

Minutes of the West Berkshire Council's Disability Equality Scheme's External Scrutiny Board Meeting 26th January 2010

Item	Notes
	<p>Prior to the meeting the Board met with the West Berkshire Council Chief Executive, Nick Carter. Mr Carter thanked the Board for their work over the previous year and noted the increased awareness of disability issues across the Council as a result of the Board being in place.</p> <p>The Board raised a number of issues with Mr Carter including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ The progress of wayleaves with regard to moving street lighting fixtures away from footways; ➤ A request for greater understanding of disability issues with regard to highways; ➤ The progress and outcome of consultations that have taken place regarding mental health support provision; ➤ The provision of concessionary bus passes ➤ Provision of car parking in the wharf area and at Parkway and it's suitability for disabled people <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Mr Carter responded that a full car parking strategy is to be developed for which accessibility will be an important component. It is recognised that the location of disabled spaces is equally as important as the number provided. ➤ Whether REACT speakers would be installed at Parkway. <p>Bob King thanked Mr Carter for meeting with the Board.</p>
Board Members in attendance	Bob King (Chairman), Alan Fleming (Vice-Chairman), John Carr, Sabrina McNair, Keith Hester, Kate Green, Norma Weaver
Others	Councillor Pamela Bale, Councillor Julian Swift Hook, Elaine Vincent (WBC Principal Policy Officer, Equality and

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	Diversity), June Graves (Head of Housing & Performance)
2. Welcome and Apologies	<p>The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting,</p> <p>Apologies were received from Mick Hutchins, John Dolton, Colin Parker.</p>
3 - Minutes	<p>The draft minutes of the meeting held on 27th October 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 investigate the provision for disabled drivers in the new underground parking and whether the Board will be consulted on the plans <p>Complete. Discussion was held around the number of spaces that would be allocated for disabled users, and the future car parking strategy for the Newbury area was discussed.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2. The DES Board to issue an invitation to Newbury Town Council to a future Board meeting <p>The Board agreed to extend a standing invitation to a Newbury Town Council elected member.</p> <p>Action 1: EV to contact Chief Executive Graham Hunt.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3. Elaine Vincent to pursue the possibility of the Board presenting at a future Senior Management Seminar within the Council. <p>Complete. A positive response was received, however agendas for each seminar are still to be agreed.</p> <p>Action 2: EV to report back to the Board as appropriate.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 4. Mick Hutchins to draft some text and circulate to Board. All comments to be forwarded to Elaine Vincent by November 27th 2009 <p>Complete. An article will be appearing in the next issue of A Great Place to Live</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 5. Elaine Vincent to re-draft the application form with these changes and circulate to the Board

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	<p>Complete. No comments received. The application form will be added to the Council website.</p> <p>Action 3: EV to add form to the Council website.</p> <p>6. Councillor Swift-Hook to investigate the addition of Browsealoud</p> <p>Complete. It would be possible to provide Browsealoud, however it is a very costly system requiring software on both the Council server and the users own PC. The Board agreed that there is unlikely to be the need for this expense as many visually impaired people will have made their own provision for all internet access.</p> <p>7. Action 4: Councillor Swift-Hook to clarify action 144 with Matthew Scalpello</p> <p>To be carried forward.</p> <p>In addition it was noted that the colour choices used by the Council for accessibility were approved as compliant by an external organisation.</p> <p>8. Action 5: Elaine Vincent to clarify the figures provided (in the staff satisfaction survey)</p> <p>To be carried forward.</p> <p>9. Action 6 – Councillor Bale and Elaine Vincent to investigate the availability of a blank employee survey for distribution to the Board.</p> <p>To be carried forward.</p> <p>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>Complete. The equality scheme would be discussed later in the meeting.</p> <p>11. Invite Teresa Bell and Jan Evans to the next Board meeting to discuss this issue</p> <p>Complete.</p> <p>Additional actions agreed:</p>

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	<p>Action 7: EV to look into including the Board in a future member development session</p> <p>Action 8: Councillor Bale and Councillor Swift-Hook to invite members to future Board meetings.</p> <p>Action 9: EV to provide link to the Audit Commission website where the results of the Comprehensive Area Assessment (CAA) are presented.</p> <p>http://oneplace.direct.gov.uk/infobyarea/region/area/Pages/areaoverview.aspx?region=57&area=420</p>
<p>4 – Financial Impact on Care Services</p>	<p>June Graves provided an update to the Board on the impact of financial pressure on care provision.</p> <p>Pressure on care budgets is a nationally recognised issue and the Council have been looking at how best to provide services within our given resources. Initially those budgets that are not directly linked to service provision were scrutinised and reduced where possible, prior to scrutinising budgets that do relate to service provision. Weekly resource panel meetings are held where any proposed changes are discussed and approved, providing confidence that services are being provided appropriately.</p> <p>There has been a recognised need for change for some time due to changes in longevity and demography. People are living longer, possibly requiring a greater level of care, and people are still coming into care, creating a growing number of users. Consideration has been given to ensuring that service users will not experience a negative effect as a result of these changes and the greater pressure being placed on available resources for care.</p> <p>JG reassured the Board that there will be no compromise on safeguarding or quality of care provided. There has been no change in policy direction, however the Council are ensuring that the policies are being applied and delivered correctly.</p> <p>Although there have been some increases in budget for care services, these have not reflected the increase in need.</p> <p>JG invited the thoughts and suggestions of the Board.</p> <p>A number of issues were raised by the Board:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What happens to those people assessed as critical but needing to wait for a care package? <p>People initially go through a re-ablement programme for 6 weeks to assess their need. We have a statutory duty</p>

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	<p>to provide care once identified, so no one will have to go without.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Is there a danger of people's level of need being deliberately lowered during the reablement programme to save money? <p>Part of the purpose of the re-ablement programme is to assist people back to independence. If it is successful then people will have a lower level of need for care after the programme than before, in which case yes their level of need will be assessed as lower. This would be a legitimate assessment only, and would not be contrived.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> What checks are there that people have not returned to a critical level after these initial assessments? <p>Action 10: JG to investigate the specific approach and report back to the Board, but she was confident that issues such as this will have been addressed.</p> <p>There are a number of routes by which people may be referred to the Council for care services; through a care manager who will be conducting a regular review process, from GPs, other agencies, friends or neighbours, or the voluntary sector.</p> <p>The two most challenging areas are those who refuse assistance, and ensuring that information is being distributed correctly to let people know that care is available.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> What contact is made with other agencies on a regular basis, e.g. mental health groups? <p>Good contact is kept with various representatives from a number of groups. Groups may also contact the Council if they become aware of someone in need.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Challenge that care packages don't currently meet legislation or the 'UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities'. This is due to a lack of care provision after certain hours, which effectively places a curfew on the disabled person. <p>Action 11: EV / JG to discuss. JG to respond.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Board reported anecdotes of negative behaviours in some care staff. <p>JG reassured that there is a clear strategy within the Council to ensure a good service is received. Negative behaviour is not condoned and everyone is encouraged to complain, and compliment, when appropriate. It was</p>

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	<p>pointed out that the process did not seem to be working and that it should be reviewed.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Is there any interface between the Council and the PCT? <p>Yes – a very clear and extensive dialogue between the two.</p>		
5 – Equality Scheme and Action Plan	<p>EV introduced the draft single equality scheme. The single equality scheme was created to replace a number of current schemes and documents whilst ensuring that our legal duties are fulfilled. The scheme uses information gathered through previous consultation exercises and incorporates issues raised by the Board into a single place.</p> <p>The scheme is in two main sections, the first section, explaining how the Council undertakes it's duties, was given to the Board for comment. The second section, setting out the activity that the Council will undertake over the next three years will be forwarded as soon as it's available.</p> <p>Action 12: All to send any comments regarding the scheme to EV</p> <p>Action 13: EV to forward to the Board the remaining section of the scheme as soon as possible.</p>		
Updates from user groups	<p>Home Care User Group – The main subject of recent meetings has been personal budgets. There are concerns that individuals are not being provided with complete information and are therefore not able to make a fully informed choice. There is no activity required by the Board.</p> <p>Transport Forum – The last meeting was cancelled and no further dates have been set.</p> <p>Action 14: EV to enquire about future meetings</p> <p>Access Panel – Two previous meetings have been cancelled due to low numbers of applications. However JC reviews all applications on a weekly basis and the cancelled meetings are not felt to have been detrimental.</p>		
6 – AOB	<table border="1"> <tr> <td data-bbox="405 1182 495 1313">JC</td> <td data-bbox="495 1182 2067 1313"> <p>There have been no messages left via the DES Board telephone number.</p> <p>The Access Guide 2010 is due to be printed imminently. JC is conducting a final proof read.</p> </td> </tr> </table>	JC	<p>There have been no messages left via the DES Board telephone number.</p> <p>The Access Guide 2010 is due to be printed imminently. JC is conducting a final proof read.</p>
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	SM	After three years, would like to pass on duties to produce the Boards' newsletter. Action 15: Anyone interested in taking this on, to please contact EV.
	KG	Noted that First Great Western have replaced their Disability and Inclusion Manager, however the new contact is not yet in post.
	Cllr Bale	Reported that a reply had been received regarding disabled parking at Newbury Station stating that funding has been identified and that work is expected to start some time this year.
	KH	Has been informed that Gill Purrott's (Care Manager – Visual Impairment) has a new manager and requested to know who this is. [Additional note: Gill Purrott's manager is Yvonne Kenyon]
7 – Next Meeting	<p>Topics for next meeting will be:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Highways and transport. Action 16: Councillor Bale to invite David Betts to the meeting. - Single Equality Scheme <p>Dates for future meetings have been agreed as:</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>	