

Motion – Disability Strategy

“That this Council notes that 25 years ago, on 8th November 1995, the Disability Discrimination Act received Royal Assent; recalls that this landmark piece of legislation was the result of a hard-fought campaign by disabled people, with up to 100,000 disabled activists taking part in direct action, campaigning for equal rights and an end to the kind of societal discrimination that saw wheelchair users regularly banned from bars, cinemas and theatres under the guise of health and safety; records that, under this Act, for the first time, it became unlawful to discriminate against disabled people, as employees, customers and citizens using public transport or getting an education; considers that the Act was an important milestone and a recognition of disability equality and disability rights, but notes that many felt it did not go far enough; recognises that, despite it now being against the law, disabled people are still discriminated against, in work, in public places, for example by assistance dog owners being refused access to restaurants and taxis, and with huge swathes of public transport still inaccessible; and joins disability campaign groups in calling for a fresh look at the future of disability equality and what needs to change in all aspects of society, including what steps are needed to ensure that anti-discrimination laws are backed up by meaningful enforcement.

Accordingly, the Council calls on the Minister for Communities to bring forward the Disability Strategy that will improve enforcement, provide sustainable funding and enable the voices of people with disabilities across NI.”

Proposer: Councillor McMullan

Seconder: Councillor Smyth

(To be debated by the Council)