

Accessibility Advisory Group

Terms of Reference – June 2014

“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.”

NEW ZEALAND DISABILITY STRATEGY 2001

A Glossary of Terms is in Appendix D

1. Purpose of the Accessibility Advisory Group (AAG)

- Advise Council on how to help grow a great and accessible City, where barriers to people with impairments are minimised.
- Bring lived experience and knowledge to Council around accessibility issues in the context of Council’s roles and priorities.

The AAG will not be seen as representing all views on accessibility in the City.

2. Expectations

Members will be accountable for their efforts to provide¹:

- Constructive advice – on Council projects and policies, where possible identifying evidence and solutions, whilst taking into account the wider needs, issues and views of people with impairments.
- Communication – engage with the Council and relevant communities to increase information flow and build knowledge of Council processes to increase involvement in Council decision-making.
- Involvement of communities - work with council staff to help the Council involve more people with impairments and from wider communities in the setting and meeting of city-wide objectives. The Council is ultimately responsible for full community consultation.

The specific work areas where members will contribute will be set out in the annual work programme. The work programme will be finalised reasonably quickly and in a collaborative way. That annual work programme will be determined jointly between the AAG, Council officers, Chair of the appropriate Committee and Councillor representative. This will take

¹ Within their capabilities and any legitimate time / resource constraints.

into account the Council's priorities as well as the skills, experience, interests and commitments of AAG members. This will enable members to have early input into the Council's work².

Council officers will report back to the AAG on how advice was considered, and whether or not officers and councillors chose to act on that advice, with reasons given at the appropriate time through e-mail and at AAG meetings.

The Council liaison officer, working with the Chair, will track meeting attendance and contribution to workflows. Issues considered will include:

- Punctuality and attendance of meetings
- Behaviour in relation to the role and Code of Conduct
- Degree of active involvement in the work of the group.

*See number 7 Terms of Appointment.

3. Reporting

The AAG will publicly report to the appropriate Council Committee within the last four months of each financial year. The report will outline the agreed work plan and progress against this over the previous year, and any issues it wishes to raise with Council.

The names of members, their attendance and minutes of the group's meetings will be available on the Council website and annual report.

4. Meetings

There will be up to 12 paid meetings per year of the full AAG. A provisional meeting schedule will be agreed once the work programme is finalised. This schedule can be varied throughout the year.

5. Training for members

The Council will provide members with:

- An induction explaining the Council's function and processes and the role of the AAG
- Training or resources as necessary to fulfil their roles as an AAG member. For example, Chairing, contributing at meetings, understanding the role of local government and presentation skills as needed or on request.

6. Key membership criteria

The AAG will include up to 9 members.

Members need to:

- have the experience or knowledge around people living with impairments

² Work of Council includes Council's strategy and policy development, planning and service delivery.

- have a broad knowledge of ‘accessibility’ as well as being able to advise on the wider needs and issues affecting people with impairments
- have good relationships and networks with a range of communities
- reside within Wellington City Council’s boundaries.

Subject to the above, the Council will during recruitment, have regard to maintaining an appropriate balance of impairment types, age and gender mix, Māori and other ethnic communities needs and issues.

Further details of the roles and accountabilities of members (including Chairs) and non-members that support the AAG are in Appendix A.

7. Terms of Appointment

The standard term of appointment will be three years. An AAG member’s membership will cease if that member resigns and may cease if that member:

- misses more than three consecutive meetings without apology or 4 meetings within one year
- does not work proactively during any one-year review period, or
- behaves in a way that violates the Code of Conduct (Appendix B) or is otherwise seen as detrimental to the effective operation of the AAG.

A member can be nominated for two consecutive elections.

No member can sit on the group for more than two consecutive three year terms.

A member may be nominated for a future term not immediately after them completing two consecutive terms.

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

8. Payment

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

The Chair will be paid \$150 for every meeting per year 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.

The Council will also support the group by providing refreshments at up to 12 meetings per year.

Council at its discretion will consider providing extra resources to AAG on a case-by-case basis and where those extra resources enable the group to meaningfully contribute to the Council’s objectives.

9. Budget

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

10. Support funds to enable members to fully participate at meetings

Members will be reimbursed for reasonable travel expenses required to allow members to travel to meetings and participate in AAG based activities.

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.

The above payments will be at the discretion of the relevant Council directorate.

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

11. Conflict Resolution

Should conflict occur, the Chair/Co-Chairs and group will work with Council Officers to resolve the conflict.

If there are any concerns, members should raise them:

- with the Chair of the group if concerns are about other members
- with the responsible Councillor and/or senior Council officer if concerns are about the Chair of the group
- with the Chair of the group (who will decide whether to raise them with an appropriate senior Council officer) if concerns are about employees.

12. Conflict of interest

Members will be asked to complete a conflict of interest form when they join the AAG and at the beginning of each year they sit on the group. This will be provided by the Council liaison officer.

Members are also expected to notify the liaison officer of any new or emerging conflicts of interest at the start of each meeting where the liaison officer is present.

For the purpose of the AAG, conflicts of interest are deemed to occur where a member advises on work-streams that impact on:

- money or other resources the member has invested outside Council
- the member's family, or
- official positions the member holds on groups or bodies outside of Council.

13. Review of Terms of Reference

The Terms of Reference will be reviewed as required. AAG will be involved in any review. All changes to the Terms of Reference will need approval by the appropriate Council Committee and the Council.

Appendix A: Role descriptions for the AAG Chair, members, Liaison Officers, Responsible Council Manager and Appointed Councillor

Members

Member position	Roles and accountabilities
Chair/Co-Chairs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • encourage open communication where all members can effectively contribute • work with Council officers to compile meeting agendas • work with Council officers and AAG members to develop, complete and implement the group’s annual work programme referred to in section 2 • be the AAG spokesperson representing the views and recommendations of the group • work with the Council liaison officer to review the contribution of AAG members at the yearly review and raise any concerns with the appropriate Council Officer • sign off minutes from the previous meeting • Members of the AAG will elect a Chair and Co-Chair (if applicable) annually each October.
All AAG Members (including Co-Chairs)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • be prepared for meetings and consider issues with an open mind • actively participate in AAG meetings and contribute to the actions in the agreed annual work programme • keep a broad knowledge of accessibility issues and issues affecting people with impairments • turn up to meetings on time • be available and attend any other training/meetings that may be planned • establish, maintain and make the most of existing relationships with other groups around the City • be committed to appropriately providing information to the range of organisations and communities supporting or including people with impairments –and seeking their feedback • not take individual issues to AAG that can be dealt with via general enquiries to Council’s information Centre • comply with the new Code of Conduct in Appendix B • have their contributions reviewed annually against the current “Terms of Appointment”.

Non-Members who will work with AAG

Member position	Roles
Council liaison officer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • administration, support and promotion of the group. This will include the induction of new members, development of agendas, recording meeting minutes and following up on action points to report back to the group • work with the Chair/Co- Chair to set the meeting agenda • work with the Chair to track attendance and review the contribution of AAG members at the yearly review • work across Council business units to help them effectively engage with the AAG in the right ways and at the right stages of a work-stream (development and implementation of policy, strategy, planning and service delivery) • ensure officers presenting to the AAG are informed of, and present information to the group that is targeted to the group's needs • Progress projects agreed between AAG and officers.
Responsible Council Manager	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • approve the AAG's annual work programme • help the Council liaison officer ensure officers work with AAG in the right ways and stages.
Accessibility Advisor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • offer support on an 'as required' basis for communication of certain issues between the wider Council and the AAG • work closely with AAG, including attending meetings and reporting back on AAG's work-streams • ensure that issues raised are discussed with the AAG and any outcomes/developments are reported back on.
Councillor/s	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • act as a communication link between Council (councillors and officers) and the AAG by attending meetings on a regular basis. • provide with officers, information, advice and explanation of the Council's political process and agreed Council policy when required and facilitate feedback from the AAG to Council.

Appendix B: Code of Conduct

1. Objective

The objective of the code is to enhance:

- mutual trust, respect and tolerance between members as a group and with Councillors and Council staff
- the credibility and accountability of the Council within its communities.

The following is the standard of behaviour that is expected from members of Wellington City Council reference and advisory groups.

2. Relationships with others

Members will conduct their dealings with each other, and elected members, in ways that:

- are open, honest and maintain integrity
- focus on issues rather than personalities
- avoid aggressive, offensive and abusive conduct
- maintain confidence in their group.

3. Relationships with Council staff

The effective performance of the group also requires a high level of cooperation and mutual respect between members and Council staff. To ensure this is maintained, members will:

- treat all employees with courtesy and respect (including the avoidance of aggressive, offensive or abusive conduct towards employees)
- observe any guidelines that the Chief Executive puts in place regarding contact with employees
- not do anything which compromises, or could be seen as compromising, the impartiality of an employee
- avoid publicly criticising any employee in any way, but especially in ways that reflect on the competence and integrity of the employee
- raise concerns about employees only with the Chair of the group, who will then decide whether to raise the issue with an appropriate senior Council officer
- not seek to improperly influence staff in the normal undertaking of their duties.

4. Contact with the media

Groups may have the opportunity to input into a number of different initiatives and for consistency, it is important that a single point of contact is established to respond to any media enquiries.

- All media enquiries shall be redirected to Council staff.
- If it is agreed with Council staff that it is appropriate for a view to be expressed by the group, only the Chair, or the Chair's proxy, can represent the group to the media. The

Chair will work with the Council's External Relations team in relation to any public comments.

- Views expressed to the media on behalf of the group must have been previously agreed on by the group as a whole.
- If a member is contacted by a journalist for a view from their group, they must refer the journalist to the Chair or Co-Chair.
- Members are free to express a personal view in the media or the view of other organisations of which they are a member, at any time. However, they must make clear that these represent their private views as an individual, or the view of their organisation.

5. Confidential Information

In the course of their duties, members will receive information that they need to treat as confidential. This will often be information that is either commercially sensitive or is personal to a particular individual or organisation.

Members should be aware that failure to observe confidentiality will impede the performance of Council and could expose the Council to prosecution under the Privacy Act 1993 and/or civil litigation.

6. Individual queries

Members will not bring individual issues to their advisory groups that can best be dealt with by going through the Council's Service Centre.

7. Honesty and Integrity

Members have a duty to act honestly. They must declare any private interests relating to their duties and take steps to resolve any conflicts of interest in such a way that protects the public interest. They must not act in order to gain financial or other benefits for themselves, their families, friends or business interests.

8. Complaints

Any complaints about other group members, officers or Councillors should be addressed confidentially to the Chair who can then raise the issue with relevant Council officers.

Appendix C: Recruitment and Selection Process

Recruitment of new members will be managed by the Council liaison officer (Appendix A).

The Council will call for nominations using contacts with disability consumer groups, the Council's website and local print media.

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

- the Council liaison officer
- two members of the AAG
- Council's Accessibility advisor.

The role description for members included in Appendix A will be used for the selection process. The selection panel will make the final decision about all appointments to the AAG.

Replacement of Vacancies

If a member resigns or is removed from the group, the Council will work to fill any vacancies if required.

Appendix D: 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.
- People first** A worldwide advocacy movement that focuses on individuals, not a disability. It uses people-first language.
- 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.

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_rese&p=1