

DISABILITY ADVISORY AND ACCESS FORUM

6th February, 2003 at 2.00 p.m.

PRESENT: Mr. M. Dillon – Disability Resource Centre (Chair)
Mrs. G. Malins – University of Luton (Spokesperson)
Ms. M. Luther – Bedfordshire Disability Forum (Spokesperson)
Mr. G. Ellis - Luton Shopmobility
Mr. B. McPhillips – Bushmead Disabled Bowling Association
Mr. G. Menczer – (co-opted member)
Mr. K. Peacock – Luton, Dunstable & District Sports Association
Mr. R. Gerrard – Luton, Dunstable & District Sports Association
Mr. P. Vyas – Milan Day Centre Users Group
Mrs. S. Vyas – (co-opted member)
Mr. V. McEvoy – Beds. Tenants Participation Group

IN ATTENDANCE: Mrs. M. Harrison – Inland Revenue
Mr. F. Roy Willis Serjeant – Carers UK Strategic Forum
Mike McMahon - Head of Private Sector Housing, Luton Borough Council
Richard Wood - Planning Officer, Adult Services, Housing & Social Services Department, Luton Borough Council
Colin Haverson - Architectural Assistant, Corporate and Customer Services, Luton Borough Council
Samantha Jones – Disability Policy and Access Officer, Luton Borough Council
Maria Silver – Equalities Co-ordinator, Luton Borough Council
Rosemary Simpson, Equalities Co-ordinator, Luton Borough Council
Matthew Hussey – Democratic Services Officer, Luton Borough Council
Nina Boston - Democratic Services Officer, Luton Borough Council

At the commencement of the meeting members joined in a minute's silence in memory of Bernie Chant.

1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE (REF: 1)

Apologies for absence from the meeting were received on behalf of Mr. G. Ellis (The Parksiders Physically Disabled Club), Mrs. P. Morris (Sight Concern), Councillor Hussain and Mrs. Y. Bacon (Licensing Manager, Luton Borough Council).

2 MINUTES (REF: 2.1)

ACTION

In considering the Minutes of the meeting of the Forum held on 5th December, 2002, the Chair referred to Minute 50(i) and reported that a briefing note from the Licensing Manager had been tabled.

Members referred to Minute 52 (Town Centre Ferry Bus) and raised concerns with regard to accessibility and eligibility.

The Chair referred to Minute 53 (ii) and reminded Members to submit suggestions.

George Menczer referred to the first paragraph on page 9 and commented that pre-arranged timeslots for officers to present their reports at meetings of the Forum had been suggested.

On a general point George Menczer issued a reminder that it had previously been agreed that abbreviations should not be used unless spelt out in full in the first instance.

Resolved: (i) That the Chair be requested to write to Simon Ayres, Senior Passenger Transport Officer, Luton Borough Council, to raise the Forum's concerns regarding the Town Centre Ferry Bus.

Mick Dillon

(ii) That the Democratic Services Officer be requested to consider, in consultation with the Chair, the possibility of timed agendas.

Nina Boston

(iii) That the Minutes of the meeting of the Forum held on 5th December, 2002 be taken as read, approved as a correct record subject to:-

- (a) the inclusion of Mr. G. Ellis of The Parksiders Physically Disabled Club in the list of those present;
- (b) in the third paragraph on page 7 delete the name "Mary" and substitute the name "Margaret";
- (c) in the first and third paragraphs on page 8 delete the name "Menczer" and substitute the name "Ellis"

and signed by the Chair.

3 BEDFORDSHIRE DISABILITY SPORTS FORUM (REF: 3.1)

The Chair reported that a meeting had been arranged by the English Federation of Disability Sport to discuss the possibility of the establishment of a Bedfordshire Disability Sports Forum.

Members were advised that two open meetings would take place on Tuesday 18th February at 10.30am and 6.30pm at the Brickhill Community Centre, Bedford.

Resolved: That the report be noted.

(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 meeting.)

4 COUNCIL POLICY ON AIDS AND ADAPTATIONS (REF: 5.1)

Mike McMahon, Head of Private Sector Housing, reported on the current position with regard to maintenance of equipment.

Members were advised that the Executive had agreed in principle to meeting all ongoing maintenance costs through Disabled Facilities Grants subject to the costs being identified.

Mike McMahon further reported that negotiations had taken place with a number of maintenance organisations to obtain figures which had been fed into the Council's budget process.

The Chair enquired how much money for maintenance costs had been provided for in the Council's budget. Mike McMahon responded that £40-50,000 had been built into the budget.

George Ellis stressed the importance of the issue. He commented that it was not a matter of luxury items, but people's everyday needs.

George Menczer commented that he welcomed the general tenure of what had been reported but the issue had been ongoing for 4/5 years. He added that he sincerely hoped that the Council would be able to follow through the issue with regard to both council and privately owned dwellings.

Mike McMahon reported that everyone in receipt of Disabled Facilities Grants would be contacted and advised of any changes .

Margaret Luther suggested that equipment no longer required could be recycled in terms of spare parts.

Gillian Malins commented that the Forum must be kept informed with regard to the issue.

The Chair suggested that the Council look at other Councils' procedures in relation to the issue.

George Ellis raised concern that the criteria for obtaining equipment appeared to be based on age rather than need.

Richard Wood responded that an anomaly had been recognised and that steps had been taken to ensure that resources were utilised effectively to meet need rather than age.

Margaret Luther suggested that the services of the Forum be offered to assist the Council with procedures to be put into place if the budget for the maintenance of equipment was approved.

Resolved: (i) That the report be noted.

(ii) That the Chair be requested to write to the Leader of the Council expressing how important the Council's decision is regarding the issue of maintenance of equipment costs. Mick Dillon

5 RE-PROVISION OF DAY CARE (REF: 6.1)

Richard Wood, Planning Officer, Adult Services reported that the Council was looking to reconfigure its day care facilities in order to pursue a promoting independence agenda.

The Forum were advised of the possibility of re-creating a new building on the site of Luton Boys Club in Dunstable Road to provide day care services, community centre resources and a surgery.

Richard Wood further reported that plans had been drawn up and outline planning permission was being sought. He added that if the scheme became a reality then extensive consultation would be undertaken.

Gillian Malins commented that although the scheme was a good idea, she felt that the site had limitations particularly in terms of specialist parking.

Richard Wood responded that parking was fundamental and would need to be thought about very carefully.

George Menczer suggested that parking consideration be given to the provision of parking beneath the building. Richard Wood commented that it would prove too expensive.

Resolved: (i) That the report be noted.

(ii) That Richard Wood be instructed to submit a further report to a future meeting of the Forum when more substantive plans had been drawn up.

Richard Wood

6 EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENTS (REF: 7.1)

Samantha Jones, Disability Policy and Access Officer reported that the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000 placed a general duty on a wide range of public authorities to promote Race Equality. The new enforceable positive duty meant that, in everything the Council undertook, it should have due regard to the need to:

Eliminate unlawful racial discrimination;
Promote equality of opportunity; and
Promote good race relations between people of different racial groups.

Samantha Jones further reported that one of the requirements was for the Council to assess its policies and functions for an adverse impact on the promotion of race equality. In line with the Council's approach to address all areas of equalities, a broad assessment framework had been developed to assess race, gender, disability, age and sexuality.

The Forum were provided with a summary of impact assessments across all Council Services and action plans for each service that had been assessed.

Resolved: That the report be noted.

7 APPLICATION FOR MEMBERSHIP (REF: 7.2)

Resolved: That the above item be deferred to a future meeting of the Disability Advisory and Access Forum to enable the Disability Policy and Access Officer to obtain further information regarding the organisation.

Nina Boston/
Samantha
Jones

8 OUTDOOR BOWLING RAMPS (REF: 8.1)

Colin Haverson, Architectural Assistant, reported with regard to outdoor bowling ramps.

The Forum were advised that four sites had been assessed:-

Memorial Park
Legrave Common
Lancaster Avenue
Ashcroft Recreation Green

The two sites of Memorial Park and Legrave Common had been recommended for upgrading.

Ken Peacock raised concern at the exclusion of the remaining two sites. Samantha Jones responded that a decision had been taken to upgrade the two sites which could be undertaken quickly in time for the commencement of the bowling season.

Resolved: (i) That the report be noted.

(ii) That the Democratic Services Officer be instructed to circulate Colin Haverson's report with the Minutes of the meeting.

Nina Boston

(iii) That it be noted that the Forum recommend that permanent ramps with a multi-purpose access point be installed.

(iv) That Colin Haverson be instructed to meet with Bob McPhillips to discuss requirements and suitability of ramps.

Colin Haverson

9 SAFER LUTON PARTNERSHIP (REF: 9.1)

Nina Boston, Democratic Services Officer, sought a nomination for a replacement representative on the Safer Luton Partnership Stakeholders Group following the resignation of Ken Peacock.

Resolved: (i) That George Ellis be nominated as the Forum's representative on the Safer Luton Partnership Stakeholders Group to replace Ken Peacock.

(ii) That Vince McEvoy be nominated as a substitute in the event that George Ellis is unable to attend a meeting.

FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

That the following items be placed on the agenda for the next meeting of the Forum:

- (1) Application for Membership – Luton Carers
- (2) 2003 – Year of the Disabled – what events the Council are proposing
- (3) Multigym equipment for wheelchair users at recreation centres
- (4) Training for taxi drivers
- (5) Parking Issues – clarification of byelaws for parking for Blue Badge holders, abuse of disabled car parking at “the Gap”, statistics/monitoring relating to cars clamped, tickets issued for people who abused disabled car parking spaces
- (5) What the Council are doing for Young Carers

(Note: (a) **Bob McPhillips expressed his thanks to all members of the Forum and officers of the Council for the progress made with regard to maintenance of equipment costs.**

(b) The meeting ended at 5.30 p.m.)