

DISABILITY REFERENCE GROUP

MINUTES

5.30 P.M. – Tuesday 12th May, 2009

Committee Room 2

Members Present

Sara Pivac Alexander (Co-Chair)
Rosie Macleod (Co-Chair)
Alan Royal
Philippa MacDonald
James Tait
Sandie Waddell
Lisette Wesseling
Thomas Bryan

Also Present

Marie Retimanu-Pule (WCC)
Iona Pannett (Cllr)
Sinéad Roe (WCC)

1. Welcome

The Chair welcomed the group and a round the table of introductions was held.

2. Apologies

There were no apologies.

3. Confirmation of the Minutes

The Minutes of the previous meeting were confirmed as a true and correct record by Alan Royal and then by the whole group.

4. Report from the Chairs

Accessible Wellington Forum

The Chair thanked Sinead and the Housing subgroup for their hard work on organising the Forum in April. There were roughly about 75-80 attendees at the forum and next is it hoped that more people will attend and that all DRG members would attend.

NZ Bus Training

At the Forum, Garry Poole asked the DRG about NZ Bus driver disability awareness training. Rosie has drafted an email to send to NZ Bus to ask for an update on this. A response to this email is expected soon.

Email Communication

The Chair reminded members to put addresses into the address line of emails instead of blind copying so everyone knows who the email is going to, as transparency in communication is an important principle for the group. Alan said that he will continue to Bcc as he does not want his email address forwarded on to third parties. Thomas said that if an email is Bcc'd it is impossible to reply to all.

The Chairs agreed to ensure everyone knows who to send DRG emails to because some emails are being sent to Council officers unnecessarily and there needs to be some clarity around this.

The DRG need to give more thought to this issue and to setting up an email account or distribution list for correspondence on DRG issues. It was agreed that members' email addresses should not be distributed among other members' networks.

Action: Co-Chairs to draft guidelines on email communication for the group after further discussion with members.

Other comments: Sara was thanked for the good job she did presenting at the forum. Members present reported that people were impressed with the presentation.

5. Paul Kos – Kilbirnie Town Centre Upgrade

Paul Kos, Senior Town Planner gave a presentation on the Kilbirnie Town Centre upgrade.

The project is about the processes to develop Kilbirnie Town Centre and to let the public know how they can be involved in the process. Council are doing this project because they think that this a very important centre in the Wellington City area and there has not been much planning on improving the centre over the last 10 years. Council will develop an overarching vision for the centre looking at what role it will have and where we see Kilbirnie in relation to other centres. Council will develop an urban plan and look at the most cost effective way to develop this vision. The study area focuses on the town centre itself, the commercial heart of the town centre including the area surrounding the town centre and will also take account of the linkages with community facilities in the immediate surrounding area. This will have an impact on the wider area and Council may need to consider gathering information on a wider scale.

The Council will be sending information out in June and asking the community for their views. In July/August the focus will be on drafting a vision for Kilbirnie. In October/November a draft town centre plan and action plan will be released. The final plan will be approved in February/March.

Questions from the DRG:

You mentioned having drop in and information sessions. Have you looked at sessions for retirement villages and a more public forum as opposed to drop in sessions?

This type of consultation will happen more during the second stage of public engagement.

Can you give some idea of the type of things Council are looking at?

Traffic congestion and parking, how traffic moves through and around the centre.

The connections between all parts of the centre, difficult to get from certain points.

Guidance on the types of commercial and retail uses in the centre and how residential living will fit into the centre and surrounds.

Can you talk more about ways in which the plan will incorporate accessibility issues like kerbs?

Connections – ease of way-finding.

Use of appropriate materials and surfaces

Streetscape improvements - footpaths, pedestrian crossings and signals at these crossings.

Parking and mobility parking and how the centre provides for this..

Will there be other opportunities for the DRG to have further consultation on this project?

When the vision is developed we will have a representative attend a DRG meeting. Throughout this process there will be the opportunity to report back should the DRG want this and after the workshops we will take on any additional comments that the DRG may have. If you want to give any feedback at any time please email Paul Kos.

Comment: the DRG should have regular input on each phase so that they can give appropriate feedback.

Regular reports will be given to the Accessibility Advisor.

Comment: as well as footpaths, the design and positioning of bus stops is very important.

There will be significant changes to the location of bus stops due to the possibility of the bus terminal in Kilbirnie moving.

Is it too early to do this exercise until it is known what is happening with the bus terminal site?

The Council has a general idea of what is proposed for the site. A vision and plan for Kilbirnie the town centre be incorporated into this to make any changes more cohesive overall for the area.

Comment: If the space is developed for retail use with Kilbirnie already being quite disjointed and spread out, this will make it even more difficult to get to.

The Council has been doing some consulting on the role of centres and other commercial areas that has been discussed at the Strategy and Policy

Committee. Current proposals are suggesting that there is a need to consider the impact on the CBD and the wider area.

Action: Paul to liaise with Sinead about providing an update for the group after Stage One of the Public Engagement is completed.

6. Council Officer's Report

New Zealand Sign Language Week

The Council ran 8 sign language taster classes during NZSL week that were well received.

Sara won the award of NZSL Teacher of the Year as part of the NZSL In Action awards.

Adelaide Road bus stop

Meetings have been held both internally to Council and with the RNZFB about the bus stop outside Baby Star on Adelaide Road. The proposal to relocate this bus stop will go for public consultation and will hopefully be moved by the end of the year. ARTA have recently published their Bus Stop Infrastructure Design Guidelines. It is hoped that these guidelines can be used by Wellington City Council to create a set of standards on bus stop design.

Accessible Wellington Map

A text version of this map is being developed. Also under way is the process of looking at producing a large print version of the map.

DRG meetings

At next month's meeting the group will hear a presentation on the Community Facilities Review and will hear more about DRG involvement in advising on this project.

A representative from BCIS has been invited to attend a DRG meeting for a question and answer session on issues to do with building consents and access. An example of the type of question that could be asked is around the change of use of buildings from private to public use.

Council are looking at a new design for landscaping Te Raekaihau Point and want to consult with the DRG when a concept design is available in early August.

Snapper Cards

It was noted that there have been changes to Snapper alerts and that users are now being advised when their card balance is low. Snapper have mentioned the possibility of having a 'tag off' reminder message sound as doors open to help passengers to remember to tag off.

Airport Flier

NZ Bus has introduced new buses on the Airport Flyer route that are very high tech and well equipped and have asked if the DRG would like to participate in a demonstration.

It was noted that the wheelchair space is being mistaken for a luggage storage space. NZ Bus are aware of this problem and are looking at ways to improve signage to make the purpose of this space more obvious.

7. LTCCP Submission

Most subgroups agreed on general points about the draft LTCCP.

Arts Subgroup

- Council needs to adopt a disability strategy
- The word and concept of accessibility should be written into the document as well as inclusiveness
- Deaf people and blind people should have continued free access to audio books and DVDs, including audio described films.
- The proposed Toi Poneke Arts Hub should be accessible for everyone.
- Grants contracts should include an accessibility clause. Organisations would report back on how they are making performances or facilities accessible according to performance measures.

Comments:

Councillor Pannett – it should be made clear that all types of disability are included, including examples. Also good to look at performance measures.

Philippa and ICT group – increase in numbers accessing facilities should also measure an increase in user satisfaction

ICT Subgroup

- No mention of accessibility in the vision statement.
- A service that is available is not necessarily accessible.
- Changing demographics and increased numbers of people with impairments means there needs to be more ease of access to information.
- Sign language is an official language in NZ and should be included in Governance. Performance measures need to be more specifically targeted.
- The word efficient is used in the draft LTCCP but there is no mention of the word effectiveness.
- Web alerts are effective but they need more information in the alerts rather than simply containing links to inaccessible documents.
- Increased resources for Web Centre.
- WCC website should be written in Plain English and include NZSL

Urban Design & Transport Subgroup

- Transport is a significant spend for Council and it is vital that the transport systems are designed for ease of use by all.
- Bus stops should be designed to be accessible for all passengers.
- Ensure footpaths are maintained and in good condition.
- Council to be congratulated on increasing mobility parking spaces.

- DRG look forward to advising on accessible parking meters.
- Public space upgrade projects should include early consultation with the DRG – examples of good and bad practice will be included.

Housing Subgroup

- Group had not finalised their comments as yet but James said that he was happy with things that have been included with regard to housing.

Comments:

Councillor Pannett – group could look at whether Council are doing a good enough job in terms of the housing upgrade with regard to accessibility.

Philippa - not a lot of information about accessibility and access in the plan, changes to the wording about performance measures and reference to universal design should also be included.

Additional comments:

Councillor Pannett - submission could include reference to parks, eco attractions and beaches in terms of accessibility.

DRG should acknowledge the work done by Council to improve accessibility as maintenance and upgrading of these facilities does occur and this is considered as a priority so the facilities can be more inclusive. DRG consultation and Universal Design principles should be included as part of all public space projects. DRG should offer to be available for consultation in the planning stages.

Recreation Strategy – many recreation centres do not cater for disabled people. Limited opportunities for training for disabled athletes and sportspeople as a result. All recreation centres should be accessible. Important to acknowledge where Council does well in terms of providing access and include examples.

Action: James and Sara to draft submission for approval by the group with assistance in reviewing from Alan.

Lisette and Rosie to give oral submission during the week May 25-29.

The meeting closed at 7:30 pm.

Next meeting is scheduled for: Tuesday, June 9th, 2009 at 5:30 pm.