

DISABILITY ADVISORY AND ACCESS FORUM

9th April 2008 at 2.00 p.m.

PRESENT: Mr. M. Dillon (Chair)(Disability Resource Centre)
Mr. P. Gomm (Luton Pensioners Association)
Mr. B. McPhillips (Bushmead Disabled Bowling Association)
Mrs. S. Fever (Sight Concern)
Ms. G. Malins (University of Bedfordshire)
Mr. V. McEvoy (Beds Tenant Participation Group)

IN ATTENDANCE Mr. P. Curry, Disability Policy and Access Officer, (LBC)
Mrs. D. Garner, Democratic Services Officer, Chief Executives Department (LBC)
Ms. S. Goldsmith, Children and Learning Department, (LBC)
Mr. R. Kirk, Business Redesign & Self Direct Support Manager, Housing & Community Living, (LBC)
Ms. S. Legate, Equalities Manager, Housing and Community Living Department, (LBC)
Mr. I. Marriot, Luton Excellence - Change Leader (LBC)

Mr. K. Toye, Passenger Transport
Unit Manager Environment and
Regeneration Department, (LBC)
Ms. K. Radford, Day Opportunities
Officer, Housing and Community Living
Department (LBC)
Mr. D. Stevenson, Environmental Health
Manager (Renovations and Disabilities),
Housing and Community Living
Department, (LBC)
Ushrat Sultana

1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE (REF: 2)

Apologies for absence from the meeting were received from Mr. D. Gower (Luton Senior Peoples Forum) and Mr. P. Vyas (Milan Day Centre Users Group).

**ACTION
BY**

2 MINUTES (REF: 4.1)

Resolved: That the Minutes of the meeting held on 3rd December 2008 be taken as read, approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

3 URGENT ITEM – CONSULTATION – NEW CORPORATE EQUALITIES SCHEME (REF: 5.1)

Paul Curry, Disability Policy and Access Officer advised the Forum of a current consultation as part of the new Corporate Equalities Scheme, which included disability Equality Action Plan. He further advised that consultation forms were available on line and the views of organisations,

individuals and carers were welcomed with a response date of 17th April 2009.

Resolved: That the Forum noted the consultation exercise as part of the new Corporate Equalities Scheme.

(Note: The above item was considered by the Committee in pursuance of 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 there be no delay in apprising Members of the Forum.)

4 ACCESSIBLE TRANSPORT (REF: 7)

The Chair presented the following transport statistics to the Forum:

- Approx 400 enquiries about transport per year
 - 44% Luton based enquiries
 - biggest enquiry – Blue Badges (40% of Luton enquiries)
 - Taxi enquiries – what to expect / accessible taxis
 - 9% - Motorbility – how get own vehicle
 - 8% - Community transport
 - other
 - adapted vehicles
 - parking provision
 - transport on holiday
 - driving assessment
 - air / ferry

He advised that some of the headings required refining and that profile by demography could be analysed and that more work was needed to breakdown by area.

It was suggested that the misuse of the Blue Badge Scheme, for example fraudulent applications, should be monitored.

Paul Curry

Resolved: (i) That the information given be noted.

- (ii) That the Disability Policy and Access Officer, (LBC) be requested to monitor the misuse of the Blue Badge Scheme.

5 ACCESS TO COUNCIL BUILDINGS (REF: 8)

The Forum discussed the policy and practice of Arriva bus company drivers in regard to access for wheelchair users. Mr. B. McPhillips explained a specific incident and the Passenger Transport Unit Manager suggested that it was not the policy of the bus company but rather the conduct of the individual driver and he advised that the incident should be reported to the bus company.

The Chair suggested that Mr. McPhillips contact the Arriva bus company spokesperson and that an update be given to a future meeting of the Forum.

The Disability Policy and Access Officer updated the Forum on work to the Luton Museum and Art Gallery and the Limbury Community Centre.

Resolved: That Mr. B. McPhillips update the forum on the response from Arriva bus company with regard to access for wheelchair users.

**Bob
McPhillips**

6 DISABILITY EQUALITY ACTION PLAN – PROGRESS REPORT (REF: 9)

The Disability Policy and Access Officer presented the report on Disability Equality Action Plan (DEAP) (Ref: 9) advising that all bar one of the main actions were due to be completed by the end of March 2009 and therefore it would be possible to review their progress on the DEAP.

He advised that:

- Environment and Regeneration Department had reviewed disabled parking provision and the Executive had agreed £75,000 over the next 3 years to work and identify sites for disabled bays within the town centre.

The Chair requested the Disability Policy and Access Officer to:

- request information from Parking Services regarding the number of appeals against parking tickets on the ground of being a blue badge holder.
- Check if the Silver Street disabled car park was being abused.
- Request parking services to monitor known areas of abuse of disabled parking bays.

Resolved: (i) That the report (Ref: 9) be noted.

(ii) That the Disability Policy and Access Officer be requested to liaise with Parking Services on the issues of monitoring and information regarding appeals (as outlined above).

**Paul
Curry**

7 UPDATE ON TOWN CENTRE REGENERATION DEMOLITION OF FOOTBRIDGE FROM LUTON STATION TO BUTE STREET (REF: 10)

There was no update at this time.

8 DISABILITY FACILITIES GRANT PROCESS (REF: 11)

The Environmental Health Manager (Renovations and Disabilities) presented the report on Disabled Facilities Grant (DFG) Process (Ref: 11) which apprised the Forum that:

- DFG was available to owner/occupiers and private sector tenants
- Mandatory DFG's were available to assist disabled people in gaining access to and from and in and around their dwelling – to a current limit of £30,000 (if exceeded this amount an interest free loan could be awarded by the Council which would be placed on the dwelling and payable on change of ownership)
- Current occupational health assessment now 6-8 weeks.
- Small adaptations were undertaken quite quickly.

The Chair requested number and statistics on adaptations be submitted to the next meeting of the Forum

Resolved: (i) That the Report (Ref: 11) be noted.

(ii) That the Environmental Health Manager (Renovations and Disabilities) report on the numbers and statistics on adaptations to the next meeting of the Forum.

**Dave
Stevenson**

9 PRESENTATION ON THE DEVELOPMENT OF SELF DIRECTED CARE IN ADULT SOCIAL CARE (REF: 12)

Mr.R. Kirk, Business Redesign & Self Direct Support Manager, Housing & Community Living, (LBC) gave a presentation to the Forum on the transformation of adult social care:

- A government led initiative to give local authority adult social care service users more choice and control of the support they receive
- To be introduced during the period 2009-2011

Members discussed:

- Getting the transition right and protecting the client
- Improved advocacy
- Improved personal budget support services

- That it was not compulsory and that probably 50% of service users would not change their current provision

Resolved: That the presentation on The Development of Self Directed Care in Adult Social Care (Ref: 12) be noted.

10 APPROPRIATENESS AND FLEXIBILITY OF THE TRANSPORT PROVIDED TO AND FOR DISABLED PEOPLE IN LUTON (REF: 13)

Mr. K. Toye, Passenger Transport Unit Manager Environment and Regeneration Department, (LBC) presented the report on the appropriateness and flexibility of the transport provided to and for disabled people in Luton (Ref: 13) and updated the Forum with regard to Shopmobility, South Beds Dial a Ride and smartcards.

The Chair enquired if customer satisfaction surveys were undertaken and if so, could their results be reported to the Forum in Autumn 2009.

The Passenger Transport Unit Manager Environment and Regeneration Department, (LBC) confirmed customer satisfaction surveys were taken by Dial-a-Ride and Shopmobility and that he would report back to the Forum on their results.

Resolved: (i) That the report (Ref: 13) be noted.

(ii) That the Passenger Transport Unit Manager, Environment and Regeneration Department, (LBC) be requested to report back to the Forum on the results of customer

**Ken
Toye**

satisfaction surveys from Dial-a-Ride and Shopmobility, in Autumn 2009.

11 ADULT SOCIAL CARE COMMISSIONING STRATEGIES (REF: 14)

Ms. K. Radford, Day Opportunities Officer, Housing and Community Living Department (LBC) presented the report on Adult Social Care Commissioning Strategies (Ref: 14) which advised that the Council's Executive had approved the draft adult social care strategies in respect of older peoples' services, learning disability services and services for carers in June 2008. The strategies were amended following feedback (summary attached at Appendix 1 to Ref: 14) and following approval by the Council's Executive in December 2008 work was underway to publish each of the strategies.

She further advised that the strategies were available on the Council's website. A lot of health care was provided to a small amount of people in Luton and it was about individual needs and what was right for that person. The future choices designing consultation uses those people involved in former consultation exercises.

Resolved: That the Report (Ref: 14) be noted.

12 PAYING THE COUNCIL (REF: 15)

Mr. I. Marriot, Luton Excellence - Change Leader (LBC), presented the report on Paying the Council (Ref: 15) which sought the views of the

Forum on a proposed change in the ways that people made payments to the Council.

Members debated the advantages and disadvantages of removal of the payment hall at the Town Hall and more outlets in the community.

Members raised the issues of assistance for people with mental health problems and those outlets that may not be accessible to wheelchair users.

The Chair had cautious reservations about the new systems proposed and welcomed an interim progress report in six months from the Luton Excellence - Change Leader, whom he suggested need not attend to present the report.

Resolved: (i) That the Report (Ref: 15) be noted.

(ii) That the Luton Excellence – Change Leader (LBC) submit an update on progress with the introduction of the new system of making payments to the Council, to the Forum in six months.

**Ian
Marriot**

13 UPDATE REPORT ON THE MONITORING OF THE TAKE UP OF SIGN LANGUAGE INTERPRETING SERVICE, HOW IT USED AND WHY (REF: 16)

Paul Curry, Disability Policy and Access Officer reported on the findings of an investigation into the provision and use of British Sign Language Interpreters when Deaf people accessed Council Services (Ref: 16):

- No longer a face-to-face service available at the Alban Neve Centre (as used to be provided by the Council)
- Deaf people use other technology
- Following consultation with the Alban Neve Centre their views on the needs of deaf people would be included in the next Corporate Equality Scheme.

Resolved: That the Report (Ref: 16) be noted.

14 DISABILITY ACCESS AND ADVISORY FORUM WORK PROGRAMME (REF: 17)

The Democratic Services Officer submitted the latest version of the Forum's Work Programme for consideration and updating.

Members suggested that the following items be added to the work programme:-

- That Councillor Hazel Simmons and Kevin Crompton be invited to the Forum's Annual General Meeting in June.
- Equality Impact Assessment – Children and Learning – Support Team for Under 5's - June meeting

And the items raised during the meeting:

- That the Disability Policy and Access Officer, (LBC) be requested to monitor the misuse of the Blue Badge Scheme.

- That Mr. B. McPhillips update the forum on the response from Arriva bus company with regard to access for wheelchair users.
- That the Disability Policy and Access Officer be requested to liaise with Parking Services on the issues of monitoring and information regarding appeals (number of appeals against parking tickets on the ground of being a blue badge holder, Check if the Silver Street disabled car park was being abused and request parking services to monitor known areas of abuse of disabled parking bays).
- That the Environmental Health Manager (Renovations and Disabilities) report on the numbers and statistics on adaptations to the next meeting of the Forum.
- That the Passenger Transport Unit Manager, Environment and Regeneration Department, (LBC) be requested to report back to the Forum on the results of customer satisfaction surveys from Dial-a-Ride and Shopmobility, in Autumn 2009.
- That the Luton Excellence - Change Leader (LBC) submit an update on progress with the introduction of the new system of making payments to the Council, to the Forum in six months (no officer attendance required).

Resolved: That the Democratic Services Officer be requested to update the Work Programme in accordance with the suggestions made by the Forum set out above.

(Note: The meeting ended at 5.15 p.m.)

