

EDC14D014

Title: Terms of Reference – Access All Areas Working Group
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Issue

To improve the design of new builds and ensure we are meeting basic access requirements across a range of disabilities.

Recommendation

The Committee is invited to review the newly drafted Terms of Reference for the working group Access All Areas, (formerly the Campus Access Budget Group) and agree the frequency with which this group might report to the Committee.

Resource Implications

Administration of the group is largely within the Estates Division and will progress from the earlier Campus Access Budget Group. Additional support may be provided by other members of the group from time to time on an adhoc basis or in order to gather a wider input from disabled staff and students.

Risk Implications

The extension of the group to include disabled people will reduce the risk of rework and expensive corrections to initial oversights in design. It will also reduce the risk of legal challenge around basic access to buildings, services, education, fire safety.

Equality and Diversity

The extension of this group has been informed by the need to assure the rights of disabled people across the built campus.

Timing of decisions

The group would like to report developments to the Committee a minimum of once per annum.

Further Information

Further information about this paper can be obtained from the Equality and Diversity Office on Ext's. 1898 or 7209. Alternatively, please email h.murdoch@uea.ac.uk

Background

Please see below.

Discussion

The Equality Act 2010 (and previously the Disability Discrimination Act 1998) established the need to ensure reasonable adjustments. Section 20 requires that where 'a provision, criteria or practice' put a disabled person at a disadvantage (in comparison with those who are not disabled) the organisation is required 'to take such steps as it is reasonable to take to avoid the disadvantage.' The Act also clarifies that where referring to a physical feature 'avoiding a substantial disadvantage includes'

- Removing the physical feature in question
- Altering it or
- Providing a reasonable means of avoiding it.

Also, reference to a physical feature includes:

- A feature arising from the design or construction of a building
- A feature of an approach to, exit from or access to a building
- A fixture, or fitting, furniture, furnishings, materials, equipment or other chattels or
- Any other physical element or quality.

Despite many improvements in the campus in recent years there has been no consultation with disabled staff or students at design stage to check all relevant aspects of access have been considered. This has resulted in key basic work being missed (e.g. powered doors).

The Campus Access Group has been extended, membership revised with the assumption of including disabled staff and students on an on-going basis, and terms of reference drafted. These are shown below for comment by the Committee. The group will now consistently involve a range of staff and students with different access requirements to help inform priorities, designs and decisions.

As a first task a basic list of design principles will be established to help with New Builds and for use in initial discussions with architects and designers. The group will also help inform priorities for smaller works around campus.

UNIVERSITY OF EAST ANGLIA – ACCESS ALL AREAS WORKING GROUP

TERMS OF REFERENCE

Aims:

- To ensure the campus is accessible for all staff, students and visitors.
- That any future maintenance or development is undertaken with an informed awareness of the full range of user needs.
- That a rolling programme of works will remain in place, with regular review, to ensure existing physical barriers around the University campus are minimised or, where possible, completely removed.

Terms of Reference

A combination of a systems approach informed by user-group consultation will be used to ensure that the estate is free from barriers to access and use in terms of design, maintenance, policies and procedures.

People with disabilities will be consulted to ensure:

- Buildings are designed with as few barriers to access and use as possible,
- Buildings can be maintained effectively and without expensive redevelopment to ensure ongoing accessibility,
- Reference to Design Standards are also effective in relation to advances in design of mobility aids
- Good communication of changes and repairs takes place
- The processes for the use of the estate assures maximum and long term accessibility.

Areas of key input and involvement

The role of the group is to consult with and inform in the following areas:

- Special projects – projects to address specific access issues
- Design of new builds
- Design of refurbishment of old buildings
- Design and maintenance of outside spaces
 - Use of buildings and campus – policies and procedures including cleaning, maintenance, repairs, fire safety, access (including out of hours), security, parking, room bookings.
- Consultation with users regarding accessibility
- Communication with users regarding improvements and plans in a spirit of transparency
- Consultation with associated facilities e.g. Sportspark, Norwich Research Park to ensure high standards of accessibility

Frequency of Meetings

The Group will meet no less than 8 times per annum.

Membership:

Estates - Richard Wilkin

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Equality Office – Helen Murdoch, Matthew Gooch

DOS – Jane Abson, Debbie Sands

Disability expert and Staff representative – Katherine Deane

Student reps – to be appointed

Service User Rep – Roland Pascoe

Safety Services - Paul Donson (interested party – receives minutes etc)