

Minutes of the West Berkshire Council's Disability Equality Scheme's External Scrutiny Board Meeting 27th October 2009

Item	Notes
Board Members in attendance	Bob King (Chairman), Alan Fleming (Vice-Chairman), John Carr, Sabrina McNair, Keith Hester, Kate Green, Mick Hutchins
Others	Councillor Pamela Bale, Councillor Julian Swift Hook, Elaine Vincent (WBC Principal Policy Officer, Equality and Diversity).
1. Welcome and Apologies	The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting, Apologies were received from John Dolton, Colin Parker, Norma Weaver.
2 - Minutes	<p>The draft minutes of the meeting held on 28th July 2009 were approved as a true and correct record and signed by the Chairman.</p> <p>Actions from the meeting held on 28th July 2009 were updated as follows:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Councillor Bale to discuss the inclusion of Blue Badge Holders in the consultation with Martyn Baker. Closed, the method of consultation was considered to be appropriate and proportionate to the decision being made. The Board would like to record that they do not agree, and consider that all registered Blue Badge Holders should have been fully consulted. Action 1 –Councillor Bale to investigate the provision for disabled drivers in the new underground parking and whether the Board will be consulted on the plans. 2. Councillor Bale to pursue issues around tactile paving. Complete. The paving will be adjusted. 3. Elaine Vincent to obtain and circulate minutes of this meeting Complete.

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	<p>4. Councillor Swift-Hook to enquire about inviting a Newbury Town Council officer to a future Board meeting to discuss access to better quality toilets.</p> <p>This has been agreed in principal, subject to a date being agreed.</p> <p>Action 2 – The DES Board to issue an invitation to Newbury Town Council to a future Board meeting.</p> <p>5. Elaine Vincent to update action plan with agreed activity.</p> <p>Complete – to be discussed later</p> <p>6. Bob King to contact Alison Love to clarify current position of All U Need 2 Know.</p> <p>All U Need 2 Know is continuing for the present. Future funding is being investigated and the group will be informed as information becomes available.</p> <p>7. Elaine Vincent to obtain notes of first Transport Forum and circulate to Board.</p> <p>Complete</p> <p>8. Elaine Vincent to add an action which compels new buildings over one storey to incorporate a lift.</p> <p>To be added to new action plan</p> <p>9. Elaine Vincent to obtain figures of the number of disabled employees within WBC.</p> <p>2008 – 40 people (2% of workforce); 2009 – 62 people (3.5% of workforce)</p> <p>10. Lynn Stephens to visit 8 Bells to consider joint working and the possibility of providing some services through them.</p> <p>Complete.</p> <p>The draft minutes of the meeting held on 15th September 2009 were approved as a true and correct record and signed by the Chairman.</p> <p>Actions from the meeting held on 15th September 2009 were updated as follows:</p>

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	<p>1. Board requested a further aim to be added to reflect that further encouragement was needed for Councillors and Council Officers to engage with the Board.</p> <p>Bob King to speak with Nick Carter in January to raise awareness amongst officers.</p> <p>2. A timetable be produced of all meetings attended so that the Board can decide the most appropriate person to attend;</p> <p>Complete. Agreed that person responsible for feeding back from meetings will be:</p> <p>Access Panel – John Carr</p> <p>Transport Forum – Mick Hutchins</p> <p>Home Care User Group – Alan Fleming</p> <p>Stronger Communities Sub Partnership – Mick Hutchins</p> <p>3. Consideration be given to how agendas and minutes be managed;</p> <p>Responsibility of those attending and feeding back to the Board.</p> <p>4. Consideration be given to the inclusion of a DES Board member on the Stronger Communities Sub Partnership.</p> <p>Complete. Mick Hutchins attended last meeting in September 2009.</p> <p>5. A legal update be provided to the Board as appropriate.</p> <p>Agreed, no update at this time.</p> <p>6. Board members who were unable to attend would be contacted to provide a similar list of priorities in order that a consolidated list can be prioritised and input to the Council.</p> <p>Complete.</p> <p>7. Consideration to be given to one or two DES Board representatives giving a presentation at Full Council of the work and achievements of the Board to raise awareness within and outside the Council;</p> <p>Further suggestion of Senior Management Seminar was put forward. Agreed that this should be first course of action.</p>

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	<p>Action 3 – Elaine Vincent to pursue the possibility of this.</p> <p>8. Consideration to be given to releasing a press release or article in an appropriate publication to raise awareness of the Board and attract new members</p> <p>An article to be put forward for the next edition of A Great Place to Live. Suggestion was to structure the article around the new Access Guide, the successes of the Changing Places toilet facilities or tie it in with the 3rd year of the Equality Duty, with the aim of getting more people involved in the Board.</p> <p>Action 4 – Mick Hutchins to draft some text and circulate to Board. All comments to be forwarded to Elaine Vincent by November 27th 2009.</p> <p>9. Meeting dates for next year to be set at the October meeting of the Board. Future dates to be changed to Thursday mornings to allow more Board members to attend.</p> <p>Meeting dates to be agreed at the end of the meeting.</p>
<p>3 – Overview of the Review Day</p>	<p>A discussion was held around the proposed application form for residents wishing to join the Board. It was felt that the two key questions enquiring what the applicant can offer, be softened. Also that a list of disabilities be included rather than a free text field.</p> <p>Action 5 – Elaine Vincent to re-draft the form with these changes and circulate to the Board.</p>
<p>4 – DES Action Plan</p>	<p>Councillor Swift-Hook requested any first impressions from the Board of the new Council website. Comments received were:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Still difficult to navigate around the website. It would be useful if there was a direct line phone list. It was noted however that there may be operational reasons why all direct numbers were not freely available to the public, and that the call centre will direct callers to the relevant person. ➤ The colour change options don't include the standard colours of black on pale yellow. ➤ It was confirmed that the new site does work well with Screen readers. ➤ Browsealoud is not implemented on the website. <p>Action 6 – Councillor Swift-Hook to investigate the addition of Browsealoud.</p>

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	<p>Action 7 – Councillor Swift-Hook to clarify action 144 with Matthew Scalpello</p> <p>The employee survey results provided in the Action plan update were questioned.</p> <p>Action 8 - Elaine Vincent to clarify the figures provided</p> <p>Action 9 – Councillor Bale and Elaine Vincent to investigate the availability of a blank employee survey for distribution to the Board.</p> <p>It was agreed that it would be useful to split the action plan into a performance monitoring plan and an action plan, and that the existing actions could be usefully revisited to update dates and expected outcomes.</p> <p>Action 10 – Elaine Vincent to rebase existing actions, to incorporate themes submitted by the Board, and to generate a performance plan for use from 2009 to 2012.</p>
<p>5 – Feedback from Comprehensive Area Assessment interview</p>	<p>Bob King informed the Board of a recent interview that he and Alan Fleming had been asked to attend with the Audit Commission as part of the West Berkshire Comprehensive Area Assessment. The interview was designed to find out about the work of the Board and how it contributes to improving the lives of disabled residents.</p> <p>It was felt that the interview went very positively, however feedback is not expected to be received from the Audit Commission until December.</p>
<p>6 – AOB</p>	<p>Mick Hutchins read out a letter from the Leader of the Council, Graham Jones, and a memo from Community Services, Teresa Bell and Jan Evans. The letter and memo set out how financial constraints mean that the provision of care services will need to be assessed with more caution, with immediate effect. Concern was raised amongst the Board as to what effect this may have on the care provided to disabled residents. The question was raised as to whether this decision was assessed for its impact on disabled residents.</p> <p>Action 11 – Invite Teresa Bell and Jan Evans to the next Board meeting to discuss this issue.</p> <p>Elaine Vincent requested permission from the Board to distribute Board member contact details to officers within the Council as necessary. This was agreed.</p> <p>Elaine Vincent reminded the Board that the national consultation on The Big Care Debate – Shaping the Future of Care Together, ends on 13th November 2009. If any of the Board would like to contribute to this, the web address is http://careandsupport.direct.gov.uk</p>

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	<p>Alan Fleming updated the Board on the last Home Care User Group meeting which focussed on domiciliary care agencies who were not always meeting domiciliary care regulations. The quality of standards was the main topic and is being looked into.</p> <p>John Carr informed the Board that no messages had been left on the DES Board answerphone.</p> <p>John Carr informed the group that Property Services within the Council are beginning to use the Access Panel which was considered a positive step.</p> <p><i>Additional note:</i> John Carr asked what disabled representation there was on the Town Centre Partnership. Cllr Bale was not aware of any disabled representation and explained that the disability aspects of the Victoria Park Pavilion development had been dealt with by the architects.</p>
<p>7 – Next Meeting</p>	<p>Topic for next meeting will be financial impact on care services. Teresa Bell and Jan Evans to be invited to the meeting.</p> <p>Dates for future meetings have been agreed as:</p> <p>Tuesday 26th January 2010 – 1:00pm to begin with lunch</p> <p>Thursday March 18th 2010 – 10:30am (Please note that this meeting will be held in Committee Room 1)</p> <p>Thursday June 24th 2010 – 10:30am</p> <p>Thursday September 30th 2010 – 10:30am</p> <p>Thursday January 27th 2011 – 10:30am</p> <p>All meetings will be held in Committee Room 2 at the Council Offices in Market Street unless noted above.</p>