

# Minutes of the West Berkshire Council's Disability Equality Scheme's External Scrutiny Board Meeting 18th March 2010

Item	Notes
<b>Board Members in attendance</b>	Bob King (Chairman), Alan Fleming (Vice-Chairman), John Carr, Sabrina McNair, Keith Hester, Kate Green, Norma Weaver
<b>Others</b>	Councillor Pamela Bale, Councillor Julian Swift Hook, Elaine Vincent (WBC Principal Policy Officer, Equality and Diversity), Councillor David Betts
<b>1. Introduction and Apologies</b>	The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting,  Apologies were received from Mick Hutchins, and Colin Parker.
<b>2 - Minutes</b>	<p>The draft minutes of the meeting held on 26<sup>th</sup> January 2010 were approved as a true and correct record and signed by the Chairman.</p> <p>Actions from the meeting held on 26<sup>th</sup> January 2010 were updated as follows:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. EV to contact Chief Executive Graham Hunt <p>Graham Hunt was put forward as the nominated Newbury Town Council representative. The DES Board were requested to agree his attendance although not an elected member. The Board agreed.</p> <p><b>Action 1: EV to pass on agreement along with a link to previous DES Board minutes.</b></p> </li> <li>2. EV to report back to the Board as appropriate regarding presenting to council officers at future Senior Management Seminars. <p><b>Action 2: Ongoing. EV to continue to report back to the Board.</b></p> </li> <li>3. EV to add DES Board application form to the Council website.</li> </ol>

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	<p>Complete.</p> <p>4. Councillor Swift-Hook to clarify action 144 with Matthew Scalpello.</p> <p><b>Action 3: Councillor Swift-Hook to carry forward.</b></p> <p>5. EV to clarify the figures provided (in the staff satisfaction survey)</p> <p>Figures can be confirmed as, in 2007, 2% reported bullying or harassment relating to disability; in 2009 this figure was 3%.</p> <p>6. Councillor Bale and EV to investigate the availability of a blank employee survey for distribution to the Board.</p> <p>The questions from the staff survey are available and attached with these minutes.</p> <p>7. EV to look into including the Board in a future member development session</p> <p><b>Action 4: EV to bring back to Board once member development calendar is agreed.</b></p> <p>8. Councillor Bale and Councillor Swift-Hook to invite members to future Board meetings</p> <p>Complete.</p> <p>9. EV to provide link to the Audit Commission website where the results of the Comprehensive Area Assessment (CAA) are presented.</p> <p>Complete.</p> <p>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>11. EV / JG to discuss. JG to respond</p> <p><b>Action 5: Actions 10 and 11 are to be carried forward.</b></p> <p>12. All to send any comments regarding the scheme to EV</p>

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	<p>Complete.</p> <p>13. EV to forward to the Board the remaining section of the scheme as soon as possible</p> <p>To be discussed later in the meeting.</p> <p>14. EV to enquire about future meetings of the Transport Forum.</p> <p>Work schedules have made it difficult to arrange further meetings, however it will be done as soon as possible.</p> <p><b>Action 6: EV to make further enquiries.</b></p> <p>15. Anyone interested in taking on the newsletter, to please contact EV</p> <p>No response. Sabrina McNair has agreed to continue for the time being.</p> <p>16. Councillor Bale to invite David Betts to the meeting</p> <p>Complete</p>
<p><b>3 – Highways and Transport</b></p>	<p>Councillor David Betts attended the meeting as the Portfolio Holder for Highways and Transport. Cllr Betts introduced himself to the Board explaining that he was pleased to be invited to attend and would be happy to listen to the issues and concerns of the Board regarding Highways and Transport. Cllr Betts explained that he believed officers to be considerate of the different needs of people, but that it was important to retain communication links in order to be made aware of, and address, issues when they arose.</p> <p>Cyclists: It was generally agreed by the Board that the consideration that cyclists give to pedestrians, and in particular those with disabilities, can vary and that improvement would only come about through greater education of cyclists.</p> <p>Bus Timetables and Accessible Bus Stops: Changes to bus timetables in Reading mean that the last bus to a particular accessible bus stop in Tilehurst is leaving Reading at 19:40. Although later buses may be available, these stop at alternative bus stops [located half a mile or more away] where the pavements are in particularly bad repair making wheelchair access too dangerous for use. Some alterations have been introduced to the area, but ramps are too steep to negotiate, or the alterations have deteriorated.</p>

Item	Notes
	<p>Cllr Betts explained that road and pavement improvement work was prioritised with consideration of available information and Council resources. He invited the Board to approach their Parish Councillors and Ward Members to inform of areas needing attention so that priorities can be put to the Council. Cllr Betts agreed that he would take this information back to Highways to review the balance of work being carried out on roads and pavements. Cllr Betts explained that all highways work plans are consulted on with the residents in the area in question.</p> <p><b>Action 7: Cllr Betts to request further consideration of pavements in Tilehurst area</b></p> <p><b>Action 8: Cllr Betts to consider review of balance between road and pavement repair.</b></p> <p>Cars Parking on Kassel Kerb Bus Stops: the issue of cars parking on or around Kassel kerb bus stops has been raised previously, but there are no signs of improvement, and no parking restrictions to prevent this happening.</p> <p>Civil Enforcement Officers will monitor areas where issues have been raised, but this is not possible to enforce every day. Residents may submit information including photographs of offending vehicles, this may result in a full parking review of the area being undertaken, but can not itself result in prosecution. Local PCSOs, Neighbourhood Wardens or Neighbourhood Action Groups may be able to assist with this issue.</p> <p>Pot Holes: Cllr Betts was asked about the policy for repairing potholes.</p> <p>The Council aim to repair pot holes identified to them within two hours of notification. The most cost and resource efficient way to achieve this is to quick fill the hole, and then plan a more lasting repair at a later date. The severe weather has exacerbated the problem in the area. The Board were reminded that the Council are reliant on being told where pot holes are.</p> <p>Hildens Drive, Tilehurst: Cllr Betts was asked whether the raised traffic calming measure on Hildens Drive, Tilehurst could be converted to a pedestrian crossing.</p> <p><b>Action 9: Cllr Betts to investigate.</b></p> <p>Tactile Paving: It was noted by the Board that improvements were being made in the use of tactile paving across the district.</p> <p>A339: It was requested that consideration be given to installing a pedestrian barrier along the section of the A339 in Newbury between Sainsbury's and Burger King. This route is well used by large lorries and the pavement is</p>

Item	Notes
	<p>particularly narrow in places. There is concern that when passing someone, particularly with a wheelchair or push chair, the speed of the lorries, and the backdraft created by them, could put people in a dangerous situation.</p> <p><b>Action 10: Cllr Betts to investigate.</b></p> <p>Department for Transport (DfT) Inclusive Mobility document: It has been noted by the Board, that the Highways service area Equality Impact Assessment mentions this document, however it is not clear how this is being used.</p> <p><b>Action 11: Cllr Betts to investigate.</b></p> <p>The Board proceeded to review issues that had been previously raised.</p> <p>Concessionary Bus Passes: There remains concern around the times that concessionary bus passes can be used as they do not support disabled people from returning to the workplace.</p> <p><b>Action 12: Cllr Betts to enquire.</b></p> <p>It was noted that a new criteria had been added to the application form regarding having had a driving licence refused due to mental health. It was questioned when this was added and for what reason.</p> <p><b>Action 13: EV to enquire.</b></p> <p>It was confirmed to the Board that carers can obtain a concessionary bus pass which can be used when travelling with the person being cared for.</p>
<p><b>4 – Equality Scheme and Action Plan</b></p>	<p>The Board were informed that it has not yet been possible to confirm the actions for the Single Equality Scheme action plan. However the scheme would be put forward for approval at the next possible opportunity following which it will be circulated to the Board and to the public for consultation.</p> <p>[Please note: the next available opportunity for approval is 11<sup>th</sup> April.]</p> <p><b>Action 14: EV to circulate to the Board after Easter</b></p> <p>JC raised a concern that disability issues may be lost as the single equality scheme sets out the Council's approach to all equality issues.</p>

Item	Notes	
<b>5 – AOB</b>	PB	Asked the Board if they were happy with the forms for travel tokens. The Board confirmed they were.
	KH	Re-raised the issue of whether the Council should be paying for the Talking Books service. Cllr Bale responded that this was a discretionary service and would be reviewed with budgets.
	AF	<p>Advised the Board that the last Home Service User Group meeting was cut short due to lack of attendees.</p> <p>Advised the Board that he had attended a meeting regarding User Led Organisations which was partially beneficial.</p> <p>Advised the Board that he would be attending a United Nations / Office for Disability Issues conference on March 31<sup>st</sup>.</p>
	JC	<p>Passed on a message from Mick Hutchins that he feels the Home Service User Forum is not well publicised and requested some further information about this.</p> <p><b>Action 15: EV to invite Stephen Stace to the next meeting</b></p> <p>Noted that the Access Panel continues to work well.</p> <p>Advised the Board of two telephone messages on the Board's answer phone. One has been passed to the appropriate area of the Council. The second concerns a complaint about access at Thatcham Station. This will be forwarded to Mick Hutchins for assistance in the first instance.</p>
<b>6 – Agree focus for next meeting</b>	<p>The Board agreed to dedicate the next meeting to Community Care issues. Officer to be invited are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Stephen Stace – to report on the Home Care User Group</li> <li>- Lynn Stephens – to feed back regarding the consultation undertaken around day services.</li> <li>- Jan Evans and Teresa Bell</li> </ul> <p>Also for discussion will be the Single Equality Scheme.</p> <p>Dates for future meetings have been agreed as:</p>	

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	<p>Thursday June 24<sup>th</sup> 2010 – 10:30am</p> <p>Thursday September 30<sup>th</sup> 2010 – 10:30am</p> <p>Thursday January 27<sup>th</sup> 2011 – 10:30am (ending with lunch with Nick Carter)</p> <p>All meetings will be held in Committee Room 2 at the Council Offices in Market Street</p>