

DISABILITY REFERENCE GROUP

AMENDED TERMS OF REFERENCE

7 June 2007

1. Purpose

The Disability Reference Group (DRG) will advise the Council on issues that concern people with disabilities in Wellington. The group will respond to issues raised by the Council as well as raise concerns expressed by people with disabilities.

The Disability Reference Group will be the first line of contact between Council and people with disabilities, although the group is not intended to remove or reduce Council's responsibilities to obtain further input on disability issues. Council would expect the DRG to advise on and assist with consultation with people with disabilities. The DRG may, when necessary, activate its own response from people with disabilities to ensure broad consultation.

The purpose of the group is also to build:

- people with disabilities' knowledge of Council processes to enable them to participate in Council's decision-making processes
- the Council's knowledge of the needs of people with disabilities, and how these can best be resolved.

2. Role

Generally, the role of the DRG is to provide:

- feedback and advice on the Council's service delivery, policy development, draft policies, design and planning
- an information conduit to and from Council
- new initiatives to be considered for inclusion in Council's Long Term Council Community Plan and Annual Plan
- submissions on Council's plans and policies
- representation of the broad spectrum of issues for people with disabilities in relation to Council's activities.

The group is able to recommend that pieces of work be undertaken and request Council officers to determine if some issues can be achieved within current budgets. The group has the ability to select and call on outside expertise whenever it is needed and is able to set up sub-groups to progress particular issues of interest (members of these sub-groups will not receive payment for meetings held by the sub-group).

The group is an advisory group that can make recommendations to the Council.

It will not be given an independent budget to commission work or undertake activities outside of this advisory role.

The Council has other advisory groups – and is seeking increased cooperation between those groups. DRG members may occasionally be asked to attend meetings of the other groups to share information.

3. Membership

Number and make-up of members

The group will have up to nine members and one Councillor representative. As all disability groups cannot be represented on the group, it is envisaged that members will have a broad knowledge of disability issues. In particular, it would be preferable for one or more representatives on the group to be able to give advice on mental health, Deaf/hearing impairment and intellectual disability issues and to have someone who can provide a Maori point of view of disability issues.

It would also be preferable for the group to have a positive gender balance.

Chair

The group's Chair will be elected annually by the group each year in October. A member cannot be elected Chair if they are due to complete their three year term prior to the next October.

Criteria for membership

- Experience of living with a disability
- An awareness of the needs and issues affecting people with disabilities
- Able to represent broad interests (i.e. not limited to the views of a specific organisation)
- Good relationships and networking within own community
- Able to be assertive and proactive
- Committed to regularly reporting back to own community
- Resides within the Council's boundaries.

A background in community/advisory work would also be an advantage.

Members will also be asked to complete a Conflict of Interest declaration.

4. Term of Appointment

A member's term of appointment cannot exceed three years without reapplying for their position through a further selection process. 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 be appointed for consecutive periods of three years.

5. Selection and Removal of Members

A recruitment process will be held every year as the DRG will have a rolling membership (to ensure that the DRG is not made up of all new members at any one time). Three new members will be recruited each year.

The recruitment will be initiated by a sub-group of three DRG members who will determine if there are any gaps in the DRG's membership that need to be filled. The Council will call for nominations for the number of positions available from disability consumer groups and at the annual Disability Forum in **December** each year.

Deleted: **October**

The DRG sub-group will short-list the applications made, and a selection panel made up of the appropriate Council officer, two members of the DRG, and another person, as considered appropriate (for example, if a person with a specific disability is being sought, it would be appropriate for someone with that disability to be on the selection panel) will interview the short-listed applicants.

The Council will provide a role description to facilitate the selection process.

If a representative resigns from the group, the Council will fill that vacancy in the following **December**.

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6. Accountability

The group will be accountable to people with disabilities by:

- fulfilling the group's communications strategy
- presenting to the annual disability/accessibility forum – where the group will outline its achievements, state the recommendations it has made to Council, and receive feedback on further issues for its consideration
- placing information on the Council's website. Members will be listed on a webpage, with the disability areas each member is responsible for identified beside their name. Minutes of the group's meetings will also be available from the website.

7. Reporting

The group will report to the **appropriate Council** committee every six months, outlining its achievements and the issues it wishes Council to consider further.

Deleted: **Community, Health and Recreation**

The DRG will also report back to Council through the Director, Community Services.

Deleted: The group may also report back to other Council Committees on an ad hoc basis, as issues arise falling within the responsibility of a specific committee.

8. Frequency of Meetings

The group will meet once a month. Special meetings may be called if there is urgent business.

9. Operation

The maintenance and servicing of the group will primarily be the responsibility of the City Communities Business Unit. The group will be supported by an officer who will

be responsible for compiling agendas, writing minutes and providing other administrative and advisory support to 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.

Induction

New members joining the group will be inducted into Council processes by Council officers. The responsible Council officer and the Chair of the DRG will also induct the member into the group's function and processes.

10. Quorum

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

11. Payment

Members will be paid \$110 for every meeting they attend of the full DRG. The Chair will be paid \$150 for every meeting of the full DRG 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.

Members will be reimbursed for their taxi fares to and from the meeting. Should a support person be required for a member to fully participate in the group's discussions, the Council will pay this person \$40 per hour.

The Council will also make assisted devices (such as computers, hearing loops, accessible toilets) available where possible.

Deleted: toilets with disability

12. Conflict Resolution

Should conflict occur, the Chair 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.

13. Review

The Terms of Reference will be reviewed as required, but at least once every three years. All changes to the Terms of Reference will be subject to the approval of the appropriate Wellington City Council committee and Council.