

## DISABILITY ADVISORY AND ACCESS FORUM

**7th March, 2002 at 2.00 p.m.**

PRESENT: Mr. M. Dillon – Disability Resource Centre (Chair)  
Ms. M. Luther – Bedfordshire Disability Forum  
Mr. B. McPhillips – Bushmead Disabled Bowling Association  
Mr. B. Chant – Bushmead Disabled Bowling Association  
Mr. K. Peacock – Luton, Dunstable and District Sports Association  
Mr. G. Menczer (co-opted member)  
Mr. G. Ellis – Luton Shopmobility  
Mr. P. Vyas – Milan Day Centre  
Mr. R. Gerrard – Sight Concern  
Mr. D.S. Childs (co-opted member)

IN ATTENDANCE: Margaret Harrison – Inland Revenue  
Mr. J. Worth – Transport Matters  
Samantha Jones – Disability Policy Officer, Equalities Unit  
Val Grant – Head of Equalities  
Graham Spademan – Capital and Asset Management Division  
Gordon Andrews – Centres Manager, Leisure, Libraries and Culture Division  
Christine Langley – Adult Learning Disabilities, Housing and Social Services Department  
Linda Coady – Team Manager, Housing and Social Services Department  
Celia Talamo – Occupational Therapist, Housing and Social Services Department  
Nina Boston – Committee Administrator

### 13 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE (REF: 1)

Apologies for absence from the meeting were received on behalf of Councillor Simmons, Mr. V. McEvoy (Thomas Becket Foundation) and Mrs. S. Vyas (co-opted member).

### 14 MINUTES (REF: 2.1)

**Resolved:** That the Minutes of the meeting of the Forum held on 10th January, 2002 be taken as read, approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

### ACTION

### 15 PASQUE HOSPICE SWIMMING POOL (REF: 3.1)

The Chair reported that he had received a letter from the Pasque Hospice extending an invitation to the Forum to visit the hydrotherapy pool at the Pasque Hospice which had recently opened.

**Resolved:** That the Chair be requested to contact the Pasque Hospice to make arrangements for members of the Forum to view the hydrotherapy pool. Mick Dillon

(Note: The above item was considered by the Forum pursuant to Sections 100B(4) and 100E(1) of the Local Government Act 1972, the Chair having considered that the item should be dealt with as a matter of urgency in order that members of the Forum could be made aware of the invitation to view the hydrotherapy pool at the Pasque Hospice.)

### 16 ACCESSIBLE TAXIS (REF: 5)

The hackney carriage trade had made 4 types of hackney carriage available for members of the Forum to test which provided facilities for people with disabilities.

Members of the Forum having tested the facilities commented as follows:-

- limited access for scooters
- cab with a ramp upon a ramp inaccessible
- newer vehicle with the small ramp could be frightening
- taxi drivers present encountered some difficulties in assembling ramps
- ramps had a lack of grip and flexed too much
- all drivers should undergo training with regard to handling people with disabilities
- the taxi industry should be made aware that London style cabs were not accessible

The Chair suggested that the Forum's findings should be presented to the Council and to taxi operators.

It was suggested that a representative from the London Taxi Company should be invited to the next meeting of the Forum in order for members to undertake the same practical exercise in a brand new TX1 model.

The Chair commented that it had been an excellent exercise for members and the drivers who had observed the difficulties encountered.

**Resolved:** (i) That the hackney carriage trade be thanked for giving the Forum the opportunity to test out the facilities in the hackney carriages.

(ii) That John Worth be requested to invite a representative of the London Taxi Company to attend the next meeting of the Forum. John Worth

(iii) That the Disability Policy Officer be requested to inform the Licensing Manager of the Forum's findings with regard to the practical exercise. Samantha Jones

(iv) That the Disability Policy Officer be requested to inform the Licensing Manager that, following previous consultation, the Forum agreed that kerbs (full kerb height) are essential on taxi ranks. Samantha Jones

## 17 ACCESSIBLE TRANSPORT (REF: 6.1)

John Worth reported that he was still actively supporting a brokerage scheme in Luton and added that himself and George Ellis were due to visit a brokerage scheme that was in operation in Lewisham.

John Worth further reported that he had been advised that some airlines would no longer assist with seating for people with disabilities.

Bernie Chant commented that it was his understanding that as from this year people with disabilities who required special seating were required to pay a minimum £25 surcharge for their flight and that there were no exceptions.

The Chair suggested that clarification should be sought on this.

**Resolved:** (i) That the Disability Policy Officer be requested to seek clarification regarding seating provided by airlines for people with disabilities. Samantha Jones

## 18 ACCESSIBILITY TO COUNCIL BUILDINGS - UPDATE (REF: 7.1)

Graham Spademan reported that following the presentation at the meeting held on 21<sup>st</sup> February by the consultants who had undertaken access audits of the Council's buildings there was now a need to prioritise the works that were required. He submitted a list of 33 properties which had been audited together with the estimated costs and sought the Forum's views.

Following discussion the Forum:

**Resolved:** (i) That works should be undertaken from the top of the list working Graham Spademan downwards (excluding the bus station car park and the swimming pool because of the question mark over their future use for service delivery) as those were the highest usage buildings and would have the maximum impact/benefit.

(ii) That the Committee Administrator be requested to circulate a copy of the list of audited properties to those members of the Forum who were not present.

Nina Boston

## **19 CAPITAL GRANTS - AIDS AND ADAPTATIONS (REF: 8.1)**

The Forum received a presentation by Chris Langley, Adult Learning Disabilities, Housing and Social Services Department in respect of a draft policy on the application of community care eligibility criteria for equipment and adaptations for disabled people.

Chris Langley requested feedback from the Forum on the draft policy in order that a final draft could be produced.

The Forum were advised that an Adaptations Working Group had been established to draw up the draft policy and that the main aim of the document was to ensure equitable and consistent service delivery for the community.

Bernie Chant commented that although the report was very commendable it had not addressed the long outstanding issue of maintenance of aids and adaptations.

The Chair commented on the on-going frustration with regard to the issue raised by Bernie Chant and added that the maintenance of equipment was the missing half of the document.

Margaret Luther referred to the first bullet point on page 6 of the policy and commented that the maintenance issue should be included within that paragraph.

The Chair commented that the report was essential for the avoidance of doubt and needed implicitly to have information regarding replacement equipment.

George Ellis referred to step 4) on page 8 of the policy and raised concern that a person may be required to move home to a property that had adaptations installed.

Chris Langley responded that the wording was a little mis-leading and that it was not about forcing people out of their homes.

A member referred to the second bullet point under paragraph 1.3 on page 10 of the policy and commented that "powered scooter" should be included.

A member referred to f) in paragraph 2.1.1 on page 11 of the policy and commented that he was unhappy with the wording. Chris Langley responded that the wording had misinterpreted the meaning.

Samantha Jones requested that the words "confined to" and "suffers from" should be removed wherever they appeared throughout the whole of the document.

The Chair reiterated that replacement equipment, existing equipment and maintenance of equipment must be included within the document in order for it to be a stand alone document.

Margaret Luther commented that reference should be made somewhere in the document to financial means testing.

**Resolved:** That the draft policy on the application of community care

Chris Langley

eligibility criteria for equipment and adaptations for disabled people be amended to incorporate the views of the Forum.

**20 ACCESS/NEW HOISTS FOR LEWSEY POOL AND PUTTERIDGE RECREATION CENTRE (REF: 9.1)**

Gordon Andrews reported on the proposed installation of hoists at Putteridge and Lewsey swimming pools and sought the views of the Forum as to the way forward.

The Forum were advised that the proposed hoists would be electrically operated to enable users to operate the equipment themselves without the need for a carer and that the equipment would be installed at the poolside permanently.

It was suggested that those members of the Forum who wished to assist in the process should visit a site with the type of hoist proposed before visiting the sites at Putteridge and Lewsey pools.

**Resolved:** That the Centres Manager be requested to make arrangements for members of the Forum to visit a location where the type of hoist proposed was installed before undertaking site visits to the Putteridge and Lewsey sites.

Gordon Andrews

**21 2003 - YEAR OF THE DISABLED (REF: 10.1)**

The Chair reported on 2003 – Year of the Disabled and suggested that the item be placed on the agenda for the next meeting of the Forum in order that consideration could be given to the Council’s corporate proposals.

**Resolved:** That “2003 – Year of the Disabled” be placed on the agenda for the Nina Boston next meeting of the Forum for discussion.

**(Note: The meeting ended at 6.00 p.m.)**