

# Minutes of the West Berkshire Council's Disability Equality Scheme's External Scrutiny Board Meeting 5<sup>th</sup> May 2009

Item	Notes
<b>Board Members in attendance</b>	Alan Fleming (Vice-Chairman), John Carr, Sabrina McNair, Norma Weaver, Keith Hester, Mick Hutchins, John Dolton
<b>Others</b>	Councillor Pamela Bale, Councillor Julian Swift Hook, Amanda Joyce (WBC Head of System Transformation), Stephen Stace (WBC Team Manager - Promoting Independence), Lynn Stephens (WBC Locality Manager), Elaine Vincent (WBC Principal Policy Officer, Equality and Diversity)
<b>1. Welcome and Apologies</b>	<p>The Vice-Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting. Brief introductions were given by all in attendance.</p> <p>Apologies were received from Bob King (Chairman), Kate Green, and Colin Parker. Alan Fleming Chaired the meeting in Bob King's absence.</p>
<b>2 - Minutes</b>	<p>The draft minutes of the meeting held on 20<sup>th</sup> January 2009 were approved as a true and correct record and signed by the Vice-Chairman.</p> <p>Actions from the meeting held on 20<sup>th</sup> January 2009 were complete with the following notes:</p> <p><b>Item 6 – Action: Martyn Baker would be invited to the next meeting to update the Board on progress made in completing the retrospective EIA for car parking.</b></p> <p>Item 7 – Further discussion was held around issues in the pedestrianised areas of Newbury Town Centre. Councillor Bale confirmed that no further work would be carried out in Northbrook Street until the sewer works were complete. John Carr suggested that any required or corrective work should be undertaken whilst the roads was closed to minimise further disruption. John Carr further noted that the tactile paving in the area needed to be reviewed as it did not currently conform to recognised standards.</p> <p><b>Action: Councillor Pamela Bale to pursue issues around tactile paving.</b></p>

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	<p>AOB – Councillor Bale informed the Board that it was the Council’s view that removing the reduction in Council Tax for people with hearing loops installed in their houses was the correct action to take. However it was noted that local charities might be able to provide support if this change placed people in financial difficulty.</p> <p>Further discussion was held around the payment of costs for the provision of the RNIB book service.</p> <p><b>Action: Councillor Pamela Bale would discuss this further with Keith Hester.</b></p>
<p><b>3 – Home Care Services Provision</b></p>	<p>Amanda Joyce and Stephen Stace gave a presentation on the Transformation of Adult Social Care. The following points were clarified for the Board:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Personal budget reviews would be likely to take place on a risk basis to fit the needs of the service user. Discussion as to how this would work were still underway.</li> <li>- A pilot of approximately 30 people was underway to understand and trial the points allocation system. This also utilised experiences gained nationally. It was understood that the system was complex and whilst there was a requirement to simplify this it still had to be adequate to meet requirements. Workshops were being run to review the forms in use.</li> <li>- The funding of adult social care was dependent on the outcomes of a Green Paper to be published in 2009. There was no expectation that personal budgets would provide financial savings for the Council, however it was thought that the choices people made in spending their budget might naturally incur some savings. Mick Hutchins commented that it was important to ensure that people were able to obtain value for money given their smaller scale spending, and that people were able to obtain the services they required. Amanda Joyce stated that it was recognised that service providers would need to address changes from selling their services on wholesale terms via the Council, to applying retail principles when selling direct to the service user.</li> <li>- Norma Weaver asked for clarification about how personal budgets would work for those who were unable or unwilling to manage their own budget. Amanda Joyce replied that advocacy would be in place for people in this position.</li> <li>- It was recognised that a user led organisation would need to be set up in West Berkshire which could be modelled on Centres for Independent Living. Mick Hutchins noted that this would place a heavy demand on user organisations and that the Council would need to provide considerable support in order for this to succeed.</li> </ul>

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	<p>- Mick Hutchins requested information about any proposals to set up a user group for those using home care services as well as front line workers. Stephen Stace replied that this was currently being looked into and would provide an opportunity to consult with service users.</p> <p><b>Action: Stephen Stace to work with colleagues to develop a user group.</b></p> <p>- A discussion took place around the level of service, provided by West Berkshire domiciliary care agencies, experienced by users. Particular issues were raised regarding:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o The number of different carers sent to users.</li> <li>o The lack of ability to attend evening events due to the time constraints of carers.</li> <li>o Carers that did not keep appointments or were persistently early or late.</li> </ul> <p>Mick Hutchins noted that once reablement programmes were complete, most people would still require a level of day to day care which would be provided by these agencies.</p> <p>It was noted that all agencies used by West Berkshire Council were regularly reviewed both by the Council and by the Care Quality Commission (CQC). Alan Fleming had requested information about West Berkshire Domiciliary Care agencies which had been distributed to the Board.</p> <p><b>Action: Tandra Forster (Contracts Manager (Adult &amp; Supporting People)) would be invited to the next meeting to discuss the quality and services provided by care agencies.</b></p>
<p><b>4 – Mental Health Update</b></p>	<p>Lynn Stephens explained that she was continuing to review the future of Day Services. A consultation event had been arranged for stakeholders to take place on May 12<sup>th</sup> in Newbury to understand what people wanted in relation to Day Services. An external facilitator would be running the event.</p> <p>The feedback received would be used to formulate proposals for the future of Day Services.</p> <p><b>Action: Lynn Stephens to be invited to a future meeting to present the outcomes from this consultation event.</b></p>
<p><b>5 – Review of</b></p>	<p>The action plan has been updated to reflect activity up until March 2009. Elaine Vincent explained that actions</p>

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<b>DES Action Plan</b>	<p>shaded in grey were considered to be complete and would be removed from future action plan updates.</p> <p>The Board requested that the status of the actions 154, 158 and 175 be amended to reflect that users did not consider them to be complete.</p> <p><b>Action: Councillor Pamela Bale to raise the issue of buses not being fully accessible with the Chief Executive of Newbury Buses.</b></p> <p><b>Action: All Board members would review the updated action plan and inform Elaine Vincent of any actions not considered to be complete.</b></p> <p><b>Action: Sabrina McNair to provide further information to Elaine Vincent regarding the issue of concessionary fares. Councillor Pamela Bale to pursue this issue.</b></p>
<b>6 – Pay on Exit Car Parks</b>	<p>Elaine Vincent updated the Board that a plan had been agreed for conducting the retrospective EIA on the changes to parking arrangements for disabled users in the Wharf area car parks. All Blue Badge Holders would be contacted and invited to share their views, from which recommendations would be formed.</p>
<b>7 – Travel Tokens</b>	<p>It was requested that the Council review what evidence was required to substantiate disabled status when applying for travel tokens. The current system required a letter from a GP to be produced, but the number of letters required would be substantially reduced if evidence of Disability Living Allowance was accepted as evidence.</p> <p>It was also questioned whether it was appropriate to require this evidence every year, or whether a three yearly review would be appropriate in line with Blue Badge requests.</p> <p><b>Action: Councillor Pamela Bale to pursue for consideration for 2010 allocations.</b></p>
<b>8 – Court Case relating to Harrow Council</b>	<p>Councillor Bale confirmed that when changes to services were considered by West Berkshire Council in 2007, the findings from this court case were considered carefully before any decisions were made.</p>
<b>9 – AOB</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- John Carr raised two issues regarding Newbury car parks. Firstly that the two multi-storey car parks require different transponders to allow entry. Users were not allowed to have both. Secondly, that cars with a lowered floor or with a heightened roof to accommodate lifting equipment, were not able to use multi storey car parks due to height bars, speed humps and the angle of ramps.</li> </ul>

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Mick Hutchins noted a report from 2008 called 'Improving Public Access to Better Quality Toilets: A Strategic Guide' produced by Communities and Local Government. It was requested that Stewart Souden be invited to the next meeting to update the Board on activity towards this strategy.</li> <li>- John Carr requested that the developers of the Parkway area be asked to install react speakers as part of the programme rather than afterwards.</li> </ul> <p><b>Action: Councillor Pamela Bale to pursue this.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- John Carr raised an issue around pubs, restaurants etc that did not remove barriers around their external seating areas when not in use as they then become smoking areas for patrons. However it was questioned whether this was legal as the tables in these areas would be included in the licence for selling food and therefore no one should be smoking there.</li> </ul> <p><b>Action: Councillor Pamela Bale to pursue this.</b></p>
<p><b>10 – Focus and Date of Next Meeting</b></p>	<p>Dates for the meetings in 2009 have been agreed as:</p> <p>Tuesday 28<sup>th</sup> July 2009 – 2:30pm</p> <p>Tuesday 27<sup>th</sup> October 2009 – 2:30pm</p> <p>Tuesday 26<sup>th</sup> January 2010 – 1:00pm to begin with lunch</p> <p>All meetings will be held in Committee Room 2 at the Council Offices in Market Street.</p> <p>Items for the next agenda will include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• EIA on car parks in Wharf area update – Martyn Baker</li> <li>• Outcomes from consultation event regarding Day Services – Lynn Stephens</li> <li>• Travel tokens – Mike Trevallion</li> </ul>

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li data-bbox="412 188 1413 225">• Improving Public Access to Better Quality Toilets – Stewart Souden</li></ul> Items for future agendas include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li data-bbox="412 331 1429 368">• Quality of, and services provided by, care agencies – Tandra Forster</li></ul>