

Item 2: Accessibility & Disability Inclusion Work Programme

SESSION TYPE: Workshop

PURPOSE/DESIRED OUTCOME:

Provide information and seek feedback on the development of QLDC’s Accessibility & Disability Inclusion work programme, including the refresh of QLDC’s Disability Policy and the development of an Accessibility Action Plan.

DATE/START TIME:

Tuesday, 4 August 2026 at 11:00 am.

TIME BREAKDOWN:

Presentation: 20 minutes
Questions or Debate/Discussion: 25 minutes

PRESENTERS:

Luke Place – Principal Policy Advisor, QLDC
Marie Schmidt – Community Partnerships Advisor, QLDC

Prepared by:



Name: Marie Schmidt
Title: Community Partnerships Advisor
22 July 2026

Reviewed and Authorised by:



Name: Ken Bailey
Title: GM – Community Services
23 July 2026

ATTACHMENTS:

A	Presentation Slides
B	2018 Disability Policy
C	Staff Survey Results Summary

Accessibility & Disability Inclusion work programme

Full Council Workshop

4 August 2026

Purpose of workshop

- > An early overview of the Accessibility and Disability Inclusion work programme
- > Why this work matters
- > Where we are now
- > Next steps



Disabled people *'include those who have long-term physical, mental, intellectual, or sensory impairments which in interaction with various barriers may hinder their full and effective participation in society on an equal basis with others'*

New Zealand Disability Strategy 2026-2030 (NZDS)

United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD)

Medical Model

- > Traditional approach
- > Disability located in the individual
- > Focus on cure or adaptation
- > Remains important for diagnosis, treatment and securing support

Social Model

- > Contemporary approach – NZDS and UNCRPD
- > People have impairments
- > Barriers in society create disability
- > Our role: remove barriers



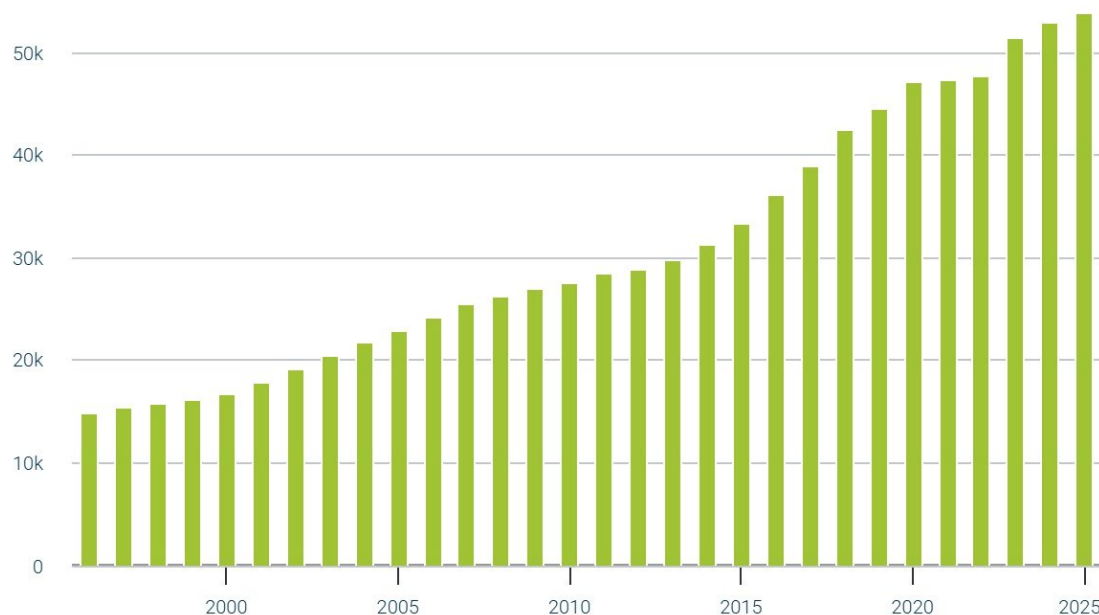
Context: Our community

Population growth has been occurring at a significant rate (Infometrics Ltd):

- > Population growth in the district averaged 2.7%*pa* over the 5 years to 2025 compared with 1.0%*pa* in New Zealand

Population level

People, annual level, June years



Data source: Infometrics Ltd

2023 Household Disability Survey (Stats NZ)

- > 17% of people living in New Zealand households were disabled. This equated to 851,000 people, of whom 98,000 were children and 753,000 were adults.
- > It is likely that QLDs disabled community is growing.
- > There is a general lack of contemporary information relating to the challenges faced by disabled people in the Otago and Queenstown Lakes District.

15% of people
in Otago
households
reported as
having a
disability.

1 out of 6 people living in New
Zealand identifies as disabled.



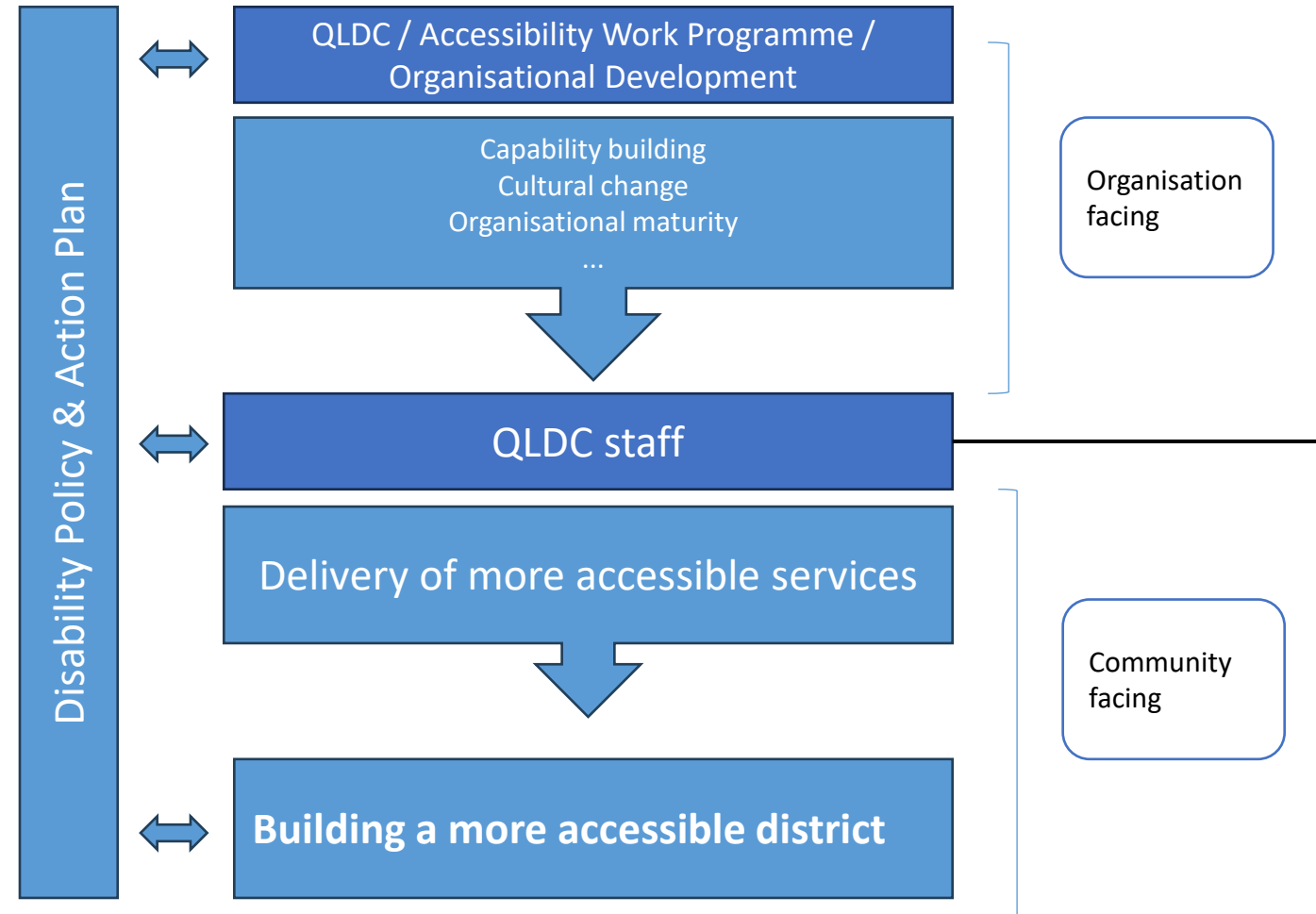
Objective of the accessibility and disability inclusion work programme

Key components of the work programme:

- > Refreshed Disability Policy – Clear principles, expectations, and accountability.
- > Accessibility Action Plan – Practical steps, timelines, and measurable outcomes.

Guiding aspects of the work programme:

- > Lived experience - 'nothing about us without us'.
- > Whole of organisation approach.
- > Operational and strategic functions of QLDC.
- > Collaborative – internal and external partners and stakeholders
- > Evidence based.



Upcoming work – Expert partner

NZDEN led

- > Review of existing information and staff engagement
- > Issues analysis - areas of concern and opportunities for improvement
- > Community survey and stakeholder engagement support
- > Outcome & recommendations report

Feeds into

QLDC led

Development of work programme

Refresh of Disability Policy

Development of Accessibility Action Plan

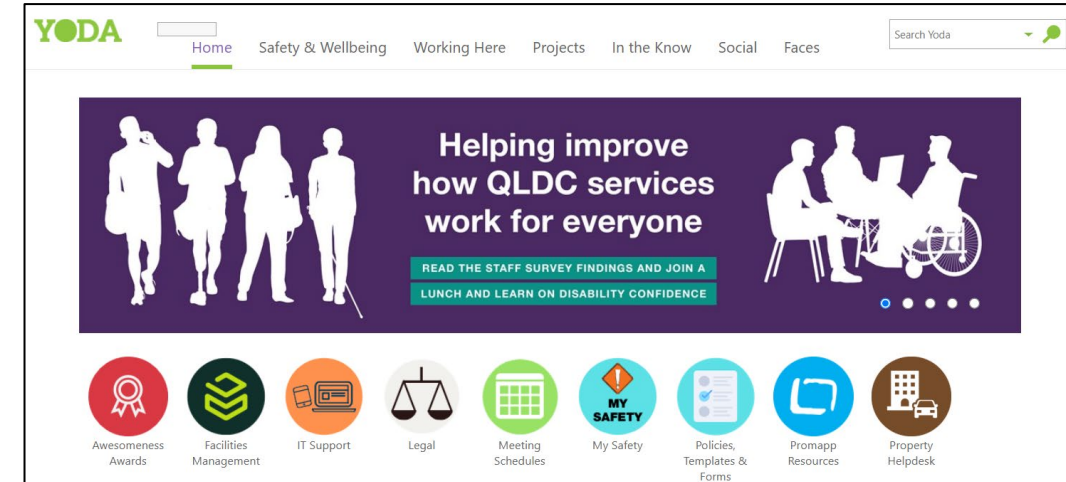
Building a more accessible district

Identifying issues – Staff Survey

QLDC staff survey core insights:

- > 130 participants
- > 75% aware of the Policy
- > 15% clear on how to apply it
- > 57% want to stay involved with the work
- > Accessibility valued but inconsistent
- > Staff want guidance, tools, and leadership

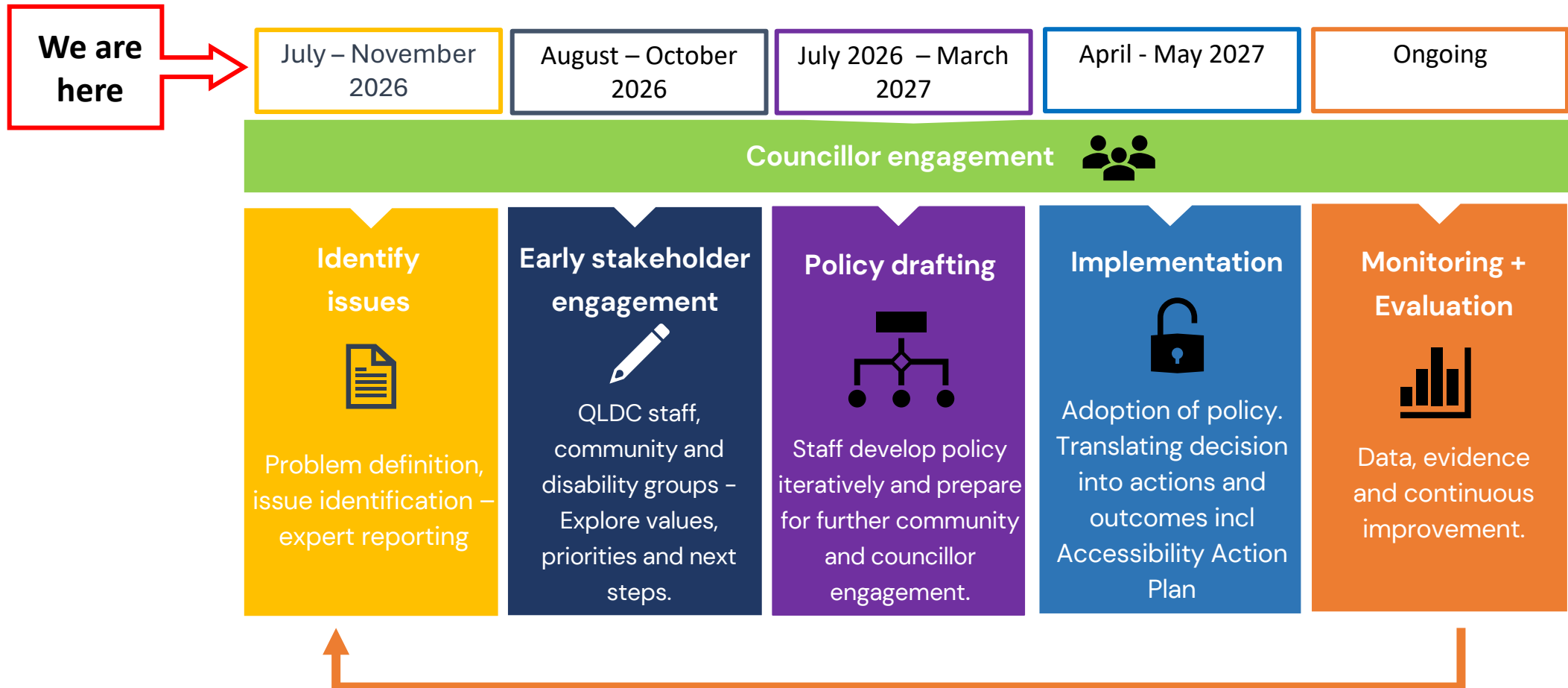
“Accessibility is largely invisible when you benefit from it - but becomes paramount when it no longer works.” – staff survey participant



WHAT THIS TELLS US:

Staff don't see accessibility as an add-on. They see it as fundamental to how we design, plan, and deliver services. They also want stronger leadership and organisation-wide commitment to support this work.

The policy making process



QLDC Disability Policy 2018

Adopted March 2018

Queenstown Lakes District Council:

- > *will support and advocate for the development of a more inclusive and diverse community*
- > *will respond to the needs of disabled people living in and visiting our district, with a focus on removing barriers to their full participation in our community*
- > *acknowledge and respect the diversity within the disability community and recognises the value it adds to our community.*

Click on this icon
to view the
Policy



Eight policy goals

- Enable participation in decision-making
- Understand the lived-experience of disabled people
- Communicate inclusively
- Deliver or fund events inclusive of disabled people
- Infrastructure is increasingly accessible
- QLDC facilities are accessible to disabled people
- Disabled people are resilient to emergency events
- QLDC provides leadership as a good employer and contract manager that builds a diverse workforce and safe and accessible work environments

Rationale for review – National and International context

Purpose of local government (LGA 2002)

- > Decision-making by, and on behalf of, communities – an inclusive approach.
- > Promote the four well-beings for present and future communities.
- > Take account diversity of the community.

United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Disabled Persons 1975

- > International action - ‘a common basis and frame of reference’
- > Disabled persons are entitled to:
 - > *‘the measures designed to enable them to become as self-reliant as possible’*
 - > *‘have their special needs taken into consideration at all stages of economic and social planning’*
 - > *‘participate in all social, creative or recreational activities’*

Rationale for review – New Zealand Disability Strategy 2026-2030

Strategy vision – *‘An equitable and accessible place for all disabled people and their whānau – where disabled people thrive, contribute, and choose the lives they want to lead.’*

Key principles

- > **Accessibility** - Participation starts with accessible environments, services, information and transport.
- > **Self-determination** - Disabled people are experts in their own lives: ‘nothing about us without us.’
- > **Equity, culture and identity** - Policy needs to recognise diverse identities, including tāngata whaikaha Māori.
- > **Respect and dignity** - Barriers are removed and positive attitudes are normalised.

What are other councils doing:

- > Auckland Council - Standing Disability Advisory Panel reporting twice yearly
- > Wellington City Council - Accessible Wellington Action Plan with an annual progress report
- > Hamilton City Council - Disability Action Plan 2025 refresh embedded across three separate Council strategies
- > Tauranga City Council - Accessible Tauranga Action & Investment Plan – embedded in Inclusive Cities Strategy



New Zealand Disability Strategy

2026–2030

Rationale for review – QLDC context



Strategic Framework:

- > Thriving people, enabling built environment
- > Belonging, identity, equity
- > Inclusive, connected communities.



Diversity Equity and Inclusion Statement

- > Commits the organisation to equitable, inclusive environments where all people feel respected and able to thrive.



QLDC community research

- > Insights and Quality of Life Surveys (Attachment A).
- > Disabled residents face greater barriers to participation, access to services, housing, transport, and community life.

Operational and financial costs and opportunities

- > Projects may require redesign, delay and unnecessary cost if retro fits are required.
- > Limited accessibility for disabled people can reduce the district's appeal to disabled visitors and whānau - lost tourism revenue and reduced participation.
- > There are economic opportunities associated with being an inclusive and welcoming destination for disabled people.



Policy review is overdue

- > Policy was developed 8+ years ago



Reputational costs and opportunities

- > Public commitments mean visible inaccessibility can undermine community confidence and trust.
- > Consistent accessibility consideration supports credibility with disabled communities.

Next steps

- > NZDEN assessment
- > Staff engagement
- > Community engagement
- > Staff capability building
- > Policy drafting
- > Approx adoption of new policy – May 2027



Attachment A - Community surveys

QLDC Community Insights Survey 2026 [here](#)

- > Reveals gaps in how accessibility is currently delivered (especially communication and engagement) and lacks disability-specific data. Illustrates both need (problems exist) and blind spots (Council isn't measuring disability properly).
- > 'desire for simple, accessible, and clear communication' information that is "simpler, more accessible, and easier to engage with, delivered through a wider range of channels"
- > Some residents report difficulty making submissions incl formats and accessibility of consultation processes.
- > Parking and access problems - transport and infrastructure not keeping pace with growth – These issues disproportionately affect disabled people and their families.

QLDC Quality of Life Survey 2025 [here](#)

- > People 'living with a health condition' consistently report lower wellbeing and greater barriers to services and participation, less secure in housing and less able to participate in community life
- > Few homes suitable for disabled people
- > People needing to travel outside the district for healthcare or disability services

Consistent with StatsNZ findings:

'Disabled people in Aotearoa New Zealand consistently report lower levels of wellbeing and inclusion across a range of indicators compared with non-disabled people.'

(StatsNZ - An overview of disability data in Aotearoa New Zealand)

Disability Policy



Policy Statement

1. Queenstown Lakes District Council (QLDC):
 - will support and advocate for the development of a more inclusive and diverse community;
 - will respond to the needs of disabled people living in and visiting our district, with a focus on removing barriers to their full participation in our community;
 - and acknowledges and respects the diversity within the disability community and recognises the value it adds to our community.

Policy Scope

2. This Disability Policy sets goals and measurable actions for creating an inclusive and enabling society, by removing barriers to participation for disabled people living in and visiting our community.
3. Disabled people make up 26 % of the population of Otago and Southland, which is higher than the national average.¹ With increasing ageing populations in New Zealand and worldwide there will also be more disabled people travelling and making a contribution to our local tourism industry. This policy provides an overview of current disability issues within New Zealand and our response to those issues.
4. This policy acknowledges the New Zealand Disability Strategy 2016-2026 as a guiding document for improving the lives of disabled people.

¹ Statistics New Zealand Disability Survey; 2013.

5. The vision of the New Zealand Disability Strategy 2016-2026 is:

“New Zealand is a non-disabling society – a place where disabled people have an equal opportunity to achieve their goals and aspirations, and all of New Zealand works together to make this happen.”

6. This policy acknowledges the contribution disabled people can and do make to the cultural, social and economic life of our community. “Future economic growth of the country has the potential to be constrained by skill and labour shortages. The low employment rates of disabled people represent a significant loss of potential contribution to New Zealand’s economy.”² This policy aims to support the development of genuinely inclusive environments in which people can participate and contribute, on an equal basis, free of barriers.
7. This policy has adopted the social model of disability which acknowledges that all people are unique individuals, and that disability arises from the interaction between people living with impairments and the physical, attitudinal, communication and social barriers they face in their environment. People can experience disability in different ways depending upon age, gender, ethnicity, impairment and many other factors. The social model of disability aims to remove the barriers that prevent disabled people from participating and contributing to community life.
8. Barriers are obstacles that make it difficult – or sometimes impossible – for disabled people to fully participate in life. Barriers usually develop because the needs of disabled people are not considered. “It is something that happens when the world we live in has been designed by people who assume that everyone is the same.”³

² New Zealand Disability Strategy 2016-2026, Office for Disability Issues, p. 15.

³ New Zealand Disability Strategy 2016-2026, Office for Disability Issues.

9. Barriers may be visible or invisible. There are many different types of barriers, for example:
- **Attitudinal barriers** may result in disabled people being treated differently than non-disabled people.
 - **Informational and communication barriers** arise when a disabled person cannot easily receive and/or understand information that is available to others.
 - **Systemic barriers** in policies, practices and procedures result in disabled people being treated differently than others or sometimes excluded altogether.
 - **Physical and architectural barriers** occur in the environment and prevent access for disabled people.
10. QLDC is committed to delivering high quality services that satisfy the needs and expectations of all of our community. As a local authority responsible for building and managing key public assets (e.g. roads, parks, community facilities) and delivering essential services (e.g. building and resource consents, community event facilitation, emergency management) QLDC can play an important role in reducing barriers.

Strategic Context

11. The Council's vision for the district is outlined within the QLDC Ten Year Plan 2018-28 as "Vibrant Community, Enduring Landscapes, Bold Leadership".
12. This policy contributes significantly to the achievement of the Ten Year Plan vision, most specifically in the achievement of the following community outcomes:
- Inclusive for Everyone
 - Effective and Efficient Community Facilities
 - Effective and Efficient Infrastructure
 - Good standard of Living and Wellbeing
 - Appropriate Public Access
 - Resilient and prepared for civil defence and emergency events.

13. Further detail about the QLDC strategic framework can be found within the Ten Year Plan 2018-28.

Guiding principles

14. This policy acknowledges the New Zealand Disability Strategy 2016-2026 as a guiding document for improving the lives of disabled people.
15. This policy is aligned with the New Zealand Disability Strategy 2016-2026 in its acknowledgement of three sets of principles which “will help make sure the disabled community is visible, acknowledged and respected on an equal basis with others, and that disabled people can live a life with dignity and feel valued”.⁴

The three sets of principles are⁵:

a. **Te Tiriti o Waitangi (The Treaty of Waitangi)**

Partnership: Māori and the Crown have a relationship of good faith, mutual respect and understanding, and shared decision-making.

Participation: the Crown and Māori will work together to ensure Māori (including whānau, hapū, iwi and communities) participate at all levels of decision-making. This includes the right to seek opportunities for self-determination and self-management.

Protection: the Crown actively contributes to improving the wellbeing of Māori, including support for independent living and the protection of Māori property and identity, in accordance with Māori values. Māori have the same rights and privileges as other citizens.

⁴ New Zealand Disability Strategy 2016-2026, Office for Disability Issues, p.6

⁵ New Zealand Disability Strategy 2016-2026, Office for Disability Issues, p.16-19

b. United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities

- i. Respect for inherent dignity, individual autonomy including the freedom to make one's own choices, and independence of persons
- ii. Non-discrimination
- iii. Full and effective participation and inclusion in society
- iv. Respect for difference and acceptance of disabled people as part of human diversity and humanity
- v. Equality of opportunity
- vi. Accessibility
- vii. Equality between men and women
- viii. Respect for the evolving capacities of disabled children and respect for the right of disabled children to preserve their identities.

- c. Ensure disabled people are involved in decision-making that impacts them and acknowledge that disabled people are experts in their own lives.

16. QLDC will also adhere to the following guiding principles:

- Recognise the diverse needs of disabled people and acknowledge that disabled people are experts in their own experience.
- Recognise the need to provide all people with equity of opportunity and access.
- Ensure that quality standards and safety are maintained and barriers to access are removed.
- Maintain an ongoing partnership with disabled people built on mutual trust and respect.

Key Terms

17. There are many words and terms that are used to identify disability and at present there is no consensus on this within the disability community. This policy will use specific terms proposed within the New Zealand Disability Strategy 2016-2026 when referencing disability. This is based on advice from the New Zealand

Disability Strategy Revision Reference Group and in recognition of the history of the term in the 2001 Strategy.

18. Recommended terms include:

- a. **Disability:** The loss or limitation of opportunities to take part in society on an equal level with others due to social and environmental barriers. Disabled people include: "...those who have long-term physical, mental, intellectual or sensory impairments which in interaction with various barriers may hinder their full and effective participation in society on an equal basis with others..."⁶
- b. **Disabled people:** A group or community of people with disabilities.
- c. **Impairment:** An injury, illness, or congenital condition that causes or is likely to cause a loss or difference of physiological or psychological function. Impairments can be both physically apparent and 'hidden'.
 - i. **Physical:** Reduced physical capacity, which for example affects mobility, strength, or balance.
 - ii. **Sensory:** Impairment of the senses (mostly commonly sight and hearing).
 - iii. **Mental Illness:** A mental health condition arising from continuous or intermittent disorders related to thinking, feeling, volition or behaviour.
 - iv. **Intellectual:** Permanently impaired learning ability (usually from birth) which prevents or inhibits people from developing the range of physical and social skills usually found in a person of that age.
 - v. **Neurodevelopmental:** Neuropsychiatric problems or impaired motor function, learning, language or non-verbal communication, e.g. Autism spectrum disorders; dyslexia; dyspraxia.
 - vi. **Age-related:** Physical, sensory, intellectual, disability or mental illness related to the onset of old age. This includes chronic conditions which can affect younger people, for example stroke, but which are more often found amongst older people.

⁶ United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, Article 1.

- d. **Access/Accessibility/Barrier-free:** These terms all refer to the removal of barriers, whether they are attitudinal or environmental, which increases the opportunity for disabled people to participate in the community.
- e. **Non-disabling:** Removing the barriers in society that disable people with impairments. This is more meaningful than 'enabling', which only helps disabled people get around barriers rather than remove them completely."⁷

QLDC's Role

19. The Council has the following strategic roles:

- **Advocate** – QLDC is responsible for advocating for access and equity issues as they relate to disabled people. QLDC recognises that self-advocacy is the strongest and most effective form of advocacy and will support advocacy groups accordingly.
- **Partner** – QLDC will support and consolidate the efforts of the wide range of groups and individuals actively involved in advocating on disability issues.
- **Planner** – QLDC has a key role in defining future development of the district in relation to buildings (including commercial, community and housing), road network, cycleways, parks, gardens, reserves and footpaths. It plays a key role in promoting sustainable development that sustains a diverse community and is barrier free.
- **Regulator** – QLDC has a regulatory function to ensure that quality standards and safety are maintained and barriers to access are removed.
- **Provider**- QLDC is a key provider of facilities and services including libraries, sport and recreation facilities, community halls, advisory and infrastructure services.
- **Leader** – QLDC displays leadership in relation to issues affecting disabled people and will lead by example.
- **Employer** – QLDC is a major employer in the District and will ensure provision of a fair and equitable workplace. QLDC will maximise the benefits that a diverse workforce can bring.

⁷ New Zealand Disability Strategy 2016-2026, Office for Disability Issues, p.11

Policy Goals and Actions

20. This policy provides goals and actions for Queenstown Lakes District Council (QLDC) to achieve a non-disabling community:

Policy Goal 1

QLDC will enable the participation of disabled people in QLDC's service design, planning and decision making process.

Actions:

- a. Consult, include and inform in accordance with the QLDC Significance and Engagement Policy.

Policy Goal 2

QLDC will demonstrate an understanding of the lived experience of disabled people.

Actions:

- a. Build staff disability awareness into the QLDC competency framework.

Policy Goal 3

QLDC communicates inclusively for disabled people.

Actions:

- a. Ensure the QLDC website continues to meet government web standards for accessibility.
- b. Develop QLDC Brand Guidelines that include guidance about reflecting community diversity in the branding/images used by QLDC.
- c. Ensure public documents and policy take into account the Disability Policy.
- d. Remove barriers wherever possible, to democratic processes i.e. consultation and voting.

Policy Goal 4

QLDC delivers or funds events that are inclusive of disabled people.

Actions:

- a. Any events funded by QLDC must confirm that they will make all efforts to ensure the event is accessible to disabled people as either a participant, spectator or employee. QLDC will consider this information during the assessment of funding applications.
- b. Any events delivered by QLDC as the event organiser must be accessible to disabled people as either a participant, spectator or employee.

Policy Goal 5

QLDC public infrastructure is increasingly accessible to disabled people.

Actions:

Work towards:

- a. Produce an online and hardcopy disability access map showing all accessible carparks, public toilets and public facilities in the District.
- b. Consider the ease of an accessible journey when commuting, in relation to the provision of appropriate accessible public toilets, public transport, parking and drop off points.
- c. Develop a quick-reference fact sheet that outlines disability requirements within QLDC infrastructure, building and development standards. Review these standards for any gaps.
- d. Review monitoring of building and resource consent standards in relation to accessibility to ensure standards are being met.
- e. Consider a process for providing temporary disability parking permits for those who experience temporary impairments.

Policy Goal 6

QLDC facilities are accessible to disabled people and QLDC leases are actively encouraged to adhere to similar standards.

Actions:

- a. Consider the accessibility of current QLDC community facilities and significant parks and reserves.

- b. Ensure that new facilities and services developed by QLDC are accessible to disabled people.
- c. Ensure all active and passive recreation programmes delivered by QLDC are accessible to disabled people, whenever practicable.
- d. Work towards ensuring that all QLDC facilities have clear accessibility signs.

Policy Goal 7

QLDC will promote the development of a resilient community that includes disabled people, with a particular focus on emergency events.

Actions:

- a. Ensure that the CDEM Welfare Group is taking the needs of disabled people into account in planning emergency response provisions.
- b. Support the development of community leaders within the disabled community to enable their contribution to building community resilience.
- c. Solicit input from the disability community in the development of emergency response provisions.

Policy Goal 8

QLDC will demonstrate leadership as a good employer and contract manager that aims to build a diverse workforce, whilst providing a safe and accessible working environment.

Actions:

- a. Develop a QLDC HR Diversity and Inclusion Policy.
- b. Develop procurement guidelines to ensure best practice when engaging contractors and suppliers, in relation to Disability Policy.

All new policies and strategies will be reviewed by the Corporate Services Team to ensure due consideration has been given to the Guiding Principles of the Disability Policy.

Consultation and Stakeholder Management

QLDC will consult and inform in accordance with the QLDC Significance and Engagement Policy.

Monitoring Performance

A biennial paper will be produced and reported through the Community and Services Committee, providing a progress update on the action items identified in this policy.

Policy review

This policy will be subject to biennial review and ratification by the Community and Services Committee.

Related Legislations and Documents

This policy relates to the following legislation:

- Human Rights Act 1993

This policy relates to the following live documents:

- Annual Plan 2017/18

And the following draft documents currently under development

- Ten Year Plan 2018-28 – DRAFT
- HR Disability and Inclusion Policy (QLDC Internal Policy) – DRAFT
- QLDC Disability and Inclusion Strategy – TBD 2018/19

Helping improve how QLDC services work for everyone



We've been taking a closer look at how accessible and inclusive QLDC's services, spaces, and information are for our community.

This includes refreshing our Disability Policy and shaping a more coordinated, organisation-wide programme of work. But before deciding what comes next, we wanted to understand where we're at now – and that means hearing directly from our staff.

Over three weeks in May–June 2026, we ran a short internal survey to gather insights from across QLDC.

THE FOCUS WAS SIMPLE:

What are you seeing in your day-to-day work? What's working well? And where could we do better?

We received 130 responses from across the organisation, giving us a valuable cross-section of perspectives.

What we heard is encouraging. Staff care about accessibility and want to improve. There are also opportunities for clearer direction, stronger leadership, and practical tools to make accessibility part of everyday delivery.

AT A GLANCE

130 responses across teams



“Accessibility is also known as ‘good design’. It happens at the beginning of a project and not afterwards.”

“Valuing accessibility would be a great start. That needs to happen from leadership and not subject matter experts.”

WHAT THIS TELLS US:

Staff don't see accessibility as an add-on. They see it as fundamental to how we design, plan, and deliver services. They also want stronger leadership and organisation-wide commitment to support this work.

What we're hearing.

Awareness is strong – but clarity is low

Most staff know we have a Disability Policy, but fewer understand how it applies in practice.

Only a small proportion feel “very clear” on expectations, with many describing accessibility as:

- > unclear in day-to-day application
- > inconsistent across teams
- > not always prioritised early in projects

“Accessibility is not considered a ‘must have’... we remain uncommitted to it.”

WHAT THIS MEANS:

Staff want a policy that is understood and being used in day-to-day work, rather than one that sits on a shelf.

Leadership and alignment will make the difference

A consistent message was the need for stronger leadership and a more joined-up approach. Staff described:

- > accessibility being driven by individuals rather than embedded
- > silos across teams
- > limited accountability

“So much work is done in silos.”

“We need higher-ups to lead this so we feel supported.”

AT THE SAME TIME, THERE'S OPTIMISM:

“QLDC has the potential to lead by example.”

WHAT THIS MEANS:

Clear leadership, shared ownership, and cross-council alignment will be key to progress.

Barriers show up in everyday experiences

Many staff shared specific examples of where accessibility isn't working, particularly in physical spaces. Common issues include:

- > heavy or difficult doors
- > inaccessible or locked facilities
- > uneven paths and site layouts
- > limited disability parking

“We see people struggle all the time with the front door at Wānaka office.”

SOME FEEDBACK ALSO HIGHLIGHTED SAFETY RISKS:

“Fire exits... are stepped — evacuating would be extremely difficult.”

WHAT THIS MEANS:

There are visible, everyday barriers that are often relatively fixable. Taking stock of our physical spaces and planning for improvements through future budgets will help remove barriers over time.

Digital and communication barriers are just as important

Accessibility challenges also show up in how we design and communicate services:

- > websites and forms that are hard to use
- > consultation tools that aren't inclusive
- > heavy use of jargon
- > lack of accessibility standards in procurement

"It can be challenging to advocate for plain language..."

"Accessibility isn't really factored into procurement."

WHAT THIS MEANS:

Improving digital accessibility and plain language can significantly improve how people experience our services.

Small details make a big difference

Staff highlighted how accessibility is often shaped by everyday details:

"Accessibility is largely invisible when you benefit from it - but becomes paramount when it no longer works."

"Accessibility and inclusion are shaped by many small things - communication, planning, spaces..."

PERSONAL EXPERIENCES REINFORCED THE IMPACT:

"I had a temporary disability and uneven pathways made accessing buildings difficult."

WHAT THIS MEANS:

Small, practical changes can have a big impact on people's experience.

Staff want tools, training, and support

There's a clear willingness to improve, but many staff don't feel equipped. Common themes:

- > uncertainty about what "good" looks like
- > lack of guidance or examples
- > limited training

"Simple training, tips, or checklists for staff could help lift confidence and awareness of accessibility best practice across the organisation."

"More team training in this area so we can recognise and know when to help."

WHAT THIS MEANS:

There's strong opportunity to build capability through practical tools, training, and shared resources.

There's strong appetite to do better

One of the most positive findings is the level of engagement:

- > over half of respondents are open to follow-up involvement
- > many provided detailed suggestions
- > strong sense of pride and openness to improvement

"I love being part of an organisation that takes this into consideration."

"This is a really important piece of work."

WHAT THIS MEANS:

We have a motivated workforce ready to be part of the solution.

Ideas and opportunities raised by staff

Many of the suggestions focused on practical improvements that could make a real difference for staff and the community.

PHYSICAL ACCESS	DIGITAL & COMMUNICATIONS	TOOLS & SYSTEMS	CAPABILITY & CULTURE	COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIP
Automatic or push-button doors at key sites	Alt text on images and captions on videos	Accessibility checkpoints in project planning	Organisation-wide awareness training	Co-design with people with lived experience
Fixing existing accessibility features	Replace PDFs with accessible online forms	Building-specific accessibility guides	Sign language training for frontline staff	Accessibility reference group
Unlocking and better signposting accessible facilities	Simplify website navigation and content	Central webpage with accessibility information	Adopting Universal Design as standard	Better mapping of accessible facilities and routes
Improved disability parking				<i>"Some of the best ideas come from customers – often simple fixes that don't need big investment."</i>

A note on progress already underway

While some of the ideas raised by staff are quick, practical improvements, others are larger pieces of work that require ongoing investment and collaboration across the organisation. Encouragingly, work is already underway in several areas, with teams across QLDC — including Communications, Libraries, Customer Experience and others - continuing to improve the accessibility of information, services, systems, and spaces.

What this adds up to

Across all responses, a clear picture emerges:

- > Accessibility is valued, but not yet consistently embedded across the organisation
- > Barriers exist across physical, digital, and service delivery
- > Staff are motivated and engaged, but are looking for more support and guidance
- > Leadership and coordination will be key to turning good intentions into lasting change

What's happening next

We're working with the New Zealand Disability Employers' Network to support QLDC's journey to strengthen accessibility and disability inclusion across the district. This includes:

- > Building staff capability through training
- > Staff discovery and feedback sessions to explore themes in more depth
- > Community engagement through surveys and workshops
- > Reviewing and updating the Disability Policy
- > Developing a findings and recommendations report to help shape future priorities

Final thought.

Accessibility isn't about doing something extra, it's about making sure everyone can use and benefit from what we already provide.

AS ONE STAFF MEMBER PUT IT:

“Accessibility is good design.”

When we get it right from the start, services work better for everyone - residents, visitors, and staff alike.

