

Access Statements

What are they

What should they contain

Who puts them together

What are the benefits

The Planning Department in the Executive has had some pre-consultation meetings with various organisations, such as Architects, Planners, RIBA and SDEF.

I have no doubt that some other organisations may have different views to those that I am going to take you through today. However, I do think it is imperative that this important vehicle is not diminished in any way so this perspective will always show best practice and equally important will show when inadequacies are present in any development.



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In planning terms Access Statements must be from the 'cradle to the grave'.

This is the first time that a bridge between the planning application and building standards submission of any proposal has been available and must be presented at the planning application stage of any development.

What is an Access Statement?

An Access Statement is a written document that contains all aspects of how a development is designed, used and managed in terms of physical access. This should not only be with regard to the built environment but also open space.

It must also detail the ideas behind the concept of what is being proposed and how best practice will be achieved in any given set of circumstances in order to make it as accessible as possible.

What is not included

Access Statements must also state why access can not be provided if there are problems with meeting at least the minimum standards required under the Scottish Building Standards 2007. For instance this scenario could arise if a building was very old and existing structures confined the creation of a toilet that should be at least 2.2m x 1.5m to less than the minimum requirements.

What should be in an Access Statement?

- Concept and Involvement
- Usage
- Design and Practicalities
- Accessible Facilities
- Management of the Building or Area

Who will put Access Statements together?

This is one of the most difficult question that has yet to be resolved. Ideally it must be someone who is qualified in Inclusive Environments and yet has a good knowledge of Architectural methods and practices. They should also know what European and British Standards to employ and have a working knowledge of Building Standards.

This person or persons must also have a working knowledge of the requirements of disabled people across the wide spectrum of disability. They must be proficient in the delivery of presentations and have a working knowledge of real involvement in terms of consultation with all the relevant user groups but especially disabled people.

Six million Dollar Question:

Are there Professionals who are able to deliver all aspects of an Access Statement?

Possibly about half a dozen professionals in Inclusive Environments in Scotland who could do Access Statements

This is quite a unique range of aptitudes. These Professionals are very few and we must get this process correct from day one.

In many cases it is likely that the formation of an Access Statement will require the input of a number of people and/or agencies.

I do think that there is a very real danger that we could end up with a watered down version of Access Statements, possibly achieved through an elaborate staged system because lets be perfectly honest here this is likely to mean:

- Extra costs that could eat into the design fees
- Cost extra over and above the design fees that are considerable at present.
- The extra hassles and appointment of specialists and the involvement of disabled people could lengthen the planning process if not handled correctly.



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- I can't express strongly enough the importance of Access Statements
- It is up to us as the Access Panel Network to do our utmost to ensure that this process works.
- SDEF to make sure our voice is heard
- Individuals and Panels also charged with making representation.
- We must speak as one and not fragment our case by advocating anything other than 'cradle to the grave' involvement and participation.

SDEF has looked into training that may be available for Panels, although some is available this specialised training is still rather sparse.

Be aware that the training being given by some agencies on Participation Statements is little to do with Access Statements.

I do hope that you have found this presentation useful today.

If you have any question I will try my best to answer them.

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