

Responses received from Consultation Draft Report

Responses in support of Model 1:

Response 1.

“Having looked through the report and the accompanying appendices, it seems to me that the first model, of a forum, is potentially more inclusive. I also liked the idea of thematic sub-groups, which should make it easier for people with particular interests/ knowledge to participate in a wider process.

Happy to comment further if that would be helpful”

Response 2.

“Preferred Option 1 which is less formal, e.g., could offer Easy Read rather than formal minutes and agendas, would be easier to understand and follow and be a better environment to work in. Important to have a Learning Disability Group representative involved in whatever form the new group takes.”

Responses in support of Model 2:

Response 1.

“Of the 2 options, I favour Option 2, staying within the City Council Structure, while broadening out the participation and access to the main and working groups.

- My reasons for preferring this option are that I feel this will best drive the group forward and ensure success while making the necessary changes.”

Response 2.

“I would be looking at option 2; I am of the opinion that we have to get back to what DAG is all about”

Response 3.

“I think I would prefer the model which is closest to the existing DAG rather than something akin to a Tenants' Association - so I prefer Model 2. I think the DAG still needs to be tied into the Council decision making process so elected members and officials take seriously what the DAG says and they also treat the DAG as a serious committee which they should be consulting to make sure they are getting their

decisions right for disabled people. While I know I did question whether there should be any Councillors on the Group, I was persuaded that it was good to have some (although maybe not as many as 5) Councillors there to hear the views expressed by the members of DAG.

I like the idea of sub-groups with particular expertise in the areas they cover.

I also don't think that the people on the DAG should have to be a member of an organisation."

Response 4.

"Thanks for the very comprehensive report and associated papers with regard to the future of Disability Issues and working in conjunction with the Council.

In short, **I prefer Model No. 2** - reasons being, as we've discussed with you at great length - I feel the idea of sub-groups having specific tasks perhaps to carry out, is a good step forward.

I also feel it's a much more "user friendly and fit for purpose" system and "all encompassing" approach to the very personal and sometimes delicate issue of disability, especially if people are discriminated against, purely as a result of being disabled.

I was interested to read that the main conclusions from the Survey Monkey Questionnaire were very close to the overall opinions of those who attended the 3 Community based consultations."

Response 5.

"**Model 2** - As set out on page 8 - The new group remains part of the council's committee structure with a RADICAL change in culture, structure and processes.

Reasons being:

1. When operated correctly, under proper & dignified governance, this structure has demonstrated to have been very capable & effective at making positive changes within this City for the diverse community of its disabled citizens
2. Similarly, when functioning under the above auspices, a positive kudos develops from being a direct sub-set of a council committee and having face to face access to (hopefully) interested councillors; this can bring about a perceived authoritative air with recognition from mainstream society, as to what this group is really about alongside its earnest objectives and commitments.

This basis I feel, is an essential grounding upon which we can "Once Again", achieve our full and future potentials, as an all-inclusive TEAM."

Response 6.

“Shopmobility Aberdeen would like the Disability Advisory Group to remain part of the council's committee structure. It has become glaringly apparent during the last few weeks that the opinion of people with disabilities, sensory impairments, the elderly and their carers doesn't count for much, if access to council decision making is further reduced by making it a forum then their opinions would not get considered at all.

Much of what is reflected in the report was previously agreed by the existing DAG group and Shopmobility Aberdeen are still in favour of making the group more open and accessible to as many people as possible, whether that is as individuals or through special interest groups etc., We are taken by the idea of exploring how we could open the meeting to people via social networks etc. This would allow people to participate even if they were unable to attend regular meetings and could solve the problems we have had attracting younger people to get involved.”

Response 7

“Model 2 please allows us to move forward. Risk of drifting and lack of direction with a forum.”

Responses with no preference towards either Model 1 or 2:**Response 1.**

“I have no preference for either model.

However, I would like to emphasis three points that I think are critical to the success of DAG:

1. The role of the “Disability Access Officer” is critical. This needs to be a dedicated person, with appropriate “teeth” to get proposals implemented. Many larger companies now recognise this, and have a dedicated senior manager addressing disability issues. For the more enlightened companies, this will be his/her **only** role!
2. To say that committees etc. are required to contain a certain number of people suffering from a disability (be that physical or mental, congenital or acquired) is, I believe, wrong. It is more important that they have the passion to address issues. Choose the best people for the job, and don't fall foul of positive discrimination.
3. One point made during the discussions that seems to have been lost in the report, is that it would be useful to have external (*i.e.* non-Council) representation. “

Response 2.

“Thanks for sight of this material and for all the work you and your colleagues have put into it. I think this is a really good example of a fair, transparent and logical review.

- I'm not going to give views on which model I think would be best to follow. I don't have strong views and I don't feel that I am closely enough connected now with that stream of work to have an influence in its future direction. I think both models have the ability to work though given the right attitude and commitment from those involved.”

Response 3.

“Representatives from GREC attended the 3 community events and also received comments via the North East Scotland Equality network and this informs our response.

A critical issue which is not explicitly addressed in the report is the operation of the core group in any model. In this regard the role of office bearers is crucial to the way that the group fulfils its remit; this includes skills, experience, and supports provided. The consultation appeared to concur that this specific issue is ineffective in the current set up. It should therefore be explicitly addressed in the new model.

There is reference to changing culture and that is necessary but it will not be sufficient if it is not accompanied by explicitly tackling the role and operation of the core group/office bearers.”

Response 4.

“This all seems fine to me.”

NB A response was received from Aberdeen Action on Disability on 12 August 2015 without an attachment. A request was sent to AAD on Friday 14 August to resend the attachment and the consultation period was extended until Monday 17 August so that this response could be included.. Unfortunately, it has not arrived to meet the committee deadline.