

Minutes of the West Berkshire Council's Disability Equality Scheme's External Scrutiny Board Meeting 30th September 2010

Item	Notes
Board Members in attendance	Bob King (Chairman), Alan Fleming (Vice-Chairman), Keith Hester, Kate Green, Norma Weaver, Colin Parker, Mick Hutchins. John Carr
Others	Councillor Pamela Bale, Councillor Julian Swift-Hook, Graham Hunt (Newbury Town Council), Mark Cole (Traffic Services Manager), Clive Tombs (Public Transport Officer) and Elaine Walker (WBC Principal Policy Officer, Equality and Diversity).
1. Introduction and Apologies	The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting, Apologies were received from Sabrina McNair and Sue Hinks.
2 - Minutes	<p>The draft minutes of the meeting held on 24th June 2010 were approved as a true and correct record and signed by the Chairman subject to the following amendment:</p> <p>Page 3, response to action 10 indicated that the footway along the length of the A339 between Sainsbury's and Burger King was 2.5m wide. JC requested that this be amended to show that the footway varied and in some places the width of the footway was as little as 1.04m.</p> <p>Actions were updated as follows:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. EW to report back to the Board as appropriate regarding presenting to council officers at future Senior Management Seminars. Action 1: Ongoing. EW to continue to report back to the Board. 2. EW to look into including the Board in a future member development session Action 2: Ongoing. The content of Member Development sessions are decided a year in advance from

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	<p>April. EW to report back to the Board as appropriate.</p> <p>3. NW noted that during some road works being carried out on St John's Road, the location of the temporary traffic lights prevented access to the dipped kerb, making it difficult for people in wheelchairs to find a suitable crossing point.</p> <p>PB to pass this back to Highways for consideration of this can be resolved.</p> <p>Complete.</p> <p>4. Cllr Betts to investigate whether the raised traffic calming measure on Hildens Drive, Tilehurst could be converted to a pedestrian crossing.</p> <p>EW to report back on progress.</p> <p>Mark Cole responded that observations in the area did not justify the installation of a formal crossing. The installation of tactile paving indicated a safe crossing point and was considered an informal crossing.</p> <p>KH disputed the safety of the crossing point as the tactile paving cannot differentiate between a formal and an informal crossing point to a blind person, whereas a person with some visibility would be able to observe the relative safety of the crossing and the absence of a zebra or signalled crossing.</p> <p>MC informed the Board that there is a formula for calculating whether a formal crossing should be installed which takes into account the number of people crossing along a stretch of road and the number of vehicles travelling along that same stretch. Initial observations at peak times had been very low in comparison to the criteria and so a formal calculation had not been pursued. He acknowledged that there are difficulties in identifying a safe place to cross for blind people (as opposed to one that is simply safer than others) but also noted that tactile paving is also considered appropriate for example at corners, where it also indicates a recommended place to cross rather than a safe place.</p> <p>J S-H asked whether:</p> <p>1 – Cost is a factor in deciding whether to install a crossing, and whether a crossing could be installed if alternative funding could be identified.</p> <p>2 – Whether the calculation takes into account that the absence of a crossing point will inevitably lower the</p>

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	<p>number of people trying to cross the road.</p> <p>3 – What account is taken of the drivers travelling above the average speed for the area who are the drivers causing most concern.</p> <p>MC responded that:</p> <p>1 - Whilst cost is a small factor, any site warranting a crossing would have one installed. Should alternative funding be identified, the Council would oppose the installation on the grounds of road safety as it has been evidenced that where a crossing is installed that is almost always set to green, on the occasions that someone crosses and the lights turn red, drivers will not be prepared for it and will not slow down in anticipation.</p> <p>2 - The calculation process did not focus on the crossing point alone, but a stretch of road in order to capture people using the most convenient point for them. The calculation is a nationally adopted one.</p> <p>3 – Road safety designs consider anyone up to the 85th percentile of speeds. To accommodate all speeds would not be practical. Some drivers will be consistently careless whatever design is adopted.</p> <p>AF disputed that traffic and pedestrian volume was too low to consider a formal calculation as his experience was that in school peak hours, there is a high volume of both.</p> <p>It was suggested that if the Parish Council were to carry out an informal audit of pedestrian and traffic volumes, the results could provide evidence for the Council to carry out a formal calculation.</p> <p>Action 3: AF to request that the Parish Council carry out an informal audit of pedestrian and traffic volumes.</p> <p>5. Cllr Betts to investigate the possibility of installing a pedestrian barrier along the A339 between Sainsbury's and Burger King.</p> <p>The footway is 2.5 metres wide so there is no statutory reason to install a barrier. However the Head of Highways has offered to walk the route with JC to understand the issues fully.</p> <p>EW to contact JC to inform him of this offer.</p> <p>Complete.</p>

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	<p>6. Cllr Betts to investigate the times that concessionary bus passes can be used.</p> <p>West Berkshire offer concessionary bus passes for use from 9am (compared to the statutory requirement of 9:30am). Passes are available in relation to disability and age, and it is not possible to set different start times to relate to the different reasons for having a pass. However travel tokens are an alternative which can be used at any time.</p> <p>The Board asked whether there was any evidence that allowing an earlier start time for bus passes caused capacity issues, or whether the reason for not bringing the time forward was financial. It was noted that in Reading passes can be used at any time.</p> <p>PB to clarify the reason for not allowing the earlier use of concessionary passes.</p> <p>A review has been undertaken into the issue of concessionary bus passes. The Council is not able to permit concessionary bus passes to be used for travel earlier than 9am due to budgetary and capacity limitations. However, it should be noted that in West Berkshire it is possible for pass holders to travel from 9am onwards, in contrast to other areas where concessionary travel is only permitted after 9:30am.</p> <p>Action 4: PB to talk further with David Betts.</p> <p>7. Stephen Stace to send information to Sabrina McNair for inclusion in the DES Board newsletter, and to Parish Councils for inclusion in local publications.</p> <p>Complete</p> <p>8. SS to send minutes of last meeting to Alan Fleming for circulation.</p> <p>Complete.</p> <p>9. SS to consider alternative locations for future forum meetings.</p> <p>Currently being investigated.</p> <p>10. JE to investigate the availability of night wardens to respond to planned as well as emergency care.</p> <p>WBC night wardens are currently responding to planned and emergency calls. Depending on the time of night</p>

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	<p>and where the night warden is located on an existing call, it can take up to 30-45 minutes to get to an emergency. There is currently a review of all the service users within the night warded service to free up additional capacity to take on new individuals.</p> <p>[Additional note: JE has confirmed that extra wardens have not been recruited, however there are now no vacancies. If a week's notice is provided, then later evening appointments can be accommodated. An alternative option to ensure assistance is provided whenever the service user requires, is to move to personal budgets.]</p> <p>Complete.</p> <p>MH requested a further action be agreed to obtain a response regarding the issue of responsibility for the maintenance and repair of equipment installed in people's homes once it reaches the end of its guarantee period.</p> <p>Action 5: PB and RK to speak with Teresa Bell to clarify.</p> <p>11. All to feedback any comments they have regarding the single equality scheme.</p> <p>Responses received during the previous Board meeting, 1 further subsequent response received.</p> <p>12. The Board requested a set of performance measures to sit alongside the equality scheme action plan. EW requested that the Board make suggestions as to what measures they feel would be useful. All to consider and feed back to EW by July 30th.</p> <p>No responses received.</p> <p>13. EW to circulate application form to the Board.</p> <p>Complete.</p> <p>14. EW to request ideas for the next agenda from all Board members.</p> <p>Complete.</p>
3 – Real Time	The Board received a presentation from Clive Tombs (Public Transport Officer) regarding real time passenger

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<p>Travel Information at Bus Shelters</p>	<p>information at bus stops. The content of the presentation is attached separately.</p> <p>CT confirmed that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - current transponders are expected to be compatible with the real time system for audio announcements - Whilst assessment of the pilot RTPI system is not yet complete, initial indications from customer surveys on site are that the visual displays have been received favourably, albeit with some confusion in instances where both arrival predictions and timetabled information is being shown. - A continual audio stream would not be appropriate as it would result in complaints from residents living near bus stops. - That work is being undertaken to be sure that the systems will be reliable when in use and that maintenance is manageable. - Much of the newer technology incorporates vandal proof systems. CCTV could also be incorporated, but this would be very costly to maintain and use. - Communications are well established with Reading Borough Council to ensure that the systems are, and will remain, compatible. Contact is also being made with Wokingham to establish similar working protocols. <p>The Board raised some issues about the systems on board buses for example that the placement of information is often behind the wheelchair space.</p>
<p>4 – Parkway Development</p>	<p>Mark Cole (Traffic Services Manager) attended the meeting to discuss the new Parkway development. In response to questions raised at previous meetings he noted:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The plans for the development were viewed by the Access Panel in 2006 when they were originally submitted. Subsequently there was an update report. On both occasions no comments were received from the Access Panel. - On site facilities for disabled people include lifts, ramps to access the development, seating provided in Middle Street, all premises compliant with DDA regulations, accessible toilets. - Transport provisions include a taxi rank and bus stops immediately outside the development and an underground two level car park with 45 disabled bays split across the two floors and with all disabled bays being located near to

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	<p>lift areas.</p> <p>In response to questions at the meeting, MC responded that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The car park will be privately owned but the tariffs will be set by the Council. The Council have requested that parking for blue badge holders be free as in other Newbury car parks. The owners have not yet decided this but it is expected that this will follow the Council's policy. - The owners have not yet decided how disabled bays will be marked. <p>Action 6: MC to raise with developers the benefits of marking disabled bays in blue and yellow and to enquire what approach they will take.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The height for car park access is expected to be 2m as is standard in multi-storey car parks. - The barriers in the car park have been requested to be fitted with a number plate recognition system which would work in the same way as other car parks, ie, disabled people who are not on the system (including visitors to the area) would need to take their ticket to the car park office in order to exit. The use of transponders to gain entry and exit was not expected to be pursued as this is a more difficult solution to implement. - The development is due to open in autumn 2011, at which time buses will be removed from Parkway. - There are no plans to limit the use of the area by cyclists. - It was confirmed that 5 of the residential parking bays would be allocated as disabled bays. - The Council are also requesting that blue badges may be used, for free, in ordinary bays in case all disabled bays are taken.
<p>5 – AOB</p>	<p>Transport Forum – John Blacker (Access Officer for First Great Western) attended the last meeting and took notes of all issues raised by the forum. Since the meeting the following outcomes have been progressed at Newbury Train Station:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - dropped kerbs installed;

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The disabled parking bays have been moved away from the cobbled area; - The lighting has been improved; - The installation of lifts is expected by may be some way off; - Real time train information is in progress. <p>The next meeting of the forum is the 24th November 2010.</p>	
	JC	<p>The Board's answer phone regularly receives calls from residents regarding Adult Social Care issues (such as our home meals service). It was requested that the appropriate service area be made aware so that they can notify people of the correct numbers to call.</p> <p>Action 7: EW to notify Adult Social Care.</p>
	MH	<p>Informed the Board the David Foster (Access Assistant) had left the Council. He raised with the Board the importance of David's role and the need for the role to be filled.</p>
	KG	<p>Informed the Board that the recently published Access Guide had received praise from the Bruce Trust.</p> <p>Kate also informed the Board of the launch of a Hate Crime Third Party Reporting Service taking place on the 8th October in the Council Chamber at the Council's Market Street offices.</p>
6 – Annual Review - Update	<p>EW thanked everyone for contributing their thoughts to the 2010 annual review of the Board. The review acknowledges the achievements of the Board to date and the success of the Board in raising awareness of disability issues across the organisation.</p> <p>The review considered the impact of new equalities legislation on the responsibilities of the Council in terms of engaging with our communities. How the Council addresses this is a consideration in any decision to be made. The Board will be updated with any decisions reached.</p>	
7 – Agree focus for next meeting	<p>The Board suggested the following topics for the next meeting:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Opening up the Countryside. 	

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	<p data-bbox="461 188 1339 220">- Barriers to housing experienced by young disabled people.</p> <p data-bbox="412 256 1984 288">Action 8: EW to invite Councillor Hilary Cole to the next meeting as portfolio holder for the environment</p> <p data-bbox="412 325 1088 357">Dates for future meetings have been agreed as:</p> <p data-bbox="412 394 2056 461">Thursday January 27th 2011 – 10:30am (ending with lunch with Nick Carter). This meeting will be held in Committee Room 2 at the Council Offices in Market Street</p>

NB: Please bring your diaries to the next meeting to agree dates for future meetings.

Proposed dates are:

Thursday 31st March 2011

Thursday 30th June 2011

Thursday 29th September 2011

Thursday 26th January 2012

All meetings to be held between 10:30 and 12:30 in CR2