

## Wellington City Council Accessibility Advisory Group Terms of Reference – June 2010

### 1. Introduction

*“Disability is not something individuals have. What individuals have are impairments...”*

*Disability is the process that happens when one group of people create barriers by designing a world only for their way of living, taking no account of the impairments other people have.”<sup>1</sup>*

#### NEW ZEALAND DISABILITY STRATEGY 2001

Wellington City Council will work to ensure its policies, plans and projects use **‘people first’ language** focusing on individuals, not disabilities and consider the **‘social model’ of disability** that recognises people are disabled by barriers in society (systems, attitudes, architecture, services) that exclude or prevent them from participating fully<sup>2</sup>.

### 2. Purpose

The Accessibility Advisory Group (AAG) will 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.

Background information on the position of the group in the work of the Council is included in **Appendix A**.

### 3. Role

The role of the AAG is to:

- provide feedback and advice to Council business units on strategy/policy development, planning and service delivery as and when required
- be an information conduit to and from the Council
- advise the Council on accessibility issues, trends and opportunities
- raise accessibility awareness and issues of national and international interest
- aid Council engagement and consultation with people with disabilities and the wider community on accessibility issues
- liaise and share information with other Council advisory groups
- submit ideas for new initiatives to be considered for inclusion in the Council’s Long Term Council Community Plan and Annual Plan
- where required, present submissions on Council’s plans and policies
- represent the broad spectrum of issues for people with disabilities in relation to the Council’s activities.

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<sup>1</sup> *The New Zealand Disability Strategy: Making A World Of Difference Whakanui Oranga* (2001), Ministry Of Health, Wellington, New Zealand: p 8

<sup>2</sup> *Arts for all: opening doors to disabled people - Ngā toi mo te katoa: whakapuare tatu mo te hunga hauā*, Published by Creative New Zealand in partnership with Arts Access Aotearoa: p 56 and 57

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The AAG is an advisory group set up to inform the work and activities of the Council. It will not have the mandate or independent budget to commission work or undertake activities outside of this advisory role.

Role descriptions for the Chair and members of the AAG are attached in **Appendix B**. Role descriptions for the Accessibility Advisor and appointed Councillor are also included in Appendix B to provide clarity between the roles of each party.

### 4. Definitions/glossary of terms

A glossary of terms is included in **Appendix C**.

### 5. Membership

The group will have up to nine community advisory members. A role description for all members is included in **Appendix B**.

A Councillor will be appointed to the group to act as a liaison between the group and the Council's other elected members. The appointed Councillor, Accessibility Advisor and other officers of the Council are not members of the AAG but support the work of the group.

#### 5.1 Criteria for membership

Members will:

- have the experience of living with a disability (personal experience or as a care giver/support person)
- be committed to regularly liaising with the range of organisations and communities supporting or including people with disabilities – providing information to these groups/people and seeking their feedback
- have a broad knowledge of accessibility as well as the needs and issues affecting people with disabilities
- be able to represent broad interests (i.e. not limited to the views of a specific organisation or disability)
- have good relationships and networks with a range of communities
- reside within Wellington City Council's boundaries.

There should be an appropriate balance of men and women on the group as well as Māori, senior citizens and youth representation. Representation from other ethnic communities is encouraged.

#### 5.2 Chair/Co-Chairs

Members of the AAG will elect a Chair/Co-Chairs annually each year in October.

Members cannot be nominated or elected for Chair/Co-Chair if they are due to complete their three year term.

A role description for the Chair/Co-Chairs is included in **Appendix B**.

## **6. Term of Appointment**

The standard term of appointment will be three years.

The term of appointment can be less than three years if a member:

- resigns, or
- misses three consecutive meetings without tendering an apology.

A member can apply to be appointed for a second term.

No member will be allowed to sit on the group for more than two consecutive terms.

### **6.1 Rolling membership**

The AAG will have a rolling membership to ensure that the group has some experienced group members at all times.

If a member needs to resign before the end of their three year term, the Council will call for applications from people willing to complete the remaining time of that term. For example if a member needed to resign after one year of his/her three year term, the group will only appoint for the remaining two years (not another full three years).

## **7. Selection and Removal of Members**

Recruitment for new members will be initiated by the Accessibility Advisor who will work with AAG members and the Manager of City Communities to determine any gaps in the group's membership.

If a member resigns from the group, the Council will work to fill any vacancies as soon as possible (see point **6.1 Rolling membership** to determine the appointment term for any new member replacing a member who has resigned).

### **7.1 Promotion and selection process**

The Council will call for nominations using contacts with disability consumer groups, the Council's website and local print media. It will also promote the opportunity to sit on the AAG at annual community forums organised by the Council.

Applications will be reviewed and shortlisted by a selection panel consisting of:

- the Accessibility Advisor
- two members of the AAG
- one other Council officer.

The role description for members included in **Appendix B** will be used to facilitate the selection process. The Manager of City Communities will make the final decision about all appointments to the AAG.

### **8. Reporting / Accountability**

The AAG will report to the appropriate Council committee every six months, outlining work undertaken with Council staff, the group's achievements and any issues it wishes the Council to consider further.

The names and details of all members of the group and minutes of the group's meetings will be available on the Council website.

The Accessibility Advisor and City Communities will be responsible for promoting AAG and Council initiatives to make Wellington City more accessible. Success stories/updates will be promoted as appropriate through a range of media including: the Accessibility Forum, Absolutely Positively Wellington print promotion, Council's web presence, Access Radio etc

### **9. Frequency of Meetings**

The group will meet once a month. Members will be paid for 12 meetings a year.

Special meetings may be called if there is urgent business. Payment for these meetings will be at the discretion of the Manager of City Communities.

### **10. Operation**

The Council's City Communities unit will be responsible for the maintenance and servicing of the group. It is also expected that members of Council's Policy Team will liaise closely with the group as well as officers from other business units, as and when required.

The Accessibility Advisor will work with other officers in the City Communities unit to compile agendas, write minutes and provide other administrative and advisory support to the group.

#### **10.1 Member induction and training**

All new members joining the AAG will receive an induction pack and information to explain the Council and the Accessibility Advisory Group's function and processes. The Accessibility Advisor with the City Communities unit will be responsible for the provision of the induction pack and induction process for all new members.

Members will receive an annual presentation to explain the Council's strategy and policy planning process and the Council's forward programme. Other training for members will be provided as required at the discretion of the Manager of City Communities.

#### **10.2 Conflict of interest**

Members will be asked to complete a conflict of interest form when they join the group and at the beginning of each year they sit on the group. The Accessibility Advisor will be responsible for providing members with a conflict of interest

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form as part of new member induction packs and to all members at the beginning of each year.

### **11. Quorum**

Half of the positions currently filled, not including vacant positions, must be present for the group to have a quorum.

### **12. Payment**

Members will be paid \$110 for up to 12 meetings they attend of the full AAG.

The Chair will be paid \$150 for every meeting of the full AAG attended. If the group decides to have more than one member in the role of Chair, the additional \$40 available to the Chair will be split between the Co-Chairs.

Payment for any special meetings will be at the discretion of the Manager of City Communities.

#### **12.1 Support funds to enable participation**

Members will be reimbursed for travel expenses required to allow members to travel to and from the 12 set meetings per annum. Members will not be reimbursed for subgroup meetings.

If a support person is required for a member to fully participate in the group's discussions, the Council can pay this person up to \$40 per hour. Payment will be at the discretion of the Manager of City Communities.

Payments will not be made to members to provide care for children or other family members to allow attendance at AAG meetings.

The Council will ensure meeting venues are fully accessible with accessible toilets and that other required assistance (such as New Zealand Sign Language interpreters) is available.

### **13. Conflict Resolution**

Should conflict occur, the Chair/Co-Chairs and the group will be responsible for working together to resolve the conflict in the first instance. If the conflict persists, the Council will only intervene at the request of the majority of the group's members.

### **14. Review**

Council advisory groups will be reviewed alongside all Council committees and subcommittees early in the new triennium following a local body election.

Advisory groups will be established to support the Council's strategic goals. Suitable terms of reference will then be developed to ensure the group's work

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and relationship with Council is effective. All new advisory groups and their terms of reference will be subject to the approval of the Council.

## Appendix A: BACKGROUND INFORMATION

### The Council – elected representatives and staff

Wellington City Council has two key roles under the Local Government Act 2002 to:

- promote the social, cultural, environmental and economic well-being of Wellington and its people
- facilitate democratic local decision making.

The Council is made up of 15 elected representatives – the Mayor and 14 Councillors. They set the city's overall strategic direction, and approve budgets, policies and plans aimed at achieving that direction. A key part of their role is to listen and consider the views of the community before making decisions.

The elected representatives are supported by the Council's chief executive and 1,450+ staff, who provide advice, implement Council decisions and look after the city's day to day operations<sup>3</sup>.

### The Accessibility Advisory Group

The Accessibility Advisory Group (formerly known as the Disability Reference Group) is one of the longest standing Council advisory groups, having been established in 1996 to provide advice on issues that concern people with disabilities.

Advisory groups<sup>4</sup> have been established on a case-by-case basis to provide advice to the Council on a broad range of issues from the perspective of a particular community. They provide preliminary feedback on Council planning, projects and policy development. Members act as conduits for information from and to specific communities. **Table 1** shows the relationships between Advisory Groups, Council staff, policy/strategy and the decision makers – the Mayor and Councillors.

### Table 1: The position of Advisory Groups in the Council's decision making process

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<sup>3</sup> Wellington City Council's Long Term Council Community Plan 2009-19 Page 4

<sup>4</sup> The Council currently has five advisory groups: Environment Reference Group (ERG), Pacific Advisory Group (PAG), The Youth Council, Safe And Sustainable Transport Reference Group (SASTRG – formerly known as the Road Safety Reference Group) and the Accessibility Reference Group.





## **Appendix B:       ROLE DESCRIPTIONS – CHAIR, MEMBERS, THE ACCESSIBILITY ADVISOR AND COUNCILLOR**

### **The Chair/Co-Chairs**

- acts as the group's principle spokesperson and contact point with the Council (including officers and the appointed Councillor)
- facilitates open communication where all members can contribute to conversations
- promotes informed dialogue
- doesn't allow individuals or sub-groups to dominate the meeting
- manages meetings to enable considered yet efficient decision making
- sets parameters for the discussion
- summarises the conversation and provides direction.

The Chair/Co-Chairs will ensure that the advice provided by the group is communicated by:

- signing off minutes
- liaising with the appointed Councillor and officers – especially the Accessibility Advisor, the Manager of City Communities and other key staff in relevant business units across the Council.

### **Members**

- provide advice on the development and implementation of the Council's policies, projects, planning and service delivery
- liaise regularly with the range of organisations and communities supporting or including people with disabilities – providing information to these groups/people and seeking their feedback
- liaise with officers – the Accessibility Advisor, Manager of City Communities and other relevant officers across the Council
- actively participate in meetings
- maintain a broad knowledge of accessibility as well as issues affecting, and opportunities for people with disabilities
- represent broad interests and a 'pan-disability' perspective (i.e. not limited to the views of a specific organisation or impairment)
- have good relationships and networks with a range of communities

### **City Communities unit and the Accessibility Advisor**

The Council's City Communities unit will be responsible for the administration and promotion of the group.

City Communities and the Accessibility Advisor will:

- work with members of the AAG to develop an Accessibility Action Plan
- ensure officers presenting to the AAG are informed of, and present information to the group, in accordance with the AAG's presentation guidelines
- liaise with other units of Council to ensure the AAG receives feedback on advice provided to Council officers

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- provide information, advice and an explanation of the Council's political process and agreed Council policy where required and requested by the group (alongside other Council officers as required)
- induct new AAG members, provide conflict of interest information and forms for members to complete, compile agendas, write minutes and provide other administrative and advisory support to the AAG.

The Accessibility Advisor is not a member of the AAG. The advisor's role is to:

- develop effective networks and relationships across the disability community and wider disability sector
- act as a key Council contact point for accessibility (and disability) questions, concerns and information brokering
- work across Council business units to ensure accessibility is considered in the development and implementation of policy, strategy, planning and service delivery in the city.
- support the AAG with forward programme management and liaison with business units
- enable other business units to develop effective working and consultation relationships and practices to address accessibility issues
- organise Accessibility Forums
- ensure that issues raised by the forums, the community and the AAG are addressed either by initiating projects or by coordinating with other Council business units
- provide advice, support and information (on gaps and trends) to the Council about accessibility and the issues affecting disability communities
- work towards keeping a safe and healthy work environment by practising safe work methods, reporting all incidents, identifying work place hazards and using appropriate safety equipment

### **The Elected member/Councillor**

The Councillor appointed to the AAG is not a member. The Councillor's role is to:

- act as a liaison and information conduit between the Council and the Accessibility Advisory Group, conveying, if necessary, the concerns of the group
- provide, in conjunction with officers, information, advice and an explanation of the Council's political process and agreed Council policy where required and requested by the group.

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## Appendix C: Glossary of terms

- Accessibility** A general term used to describe the degree to which a product, device, service or environment is accessible by as many people as possible. It can consider *physical accessibility*, *social accessibility*, people's *attitudes* and *actions* etc. In the context of these terms of reference, the Accessibility Advisory Group will provide advice on Council policy, planning and activities considering physical and social accessibility from the perspective of people living with disabilities.
- Disability** The New Zealand Disability Strategy (NZDS) describes disability as a process that occurs when 'one group of people create barriers by designing a world only for their way of living, taking no account of the impairments other people have'. 'Impairments' include physical, sensory, neurological, psychiatric, intellectual and any other impairment, and encompass people with permanent, intermittent, temporary and perceived impairments.<sup>5</sup>
- People first** A worldwide advocacy movement that focuses on individuals, not a disability. It uses people-first language.<sup>6</sup>
- Social model** A view of disability that recognises people are disabled by barriers in society (systems, attitudes, architecture, services) that exclude or prevent them from participating fully.<sup>7</sup>

## Key Guiding Documents

- **NZ Disability Strategy 2001** - <http://www.odi.govt.nz/nzds>
- **UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities** - (New Zealand signed this in 2007. It was ratified in 2008) - <http://www.un.org/disabilities>
- **Human Rights Act 1993** - [http://www.legislation.govt.nz/act/results.aspx?search=ts\\_act\\_human+rights\\_resel&p=1](http://www.legislation.govt.nz/act/results.aspx?search=ts_act_human+rights_resel&p=1)

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<sup>5</sup> *An Action Plan for Human Rights Mana ki te Tangata*, Chapter 5: The rights of disabled people Ngā tika o te hunga haua <http://www.hrc.co.nz/report/chapters/chapter05/disabled01.html>

<sup>6</sup> As above - *Arts for all: opening doors to disabled people*

<sup>7</sup> As above - *Arts for all: opening doors to disabled people*