

## AUDIT COMMITTEE

19 JANUARY 2012

### REFERENCE FROM CABINET

#### A.3 **DISABLEDGO** (Report prepared by Karen Neath)

#### PART 1 – KEY INFORMATION

##### **PURPOSE OF THE REPORT**

To consider the audit of funding paid to DisabledGo referred to the Audit Committee by Cabinet.

##### **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

Funding was made available within the 2008/09 budget of £33,000 (together with £30,000 sponsorship from Marks and Spencer) to enable initial work to be undertaken for 1,000 venues in Tendring to be included on the DisabledGo access information website. A further £6,800 in 2009/10 and 2010/11 was provided to fund annual reviews in each of those years. The original three year agreement has come to an end. No commitment has been made to sign up to a further agreement and no funding has been made available in 2011/12 or future years. Consequently no review has been undertaken in the current year.

The Committee has been asked by Cabinet to give an explanation and assurances to Members that the money this Council paid towards the DisabledGo scheme was spent appropriately as well as transparently. Members of the Committee need to consider their response to Cabinet. The Committee may also wish to express a view on whether the council should sign up to a further agreement (3 or 5 years) with DisabledGo or make any other comment.

##### **RECOMMENDATIONS**

- a) That the Committee determines its response to Cabinet's request that an audit be undertaken in respect of the £45,000 that this Council paid towards the DisabledGo scheme in order to give explanation and assurances to Members that this money was spent appropriately as well as transparently.
- b) That the Committee determines whether it has any other comment in relation to DisabledGo.

#### PART 2 – IMPLICATIONS OF THE DECISION

##### **DELIVERING PRIORITIES**

The undertaking of an audit and review of this matter demonstrates that the council remains vigilant in ensuring that it achieves value for money in the services it provides.

##### **FINANCE, OTHER RESOURCES AND RISK**

###### **Finance, Other Resources and Risk**

In total the Council has expended £46,600 on the provision of access information on the DisabledGo website. The initial work to review and document 1,000 venues cost £33,000 (together with £30,000 sponsorship from Marks and Spencer). Thereafter the annual

reviews in November 2009 and 2010 each cost £6,800. If the Council were to sign up to a further agreement than, at present, each annual review would cost £6,800.

#### **LEGAL**

Engagement of DisabledGo is within the Council's discretionary powers.

#### **OTHER IMPLICATIONS**

**Consideration has been given to the implications of the proposed decision in respect of the following and any significant issues are set out below.**

**Crime and Disorder / Equality and Diversity / Health Inequalities / Area or Ward affected / Consultation/Public Engagement.**

The access data held on the DisabledGo website is aimed at providing information to anyone with a disability of any kind. Clearly, as a tourist destination and an area with seaside resorts, the access information should be of value both to those who live within the district and those who are intending to visit. Tendring also has the highest proportion of older people in the East of England and therefore they may also make use of the access information available.

As part of the initial review a community consultation was undertaken and the annual reviews included the conducting of a six monthly steering group and community forum with local disabled people.

### **PART 3 – SUPPORTING INFORMATION**

#### **BACKGROUND**

At the meeting on 28 October 2011, Cabinet considered a recommendation from the Audit Committee on the regeneration and tourism strategies. As well as a specific response to the recommendation, Cabinet also resolved that:

*(c) That Cabinet requests that the Audit Committee add to their work programme an audit of the £45,000 that this Council paid towards the DisabledGo scheme in order to give explanation and assurances to Members that this money was spent appropriately as well as transparently.*

In order to expedite this audit it was agreed with the Chairman that this would go ahead so that the outcome could be reported back to the next meeting of the Committee.

#### **What is DisabledGo?**

DisabledGo is a disability organisation that produces online access guides to buildings and venues in different towns and cities. The organisation has been in operation since 2000 and works nationally across the UK and Ireland.

DisabledGo employs surveyors to survey venues and make a record of access arrangements. Once collected the information is made available on the DisabledGo website so that any member of the public can seek out access information for any venue that has been reviewed. DisabledGo works with partners through a contract arrangement and this together with consultation with local disabled people and disability organisations determines the venues that are included on the website.

Contact with each venue that was part of the initial review was undertaken as part of the annual reviews.

### **Inclusion of Funding in the Budget**

The background to the inclusion of funding in the budget for DisabledGo is as follows. At the Council meeting held on 26 September 2006, Councillor Delia Aldis put forward the following motion:-

*That this Council looks at the possibility of working with DisabledGo, which works in partnership with local authorities in producing detailed access guides to their areas, thus empowering disabled people and also encouraging local visitors and thereby supporting the local economy.*

The motion was referred to Cabinet who considered it at the meeting on 24 January 2007 and resolved:

*That a further report on the advantages and cost of working with DisabledGo and the work for the benefit of the disabled which the Council is currently undertaking, or has, planned, be submitted to a future meeting.*

Details of the proposed scheme were subsequently reported back to Cabinet at the meeting on 31 October 2007 as one of a number of capital and revenue projects requested by the then Executive Leader. The detailed information submitted in relation to DisabledGo is attached at **Appendix A** and in respect of this project Cabinet resolved to recommend on to Council:

1. That the Council signs up to the DisabledGo scheme and that the scheme is implemented by the Head of Regeneration and Community Services.
2. That the signing up cost of £33,000 in 2007/08 and ongoing revenue cost of £13,600 in 2008/09 and 2009/10 be allocated from the 2007/08 Service Improvement Budget as the Council's contribution towards the DisabledGo scheme.
3. That the funding of the on-going revenue cost of £6,800 beyond 2009/10 be considered as part of the Financial Strategy for 2010/11.
4. That the Head of Regeneration and Community Services investigates opportunities to integrate the information for DisabledGo into the Council's existing public information channels.

This recommendation together with recommendations for other capital and revenue projects was first considered by Council on 11 December 2007, where it was not approved, and again at Council on 19 February 2008 where it was approved.

Subsequently, funding was included in the 2008/09 budget to enable the initial work for the scheme to be undertaken (£33,000) and to fund the second year's review (£6,800). In accordance with recommendation agreed by Council funding for the scheme was reconsidered as part of the Financial Strategy for 2010/11 and a cost pressure of £8,000

was agreed to fund the third year review (actual cost £6,800). DisabledGo had been engaged on a three year contract that ended in November 2011. No commitment has been made to sign up to a further agreement and no further funding has been requested or agreed.

### **The Initial Review**

DisabledGo was launched in Tendring in 2008 with the access guide to venues and buildings in the district available from November in that year. The initial survey covered 1000 venues and buildings at a total cost of £63,000 (£33,000 funded by TDC and £30,000 funded by Marks and Spencer). DisabledGo has provided the following background as to what the initial funding covered:

#### **Field work**

- Pre-survey planning of the area
- Arranging appointments with venues to be surveyed
- Travel and transport to each venue
- Parking charges
- Surveyor salaries and national insurance
  - On site, in-depth survey capturing up to 800 pieces of information
  - Photographs of the venue
  - Sizing and naming photographs for use on the website
- Surveyor expenses
- Meetings with each service provider to discuss disability

#### **Office based work**

- Organising a community consultation
  - Liaising with Local Authority
  - Researching local disability groups
  - Contacting local groups and explaining the service
  - Preparing for consultee's additional requirements
  - Conducting the consultation
  - Consultation follow-up
- Quality Assurance of survey work in line
- Publishing the data on the DisabledGo website
- PDF distribution of Disability Awareness Training materials
- Organising launch of the service
- Holding the launch of the service with all concomitant costs
  - E.g.: salaries and expenses of DisabledGo Partnership staff

The information relating to Tendring venues is available on the DisabledGo website at the following link:

<http://www.disabledgo.com/>

A demonstration of the website will be made at the Audit Committee meeting. It should be noted that due to the current situation this information has not been updated during 2011.

## **The Annual Reviews**

The access information available for Tendring was reviewed and updated in November 2009 and November 2010 at a cost of £6,800 in each of those years. All venues that reported changes were reassessed in person by surveyors. In addition 25 new venues were added at each annual review and two meetings with local disabled people organised and held.

The annual review costs of £6,800 are distributed as follows in renewing 1,000 venue guide:

- Steering group costs
  - Ensuring local disabled people retain 'ownership'
  - Much of the costs involved in Community Consultation (see above) are repeated
- Mail out to all participating venues requesting notification of any structural changes
- Follow-up phone calls
- Survey of every venue reporting or reported to have a structural change
- Adding a further 25 venues to the guide so keep guide fresh and up to date
- Partnership update of website for non-structural changes (new email address or phone number for example)
- Quality Assurance
- Deep linking with Local Authority website
- Distribution of marketing materials, for example posters to local groups

And additionally:

- A percentage contribution to our fixed and extra-variable costs: rent, rates, consumables, management costs, training, development, marketing etc.
- Sales and marketing costs in revisiting the Local Authority for contract extension
- < 8% profit overall.

DisabledGo has also provided some usage data for the Tendring area of the website as follows:-

<b>Usage for Tendring Venues</b>	<b>2010</b>	<b>2011 (to October)</b>
Visits	261	543
Page views	7,811	4,923
Average time on site	19 mins	5 mins

## **CURRENT POSITION**

The original contract with DisabledGo has now expired. Consequently no review of the Tendring venues has been undertaken in November 2011. The Council must decide whether it wishes to sign up to a new agreement. It can sign up to a 3 or 5 year contract with a cost of £6,800 for each of the annual reviews. The cost covers DisabledGo contacting all the venues that took part in the initial survey to see if there have been any major access changes as well as adding a further 25 venues to the site and conducting sessions with local disabled people.

DisabledGo are keen to work with the Council on the marketing and promotion of the available access information to ensure that this is reaching the right people.

If the Council does not sign up to a new agreement and pay the annual review fee then the Tending data will be removed from the DisabledGo website.

#### **WAY FORWARD**

The Committee have been asked by Cabinet to give an explanation and assurances to Members that the money this Council paid towards the DisabledGo scheme was spent appropriately as well as transparently. The background to the allocation of funding and the sums involved are set out above. Members are therefore asked to consider their response to Cabinet. Members may also wish to consider whether they judge that there is value in signing up to a new agreement with DisabledGo, either as a community service or an aid to tourism, and make any comment to Cabinet accordingly. In signing up to a new agreement the council would be committing itself to further expenditure (£20,400 for 3 years or £34,000 for 5 years) and the value of this should be considered against the backdrop of the current financial situation. However, signing up to a further agreement does protect the council's initial investment and allows the information to remain available although the low usage of the information does need to be taken into account.

DisabledGo have provided some supplementary information on how they envisage a working relationship with the Council could be progressed and this is attached at **Appendix B**.

#### **BACKGROUND PAPERS FOR THE DECISION**

None

#### **APPENDICES**

**Appendix A – Submission to Cabinet and Council in relation to DisabledGo**

**Appendix B – Additional information from DisabledGo**

**LEADER FEASIBILITY STUDY REQUESTS**  
**STANDARD PROFORMA**

<b><u>Description/Brief</u></b>  'DisabledGo' – Support	<b><u>Head of Service:</u></b> Mike Bateson – Head of Regeneration and Community Services
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**1. Current Position**

At their meeting on 24 January 2007, Cabinet received a report on DisabledGo and resolved that “a further report on the advantages and cost of working with DisabledGo and the work for the benefit of the disabled which the Council is currently undertaking, or has planned, be submitted to a future meeting” (minute 120). A report is due to go back to Cabinet outlining the service provided by DisabledGo, the initial cost, the on-going cost, and what is currently being provided by the Council for disabled people.

**2. Options to Progress (e.g. low cost/quick actions/full scheme)****a) What can be delivered?**

DisabledGo provides free detailed access information for disabled people across the UK. The information provided by DisabledGo in a Detailed Access Guide is designed to provide the broadest range of access information in any area (in this instance specific to Tendring) for a wide range of disabled people. It is the most in-depth disabled access information guide ever. The information is designed to empower disabled people to make their own informed decisions as to the usability of a venue based on their own particular access requirements, allowing them to judge for themselves which hotels, cinemas, restaurants, solicitors' offices, pubs, train stations, shops and services are accessible to their particular needs. There is a large amount of independent set-up work undertaken by DisabledGo and an ongoing review to ensure the guide is timely and accurate.

**b) When?**

An authority can sign-up to the scheme at any time.

**c) Costs?**

DisabledGo has estimated that the cost to an Authority of Tendring's size would be about £63,000 to set up the scheme (of which £30,000 would be met by Marks and Spencer (sponsor of the scheme) and £33,000 would be a cost to the Council. There would be an ongoing cost to the Council of between £3,500 and £6,800 a year. Although there are other providers of similar schemes, the partnership arrangement which DisabledGo has with the sponsor (Marks and Spencer) means that the cost to the Council is greatly reduced and for this reason DisabledGo is the preferred provider.

**3. Decisions Required**

To determine if the Council should sign up to the DisabledGo Scheme.

#### **4. Implications (relevance to corporate priorities)**

Signing up to DisabledGo would demonstrate the Council's commitment to removing the barriers that disadvantage disabled people and restrict them from leading a full and active life.

It would show the Council as a willing partner and community leader, leading by example, addressing the needs of the young and old with disabilities, and encouraging responsible citizenship.

It would also earn the Council a positive public image by using the guide to publicise that TDC has access to those people with disabilities to the Council's leisure centres, theatre, recreation areas, car parks, crematorium as well as our more formal public buildings.

It also impacts on strengthening the economy as the guide would be an attraction to disabled visitors that would be able to plan their visit based on what is available to them with their disability.



Karen Neath  
**Head of Resource Management**

Anna Borthwick  
**Head of Business Development & Marketing**

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3<sup>rd</sup> January 2012

Dear Karen

I hope you are well. Further to our email correspondence please find some supplementary information below to be included as an appendix to the Audit Committee report.

In relation to the usage of the Tendring section of [www.disabledgo.com](http://www.disabledgo.com) we feel it should be noted that DisabledGo has not been able to establish deep links with the Council's website due to past issues in relation to Council resourcing. Deep links have been proven to significantly improve user rates elsewhere and has significantly enhanced both the community and tourism offer. Not having these links established gives a skewed reflection of usage, particularly when compared to areas where these have been included. To add these links on average takes Council colleagues 1 hour.

The last year has seen an increase in resourcing from DisabledGo in regards to marketing and a focus on increasing visitor rates. Promotion and marketing was not part of the original agreement and has been performed by DisabledGo on a best reasonable endeavours basis. Moving forward DisabledGo is keen to work with the Council to put a marketing strategy in place to promote the resource both on and offline.

DisabledGo is keen to continue its relationship with Tendring District Council and serve local disabled people. For this reason DisabledGo has proposed that a future agreement with the Council (from 2012 onwards) would be offered on the basis of 2007 costs, absorbing the significant rate of inflation, and include a number of additional features. We believe that this offer clearly demonstrates value for money. A full business case has been provided, however, the outline proposal is as follows –

A contribution from the Council or from a collection of local partners of £6800 + VAT per year would fund –

- Holding 2 face to face steering groups each year, to help feedback on the success of the guide and suggest further improvements. This is important for the 'Duty to Consult' contained within the public sector equality duty to promote disability. **The groups could also be used as a ready forum for the Council to use to discuss disability and equality related issues.**

- Every venue on the guide being contacted to ascertain if any structural, procedural or policy changes have taken place.
- Onsite and in person visits for any venue that reports a structural change by a DisabledGo surveyor.
- A further 25 detailed access guides added to the service which helps to further protect the Council's investment as the service remains dynamic, up to date and reflecting the way Tendring is changing over time.
- All surveyors' expenses, including travel and accommodation.
- Full quality assurance of data using ISO 9001 accredited processes.
- Changing of logos, forewords or pictures at the request of the local authority.
- All web hosting and maintenance of the Tendring pages.
- Disability Awareness Training manuals for all participating venues.
- **Training for front line staff regarding how to use [www.DisabledGo.com](http://www.DisabledGo.com) and how it can help answers questions from the public.**
- **Training and temporary employment of local disabled people and carers (if sufficient interest).**
- **Promotional materials for libraries, tourist information and council offices.**
- Having the ability to 'deep link' access guides to the Council and partners' websites to enhance the information on these sites but having access guides to hand and integrated with existing information.
- **Tendring's leisure and tourism information appearing on [www.openbritain.net](http://www.openbritain.net).**
- Annual reports regarding accessibility of the area, user rates and feedback on the service.
- **Good Practice Guidance reports for Council buildings to assist asset managers assess accessibility and compliance to building regulations and standards.**
- **If requested a hard copy digest version of the access guide made available as a PDF.**

**(All points marked in bold are additional features)**

I hope this supplementary information is useful to you; I would be delighted to assist with any queries.

We feel strongly that the project would support the Council not only in meeting legal duties set out in the Equality Act 2010 but also in delivering the Council's Corporate Plan. We feel this is particularly important given the high proportion of disabled people and older people living within the District.

An access guide enables local authorities to promote tourism and town centres, ensuring that organisations can access the £80 billion spent by disabled people in the UK each year (Our Prosperity). Providing access information reduces the barriers disabled people face when accessing health and public services (Our People). Promoting what Tendring has to offer within an access guide, and keeping that information up to date, ensures that regeneration projects and improvements are communicated. This ensures people are aware of the opportunities available in their local area, as often people travelling to another town they perceive to be more accessible (Our Place).

I very much hope we can continue to work with the Council and develop the access guide to further meet the requirements of the authority and local disabled people.

Very best wishes



Anna Borthwick





## Local authorities who have joined DisabledGo in 2011

1. London Borough of Bexley
2. London Borough of Barking and Dagenham
3. London Borough of Merton
4. Hampshire County Council
5. Central Bedfordshire Council
6. Basingstoke and Deane Borough Council
7. Rushmoor Borough Council
8. Leicester City Council
9. Hastings Borough Council
10. South Ayrshire Council
11. Portsmouth City Council
12. Milton Keynes Council
13. Bournemouth Borough Council
14. Coventry City Council
15. Dundee City Council
16. Suffolk County Council
17. States of Guernsey
18. Durham County Council
19. Birmingham City Council
20. Aberdeenshire Council

BACK TO SEARCH RESULTS

## CLACTON PIER E AND M HARRISON

 English 

Theme Park

 SHARE

1 North Sea  
 Clacton-on-sea, Essex, CO15 1QX, England  
 +44 01255 421115, [e-mail](#), [website](#)

OVERVIEW

PHOTOS

ACCESSIBILITY

### SHOW NEARBY...

- Hotels, B&B
- Self Catering
- Events
- Attractions

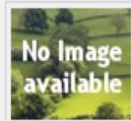
[\(View on map\)](#)

#### West Beach



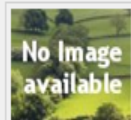
Beach  
 0.00 miles away  
 Free Admission is available

#### Pavilion Gallery (Holland Art Society)



Gallery  
 0.10 miles away  
 Free Admission is available

#### Martello Bay Beach



Beach  
 0.30 miles away

#### Dovercourt Bay



Natural Feature  
 0.30 miles away

#### Frinton Beach

### Access Organisations



#### DisabledGo

DisabledGo has 10 years experience in providing detailed, personally surveyed access information, enabling people to find places that suit their specific requirements. Every location has been visited by a trained access surveyor to ensure that people can use their information with confidence. The information has been developed in constant consultation with disabled people.

DisabledGo has visited this location to collect accessibility information. [View the information DisabledGo hold.](#)

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