

KLP DESIGN SOLUTIONS

KIT POWELL · UX & BEHAVIOURAL PSYCHOLOGY CONSULTANT

DOCUMENT 3 OF 3 · LEADERSHIP

Executive Summary

A cross-discipline review of the Harbourly booking application — interface, experience — prepared for the leadership team.

CLIENT

Harbourly Ltd

PROJECT

Harbourly Mobile & Web Redesign

DISCIPLINES COVERED

UI · UX

DATE OF ISSUE

14 August 2026

PREPARED BY

Kit Powell

VERSION

1.0 — Final

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This document is designed to be read on its own. Full detail sits in the UI Audit Report, UX Audit Report.

Sample report. "Harbourly" is a fictional product created to illustrate the format, structure and depth of a KLP Design Solutions audit. All findings are invented and client screenshots are omitted.

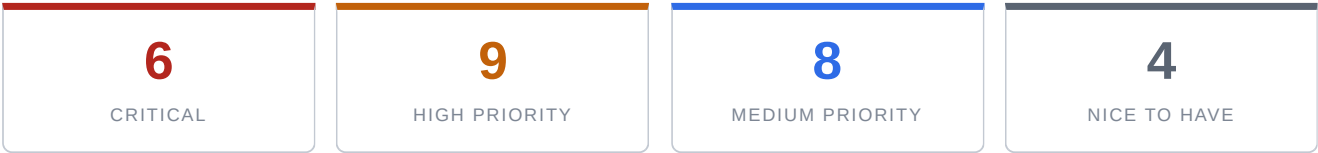
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The position in one page

Harbourly is a well-made product with a problem concentrated in one place. Search, discovery and property evaluation are genuinely good — fast, legible, and organised the way guests actually think. Almost everything that needs attention sits in the twenty seconds between a guest deciding they want a property and the money leaving their account.

Two things happen in that window. The product asks for account creation before it has shown a price or given a reason, and it then raises the total by roughly 18% with fees that were never mentioned. Separately, the interface has drifted: three primary button styles, two type scales, and five accessibility failures that put the product outside WCAG 2.1 Level AA.

The encouraging part is the shape of the work. Of the twenty-seven findings across the two audits, most of the highest-priority items are copy changes, token changes or deletions rather than rebuilds. Two structural pieces, checkout architecture and pricing display, need proper design and engineering time. Everything else can be cleared while those two are scoped.



DISCIPLINE	FINDINGS	CRITICAL	HEADLINE
User interface	14	3	Accessibility failures and visual drift from an unenforced design system.
User experience	13	2	Strong discovery, weak checkout. Control and error recovery are the weak points.

01

Usability health check

The product scored against Nielsen's ten usability heuristics — the standard high-level measure of a product's usability. Detail in the UX Audit Report.

#	HEURISTIC	SCORE	ONE-LINE ASSESSMENT
1	Visibility of system status	3/5	Good in search, absent during payment processing.
2	Match with the real world	4/5	Natural language, with occasional internal jargon.
3	User control and freedom	2/5	No safe way back once checkout begins.
4	Consistency and standards	3/5	Visual and behavioural drift between product areas.
5	Error prevention	2/5	Invalid input accepted, then rejected late.
6	Recognition rather than recall	3/5	Users must remember their own filter choices.
7	Flexibility and efficiency	3/5	Nothing rewards a returning guest.
8	Aesthetic and minimalist design	4/5	Clean and confident throughout.
9	Error recognition and recovery	2/5	Error codes instead of explanations.
10	Help and documentation	3/5	Help exists but not where it is needed.

OVERALL: 29 / 50

A clear pattern sits behind these numbers. The product scores well on everything to do with presentation and poorly on everything to do with control, prevention and recovery. It has been designed carefully for the journey where nothing goes wrong, and left largely undesigned for the moments where something does — which are also the moments that determine whether a guest books again.

Flow completion risk map

Every primary user journey with a traffic light. Green means guests complete it without noticing anything; amber means they complete it but pay a cost; red means a meaningful share do not complete it at all.

FLOW	STATUS	WHERE IT BREAKS DOWN
Search & discovery	WORKING	No material risk. Filters are not persisted on the results screen — a minor recall burden.
Property evaluation	WORKING	No material risk. Badge density competes for attention.
Booking & payment	SERIOUS	Account wall at step 3; 18% price rise at step 6; no route back to amend dates without losing everything.
Account creation	FRICTION	Eleven fields where four are needed, none marked optional, no autofill support.
Booking management	FRICTION	Any amendment requires contacting support.
Cancellation	SERIOUS	Entry point hidden five screens deep; refund amount never stated before confirming.

READ THIS ALONGSIDE THE REVENUE

The two red flows are the two that touch money. Everything the product does well happens before a guest has spent anything, and everything it does badly happens at or after the point of payment. That is the commercial shape of the finding, and it is why the recommended sequence starts at checkout rather than at the visual layer.

Accessibility compliance summary

A WCAG 2.1 Level AA snapshot, drawn from the UI Audit Report. Relevant to procurement, regulated sectors and international scaling.

REF	CRITERION	STATUS	CONSEQUENCE
1.4.1	Use of colour	Fail	Colour-blind guests cannot tell available dates from unavailable ones.
1.4.3	Contrast (minimum)	Fail	Secondary text unreadable in bright light and for many older guests.
1.4.11	Non-text contrast	Fail	Form field boundaries are hard to see.
2.4.7	Focus visible	Fail	Keyboard and switch users cannot tell where they are.
2.2.1	Timing adjustable	Fail	Checkout timer cannot be extended.
1.1.1	Non-text content	Partial	Icon buttons unnamed to screen readers.
1.3.1	Info and relationships	Partial	Headings not exposed semantically on three screens.
2.1.1	Keyboard	Partial	Date picker requires a pointer.
1.4.10	Reflow	Pass	Works at small viewport widths.
3.3.1	Error identification	Pass	Errors are described in text.

COMPLIANCE POSITION

The product does not currently meet WCAG 2.1 Level AA. Five criteria fail outright. None is structurally difficult — four of the five are token or CSS-level changes deliverable inside a single sprint. The exposure is real but the remedy is small, which is an unusually good position to be in. Relevant contexts: UK public sector procurement requires AA conformance, the European Accessibility Act applies to consumer booking services, and enterprise buyers increasingly request an accessibility statement during due diligence.

04

What works well

Strengths across every discipline reviewed. These are assets to protect during any redesign.

- ✓ **Search and filtering are genuinely strong**
The filter taxonomy matches how guests actually narrow a choice, results are fast, and the feedback loop between refining and seeing results is tight. Users feel effective here, and that is not accidental.
 - ✓ **The property page answers the right questions**
Information is grouped the way guests evaluate a place rather than the way a database stores it. Photography and review volume do real work.
 - ✓ **Visual craft is high where the design system is followed**
Where components come from the shared library, the product looks considered and current. The problem is drift, not taste.
 - ✓ **Language is plain and unpretentious**
No unnecessary jargon and no marketing voice in functional copy. The copy problems are of framing, not of clarity.
 - ✓ **Progress is shown honestly in checkout**
"Step 3 of 7" is more honest than most competitors manage, and worth keeping even while improving how it is framed.
 - ✓ **Reduced-motion preferences are respected**
A detail most products miss, and a sign that accessibility has been considered somewhere in the process.
-

05

Biggest usability problems

The most consequential findings from the UX Audit Report.

ID	PROBLEM AND CONSEQUENCE	PRIORITY
UX-03	Account creation is forced before any value is delivered. At step 3 of 7, before a price is shown, guests must register with no explanation and no guest-checkout alternative. Forced registration before checkout is among the most consistently documented causes of abandonment in e-commerce, and it costs most with first-time customers.	● CRITICAL
UX-04	The full price appears only at the final step. Fees add roughly 18% and are not shown in search, on the property page, or at any earlier step. This is both an abandonment driver and a compliance exposure under the Digital Markets, Competition and Consumers Act.	● CRITICAL
UX-05	There is no safe route back to change dates. Going back at any point after step 3 discards everything with no warning. Re-checking dates is normal behaviour when booking a holiday, and the product punishes it with total data loss.	● HIGH PRIORITY
UX-06	Account creation asks for eleven fields where four are needed. None are marked optional and platform autofill does not engage, so the form is typed out manually at the product's weakest step.	● HIGH PRIORITY
UX-02	Cancellation is hidden five screens deep. Converts a self-service action into a support call and reads as deliberate obstruction whether or not it is.	● HIGH PRIORITY

Biggest visual design opportunities

The most consequential findings from the UI Audit Report.

ID	OPPORTUNITY AND CONSEQUENCE	PRIORITY
UI-01	Secondary text fails contrast requirements everywhere. A single token change resolves the most widespread accessibility failure in the product and improves legibility on every screen — including outdoors, which is where a booking app is used.	● CRITICAL
UI-05	Calendar dates are too small to tap reliably. 32pt targets against a 44pt guideline, on the one screen every customer must pass through. Mis-taps here produce wrong-date bookings, support contacts and refunds.	● CRITICAL
UI-09	Availability is shown by colour alone. Around 8% of men cannot distinguish available from unavailable dates, and will conclude the app is broken.	● CRITICAL
UI-03	Dark mode is an inversion rather than a designed theme. Roughly a third of mobile users run dark mode permanently, and evening browsing is when a booking app is most used.	● CRITICAL
UI-08	Design tokens are not the source of truth. The root cause of most visual drift. Fixing it makes every other UI fix roughly an order of magnitude cheaper, so it pays for itself twice.	● HIGH PRIORITY

07

Highest impact changes before launch

Drawn from all three documents and ordered by impact for effort. This is the list to work from.

01	Show the all-in price from search onward — UX-04	Medium effort Critical
02	Remove the account wall; offer guest checkout — UX-03	High effort Critical
03	Fix the five accessibility failures — UI-01, UI-05, UI-06, UI-09, UX-07	Low-medium effort Critical
04	Make cancellation visible and state the refund — UX-02	Low effort Critical
05	Rewrite payment and validation errors — UX-08	Low effort High
06	Cut account creation to four fields with autofill — UX-06	Low effort High
07	Design dark mode properly rather than inverting it — UI-03	Medium effort Critical
08	Consolidate the design tokens — UI-08	High effort High
09	Standardise on one primary button treatment — UI-07	Medium effort High
10	Reduce corner radii, shadows and loading indicators to one set each — UI-10, UI-13, UI-14	Low effort Medium

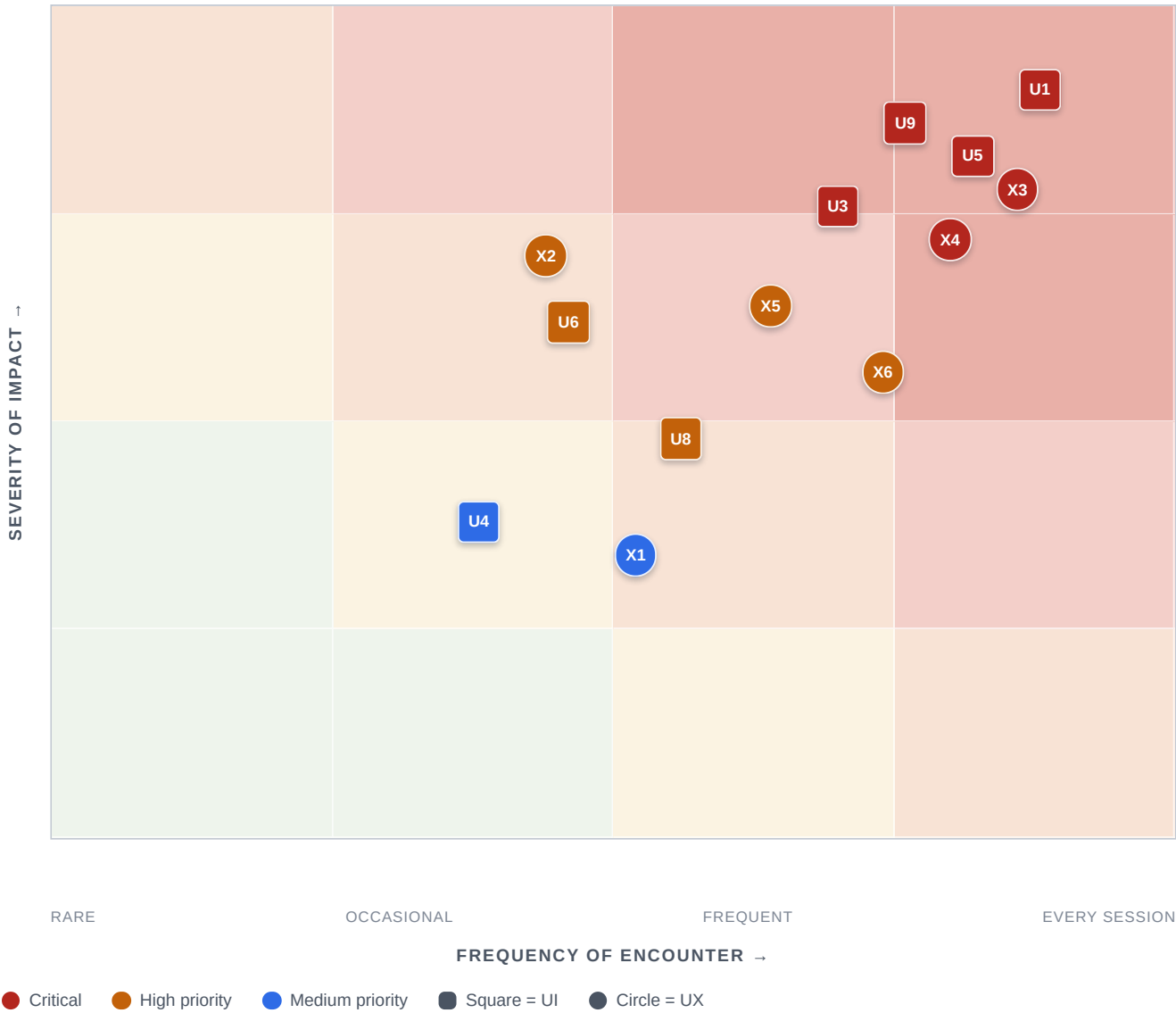
-
- | | | |
|--|---|------------------------|
| 11 | Make cancellation visible and state the refund — BP-02 | Low effort
Critical |
| <p>One link on the confirmation screen and in the email, plus the exact refund figure before the confirm step. Removes the asymmetry between how easy it is to commit and how hard it is to leave.</p> | | |
| <hr/> | | |
| 12 | Rewrite payment failure messages — BP-08 | Low effort
High |
| <p>State the money position first — "no payment has been taken" — then the cause, then the next step. Copy only, and it resolves the most trust-destructive screen in the product.</p> | | |
| <hr/> | | |
| 13 | Show the all-in price before the point of commitment — BP-07 | Medium effort
High |
| <p>Removes the late loss that forces guests to re-make the entire decision under a countdown, and defuses the highest-abandonment-risk moment in the journey.</p> | | |
| <hr/> | | |
| 14 | Add reassurance at the point of payment — BP-09 | Low effort
Medium |
| <p>A security statement, card scheme marks and a one-line restatement of the cancellation policy above the pay button. Their absence is itself a signal, and guests read it.</p> | | |
| <hr/> | | |
| 15 | Neutralise the notification prompt and untick marketing consent — BP-03, BP-10 | Low effort
Medium |
| <p>Equal-weight buttons, a concrete reason to accept, and consent unticked by default. Removes a reactance cost and a GDPR exposure in the same change.</p> | | |
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WHAT THIS COSTS

Items 3 to 6 total roughly one week of combined design and engineering effort and clear four of the six Critical findings. Items 1 and 2 need a proper design cycle because they touch checkout architecture and pricing display — scope them now, deliver them next. The design token consolidation (UI-08) should run alongside as enabling work, because it turns the remaining visual findings from component-by-component edits into single-line changes.

Combined NASA criticality matrix

The most critical findings from every discipline reviewed, on a single grid, plotted by frequency of encounter against severity of impact.

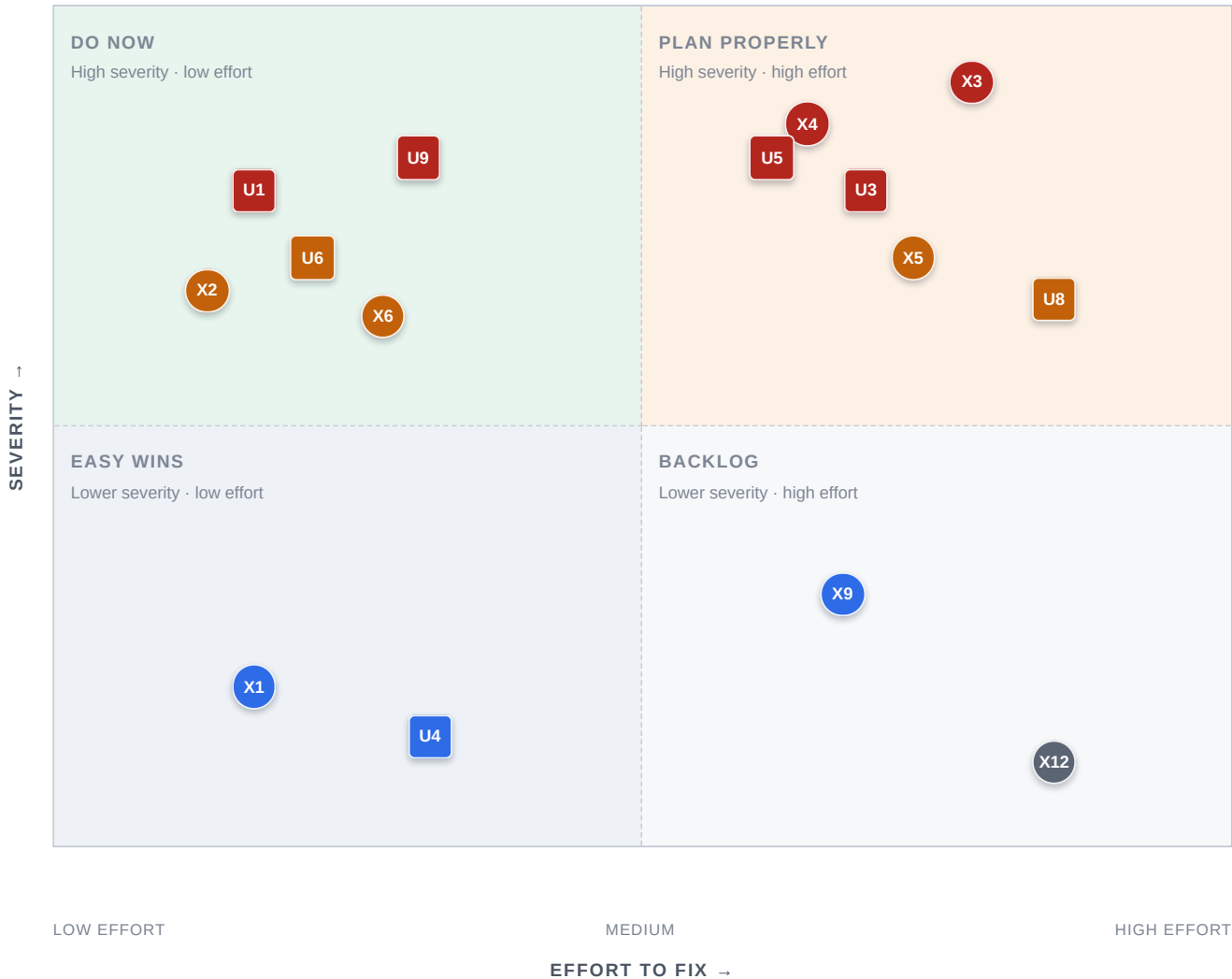


PLOT KEY

- | | |
|--|---|
| U1 UI-01 · Text contrast fails AA | X2 UX-02 · Cancellation buried |
| U3 UI-03 · Dark mode not designed | X3 UX-03 · Forced account creation |
| U5 UI-05 · Calendar targets too small | X4 UX-04 · Late full-price reveal |
| U6 UI-06 · No focus indicator | X5 UX-05 · No safe route back |
| U8 UI-08 · Tokens not authoritative | X6 UX-06 · Eleven-field sign-up |
| U9 UI-09 · Colour-only availability | |

Combined Severity vs effort matrix

The unified view of highest impact for lowest effort across every discipline reviewed. This is the prioritisation picture for the delivery team.



THE COMMERCIAL READ

Six findings sit in "do now", and four of the six Critical items are among them. That is favourable: most of this product's serious problems are copy changes, token changes and deletions rather than rebuilds. Only two items genuinely require a design cycle — checkout architecture and pricing display — and both should be scoped now and delivered next.

Recommended next steps

A clear sequence for the leadership team, with what each stage delivers and what it depends on.

1

SPRINT 1 · ~1 WEEK

Clear the "do now" quadrant

The five accessibility fixes, the payment and validation error rewrite, visible cancellation with a stated refund, the four-field sign-up form, and the removal of fabricated urgency. Roughly one week of combined design and engineering; clears the majority of the Critical findings.

2

SPRINT 1, IN PARALLEL

Consolidate the design tokens

Enabling work rather than a visible improvement. Replace hard-coded values with token references and add a lint rule preventing literals. Every subsequent visual fix becomes a single-line change rather than a component-by-component edit.

3

SPRINT 2 · SCOPE

Design the checkout and pricing changes properly

All-in pricing from search onward, guest checkout with post-payment account creation, persistent flow state so guests can amend dates safely, and a pausable hold timer. These interact, so design them together rather than as four tickets.

4

SPRINT 3 · DELIVER

Build the new checkout and rebuild the confirmation

Deliver the scoped checkout work alongside the confirmation screen redesign, so the guest's first experience of the new flow ends well rather than ending on a reference number.

5

POST-DELIVERY

Validate with real users

This engagement was expert review, not user testing. Five moderated sessions on the new checkout would confirm the predictions here and are likely to surface two or three things no heuristic review can. Worth doing before the changes are considered finished.

6

ONGOING

Prevent the drift from returning

Most findings in the UI audit are symptoms of an unenforced design system rather than individual mistakes. A component library treated as the source of truth, plus contrast and target-size checks in the build pipeline, stops this audit needing to be repeated in eighteen months.

WHAT I WOULD DO FIRST, IF ONLY ONE THING WERE POSSIBLE

Show the real price in search results. It resolves the largest abandonment driver, removes a live compliance exposure, defuses the cognitive overload at checkout, and removes the product's most damaging trust problem — in one change, in one place.

Prepared by Kit Powell · KLP Design Solutions · kitpowell.com

Full detail in the companion documents: UI Audit Report, UX Audit Report, Behavioural Psychology Audit Report.