Next.co.uk Homepage

6-Month Product Transformation Roadmap

January - June 2026

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Executive Summary

This roadmap outlines strategic improvements for the Next.co.uk homepage to enhance accessibility compliance, performance, personalization, and customer engagement. The analysis identified critical gaps including JavaScript dependency for core functionality, fragmented accessibility strategy (separate accessible site), minimal WCAG commitment, and opportunities for AI-driven personalization and sustainability messaging.

The proposed 6 Epics address compliance requirements (European Accessibility Act enforcement from June 2025), competitive positioning against ASOS, Marks & Spencer, and John Lewis, and revenue optimization through improved conversion and customer lifetime value.

Key Issues Identified

- **JavaScript Dependency:** "You need to enable JavaScript to run this app" - critical failure for SEO, accessibility, and progressive enhancement
- **Fragmented Accessibility:** Separate accessible.next.co.uk site indicates main site has significant a11y issues; violates inclusive design principles
- **Vague Accessibility Policy:** No specific WCAG level commitment; policy lacks remediation timelines or conformance statements
- **Performance Concerns:** Multiple image carousels, video backgrounds, and heavy asset loading impact Core Web Vitals
- **Limited Personalization:** Generic homepage experience; no visible personalization based on browsing history or preferences
- **Missing Sustainability Messaging:** No visible eco/sustainability features despite growing consumer demand
- **No Social Proof on Homepage:** Customer reviews/ratings absent from homepage despite being available on product pages

Epics Overview

The following 6 Epics are prioritized based on regulatory requirements, business impact, and technical dependencies:

#	Epic	Priority	Timeline	Focus
E1	Unified Accessibility & WCAG 2.2 AA	CRITICAL	Jan-Feb	EAA compliance, single site
E2	Progressive Enhancement & Core Web Vitals	HIGH	Jan-Mar	JS-free core, performance
E3	AI-Powered Personalization & Search	HIGH	Feb-Apr	Conversion optimization
E4	Sustainable Commerce Features	MEDIUM	Mar-May	Eco-conscious shopping
E5	Social Proof & UGC Integration	MEDIUM	Apr-Jun	Trust & engagement
E6	Mobile-First & App Parity	MEDIUM	May-Jun	Cross-platform experience

Epic 1: Unified Accessibility & WCAG 2.2 AA Compliance

Priority: CRITICAL | **Timeline:** January - February 2026

Business Context: The European Accessibility Act (EAA) requires e-commerce sites to meet accessibility standards from June 2025. Maintaining a separate "accessible site" is not compliant and creates legal exposure. This epic eliminates the need for accessible.next.co.uk by making the main site fully accessible.

Acceptance Criteria

1. 100% WCAG 2.2 Level AA conformance on homepage and all linked pages
2. Accessible.next.co.uk retired with 301 redirects to main site
3. All images have meaningful alt text; decorative images marked appropriately
4. Full keyboard navigation with visible focus indicators
5. Skip navigation links and proper heading hierarchy (h1-h6)
6. All carousels/sliders have pause controls and are keyboard accessible
7. Video content has captions and audio descriptions
8. Color contrast ratios meet 4.5:1 for text, 3:1 for large text
9. Published VPAT/Accessibility Conformance Report on site
10. Automated accessibility testing in CI/CD pipeline (axe-core/Pa11y)

User Stories

US1:   As a screen reader user, I can navigate the homepage using only keyboard and hear all content read correctly

US2:   As a user with low vision, I can resize text up to 200% without loss of content or functionality

US3:   As a user with motor impairments, I can use all homepage features with keyboard only

US4:   As a user with photosensitive epilepsy, I am not exposed to flashing content above 3 flashes/second

US5:   As a user with cognitive disabilities, I can understand navigation and find products easily

US6:   As a compliance officer, I can access and share the accessibility statement and VPAT

Technical Tasks

- Conduct comprehensive WCAG 2.2 AA audit of current homepage
- Implement ARIA landmarks, roles, and live regions
- Refactor carousel components with proper focus management
- Add automated a11y testing to PR checks and nightly builds
- Create alt text guidelines and train content team
- User testing with disabled users (minimum 5 participants per disability category)

Epic 2: Progressive Enhancement & Core Web Vitals Optimization

Priority: HIGH | **Timeline:** January - March 2026

Business Context: The current "JavaScript required" message fails gracefully for users with JS disabled and creates SEO penalties. Google's Core Web Vitals directly impact search rankings. This epic implements progressive enhancement and optimizes LCP, FID, and CLS metrics.

Acceptance Criteria

1. Homepage renders meaningful content without JavaScript (product categories, search, navigation)
2. Largest Contentful Paint (LCP) < 2.5 seconds on 4G connections
3. First Input Delay (FID) < 100ms / Interaction to Next Paint (INP) < 200ms
4. Cumulative Layout Shift (CLS) < 0.1
5. Above-the-fold content served as static HTML with critical CSS inlined
6. Images use next-gen formats (WebP/AVIF) with proper srcset and lazy loading
7. Video backgrounds converted to optimized hero images with motion preference detection
8. Page weight reduced by 40% from current baseline

User Stories

US1: As a user on slow mobile connection, I can see and interact with the homepage within 3 seconds

US2: As a user with JavaScript disabled, I can browse categories and access product pages

US3: As a user with "reduce motion" preference, I see static images instead of video backgrounds

US4: As a search engine crawler, I can index all homepage content and links

US5: As a user on metered data, I can browse without excessive data consumption

Technical Tasks

- Implement server-side rendering (SSR) or static site generation (SSG) for homepage
- Configure CDN with edge caching for static assets
- Implement image optimization pipeline with automatic WebP/AVIF conversion
- Add prefers-reduced-motion media query support
- Implement resource hints (preconnect, preload, prefetch)
- Set up Core Web Vitals monitoring dashboard (RUM data)

Epic 3: AI-Powered Personalization & Search Enhancement

Priority: HIGH | **Timeline:** February - April 2026

Business Context: Personalized experiences drive 10-15% revenue lift in e-commerce. The current generic homepage misses opportunities to showcase relevant products based on browsing history, purchase patterns, and seasonal context. AI-powered search reduces friction and increases conversion.

Acceptance Criteria

1. Homepage displays personalized product recommendations for logged-in users
2. "Continue Shopping" section shows recently viewed and abandoned cart items
3. Search includes autocomplete with product images, categories, and trending suggestions
4. Natural language search ("blue dress for summer wedding") returns relevant results
5. Visual search capability (upload image to find similar products)
6. Personalization respects privacy preferences with clear opt-out options
7. A/B testing framework for recommendation algorithms
8. "Shop by Occasion" dynamic sections based on calendar and trends

User Stories

US1:   As a returning customer, I see products relevant to my past purchases and browsing
US2:   As a shopper, I can search using natural language and get relevant results
US3:   As a user with inspiration, I can upload an image to find similar products
US4:   As a privacy-conscious user, I can opt out of personalization while retaining core functionality
US5:   As a gift shopper, I see occasion-based collections (Valentine's, Mother's Day)

Technical Tasks

- Integrate ML recommendation engine (collaborative + content-based filtering)
- Implement Elasticsearch/Algolia with semantic search capabilities
- Build visual search feature using computer vision APIs
- Create real-time personalization API with edge caching
- Implement privacy controls and consent management

Epic 4: Sustainable Commerce & Transparency Features

Priority: MEDIUM | **Timeline:** March - May 2026

Business Context: 67% of consumers consider sustainability when making purchases. Next has Corporate Responsibility reports but this isn't visible on the homepage. This epic brings sustainability messaging to the forefront, enabling eco-conscious shopping decisions and differentiating from fast-fashion competitors.

Acceptance Criteria

1. Sustainable/eco-friendly product filter visible on homepage
2. "Responsible Collection" featured section on homepage
3. Carbon footprint estimates displayed for delivery options
4. "Pre-loved" / resale section prominently linked from homepage
5. Sustainability badges/certifications visible on product cards
6. Link to CR report and ethical sourcing information in footer elevated
7. "Repair & Care" guides linked from homepage

User Stories

US1:   As an eco-conscious shopper, I can easily find sustainable products from the homepage
US2:   As a customer, I can see the environmental impact of my delivery choices
US3:   As a budget-conscious shopper, I can access pre-loved/resale items easily
US4:   As a concerned consumer, I can verify Next's ethical sourcing practices
US5:   As a customer, I can learn how to extend the life of my purchases

Technical Tasks

- Implement sustainability tagging system in product database
- Build carbon calculator integration for delivery options
- Create dynamic "Responsible Collection" content module
- Design and implement sustainability badge component library
- Integrate with resale/pre-loved platform if available

Epic 5: Social Proof & User-Generated Content Integration

Priority: MEDIUM | **Timeline:** April - June 2026

Business Context: Social proof increases conversion by up to 270%. While Next has reviews on product pages, this content isn't surfaced on the homepage. This epic brings customer voices to the forefront through ratings, reviews, and user-generated content integration.

Acceptance Criteria

1. "Customer Favorites" section with star ratings and review counts on homepage
2. Instagram/social feed integration showing real customer photos
3. "Shop the Look" with customer-submitted outfit photos
4. Trust signals (Trustpilot score, awards) visible above the fold
5. "Trending Now" based on real-time purchase/view data
6. Video reviews/testimonials on homepage
7. "Staff Picks" curated selections from Next employees

User Stories

US1:   As a new customer, I can see social proof that builds trust in Next
US2:   As a shopper, I can see what products other customers love
US3:   As a fashion-conscious user, I can see how real customers style Next products
US4:   As a shopper, I can discover trending products based on real demand
US5:   As a customer, I can submit my own photos for potential feature

Technical Tasks

• Build aggregated ratings component for product cards
• Integrate Instagram API for social feed with moderation
• Implement UGC submission and moderation workflow
• Create real-time trending algorithm based on sales and engagement
• Integrate Trustpilot/external review aggregation

Epic 6: Mobile-First Experience & App Parity

Priority: MEDIUM | **Timeline:** May - June 2026

Business Context: Over 70% of e-commerce traffic comes from mobile devices. This epic ensures the mobile web experience matches app quality while providing smooth cross-platform journeys. PWA capabilities enable app-like features without requiring app download.

Acceptance Criteria

1. Touch-optimized navigation with thumb-friendly tap targets (min 48x48px)
2. PWA implementation with offline browsing and add-to-homescreen
3. Swipe gestures for carousels and product navigation
4. Mobile-specific quick actions (scan barcode, store mode)
5. Seamless handoff between mobile web, desktop, and native app
6. Push notifications for price drops, back-in-stock (with consent)
7. Apple Pay / Google Pay express checkout from homepage
8. Biometric login support via WebAuthn

User Stories

US1:   As a mobile user, I can easily navigate with my thumb without awkward reaching
US2:   As a user with poor connectivity, I can browse previously viewed content offline
US3:   As a user, I can add Next to my home screen without downloading an app
US4:   As a returning user, I can log in with Face ID or fingerprint
US5:   As a user in-store, I can scan products to check reviews and availability

Technical Tasks

- Implement Service Worker for offline support and caching
- Create PWA manifest with icons and splash screens
- Implement touch gesture library for swipe interactions
- Integrate Payment Request API for express checkout
- Implement WebAuthn for biometric authentication
- Build barcode scanning feature using device camera

Dependencies Matrix

The following table shows the dependencies between Epics:

Epic	Depends On	Enables	Shared Resources	Risk Level	Notes
E1 (A11y)	None	E2, E3, E6	Frontend Team	HIGH	Foundation epic
E2 (Perf)	E1 partial	E3, E5, E6	DevOps, Frontend	MEDIUM	SSR may impact E3
E3 (AI)	E2	E5	Data Science, Backend	MEDIUM	ML model training
E4 (Sustain)	None	E5	Content, Product Data	LOW	Independent work
E5 (Social)	E2, E3	None	Content, Frontend	LOW	Requires E2 for perf
E6 (Mobile)	E1, E2	None	Frontend, Native	MEDIUM	PWA complexity

Success Metrics & KPIs

The following metrics will be tracked to measure success of the roadmap:

Metric	Current	6-Month Target	Related Epic
WCAG 2.2 AA Conformance	Partial (separate site)	100%	E1
Lighthouse Accessibility Score	~75 (estimated)	95+	E1
Core Web Vitals Pass Rate	~60% (estimated)	90%+	E2
LCP (Largest Contentful Paint)	~3.5s	<2.5s	E2
Homepage Bounce Rate	~45%	35%	E2, E3
Search Conversion Rate	~2.5%	4%	E3
Personalization Engagement	N/A	40% CTR on recs	E3
Sustainable Products Discovery	Low visibility	15% of homepage clicks	E4
Homepage UGC Engagement	0	5% CTR on UGC	E5
Mobile Conversion Rate	~1.8%	2.5%	E6
PWA Install Rate	N/A	10% of mobile users	E6

Risk Mitigation Strategies

Risk	Probability	Impact	Mitigation
EAA non-compliance penalties	Medium	HIGH	Prioritize E1, engage legal early
SSR migration breaks existing features	Medium	HIGH	Feature flags, phased rollout
ML recommendations create bias	Medium	Medium	Diverse training data, human review
Performance regression from personalization	High	Medium	Edge caching, lazy loading
UGC moderation challenges	High	Medium	AI pre-moderation, clear guidelines
PWA not adopted by users	Medium	Low	A/B test prompts, clear value props
Resource conflicts between epics	High	Medium	Cross-functional planning, shared sprint reviews

Next Steps

1. Stakeholder review and approval of this roadmap
2. Conduct detailed WCAG 2.2 AA audit to baseline current conformance
3. Establish Core Web Vitals baseline with RUM data
4. Vendor evaluation for ML personalization platform
5. Sprint 1 planning for Epic 1 (Accessibility)
6. Form cross-functional squad with accessibility specialists

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