

DISABILITY REFERENCE GROUP

MINUTES

5.30 P.M. – Tuesday 10th November, 2009

Committee Room 2

Members Present

Philippa McDonald (Co-Chair)
Rosie Macleod
Thomas Bryan
Alan Royal
Sandi Waddell
Lisette Wesseling

Also Present

Jula Goebel (WCC)
Marie Retimanu-Pule (WCC)
Councillor Iona Pannett
Wendy Walker (Item 3)
Jenny Rains (Item 3)
John McGrath (item 3)

1. Welcome

The Chair welcomed the group and thanked everyone for attending.

2. Apologies

Apologies were received from Sara Pivac-Alexander and James Tait.

3. Strategy and Policy Committee Forward Programme - Accessibility Policy

Council officers (Wendy Walker (Director Citizen Engagement), Jenny Rains (Manager City Communities) and John McGrath (Manager Policy)) responded to the reference groups questions as to why the Council had voted against developing an accessibility policy. It was noted that while the councillors voted against the development of an accessibility policy it should not be interpreted as a lack of support by councillors for accessibility issues.

Council Officers acknowledged the concerns of the reference group and that while policy work is on hold at the moment work could be started on developing an accessibility action plan for the Council

The reference group expressed frustration at not having a policy to guide decision making and actions within Council and that the LTCCP and Councils policies do not currently have an obvious commitment to accessibility.

Action: Jenny Rains will attend the next Disability Reference Group meeting to discuss the development of a Council Accessibility Action Plan and how this can be adopted by Council

4. Charles Gordon – Te Raekaihau Point (the site of the marine centre).

Much of the existing site will remain and after public consultation it was decided to allow pedestrian and vehicle access (although limited).

Plans for the site include an accessible deck around the toilet block; giving access to the beach. Access around the site will include secondary paths separated from traffic with a hard surface for wheelchairs. It was noted current plan is to join up with the existing track from the Lyall Bay area. A discussion on specific aspects of accessibility noted that:

The footpaths (1.6 meters wide) have separating bollards (1.5 meters apart) and that the footpath is curved and has a different surface to that of its surrounds.

There will be designated mobility parks and the toilets are accessible.

5. Confirmation of Minutes

The Minutes of the previous meeting were confirmed as a true and accurate record by Alan Royal and seconded by Thomas Bryan.

6. Continuation of the Discussion on the Accessibility Policy

The discussion continued on the development of an accessibility policy how was accessibility reported on in the Quarterly Reports.

It was noted that the DRG had (via their LTCCP submission) highlighted that performance measures in the LTCCP do not reflect disability/accessibility issues

It was agreed that the WCC needed to have an action plan with this to be discussed at the next meeting.

Action:

1. Letter to be sent to the Mayor outlining the group's frustration at not having an accessibility policy emphasising why one is needed:
Sandy Waddell and Alan Royal.
2. Invite the Council Officers to help the group understand what the annual plan is and how to have input (especially at the different stages –development and consultation-):
Accessibility Advisor
3. Council officers to be invited to inform the group how accessibility is reported on in the annual and quarterly reports
Accessibility Advisor

7. Report from the Co-Chairs

Interviews have been held for the new DRG members with Errolyn Jones joining the group in February 2010. There are still vacant positions on the DRG and the position will be advertised again in the New Year.

It was noted that consideration should be given to filling the current gaps on the DRG when appointing in the New Year. It was suggested that it would be good to have younger people, people with an intellectual disability, mobility/wheelchair disability and someone from the ethnic community on the group.

The DRG presented submission to Council regarding the Manners Mall upgrade. It was noted that the group answered questions presented to them from Councillors.

Action: Call for applications for new members in the New Year
Accessibility Advisor

8. Accessibility Advisor's Report

Arts and Accessibility: December 4 worksop and book launch: This event includes the launch of "Arts For All | Ngā toi mo te katoa" followed by a panel discussion and a free audio description workshop

City Housing Wayfinding Signage Project: Lisette Wesseling has been providing input and discussion have centred around including Braille, colour, contrast and embossing of signage.

Accessible Documents – The Accessibility Advisor is working to develop sustainable processes to creating accessible documents for the Council. A one page document giving simple instructions on how to create accessible documents will be written up. These guidelines would be implemented as part of Council's internal standards; training will be offered all units.

The group emphasised that there needed to be a strong commitment for training and it might need to be mandatory

Action: The group to be kept informed of the progress
Accessibility Advisor

9. Sub Group Reports

All Sub Group reports have been emailed to the DRG members prior to this meeting.

Transport – Presentation to Council on the Manner Mall changes. The Sub Group have been invited to the Greater Wellington Public Transport meeting.

Arts – email of report sent to members. Requested that the Sub Group receive more information about the event on 4 December.

ICT - have met with the Acting Operations Officer for Positively Wellington Tourism. They have explained the problems about not getting back with information to the DRG. Part of this site will be launched in February. Links will be sent through to Thomas and Lisette for testing. Positively Wellington Tourism will be reporting back on a regular basis.

Action: Accessibility Advisor to liaise with the group and PWT to ensure regular reports
Accessibility Advisor

10. Other Business

Seating at Venues – Concern was expressed that wheelchair seating is limited to the ground floor in many venues and that at the WestpacTrust Stadium lazy boys have been installed in areas originally designated as wheelchair seating.

Action:

1. To be put on the agenda in the New Year to discuss.
2. The Accessibility Officer to do some preparatory work and to get an over view of Wheel Chair Seating at Council's venues

Pedestrian Crossings – It was noted that the tones on some pedestrian crossings have been turned off or down due to complaints being received from residents. It was noted that this has not been finalised as yet and there will be a site meeting held to discuss the level and tone. This will be brought back to the DRG for further discussion.

Action: the Accessibility Advisor to follow up internally and report back

Wet House A short discussion followed on the Wet Hostel

The meeting closed at 7.35pm
Next meeting is scheduled for: Tuesday, December 8th, 2009 at 5:30 pm.