

## **Suffolk Coastal Disability Forum**

‘Working together to raise awareness and provide opportunities to improve the health and wellbeing of people with disabilities in East Suffolk’

### **Terms of Reference**

#### **1. Objectives**

- 1.1 The Forum has been established as an independent reference group to assist East Suffolk Council to listen, learn and consult with people with disabilities and their family carers throughout East Suffolk.
- 1.2 The Forum will create an opportunity for people with disabilities, their family carers and disability organisations in East Suffolk to come together to:
  - Consult directly with East Suffolk Council and other organisations on the services and facilities which affect people with disabilities.
  - Provide a collective and stronger voice on all issues of disability to achieve positive outcomes for the community.
- 1.3 The Forum will feed into the Disability Forum for Suffolk and other appropriate networks and forums working with people with disabilities.
- 1.4 The Suffolk Coastal and Waveney Disability Forums will work together to raise awareness of East Suffolk wide issues but continue to also focus on more localised issues and areas of work.

#### **2. Membership**

- 2.1 The Forum is open to the following:
  - People living in East Suffolk with physical, sensory or learning difficulties, or mental health problems, including their family members and carers
  - Representatives of disability organisations that provide a service to people who live in East Suffolk
  - Representatives from organisations that support family carers of people with disabilities
  - Representatives of East Suffolk Council
  - Representatives of Town and Parish Councils in East Suffolk
  - People, groups and organisations with an interest in disability issues in East Suffolk
- 2.2 The Forum can invite other representatives from statutory, voluntary and community organisations to attend as guest speakers or to discuss issues as and when required.

### **3. Meetings**

- 3.1 The Forum will meet not less than 4 times per calendar year, normally on a quarterly basis.
- 3.2 Additionally, Waveney and Suffolk Coastal Disability Forums will aim to host at least one joint meeting a year (likely to be virtual) to focus on priorities across the whole of East Suffolk. The organisation of joint meetings will be led by East Suffolk Council in partnership with the Forums. East Suffolk Council will also take the minutes and organise their distribution.
- 3.3 The Forum will elect a Chair and such other officers as required. The Forum will endeavour to elect a Chair and Vice Chair who are disabled, or who care for a disabled person, or who have lived experience of disability.
- 3.4 When in attendance at the meetings, Forum officers who are Councillors or Senior Officers should be independent of their respective organisations in order to demonstrate the impartiality of the Forum.
- 3.5 Officers will be elected for a period of 2 years and allowed to be considered for re-election at the end of their 2-year term of office.
- 3.6 Minutes will be taken by the Secretary of the Forum.
- 3.7 Meetings and meeting papers will be made as accessible as possible.
- 3.8 Notice of meetings including agendas and minutes will be sent to East Suffolk Council for inclusion on their webpages for the Forum.
- 3.9 Meeting formats, times and locations will be agreed by the Forum, ensuring venues are suitable and accessible for all members.

### **4. Review**

- 4.1 These Terms of Reference will be subject to a review which will be completed as and when required.

**Agreed at a meeting of the Suffolk Coastal Disability Forum on the  
22<sup>nd</sup> October, 2024**

## **Appendix 1**

### **Relationship with East Suffolk Council**

1. East Suffolk Council will provide support to the Forum as follows: A named officer from the Council's Communities Team will be designated to support and facilitate the Forum. Where possible, this officer will support both of East Suffolk's Forums to ensure equity and continuity:

This officer will:

- Share, discuss and feedback on East Suffolk Council related issues and suggestions raised through the Forum's meetings with the appropriate colleagues and departments within the Council.
- Provide a meeting venue suitable and accessible for all members, including paying for venue hire if required. This includes providing a virtual alternative (e.g. Zoom) where physical meetings are not possible or practical.
- Ensure documents are provided in alternative formats (e.g. easy-read, large print, audio) to assist members with disabilities, when required.
- Attend the Planning meetings for the Forum to help ensure the main Forum meetings reflect current and relevant topics and priorities.
- Encourage East Suffolk Council service areas to liaise and consult with both Forums when delivering work or projects which have the potential to impact on people with disabilities and their family carers.

2. East Suffolk Council will provide £500 of funding per annum to the Forum to cover specific costs associated with the administration of the Forum. Funds will be held on behalf of the Forum by a designated disability organisation.

3. East Suffolk Council will appoint a Councillor to the Forum.

Councillor Appointees will:

- Inform the Planning Group of the relevant Forum, at the earliest opportunity, about upcoming plans/strategies that may affect people with disabilities and their family carers.
- Attend the quarterly and joint Forum meetings (or identify a substitute to do so). On occasions the appointed Councillor may be required to attend Forum Planning meetings, but this attendance will be mutually agreed between both parties.
- Champion the work of the Forums within and beyond the Council.
- Support the Cabinet Member for Leisure, Tourism and Communities to increase awareness of Equality and Diversity within the Council, with a particular focus on disabilities and the work of the Suffolk Coastal and Waveney Disability Forums.