

County Kildare Access Strategy

A Universal
Access Approach
2020-2022



Comhairle Contae Chill Dara
Kildare County Council



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Foreword from Kildare County Council



Cllr Suzanne Doyle
Cathaoirleach



Peter Carey
Chief Executive

“Towards 2016”, the social partnership agreement sets out a vision for a society in which disabled people have the opportunity to work and to live a full life with family and as part of their community. The agreement suggests that this should be achieved through a long-term goal of ensuring access to buildings, transport, information, appropriate housing, advocacy and other public services. This strategy ensures that we, as a local authority, have a very clear purpose and a definite direction to follow in supporting the aims of **“Towards 2016”** and delivering a universally accessible environment and service.

We would like to thank all those who contributed to the consultation process and to those who were involved in the preparation of this strategy document. This model of active participation helped to identify the challenges that disabled people in County Kildare are faced with on a daily basis and the information that was gathered formed the core of this strategy. It is through active participation that real change can take place.

This strategy presents an excellent opportunity to enhance the quality of life for disabled people in County Kildare and we look forward to supporting its delivery.

Cllr Suzanne Doyle
Cathaoirleach

Peter Carey
Chief Executive,
Kildare County Council



Introduction



Michael Hurley
Access Officer

According to the Census 2016, the total population with a disability residing in Kildare is 27,768 i.e. 12.5% of the population. Although a large proportion of our overall population self identify as disabled this sector still see themselves as marginalised as they believe that they are unable to participate fully in society due to the physical and attitudinal barriers that they experience. Disabled people want to lead independent lives and rightfully expect to be able to participate in all aspects of society.

This document is constructed around the social and rights model of disability which allows us to understand that the inequalities experienced by disabled people exist, not because of their impairment or condition but because of societal barriers. A simple example which demonstrates this point would be a building which can only be accessed by steps. A wheelchair user is excluded not because they are in a wheelchair but because we have not provided an alternative means of access. It is an important point to note that, to date, our environment, in the main, has been created by non-disabled people with non-disabled people in mind. This in turn has led to poorer living standards and social participation for disabled people.

With this mind and with such a significant number of the population in Kildare presenting with a disability we recognised the importance of engaging with this group in order to affect real change.

As a result, a workshop was convened on the 1st May 2019 to which a broad range of stakeholders were invited to attend from within Kildare County Council (elected members and

officials), other statutory bodies, community and voluntary sector agencies, and disability access groups. Disabled people were at the heart of this process and they were given the platform to influence policymakers and service providers.

The purpose of the workshop was to identify the key challenges and accessibility/disability issues faced by disabled people in Kildare.

A recurring view that was expressed throughout the workshop was that we should adopt the principle of universal design i.e. designing for everyone instead of one particular group which will have the effect of future proofing our society.

Universal Design is the design of buildings, products or environments to make them accessible to all people regardless of age, disability or other factors.

This influenced the six key areas of focus which included:



Under the six headings a series of objectives and actions were identified to which a specific owner and a timeframe for completion was assigned. Addressing these actions will, in essence, help to create an environment where disabled people can have the opportunity to work and to live a full life with family and as part of their community.

The information gathered at this workshop, in addition to the information provided by local access groups across the county has been instrumental in the development of this strategy.

While every effort has been made to ensure that this strategy and the consultation process were as comprehensive as possible, it is also recognised that this strategy document is dynamic and will continually evolve and remain a “work in progress”.

In summary this document is a testament to our commitment towards ensuring that no section of our community is left behind in the future delivery of our services.

Michael Hurley
Access Officer





Vision

Our Vision is that County Kildare is universal to all and recognised as a leader in universal accessibility.



Mission

To support the removal of physical, attitudinal & communication barriers for all.



Values

Inclusion: The principle of universal design underpins inclusive practices. By addressing the physical, attitudinal & communicate barriers we can help create a more inclusive society within the county of Kildare.

Best Practice: We aim to use best practice guidelines around the area of universal accessibility & design.

Engagement: Everyone's voice is essential for the development & implementation of this strategy.

Collaboration & Partnership: We aim to consult and collaborate with all key stakeholders to improve universal accessibility.

Themes



Public Awareness Education
and Communication



Transportation
and Public Realm



Community Culture
and Heritage



Economic Development,
Enterprise and Planning



Partnership
and Collaboration



Housing
and Services



Public Awareness Education and Communication



Objective 1

To develop an awareness campaign to highlight accessibility/disability within Kildare County Council.

| Action | Responsibility | Timeframe |
|--|----------------------|-----------|
| Develop a selection of training packs | KCC (Access Officer) | 2020 |
| Deliver awareness training to front line Kildare County Council staff | KCC (Access Officer) | 2020 |
| Deliver technical training to relevant sections such as engineers and architects | KCC (Access Officer) | 2021 |



Objective 2

To develop an awareness campaign to highlight accessibility/disability within the community.

| Action | Responsibility | Timeframe |
|--|--|-----------|
| Deliver training to local business's around accessibility and economic benefit of embracing universal design approach. | KCC (Access Officer) & Local Access Groups | 2021 |
| Deliver training to schools and community groups | KCC (Access Officer) & Local Access Groups | 2021-2022 |
| Develop a website for Kildare Access Group with subsections for Local Access Groups | Intel / Maynooth Access Group | 2020 |
| Develop a suite of awareness campaigns e.g. Back in 5, Make Way Day. International Day of Persons with Disabilities | KCC (Access Officer) & Local Access Groups | 2020 |

Objective 3

Improve communication outlets.

| Action | Responsibility | Timeframe |
|---|-------------------------------------|-----------|
| Improve the accessibility of KCC website and make more user-friendly incorporating tools like Browsealoud | KCC (Access Officer and IT Section) | 2020 |



Objective 4

Make the service users experience more accessible.

| Action | Responsibility | Timeframe |
|---|----------------|-----------|
| Introduction of JAM (Just A Minute) Card across county. | KCC | 2021 |

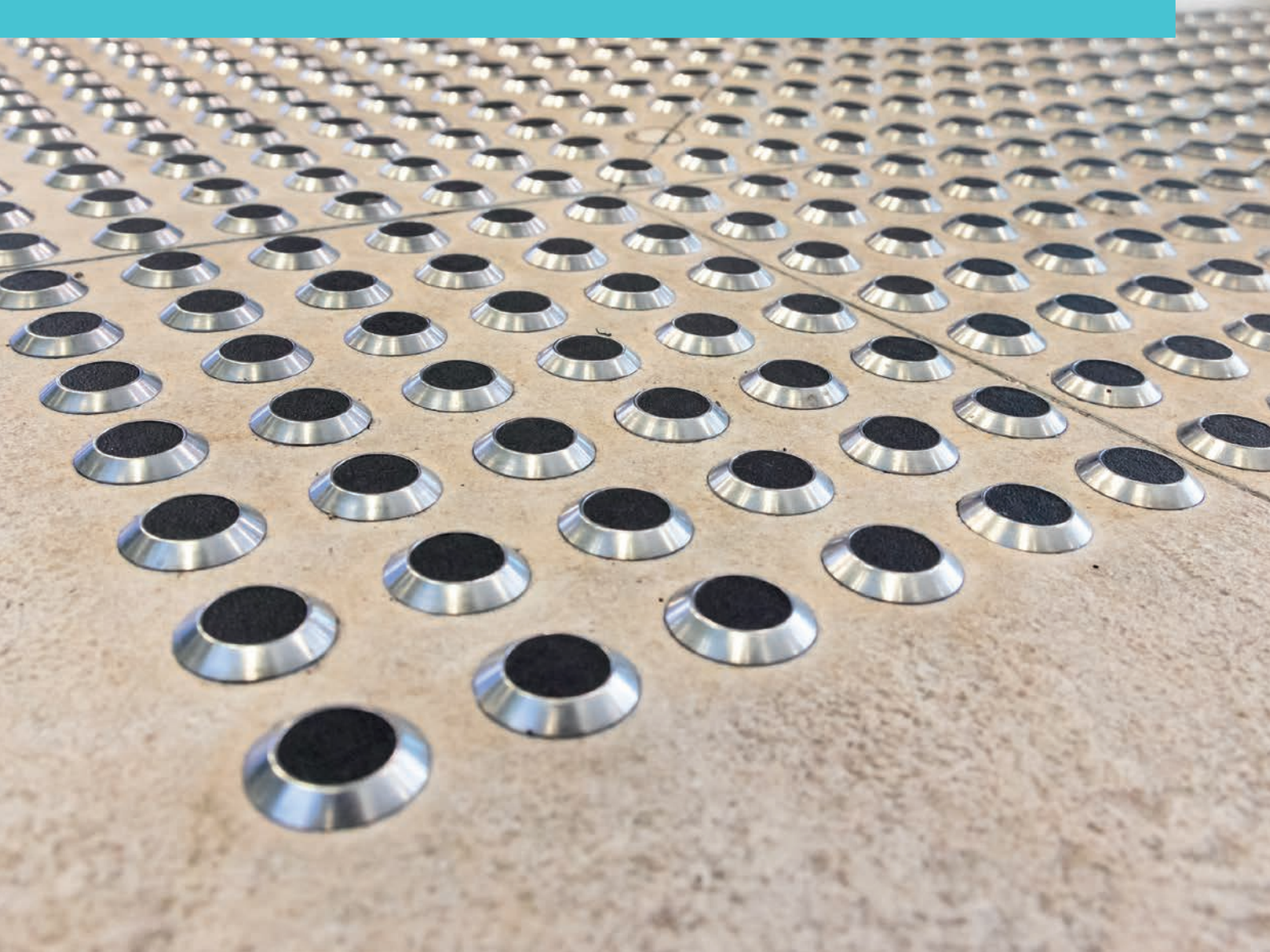
Objective 5

Make the service users experience more accessible.

| Action | Responsibility | Timeframe |
|--|----------------|-----------|
| Promote the use of libraries as a central base for disability platforms to meet and share information. | KCC | 2021 |



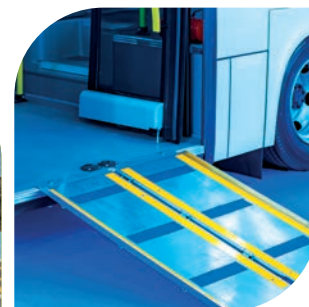
Transportation and Public Realm



Objective 1

Ensure that the built environment is accessible for all.

| Action | Responsibility | Timeframe |
|---|--|-----------|
| Develop a template for an accessible streetscape | KCC (Public Realm Team & Access Officer) | 2020 |
| Survey to be completed in all municipal areas to ensure adequacy of disabled parking bays (location and number) | KCC (Access Officer) & Local Access Groups | 2020-2022 |
| Following survey of adequacy of disabled parking bays, link in with Bye-Law reviews and update accordingly. | KCC (Roads Department & Access Officer) | 2020-2022 |
| Develop a policy around sandwich boards and other shop paraphernalia | KCC (Environment, Planning) | 2021 |
| Pedestrian Crossings: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review length of crossing • Countdown on pedestrian crossings at major junctions | KCC (Roads) | 2021 |





Community Culture and Heritage



Objective 1

To ensure universal design approach is followed when designing playgrounds, parks and heritage sites.

| Action | Responsibility | Timeframe |
|---|--|-----------|
| A survey of all playgrounds to be completed for accessibility needs. | KCC (Parks section, Local Access Groups, Access Officer) | 2021 |
| Work with parks department to deliver accessible play opportunities | KCC (Parks section, Local Access Groups, Access Officer) | 2020-2022 |
| Look at ways for ensuring better access to recreational and heritage sites | KCC (Parks, Access Officer) | 2020-2022 |
| Make events and festivals more accessible e.g. use of Mobiloo. Develop a policy around making events more accessible. | KCC (Access Officer) | 2020-2022 |
| Review of all signage at recreational sites to ensure it meets accessibility standards. | KCC (Access Officer) | 2022 |
| Develop a directory of accessible recreational areas and sports facilities | KCC (Parks, Sports Partnership and Access Officer) | 2022 |
| Develop virtual reality tours of main attractions for people unable to access sites | KCC | 2022 |



Economic Development, Enterprise and Planning



Objective 1

Market Kildare as an Accessible Friendly County.

| Action | Responsibility | Timeframe |
|--|--|-----------|
| Identify and map Kildare's access friendly business and tourist sites. | KCC (Access Officer) & Local Access Groups | 2022 |

Objective 2

Promote a Universal Design Approach for new public buildings.

| Action | Responsibility | Timeframe |
|---|---|-----------|
| When designing new public buildings or refurbishing old buildings encourage the use of universal design standards in excess of Part M of Building Regulations | KCC (Access Officers + all relevant sections) | 2020-2022 |
| Incorporate Changing Places where possible in any new public buildings | KCC (Access Officer, Planning Section) | 2020-2022 |

Objective 3

Work with local businesses to promote accessibility.

| Action | Responsibility | Timeframe |
|--|--|-----------|
| Accessibility section of shop front grant to be expanded to include a more widespread choice of accessibility improvements | LEO | 2020 |
| Promote shop front and accessibility grant scheme with local businesses | KCC (Access Officer, LEO) & Local Access Groups | 2020-2022 |
| Explore the possibility of having a grant solely for accessibility improvements | KCC (Access Officer and Economic Development section) | 2022 |
| Introduce Annual Awards Scheme for best practice around accessibility e.g. Gold Star Awards | KCC (Access Officer, LEO) & Local Access Groups | 2020-2022 |
| Design Universal Symbol to promote Accessible Friendly business's | KCC (Access Officer, LEO) & Local Access Groups | 2022 |
| Encourage businesses to incorporate Changing Places where possible | KCC (Access Officer, Planning Section) & Local Access Groups | 2020-2022 |





Partnership and Collaboration



Objective 1

To develop and continue partnerships with organisations representing disabled people, other agencies and Non-Government Organisations.

| Action | Responsibility | Timeframe |
|---|----------------------|-----------|
| Develop a directory of county access groups with a focus on raising their awareness and profile. | KCC (Access Officer) | 2020-2022 |
| Continue to develop partnerships with service providers and organisations. | KCC (Access Officer) | 2020-2022 |
| Establish a county forum to centralize collective thinking and build on existing collaborations with access groups and organisations. | KCC (Access Officer) | 2020 |

Objective 2

To work closely with all directorates within KCC for the successful implementation of this strategy.

| Action | Responsibility | Timeframe |
|---|----------------------|-----------|
| Develop a coordinated partnership of all the various directorates in KCC. | KCC (Access Officer) | 2020 |
| Establish an access team in KCC made up of champions from each directorate. | KCC (Access Officer) | 2020 |
| Collaborate with chamber of commerce and LEO and Kildare Fáilte to promote accessibility. | KCC (Access Officer) | 2020-2022 |





Housing and Services



Objective 1

To ensure that our housing stock provides for Accessible Housing.

| Action | Responsibility | Timeframe |
|--|----------------|-----------|
| Ensure and monitor that 10% of acquired housing stock meet the needs of those with a disability (dependent on market availability) and 12% of KCC new builds are suitable for those with a disability. | KCC | 2020-2022 |

Objective 2

To ensure that all housing stock meets the required standards.

| Action | Responsibility | Timeframe |
|--|----------------|-----------|
| Build all KCC housing stock to Part M of the Building Regulations. | KCC | 2020-2022 |

Objective 3

To ensure that the application process for housing assessment is as accessible as possible.

| Action | Responsibility | Timeframe |
|---|----------------|-----------|
| Review our housing application process – create online applications where possible. | KCC | 2020 |

Acknowledgements

Mr. Michael Hurley, Access Officer of Kildare County Council wishes to acknowledge the collaboration and interagency working which took place in the preparation of this strategy. I gratefully acknowledge the contribution of all those who actively participated in our workshop and the local access and disability groups across the county who were part of the consultation process. Their guidance has been invaluable. I would like to acknowledge the support given by the facilitators who devoted their time, energy and commitment in participating in the workshop.

Particular thanks are extended to Mr. Peter Carey (Chief Executive of Kildare County Council), Mr. Niall Morrissey (Director of Service), Ms. Sonya Kavanagh (Director of Service), Mr. Peter Minnock (Director of Service), Ms. Susan Bookle (LCDC Coordinator) and elected members for their support in the development of this strategy.

I would like to especially thank Ms. Majella O'Keefe (Chair of Naas Access and Disability Group) for her hard work and dedication in supporting the development of this strategy document. We all look forward to continuing to work together in making County Kildare universally accessible for all.





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