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ACCESSIBILITY AND DISABILITY ACCESS POLICY

1. Introduction

Hellesdon Parish Council is committed to improving access to both Council owned buildings and in relation to all information which it manages. This policy statement sets out the principles that will guide our work with regards to disability access, and outlines principal areas of responsibility.

2. Definitions

Disability is defined as a loss or reduction of functional ability that results from a physical, cognitive or other impairment, and includes physical, intellectual, sensory and psychiatric disabilities.

Access means physical access to buildings, intellectual access to ideas and information, and access to services by a wide variety of means. In practice, the measures taken to improve access for people with disabilities, from an adoption of the principles of 'universal design' to the provision of temporary ramps at Council owned sites to the introduction of tactile displays and hands-on exhibitions, will improve access for everyone, and help many people who do not consider themselves 'disabled' or whose disabilities are invisible.

3. Policy

Hellesdon Parish Council seeks to ensure that its services and activities are accessible to everyone wherever practicable and reasonable. It aims to provide easy, dignified and supportive access to its own properties whenever this can reasonably be done.

4. Policy Objectives

In pursuance of this policy, Hellesdon Parish Council will improve and enhance, as far as is reasonable, all forms of access to its properties and services and will conform to the requirements of the 1995 Disability Discrimination Act (DDA1) and the 2005 Disability Discrimination Act (DDA2), bearing in mind the constraints contained within pre-existing legislation relating to local authorities. DDA1 and DDA2 do not override existing Health and Safety legislation.

5. Access

Hellesdon Parish Council will explore all reasonable methods of providing and improving access to its properties and services for people with limited mobility. Where physical access remains difficult or impossible it will introduce alternative forms of interpretation in order to extend access as far as is practicable. Interpretive resources will also be used to meet the needs of visitors with cognitive and sensory impairments. Due to the level of demand in this area, Hellesdon Parish Council will not retain these services in house, or through a contractor, but will source them when required.

6. Employment

All staff are employed on the basis they meet the agreed acceptable criteria for the post. Hellesdon Parish Council follows the basic policy that disablement is no bar to recruitment or advancement and wherever possible reasonable adjustments will be made both as part of the recruitment process and whilst in employment.

7. Training

Hellesdon Parish Council is committed to providing training for all staff, councillors and volunteers who may from time to time provide services for people with disabilities. Such training will include courses on sympathetic hearing, disability awareness and sign language.

8. Communications

Wherever possible and reasonable Hellesdon Parish Council will endeavour to ensure that its printed and digital communications are presented in variable formats that meet best practice in readability.

9. Consultation

Hellesdon Parish Council is committed to the process of consultation with all stakeholders with respect to disability access, site development plans and service development.

10. Legislative Information

Equality Act 2010

Disability Discrimination Acts 1995 and 2005.

11. Monitoring

Hellesdon Parish Council will undertake an Accessibility Audit annually or whenever substantial changes are made to Council properties or services.