

EAST AYRSHIRE COUNCIL

CABINET 6 FEBRUARY 2008

**DISABLEDGO - APPROVAL OF CONTRACTOR FOR THE CREATION OF A
WEB BASED ACCESS GUIDE**

**Report by the Depute Chief Executive/Executive Director of Corporate
Support**

1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 The purpose of the report is to seek Cabinet approval to appoint Disabledgo to provide the Council and Community Planning Partners with a dedicated web based Access Guide which will provide information on accessibility for disabled people for a range of commercial and other premises.

2. DISABILITY EQUALITY DUTY

- 2.1 In December 2006 under the Discrimination Disability Act (Amended) 2005 the Council and Partners published their Disability Equality Scheme with the intention to:

Promote equality of opportunity between disabled persons and other persons;

Eliminate discrimination that is unlawful under the Act;

Eliminate harassment of disabled persons that is related to their disabilities;

Promote positive attitudes towards disabled persons;

Encourage participation by disabled persons in public life; and

Take steps to take account of disabled persons' disabilities, even where that involves treating disabled persons more favourably than other persons.

- 2.2 The elements detailed above are referred to as the General Duty. The General Duty builds upon the duties of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 including the duty to make reasonable adjustments to make sure disabled people can access employment, goods, services, facilities, functions and premises.

2.3 The Duty imposed on all Public Bodies includes the need to involve disabled people in the process of developing and delivering their Disability Equality Scheme.

3. DISABLEDGO – BACKGROUND INFORMATION

3.1 DisabledGo is the trading name of a company called Disabled Enabled Ltd which has its registered office in Worthing, East Sussex. The company offers a web based Access Guide on a wide range of specific venues in local areas to empower disabled people to enjoy the benefits of – and make contributions to – their local community and wider society. The Access Guide is tailored specifically to local areas.

3.2 DisabledGo have provided this product for a number of Local Authorities such as; East Dunbartonshire, Angus, Edinburgh and Glasgow.

3.3 In order to develop the East Ayrshire Access Guide the following methodology will be used:

- DisabledGo have undertaken national consultation with over 400 groups of and for disability over a six year period to define and refine a research methodology.
- Trained and experienced access researchers from DisabledGo survey each venue on the guide from a range of different disability perspective. Each local guide typically has 1,000 venues, ranging from offices, shops, entertainment venues, eating places, hotels, leisure & cultural venues.
- Every venue on the DisabledGo guide is visited onsite and in person by a trained access surveyor. Results are presented in a standard format with consistent measures employed in every town and city covered. This enables disabled people to use other guides to areas around the country and vice-versa.

3.4 Once all the relevant information has been collected and collated for the Access Guide a private presentation will be held for the Council and the Council's nominated parties to view the product before the formal launch.

3.5 DisabledGo will organise the public launch, inviting 30-50 guests drawn from the local community and local press.

4. INVOLVEMENT OF DISABLED PEOPLE

- 4.1 DisabledGo empowers disabled people to make direct, anonymous enquiries about particular venues and judge whether they will be accessible to their own individual needs.
- 4.2 DisabledGo organise a community consultation of local disability groups and individuals to ensure that the local guide meets local needs.
 - What type of venues would local people like on the guide?
 - What geographic spread?
 - What specific venue recommendations to put on the guide?
- 4.3 Local steering groups- in effect the governing bodies – of disabled people will be established after the initial launch of the service. The steering groups are made up of local disabled people. The purpose of the steering groups is to:
 - Assess the work that has been done
 - Feedback on the success of the project
 - Contribute vital local input to alert DisabledGo to changes in the area so that these can be reflected in the guide
- 4.4 DisabledGo encourage people with disabilities to apply for all its Vacancies. Indeed most office-based staff have a disability or are/have been carers.
- 4.5 Local disabled people are also given the opportunity to contribute to the research process and if they can commit to 4 months availability, then DisabledGo will train local people to conduct the research, inputting and quality control. In addition to the training DisabledGo will provide a field coordinator to oversee the research phase. There are no additional costs involved.
- 4.6 It should be noted that it is through community consultation and local steering groups that disabled people are able to control the input to their local guide.

5. COST IMPLICATIONS

5.1 The initial set-up cost is £35,000 which provides a 1,000 venue guide which is a typical sized and priced guide. This will entail 1,000 venues – 800 Key Access Reviews, and 200 Detailed Access Reviews. Annual Renewal costs £6,800 each year for two years. Thereafter continuation costs would be negotiated with DisabledGo.

5.2 The following initial set-up costs will cover:

- DisabledGo attending a 'set-up' meeting with the Council and Partners to receive instructions about which venues they would like to have included in the guide and to share information with other interested parties within the Partnership.
- DisabledGo gathering all the contact information for disability groups in the area (some known and some not known to all the Partners). This list is then available for all to use.
- DisabledGo will organise all aspects of the community consultation
- DisabledGo will arrange all appointments to survey 1,000 venues
- All travel and transport expenses to each of the various venue locations
- All accommodation expenses incurred through the establishment of the service
- Face-to-face meeting with 1,000 business, service providers, NHS facilities etc.
- The distribution of disability-awareness training materials to 1,000 business, service provider, NHS facilities etc. to promote better understanding of disabled people as potential customers and potential employees.

5.3 Renewal will cover:

- Maintenance of the information contained in the Access Guide and the web site.
- The provision of monitoring information on usage of the access Guide and website.

6. JUSTIFICATION FOR A NEGOTIATED CONTRACT

6.1 DisabledGo Access Guide is a unique service which no other Company can supply. The Access Guide will not only encourage tourism but will also support the development of the Council's Disability Equality Scheme and offer comprehensive support throughout the process.

6.2 The Council's standing orders relating to contracts (paragraph 20 (1) are to the effect that:-

"Where the appropriate Executive Director/Executive Head of Service/Head of Service considers that a tender should be negotiated with one person, he/she shall before entering into negotiations, obtain the approval of the Cabinet, and of the person with whom the tender is to be negotiated, stating the reasons for the proposed negotiated procurement route."

In these circumstances, as Disablego has been identified as providing a unique service, approval is sought to enter contractual negotiations to procure the services as detailed in the preceding paragraphs.

7. POLICY AND LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

7.1 The approval of a web-based Access Guide will enable the Council to meet its statutory obligations and its policy objectives in relation to the promotion of equality for all its citizens.

7.2 Specific approval to enter into the contract between the Council and Disabled Go is necessary to enable exemption from the Council's Standing Orders relating to Contracts.

8. COMMUNITY PLAN

8.1 The development of a web based Access Guide will contribute to the achievement of all aspects of the Community Plan.

9. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

9.1 The cost of the proposal will be met from the Community Planning Partnership Joint Officers Group.

10. RECOMMENDATIONS

10.1 It is recommended that Cabinet:-

- (i) Remit to the Executive Director of Neighbourhood Services/Depute Chief Executive/ Executive Director of Corporate Support to negotiate an appropriate contract with Disabledgo as the trading name of Disabled Enabled Ltd for the production of a web based access guide primarily for the benefit of disabled people, and
- (ii) otherwise note the contents of this report.

Elizabeth Morton
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6 February 2008

BACKGROUND PAPERS

Nil