
ANNUAL REPORT OF THE ACCESSIBILITY ADVISORY GROUP

1. Purpose of report

To report on the work and the achievements of the Accessibility Advisory Group (AAG) in 2012. The AAG's Annual Report is attached as Appendix 1.

2. Executive summary

The AAG has written its own Annual Report for 2012, which is attached as Appendix 1.

The report lists the results of a busy year for the AAG and highlights the group's achievements, activities and concerns.

3. Recommendations

Officers recommend that the Strategy and Policy Committee:

- 1. Receive the information.*
- 2. Note the work and achievements of the Accessibility Advisory Group in 2012.*
- 3. Note the issues highlighted in the report.*

4. Background

The AAG is one of the most long standing Council advisory groups. It was established in 1996 to provide advice to the Council on issues that concern people with disabilities in Wellington City.

As outlined in the AAG's Terms of Reference (TOR)¹, the purpose of the AAG is to provide feedback and advice on the Council's strategy and policy development, planning and service delivery across all of the Council's strategy areas from the perspective of people living with disabilities.

The AAG achieve this by actively giving advice, feedback or formal submissions internally to Council and to external parties.

¹ <http://wellington.govt.nz/~media/your-council/meetings/files/toraccessibility.pdf>

The TOR specifies that the AAG Annual Report to the Council should note work undertaken with Council staff, the group's achievements and any issues it wishes the Council to consider further.

5. Discussion

The AAG's report for 2012 is attached as Appendix 1. It contains responses to the reporting requirements as set out in the TOR.

The report contains an extensive list of activities for the year and comments on the establishment and enhancement of relationships with business units within Council and the Wellington Waterfront Limited.

The AAG believe they are achieving excellent results for the Council and cite the particular example of the inclusion of accessibility in building consents forms. This is an example where Council officers have taken on board their feedback and initiated what the AAG think is a New Zealand first.

They want to enhance their work in 2013 by ensuring Council officers who seek advice from them, in turn, report back to them on how their advice is used.

The report outlines a number of ongoing frustrations that the AAG have experienced. These are:

- serious safety concerns with the Lower Cuba Street area and on their difficulty in getting these issues resolved,
- the Council's failure to consistently provide accessible information.

The AAG is seeking for these issues to be remedied.

5.1 Consultation and Engagement

The AAG has written its own report which is attached as Appendix 1.

5.2 Financial considerations

None of the issues or initiatives contained in the AAG's report require increased funding.

5.3 Climate change impacts and considerations

None of the issues or initiatives contained in the AAG's report has climate change impacts or considerations.

5.4 Long-term plan considerations

None of the issues or initiatives contained in the AAG's report will impact on the Long Term Plan.

6. Conclusion

This report provides a summary of the work and activities of the AAG in 2012.

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SUPPORTING INFORMATION

1) Strategic fit / Strategic outcome

This activity fits with the outcomes for the Governance Strategy.

2) LTP/Annual Plan reference and long term financial impact

The Accessibility Advisory Group is managed within existing budgets.

3) Treaty of Waitangi considerations

There are no Treaty of Waitangi implications from this report.

4) Decision-making

This report does not require a significant decision.

5) Consultation

a) General consultation

No general consultation has been undertaken for this report.

b) Consultation with Māori

No consultation with Māori has been undertaken for this report.

6) Legal implications

There are no legal implications from this report.

7) Consistency with existing policy

The activities of the Accessibility Advisory Group are consistent with existing policy.

APPENDIX 1

Accessibility Advisory Group Annual Report 2012

Dear Mayor and Councillors,

It is with pleasure that we report back to you on the work the Accessibility Advisory Group (AAG) has undertaken and the progress that has been made towards making Wellington a more accessible city in 2012.

Milestones and achievements

As you will see from the attached list of AAG activities, we have had another busy year, with some significant milestones and achievements. The approval of the Accessible Wellington Action Plan is something with which we can all be very proud. We thank you for supporting this so decisively. Now the challenge for us all is to make this a living, breathing document that the Council is proud to consider in everything they do.

Throughout 2012, the AAG worked closely with Council officers to get in at the planning stages of projects. In general, there has been some great team work to get some great outcomes for Wellington. In particular, the Urban Design team have shown a real willingness to engage the AAG at the earliest possible opportunity. The Kilbirnie development was a great example of this early engagement, and continued discussion of challenges, as they came up in the planning stages.

Other relationships were established or worked on in 2012, including the Council's Building Consents Team, City Housing and the Wellington Waterfront's Technical Advisory Group. One of the highlights from this is the Building Consents Team who have created a New Zealand first initiative where on building consent packages the accessibility requirements are now written in alongside fire requirements. This will result in much higher levels of compliance and means accessibility requirements will not be as easily overlooked throughout construction, inspection process and final signoff. This is excellent and they should be commended.

Challenges and things we can improve on

While 2012 has been a year of great progress, it has also had its fair share of frustrations with two previously identified issues still unresolved:

1) Inaccessible information

Inaccessible information, and in particular inaccessible documents, continues to be released on the Council website. We implore the Council to strive for higher standards of accessible information across departments.

2) Lower Cuba Street

In 2011, the AAG raised concerns regarding the upgrade of the Lower Cuba Street area. Problems have continued at this site post construction and despite meeting with numerous people at Council over this issue and voicing our complaints, nothing seems to happen.

Our biggest concern is the state of the garden pits which are currently hazardous with drops of up to 80mm plus below the lip. This kind of drop would be enough to fully dislodge a wheelchair user, cause a significant fall to a blind person, and both of the above to a parent with stroller or young child. The staff at Felix (the neighbouring café) have seen some of these incidents occur.

The AAG would like to see this and other issues in the area immediately resolved.

In terms of what can be improved, the AAG is keen to strengthen the efficacy of how we work. We are delighted that we are now regularly contacted by business units and asked for advice. However, going forward, the AAG will be requesting that units report back on how AAG advice is used. Often we give advice on a design, plan or policy but do not see the end results. This change in approach will enable the group to assess whether we are making a difference.

Where to now

In 2013, the AAG is committed to helping the Council embed the Accessible Wellington Action Plan in everything it does. In doing so we would like to build on relationships we have with Councillors and Council staff and engage in new relationships. We also want to really concentrate on making sure we do not have the same issues popping up again in 2014. This will require a commitment by the Council - that being accessible is the expectation not the exception. Thank you for all your support in 2012. We look forward to working with you all to make Wellington a more accessible and vibrant city in 2013 and beyond.

AAG 2012 Activities

Advice on:

- Kilbirnie upgrade
- Miramar upgrade
- Opera House Lane upgrade
- Open Spaces Framework
- Temporary traffic arrangements
- Cable car upgrade
- Rubbish bin design
- City Housing upgrade design guide
- Accessible documents
- Positive Ageing policy review.

Submissions:

- Events Policy including oral
- Public Art Policy
- Kumutoto Precinct (Feb)
- Kumutoto Precinct including oral (Oct)
- Draft Long Term Plan including oral
- Greater Wellington Regional Council (GWRC) Draft Long-Term Plan including oral
- GWRC Bus review including oral review
- Town Belt Management Plan

Membership

- GWRC Accessibility Reference Group
- GWRC Public Transport Spine Study
- Companion card working group
- Safe and Sustainable Transport Reference Group

Lobbied regarding:

- Council's interpretation of S112 of the Building Act
- Lower Cuba St changes
- Council's provision of accessible documents

Meetings attended:

- GWRC transport meeting
- Attendance at Walking and Cycling Conference
- Regional disability network (members of Council accessibility/disability groups)
- Kumutoto public meeting
- Wellington Reaccreditation as a Safe City ceremony
- Ethnic Forum

Training:

- Some members attended and spoke at Council organised Barrier Free training
- Some members attended Council orientation day

Other:

- Developed accessible events check list for the Events team
- Gave feedback on Home Energy Assessment scheme
- Agreement developed between AAG and the Technical Advisory Group regarding working relationships
- Co-hosted Accessible Wellington Action Plan consultation workshop