



Subject:	Disability Strategy - Proposals for the adoption of two Inclusive and Accessible Initiatives
Date:	18 November 2016
Reporting Officer:	John Walsh, Town Solicitor
Contact Officer:	Stella Gilmartin, Equality & Diversity Officer

Is this report restricted?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Is the decision eligible for Call-in?	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>

1.0	Purpose of Paper
1.1	The purpose of this paper is to provide details of requests to support two external accessibility initiatives: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• the Equality Commission for Northern Ireland's Every Customer Counts Initiative• the Now Group's JAM Card initiative
2.0	Recommendations
2.1	The Committee is asked to approve and adopt Belfast City Council's involvement in the: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Every Customer Counts Initiative• JAM Card initiative
3.0	Background
3.1	One of the key outcomes in the Belfast Agenda is to ensure that Belfast is a welcoming, safe, fair and inclusive city for all and one of the strategic priorities in the council's Disability Strategy is to 'eliminate the barriers disabled people face in accessing the physical environment, goods and services so that disabled people can participate fully in all areas of life'.
3.2	The council has recently received two requests to participate in initiatives aimed at improving the experiences of disabled people when accessing services both from the council and other city centre businesses.

3.3	<p><u>Every Customer Counts (ECC) – Promoting Accessible Services’</u></p> <p>The "Every Customer Counts" (ECC) initiative is a corporate initiative recently launched by the Equality Commission with the aim of improving disabled people's access to services. The aim of the initiative is to encourage organisations to demonstrate support for the initiative by making their services available to all customers on a fair and equitable basis. The ECNI will provide a sticker which can be displayed to tell our customers that we:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review the accessibility of our service • Make reasonable adjustments for disabled customers
3.4	<p><u>The Now Group - JAM Card and App</u></p> <p>The Now Group, the operator of the Bobbin café, is a social enterprise which supports people with learning difficulties and autism into jobs. The JAM Card and App is an information card/App carried by people with hidden disabilities /learning disabilities to provide a discreet way to alert staff in a range of services including retail, transport or other outlets that the card-holder needs ‘Just a Minute’ of time and patience when interacting with them.</p>
3.5	<p>The NOW Group has been awarded funding from the Big Lottery to roll out the JAM Card / App regionally over the next six months and is now seeking the assistance of key private and public sector stakeholders. In addition to the council, the other key stakeholders would likely be Libraries NI, Translink, NIE and the Henderson Group.</p>
3.6	<p>It is proposed that free online ‘JAM Card Awareness’ training will be provided to front line staff to help raise awareness of how to interact when presented with a JAM Card. In return they request the council offer free publicity in our publications and promotion to key city-centre partners through Belfast City Centre Management. The NOW Group hopes to use the council’s involvement as a model of good practice to use with other councils in Northern Ireland.</p>
3.7	<p><u>Financial & Resource Implications</u></p> <p>There will be financial and time resources required to implement both initiatives but these will be resourced from within existing budgets and staff allocation.</p>
3.8	<p><u>Equality and Good Relations Implications</u></p> <p>This proposal will provide a positive endorsement of our commitment to diversity as highlighted in the Belfast Agenda, our Equality Scheme and Disability Strategy and Action Plan and Age Friendly Charter and Action Plan.</p>

4.0	Appendices – Documents Attached
4.1	Appendix 1: Letter of Request from the Equality Commission Northern Ireland re: Every Customer Counts Appendix 2: Letter of Request from The Now Group re: The JAM initiative.