this? What are you trying to say? What do the audience want to hear? As with all content the needs of the end user must drive this; 'general publicity' is too vague; 'to inform parents of school term dates', 'to make those in business aware of support services', 'to put individuals in touch with community groups' are more helpful examples
- What linkages does it have with other information provided by NCC or partners? Remember that the site is based around citizens - their needs do not begin and end with information about one service only. Refer to related information and services where appropriate. Where gaps in content arise due to services not being provided by NCC, signpost users to appropriate agencies and their sites. Also consider those living in the City or outside the County
- Who will maintain it? Without a designated person, **who is allotted sufficient time** to use WCM competently, content will become out-of-date, inaccurate and bring harm to the overall reputation of the site and the Authority
- How can I ensure that it will be read? Web users do not read web pages. Instead they scan pages looking for clues that they are 'in the right place'. Research has shown that if users do not find what they are looking for instantly, they tend to give up and go to another site or try another search to find the answer which 'must be somewhere else'. Writing for the web (WFTW) encompasses a range of techniques to make life easier for the web user and to maximise the possibilities of you having your content read
- How often will it be reviewed? As a **minimum requirement** all content should be reviewed at least once every 6 months
- Does it meet BVPI157 regarding electronic service delivery – initially this will apply to services where the provision of information IS the service ie the service does not incorporate any transactions or ordering facilities that would need to be e-enabled. This data will be included in the BVPI157 Audit exercise currently underway.