



**Submission by:** Rahna Riley, Rochdale Borough Council, [Rahna.riley@rochdale.gov.uk](mailto:Rahna.riley@rochdale.gov.uk)

**Awards:** iNetwork Innovation Awards 2017

**Category:** Partner Excellence Award

### **Name of initiative, project or service**

Overcoming challenges to help with digital transformation.

### **Describe the initiative, project, service**

Rochdale Borough Council has partnered with Sitemorse to help deliver a more accessible and usable corporate website that will help contribute towards improving reputation, channel shift and making savings.

### **Why do you think it should win this award?**

Sitemorse has been instrumental in helping Rochdale Borough Council deliver a more accessible website with fewer broken links and a more optimised site.

Rochdale Borough Council changed its website content management system in 2015 to Sharepoint. At the time it was known Sharepoint 'out of the box' was not accessible and not believed to be easy to make accessible. There was no known Sharepoint web part/s that could be used to help identify accessibility issues and broken links; these were crucial areas for us to get right to help improve reputation, channel shift and make savings. Without building confidence in our site we would have struggled to achieve our goals.

Sitemorse was chosen as our partner to help us deliver and remain on track with our programme of work.

Sitemorse is an automation tool that helps to improve the digital experience by identifying website errors. It also replaces sporadic and often manual assessment of inefficiency resulting in an improved customer experience of the website.

Sitemorse is also the only recognised independent sector benchmark auditing service of UK council websites; the results of which are published and available through a Sitemorse INDEX.

In 2015 Rochdale Borough Council was ranked towards the bottom of the INDEX at position 372. After investing resources into using both Sitemorse as a product and their excellent, speedy and knowledge support service we were able not only to significantly improve the

accessibility of the site but we also retained our 4-Socitm rating . We also jumped up to one of the top 20 most accessible sites as published in the Sitemorse INDEX.

Sitemorse has always offered us excellent support, been very flexible in modifying our contract as our requirements changed as well as acting upon suggestions to improve their product/service to meet our needs. During the service deployment, we collaborated on a joint project to improve the overall score, through online workshops and support on a regular basis

They are an organisation who appear to value their customers.

### What are the key achievements?

The table below lists a few of the key achievements between 2015-2017. The biggest improvement by far was moving from position 372 in the Sitemorse INDEX to 16<sup>th</sup> place; 409 local authorities were surveyed.

Area	Q4 2015*	Q4 2017*	% +/-
Sitemorse INDEX ranking	372nd	16th	+ 356 places
Broken links	187	8	96% improvement
Code quality errors	3609	613	83% improvement
Email	0 Occurences	0 Occurences	Consistent 10/10

\*125 page assessment



Area	Baseline at Q4 2015	Q4 - 2017
Accessibility	2/10	7/10
Code quality	3/10	7/10
Email	10/10	10/10
Function/links	0/10	7/10
SEO and metadata	7/10	9/10
Performance	10/10	7/10
Sitemorse INDEX	372	16
OVERALL SCORE	3.3/10	7.3/10

Key

- **WCAG 2** – checking content against the W3C accessibility standards.
- **Code quality** – does the code of the page meet W3C and IETF technical standards?
- **Email** – testing that email addresses and infrastructure work and can receive mail.
- **Function/links** – reviews page content and links are functioning correctly.
- **SEO and Metadata** – reporting improvements relating to Search Engine Optimisation.
- **Performance** – reporting of the web server response time and download speed.
- **Sitemorse INDEX** - only recognised independent sector benchmark auditing service of UK council websites.

Ends.