

**Accessible Britain Challenge**  
Report by Senior Waterways and Recreation Officer

**Summary:** This report provides members with information on the Accessible Britain Challenge which was recently launched by Government through the Office for Disability Issues (ODI)

**Recommendation:** That members note the contents of the report.

## **1 Introduction**

1.1 The Accessible Britain Challenge which was launched by Government in September 2014 actively encourages communities to be inclusive and accessible. The Challenge aims to see communities working with disabled people to remove the barriers that stop them participating fully in their community. Recognising that the UK's 12.2 million disabled people make a positive contribution to employment and local economies the Accessible Britain Challenge aims to share examples of best practice so others can learn from them.

## **2 Vision and aims**

2.1 The vision of the Accessible Britain Challenge is for communities to become more inclusive and accessible by engaging and working with disabled people to remove barriers that get in the way of them being full and active contributors in their community. The ODI considers an inclusive and accessible community as one that:

- engages with disabled people and includes them equally;
- recognises the positive contribution, in terms of employment and vibrant local economies, that 12.21 million disabled people across the UK can provide;
- recognises physical, hidden and mental health conditions and has the means in place to be fully accessible to all conditions; and
- encourages collaboration and co-production between disabled people and local organisations including local businesses, employers and service providers.

2.2 The stated aims of the Accessible Britain Challenge are to:

- motivate local communities to do more to be inclusive and accessible for disabled people;
- contribute towards building and maintaining strong and sustainable economic growth by harnessing the potential of disabled people, supporting them to be active members of their communities; and
- increase awareness and understanding of:
  - i. how a community can be inclusive and accessible for disabled people;
  - ii. the potential benefits for local businesses and organisations of engaging with disabled people either as employers or customers;
  - iii. the barriers disabled people face in their everyday lives that prevent them from being able full and active participants in their community;
  - iv. bring about a change in attitudes and behaviours towards disabled people by local businesses, employers, service providers and voluntary and community organisations; and
  - v. encourage collaboration and co-production between disabled people and local organisations including local businesses, employers and service providers.

### **3 How the challenge will work**

- 3.1 The ODI recognises that Government has a key role to play in helping to make communities inclusive and accessible. However, it feels that communities are built by individuals, groups and organisations working together at a local level. In this respect engaging with disabled people and working with them to design solutions is key to making a difference to their everyday lives.
- 3.2 The ODI therefore aims to provide significant practical support for the challenge which will be aimed at local businesses, local councils, voluntary groups, disabled people's groups and community groups.
- 3.3 By focusing on the positive contribution that nearly 12.22 million disabled people provide in terms of employment and vibrant local economies the ODI wants to build on this by harnessing, showcasing and sharing the initiatives and good practices that already exist. There will be an Accessible Britain Challenge online resource tool which will support the aims of the Challenge and exemplify and showcase good practice. The resource tool collates guidance, case studies, toolkits and good practice on inclusive and accessible

communities. This has been published on GOV.UK at [www.gov.uk/accessiblebritain](http://www.gov.uk/accessiblebritain)

## 4 Conclusions

4.1 The Accessible Britain Challenge is to be welcomed as it seeks to disseminate best practice guidance across a wide section of the community. The project also aims to recognise success in the form of awards under the broad categories of:

- Improved mobility;
- Innovative use of buildings, places and spaces;
- Safer neighbourhoods; and
- Inclusive social activities.

4.2 Details of the awards process will be published shortly and the best practice guidance is being further developed by the ODI. Officers consider that this initiative will provide a valuable resource for the Authority and other public authorities. Member's comments are welcomed.

Background papers:	Nil
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Broads Plan Objectives:	None
Appendices:	Nil