

‘Good access benefits all’

North Wiltshire District Council is committed to providing excellent services to the diverse communities of North Wiltshire. The Council ensures that services are delivered equitably to all sectors by consulting with a wide range of customers and stakeholder groups that represent the six strands of diversity :

- Age
- Ethnicity and culture
- Religion and belief
- Sexual orientation and transexuality
- Gender
- Disability

The outcome of this consultation then informs the continual improvement of service delivery. The Council is currently developing an access policy that considers the ‘physical’ and ‘built’ aspects of access to Council facilities. To complement this policy and to ensure that the Council does not discriminate against any member of the community from accessing services, a range of access methods and channels have been developed. The Council recognises that with changing working practices and information technology advances, the effectiveness of access channels will have to be constantly monitored and reviewed to ensure the requirements of our customers are met.

All Council employees and staff who join the Council undertake the ‘Respect for people’ training programme. This training equips employees with the knowledge and skills required to ensure that all customers are treated fairly and equitably. Further disability awareness training will be undertaken by all customer contact employees by the end of 2006.

The Council will ensure that blind and partially sighted customers will have equitable access to services by :

- Welcoming all assistance and guide dogs to Council premises
- Providing access to the Council web site through the Browseloud system
- Providing a facility on the web site under the ‘Accessibility Guide’ to enable the reader to alter text, font and colour.

- Assisting customers to transcribe documents into braille or audio format by signposting to organisations that provide this service
- Providing braille signage on all lifts, toilets and doors within the Council offices

The Council will ensure that deaf and hard of hearing customers will have equitable access to services by :

- Welcoming all assistance and guide dogs to Council premises
- Providing support through Human Resource employees and Jobcentre Plus to overcome obstacles that might be inhibiting access to employment opportunities
- Providing a typetalk service that will enable effective communication with the Council
- Provide a sign language service when requested

The Council will ensure that customers that have a physical impairment will have equitable access to services by :

- Providing support through Human Resource employees and Jobcentre Plus to overcome obstacles that might be inhibiting access to employment opportunities
- Providing a wheelchair for customer use.
- Having a Disability Equality Scheme and Access Policy in place by December 2006
- Providing assistance when required

The Council will ensure that customers who do not speak English will have equitable access to services by :

- Providing a translation service for five languages on the web site
- Providing assistance to access more comprehensive interpreting and translation services