

## DISABILITY REFERENCE GROUP

### MINUTES

5.30 P.M. – Tuesday 14 April, 2009

Committee Room 2

#### Members Present

Sara Pivac Alexander (Co-Chair)  
Rosie Macleod (Co-Chair)  
Alan Royal  
James Tait  
Jules Taniwha  
Sandie Waddell  
Lisette Wesseling

#### Also Present

Marie Retimanu-Pule (WCC)  
Sinéad Roe (WCC)

#### **1. Welcome**

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

#### **2. Apologies**

Philippa MacDonald and Councillor Iona Pannett

#### **3. Confirmation of the Minutes**

The Minutes of the previous meeting were confirmed by the Group.

#### **4. Report from the Chairs**

There is only a brief report from the Chairs this meeting because they will be giving a presentation at the Accessibility Forum on Friday. It was noted that there has been a lot of work carried out by the Housing Subgroup.

#### **5. Report from the Council Officer**

##### **Strategy & Policy Committee Papers:**

All Councillors are on the Committee and Council's strategy and policy papers go to the Committee for rejection or passing. The DRG can have input to some of the papers before and after they have been to Committee. Papers coming up in May and June include

- Changes to the Dog Control Policy.

- Further developments on the Passport to Leisure scheme (now called Leisure Card).
- LTCCP deliberations.
- Courtenay Place Flexible Streetscape proposals.

### **Draft LTCCP:**

The draft LTCCP will be made public this week. There is a summary of the plan, the plan itself and a guide to the plan available this week either via hard copy or electronic. A DRG meeting on April 23rd will include a presentation from the LTCCP team giving the main points in the draft plan and how to make submissions with the rest of the meeting being a group discussion about making submissions. There will also be a LTCCP roadshow presentation at the Forum on Friday.

### **Accessible Forum:**

At the Forum there will be presentations from Bill Wrightson and the Lifetime Design Foundation. There has been a good response for attendees. The design competition documents will be available on Friday April 17<sup>th</sup> with the competition officially beginning on that date.

### **Upcoming Events:**

Events over the next few months include taster classes for New Zealand Sign Language week (the first week in May). Council will also be participating in a video sign language interpreting trial in the library. Council are supporting a video interpreting trial from June for 4 or 5 months and hope to make this facility available in a public space in the Central Library.

### **Upcoming Work for DRG:**

Upcoming work for the DRG will include some input into the Community Facilities Review and the Cobblestone park upgrade. The Kilbirnie Town Centre project will be starting in a month's time.

### **Passport to Leisure queries:**

What is the availability of the Passport to Leisure to people who receive ACC payments and who is entitled to this card? *This card is for beneficiaries, people with physical disabilities and it was passed last year to include recent migrants and refugees. There has also been a proposal to also include superannuitants.*

Is there any reason why there is just one particular disability group included in the scheme and in similar schemes overseas the support person gets in for free? Also why has this not come to the DRG before?

*This scheme has an existing arrangement and is not a companion card scheme. This scheme has been around for at least 4 years and we can talk to the Manager of Recreation Wellington about the criteria. It would also be beneficial for Recreation Wellington to come along to a DRG meeting.*

Are mental health disabilities included in the scheme?

*Not sure what the history of the scheme is. Maybe it would be good to have a look at the criteria for the scheme again.*

## **6. Amanda Cox – GWRC Regional Parks Network Strategy**

Amanda Cox referred to the letter and questionnaire that has been sent out to the DRG for comment. She said that GWRC are looking at the long term vision for the regional parks.

Questions raised around the Parks Strategy included:

*Does this cover things like accessible toilets? When GWRC are putting plans together they need to get input from groups representing disabled people to make sure everything is covered and they will continue to do this. The provision of facilities will come under the long term strategic plan. They are also looking at how parks can best cater for people with disabilities.*

*Where do Council parks end and Regional Parks start? All parks located outside of Wellington City are Regional Parks.*

Amanda Cox then went through the questionnaire that was sent out and got feedback from the DRG. She asked if there was any other feedback if it could be sent through to her.

## **7. Tony Dawe – Introduction to the History of the DRG**

Tony Dawe gave a presentation on the origins and history of the DRG in the 1990s. The group thanked Tony for his visit and noted that it was useful for them to have knowledge of the work of DRG members who had gone before them, particularly in the early days.

Sinead asked about the idea of having meetings outside of Council and if Tony Dawe meant DRG meetings or the forums. Tony Dawe said that he meant the DRG meetings and that the meeting could focus on the needs of a particular group if it were held at a specific location, for example RNZFB or Arthritis New Zealand.

## **8. Gerald Blunt – Public Space Design Policy**

The Draft Public Space Design Policy paper has been circulated to the DRG. Last year a paper was put up to Council to look at the Public Space Design Policy review. There were a number of issues that led to this acknowledging that Council had a gap in the directive about what happens in public spaces with the exception of how you move large vehicles with this policy coming from a different perspective.

Primarily there will be one Public Space Design Policy with the purpose of ideas or thinkings and giving a set of policies or directions about what happens in the public environment. One of the issues looked at is the Adshel bus shelters. These were really the only way the Council could provide shelter at a minimal cost to the rate payer.

Part of the work has been to set up a Public Space Advisory Group (PSAG). This group covers cross Council units with a number of externals as well. They meet once a month and discuss several projects. This is the first time there has been a group set up to work across Council with a number of different units. A couple of pieces of work being discussed at the moment include a review of the Consultation Plan and work on developing a charter for universal access and design. The PSAG would like to engage with the DRG on this. They have developed a Public Space Design Manual that captures all existing pieces of street furniture. There are a whole lot of designs that are not working very well and this groups needs to look at how they work.

Questions raised:

Regarding the comment about a Universal Design charter, the group would be keen to see an overarching guide about the way things are designed in streets. Things like getting rid of kerbs and having painted lines are very dangerous to people who cannot see and these basic concepts need to be included in this charter.

*Gerald Blunt said that there has not been a lot of thinking about how this charter will be developed. The group would be keen over the next year or so to work on this and agree to some sort of system on how this would work.*

Regarding Adshel bus shelters, group are not sure whether this has come through the DRG for consultation before but these shelters provide difficulty to visually impaired people as they tend to walk into them.

The Adshel project has been discussed with the DRG before and concerns were noted but there does not appear to have been any consultation about where shelters are placed. The group would like to see a design standard for all bus stops. It was noted that Auckland has done some work on this.

*Gerald Blunt said that this needs to be taken back to the group and the issue raised there*

Objective 3 – improve accessibility for all. This is not reflected for most people. The key word here is about a safe environment. If there is a safe environment for everyone this will be an accessible environment for everyone. These can be made attractive as well.

Does the maintenance of walkways come under this project as they need to be kept clean especially for seniors?

*Gerald Blunt said that the more the group get into this the more they are trying to cover off. Part of the exercise is to get different parts of Council talking together as this kind of dialogue has been lacking in the past.*

Objective 5 – night time environment of the City. This is also an area where access comes into play with regard to lighting.

The DRG have done work on the Courtenay Place project with regard to lighting. The group noted that it will be interesting to see the finished product to see how

improved the lighting is. Their opinion is that lots of bright lights are not necessary as there are different ways of illuminating an area. Hopefully when the lights are put in an improvement will be seen.

It was noted that when things are designed with an audio track there needs to be a visual display as well. This is something that the DRG would like to see included in the document.

The question was asked how the DRG can have input into the policy document.

*Gerald Blunt said that he would work with Sinead on a brief and engage with the DRG as a group.*

## **9. Subgroup Reports**

### **Accessible Art Sub-Group – Lisette**

The Arts Sub group met on 31 March with Iona McNaughtan and Marianne Taylor from Arts Access Aotearoa. They are being funded by Creative New Zealand to write a guide for arts organisations about how to bring people with disabilities to the arts. The kinds of barriers which will be discussed range from physical, sensory and attitudinal. To inform the research, various types of organisations are being surveyed, including those which provide services for disability groups and those which are specifically arts-related. Another survey is being prepared for individuals. The arts sub group helped nut out some of the wording for the questions for this individual survey. We are sending our final recommendations by the end of this week. The survey will then be distributed widely among disability networks so the writers can get a good spread of data to include in the statistical part of the publication. The arts sub group will continue to have input into the bulk of the document, which involves compiling best practice guidelines for making arts event more accessible to disabled people.

Since the Council is supporting this project, and since its launch is scheduled for the end of the year, we are thinking to expand this to include some workshops on accessible arts, including showing a portion of an audio described film and perhaps some workshops.

Sinead has been in touch with Vision Australia regarding what is involved in training audio describers. She is discussing whether there are possibilities to bring somebody over to run a training session here.

Sara said that there is going to be an interpreted tour of the Monet exhibition organised throughout New Zealand Sign Language week. The Deaf Short Film Festival and the play “Words Apart” will also be taking place during this week. Some of these events are not audio described and not accessible to blind audiences.

### **Transport & Urban Design Sub-Group – Thomas**

There is nothing major to report with information from the group having been tabled at the February meeting. The group are meeting on April 15th to look at Urban Design for Wellington.

Thomas expressed concern that a Council traffic engineer had not been able to attend a site visit about a bus stop on Adelaide Road. The Foundation of the Blind have concerns about a few points that were raised previously with the engineer that have not been answered.

The issue with this stop is with the location of the bus stop, as it is intersected in two places by vehicle entrances and cars are driving across the footpath to access parking. Due to safety concerns this raises, particularly for blind passengers waiting at the stop, the bus stop should be moved. Thomas asked whether the DRG could be told whether the vehicle entrance at the bus stop is legal. Sinead will talk to the Traffic Engineer.

**Snapper Cards** – Sinead was contacted about the metlink monthly Gold Pass migrating to Snapper this year. There is a concern that people with intellectual disability will find this hard to deal with. She has raised this with Snapper who have said that they have designed a system and NZ Bus have some discretion as to how it is used. Sinead noted that this issue brings up the need to have a representative on the DRG with an intellectual disability, as this perspective can be overlooked.

Thomas said that it may be an opportune time to invite Snapper back to the DRG as the information promised has not been forthcoming.

Alan noted that the question about whether or not people can tag on and off at the back door has not been answered. Sinead said that Snapper have not developed the capacity to do this.

In terms of the accessibility of the Snapper website, Snapper feel that cost is a prohibitive issue. Lisette noted that in London people do not have to tag off and maybe they can look at modifying the product to be the same here.

The next monthly reports will be from the ICT and Housing Sub-Groups.

## **10. Other Business**

The Royal New Zealand Foundation of the Blind is working with the Botanic Garden to establish a Sensation Walk – Braille Trail, to commemorate the bicentenary of Louis Braille's birth. The walk will include plants of interest to senses other than sight. There will be Braille signs and brochures available. The launch is scheduled for 26 May and she will be inviting the DRG to the launch.

The meeting closed at 7:25 pm.

Next meeting is scheduled for: Tuesday, May 12, 2009 at 5:30 pm.