Te Kaunihera o Te Hiku o te Ika
Far North District Council

HE ARA TĀMATA
CREATING GREAT PLACES
Supporting our people

Accessibility Action Group – Terms of Reference

July 2025

1. Constitution:

The Accessibility Action Group (AAG) is established as a stakeholder liaison group within the Far North district to provide advice to the Far North District Council, Government and its Agencies, Disability Service Providers; and to engage with the community on issues of accessibility.

AAG operate under Far North District Councils *Accessibility Policy* and aligns its work with the *Te Tai Tokerau Regional Accessibility Strategy*, promoting regional consistency and collaboration across Northland.

2. Purpose:

The purpose of AAG is:

- To identify and take up opportunities to advocate for equity and access for all people.
- To provide ongoing communication and advice to Council, Government Agencies and Service Providers to advocate for equity and accessibility for all people.
- To provide opportunities for people with accessibility requirements to engage with Council and other service providers e.g. Top Energy.
- To advocate for policies, programmes, practices, and procedures that guarantee equal opportunity for all people with accessibility requirements
- To encourage the portrayal of persons with accessibility requirements by the media in a positive way, including in the Council's own publications and publicity material
- Align local action with the strategic goals of the *Te Tai Tokerau Regional Accessibility Strategy*.

3. Membership:

The membership of AAG shall be comprised of the following:

- 2 appointees from Council, one general Councillor and one Māori Ward Councillor
- 1 appointee from Te Hiku Community Board, Kaikohe-Hokianga Community Board, and the Bay of Islands-Whangaroa Community Board
- Representatives from stakeholder and advocacy bodies for people with accessibility requirements across the Far North District
- Residents with an interest in accessibility in the Far North District on accessibility

4. Meetings:

- A quorum of members of AAG shall be two.
- AAG meetings shall be held bi-monthly. Minimum of two physical meetings throughout the year.
- The chair of the AAG may request additional meetings as necessary.

- At these meetings AAG may invite staff from the Far North District Council or other organisations as necessary to provide appropriate information and to receive feedback from stakeholders as to how people with accessibility requirements can be supported to fully participate in the life of their communities.
- Minutes of all meetings shall be kept and distributed to members after each meeting.
- Meeting decisions that require a response from Council will be lodged using either the AAG action sheet or the Report Request Form

5. Structure:

- AAG shall elect a Chairperson and Deputy Chairperson once each triennium.
- Voting members of AAG shall be the AAG members but not Council staff.

6. Principles:

- Advocacy – representing the interests of people with accessibility requirements with fairness and equity
- Inclusiveness – a wide range of views are sought
- Openness – communicating clearly and providing as much information as possible to facilitate open and free exchange of information within the group
- Honesty and respect – treating people with courtesy, observing their rights and recognising the different roles that others play in management and decision making
- Responsiveness – dealing with issues within agreed timeframes
- Accountability – issues raised are followed up as appropriate
- Alignment with *Te Pae o Uta* – embracing the Council's Te Ao Māori framework to guide inclusive, place-based approaches that support meaningful engagement and equitable outcomes for accessible communities.

7. Planning:

AAG will develop annual strategic goals through an annual workshop. Staff members may support this workshop if requested.

8. Reporting Procedures:

AAG will produce an annual report on its activities, achievements, and concerns to the three Community Boards.

9. Staff Support:

Subject matter expertise shall be provided by relevant staff members from within the Far North District Council, with sufficient notice.

10. Administration:

- Support for administration of AAG, including the agenda, invitations, meeting venues (cost for non-Council venues will be met from the AAG budget), meeting minutes, claim form distribution will be undertaken Council staff.
- The Chair of AAG or delegate (including responsible staff member) will be responsible for lodging Report Request Forms to the relevant Council departments regarding AAG issues

- Approval of funds from the AAG budget is the responsibility of the Manager - Democracy Services, and AAG will recommend expenditure via meeting resolutions.

11. Resourcing for AAG Operation:

- Funding for the AAG through the Long-Term Plan shall be used to assist the AAG to meet its strategic goals and operational costs, such as travel expenses, reimbursement of costs for accessibility assistance and meeting venues for the AAG.
- Individual AAG expenses must be submitted via the claim form.

12. Definitions:

Accessibility:
Accessibility means creating environments, information, services, and systems that enable all people, regardless of their abilities, to participate fully and equitably in society. It includes physical, digital, communication, and attitudinal access, and is about removing barriers so that everyone can thrive.

What do we mean by accessible?

We understand an accessible community to be where everyone:

- Has realised rights,
- Is treated with dignity and respect, and
- Can access all places, activities, services and information easily and appropriately.

When we say all people with access needs, we mean:

- Tamariki and whānau
- Older adults/kuia and kaumātua
- Disabled people
- People with conditions
- People with language difficulties.

Disability:

People with Disabilities are *"…those who have long-term physical, mental, intellectual or sensory impairments which in interaction with various barriers may hinder their full and effective participation in society on an equal basis with others…"*

This definition draws on the social model of disability and is used in the NZ Disability Strategy and is sourced from the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, Article 1.