

Corporate Disability Access Forum

Terms of Reference

Version: 10.0

Approved by: The Corporate Disability Access Forum

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Responsible Directorate: Public Health

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1.0 Background

- 1.1 Established in 2013, the Corporate Disability Access Forum (CDAF) is a partnership of disability organisations, charities, access groups, interested individuals, and Cheshire West and Chester Council ('the council').

2.0 Role of the CDAF

- 2.1 The CDAF is a two-way information channel for the council and local and regional access and disability organisations.
- 2.2 The CDAF's priority is to encourage accessibility for disabled and other people. By this we mean inclusive built environments, policies, and transport systems that are easy to reach, use and understand by all, in safety and comfort.
- 2.3 The CDAF will promote the adoption of inclusive design and management to create environments which are universally designed and usable by everyone.
- 2.4 The CDAF will promote and encourage greater access to information and in accessible formats, and more positive attitudes towards disabled people when providing services.
- 2.5 The CDAF will ensure that local issues are addressed from an informed and representative consumer viewpoint and that the group is made up of people who are either disabled themselves or others who represent disabled people.
- 2.6 The CDAF cannot amend Council policy or procedural matters but should be consulted with to influence the decision-making process. It should be considered a resource for coproduction with disabled people when the Council proposes to change, create, or cease a service that will significantly impact disabled people.
- 2.7 The CDAF will help support the Council's legal responsibility under the Equality Act 2010 (and section 149 - the Public Sector Equality Duty) to demonstrate 'due regard' obligations and reasonable adjustments for disabled people.
- 2.8 The CDAF will, when able support Council plans and priorities. This will include the six missions outlined in Play Your Part Towards a Stronger Future, the Borough Plan for 2024-2028, specifically tackling hardship and poverty, an

3.0 Membership of the Corporate Disability Access Forum

- 3.1 Membership is open to all access and disability organisations in Cheshire West and Chester by sending an email to the clerk of the CDAF to request more details.
- 3.2 Any Individuals who live or work within the borough with an interest in; improving access to the built environment; improving the quality of services delivered to disabled people; providing better information and communication with disabled people, are also eligible to be part of the CDAF. Membership numbers will not be restricted.
- 3.4 The CDAF will be balanced to avoid dominance by any single interest group, and represent a cross-section of interests in the area
- 3.5 Relevant Council Officers, Developers, Project Managers will be invited to attend CDAF meetings to advise and provide updates on major development projects and initiatives within the borough.

4.0 Structure and Frequency of Meetings

- 4.1 Meetings will be held approximately every 2 months and will be organised and clerked by the council.
- 4.2 Meetings will be held virtually over MS Teams and a Link will be distributed to all members in advance of all meetings. In the event the membership opt for physical 'in person' meetings the venues for each meeting will alternate between the 'West' (Chester or Ellesmere Port) and 'Central' (Hartford, Northwich, or Winsford).
- 4.3 Venues will be generally accessible (with car parking, level access, accessible toilet, hearing loop etc). Translation services will not be provided as standard but will be made available on request to the clerk.
- 4.4 Any sub-groups or working groups may set their own meeting arrangements. Sub-groups to provide updates at CDAF meetings.
- 4.5 Any apologies should be sent to the meeting organiser/clerk.
- 4.6 If members are unable to attend a CDAF meeting (or sub-group), a deputy should attend, wherever possible.
- 4.7 Agenda items will be prepared in advance and will be distributed before each meeting. Topics for discussion can include any access related issues associated with the council and private developments, and how these might impact upon the community as a whole. Agenda items will be added at the Chair's discretion.
- 4.8 Meeting notes will be taken at each meeting and distributed to the membership prior to the next meeting. An action log will be kept as part of the meeting notes for transparency of activity. .

5.0 Communication

- 5.1 Communication regarding meetings and distribution of documents will generally be by email, unless another means is requested. Information is available in other formats (e.g. Braille, large print, audio) on request.
- 5.2 New information and communication technologies will be provided, if possible, to aid communication if members are unable to physically attend meetings.

6.0 Chairing of Meetings

- 6.1 Meetings will be chaired by a CWaC councillor appointed at the first CDAF meeting in the municipal year following an election (or as soon as possible thereafter).
- 6.2 Vice Chair – to be appointed at the first CDAF meeting in the municipal year following an election (as soon as possible thereafter). The role of Vice Chair is reserved for an opposition party councillor to ensure the forum is politically neutral

7.0 Governance

- 7.1 Each organisation/ group is responsible for its own governance and ensuring that this complies with all relevant legal and regulatory requirements.
- 7.2 The CDAF will review its term of reference (ToR) annually with the membership to provide assurance that procedures and the role of the forum are fit for purpose.
- 7.3 The CDAF is not defined as a Significant Partnership in financial context as the Council does not contribute funding or other resource to the forum other than officer time. The Council's legal responsibility under the Equality Act 2010 represents a significant risk to the reputation of the Council and its priorities. The clerk of the CDAF will ensure the TOR and Council Risk Register are reviewed annually.

8.0 Conflict Resolution

- 8.1 Members of the CDAF shall be expected to maintain appropriate professional standards including those necessary to avoid any real or apparent impropriety or to prevent any action or situations, which could result in conflict with the interests of other CDAF members.

8.2 CDAF members shall be expected to provide open and comprehensive stakeholder engagement, share lived experiences and best practices whilst respecting other members may express an alternative point of view.

8.3 In the event of any disputes, the CDAF members will follow the conflict resolution procedures as follows:

1. The affected CDAF members should discuss the dispute to resolution.
2. If resolution is not reached, raise any issues at the CDAF meetings
3. If resolution is not reached at the CDAF meetings, the dispute should be referred to a sub-group for consideration.
4. If no resolution is reached by stage 3, an independent arbitrator will be appointed

8.4 Members of the CDAF are responsible for dealing with complaints about their own organisation. However, where Comments, Compliments, Complaints are about the CDAF as a whole, these should be forwarded to the Clerk of the CDAF, and where appropriate, a sub-group will be set up and will investigate and respond.

9.0 Refreshments

9.1 All meetings will be either AM or PM. Light refreshments will be provided if a full-day in person meeting is required.

10.0 Travel Expenses

10.1 Travel expenses (including mileage and public transport) cannot be reimbursed. Physical meeting venues will alternate between 'the west' (Chester/Ellesmere Port) and 'central' (Northwich/Winsford) in order to minimise the distances travelled throughout the course of the year.

11.0 Confidentiality

Members will ensure that any matters or materials coming before them at CDAF meetings which are marked or otherwise directed as being confidential, are fully respected in confidence and handled with due care in order to maintain confidentiality.

Appendix A – CDAF Membership *(Updated 28/10/2024)*

The following groups/ organisations are current members of the CDAF:

- Chester Adult PHAB
- Disability Positive (formally Cheshire Centre for Independent Living)
- Age Friendly Network
- Cheshire West and Chester Council
- Dementia Friends
- Deaf & Sensory Network (formerly Deafness Support Network).
- Dial West Cheshire (formally Dial House Chester)
- West Cheshire Autism Hub
- Healthwatch Cheshire West
- Learning Disability Partnership Board
- Muscular Dystrophy Campaign North West Muscle Group
- Neuromuscular Centre
- Vision Support
- Vivo Care Choices
- People Choice Group
- MND Association Cheshire
- Live Cheshire
- Snow Angels
- Alzheimers UK