

Reference: FOI-1779

**Request:**

Please provide information on whether or not you employ an access officer(s).

Notes: They do not need to have the specific job title of access officer for you to respond affirmatively. The role may be defined as having responsibility for any one or all of the following and may be split between more than one person;

- respond to requests, comments and complaints from all concerned with disability access
- prepare adaptation programmes, including budgets, and monitor progress
- carry out surveys, feasibility studies, drawings, specifications, contract documentations and supervise their implementation
- give advice on all access design issues: transport, pavements, damaged kerbs, road crossings, highways schemes, traffic calming, parking and street furniture.
- assist in the development of appropriate access plan policies and design guidance, primarily through implementing supplementary planning guidance
- provide technical consultation and interpretation on applications that justify detailed input and provide guidance to development control officers on when to consult
- be available for pre-application consultations on larger applications.
- co-ordinate the consultation process with statutory consultees, such as English Heritage, Building Control and the Statutory Highway Authority
- co-ordinate and manage the Council's training programme for new and existing officers, in particular in development control
- liaise with neighbouring authorities and national bodies
- establish a local access group where one does not exist, encourage and support the local access group and ensure that disabled people and

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other appropriate voluntary groups are effectively involved in the planning process. Servicing regular planning application consultation meetings and providing accessible transport and meeting rooms can be supportive

If an employee(s) is responsible for the above, please respond and clarify which responsibilities or similar responsibilities they hold.

This should include:

- Highways and Engineering, i.e., public highway works?
- Housing adaptations team, i.e. Council Housing?
- Accessibility/adaptations in Public Buildings?
- Accessibility policies, advice and guidance

**Response:**

The Authority does not employ specific Access Officers. All the duties listed are carried out by a range of officers and teams depending on the specific project being carried out.

- **Respond to requests, comments and complaints from all concerned with disability access**

Any complaints or enquiries to received would be coordinated by the Authority's Customer First Office who would direct it to the relevant department, dependent on the nature of the complaint or enquiry.

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- **Prepare adaptation programmes, including budgets, and monitor progress**
- **Carry out surveys, feasibility studies, drawings, specifications, contract documentations and supervise their implementation**
- **Give advice on all access design issues: transport, pavements, damaged kerbs, road crossings, highways schemes, traffic calming, parking and street furniture.**

The Authority's Property Services team would support in any adaptations programmes covering both Public Buildings and Council Housing.

With regards to Highways, the Authority has a long standing technical partnership with Capita PLC, who manage and oversee adaptations to the highway.

- **Assist in the development of appropriate access plan policies and design guidance, primarily through implementing supplementary planning guidance**

Supplementary Planning Documents are published online at [Supplementary planning documents and masterplans | North Tyneside Council](#). Design advice is set out in the Design Quality SPD.

Building Control can provide advice in relation to building work as defined by the Building Regulations 2010, and if not exempt will ensure this work complies with Part M – Access to and use of buildings – of the Building Regulations.

- **Provide technical consultation and interpretation on applications that justify detailed input and provide guidance to development control officers on when to consult**

There is specialist input on planning applications from highways officers, landscape architects and urban design as required.

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- **Be available for pre-application consultations on larger applications.**  
A planning pre-application advice service is offered, and this would involve consultees providing specialist advice as above.
- **Co-ordinate the consultation process with statutory consultees, such as English Heritage, Building Control and the Statutory Highway Authority**  
Planning Case Officers co-ordinate the consultation process on their own cases.
- **Co-ordinate and manage the Council's training programme for new and existing officers, in particular in development control**  
The Authority has a formal induction programme for all new employees. The Authority also delivers a workforce development programme. Any training will cover mandatory training for all employees on topics such as Equality and Diversity, and Health and Safety, as well as specialist training specific to individual roles and responsibilities.  
  
The Authority's technical partner, Capita PLC, also have a workforce development programme.
- **Liaise with neighbouring authorities and national bodies**  
All appropriate consultation and liaison with National Bodies would be undertaken in relation to the specific project.

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- **Establish a local access group where one does not exist, encourage and support the local access group and ensure that disabled people and other appropriate voluntary groups are effectively involved in the planning process. Servicing regular planning application consultation meetings and providing accessible transport and meeting rooms can be supportive**

The Authority does not employ specific Officers that hold this responsibility. However, the Local Authority is happy to consult with any local interest groups it is made aware of.

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