

Minutes of the West Berkshire Council's Disability Equality Scheme's External Scrutiny Board Meeting 31st March 2011

Item	Notes
Board Members in attendance	Bob King (Chair), Jan Rothwell, Alan Fleming (Vice-Chairman), Keith Hester, Norma Weaver, Sue Hinks, John Carr, Maggie Allison
Others	Councillor Pamela Bale, Councillor Joe Mooney, Councillor David Betts, Graham Hunt (Newbury Town Council), Jan Evans (Head of Adult & Community Services), Nigel Owen (Project Manager Community Services) and David Baker (WBC Policy Officer).
1. Introduction and Apologies	<p>The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting,</p> <p>Apologies were received from Councillor Julian Swift-Hook, Mick Hutchins, Kate Green and Maggie Allison.</p> <p>Bob King started the meeting off by describing the main purpose of the Board was look to influence policy development rather than policy review by involving and using its expertise earlier in the planning cycle to achieve better value services and provide a fuller understanding on disability issues.</p> <p>Bob King introduced Jan Rothwell to the meeting. Jan gave a brief resume of her career and her current role as CAB chief executive and was then introduced to each person attending the meeting.</p>
3.- Minutes	<p>The draft minutes of the meeting held on 27th January 2011 were approved as a true and correct record and signed by the Chairman.</p> <p>Matters arising from previous actions were updated as follows:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. DB to report back to the Board as appropriate regarding presenting to council officers at future Senior Management Seminars. <p>Action 2: Ongoing. DB to continue to report back to the Board. C/F</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2. DB to look into including the Board in a future member development session <p>Action 3: Ongoing. The content of Member Development sessions are decided a year in advance from April. DB to report back to the Board as appropriate. C/F</p> <p>Note: Provisional date for next Member equalities training session was being planned for 6th or 7th June.</p>

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	<p>Action 6: JE to set up review meeting in June. Adult Services were planning for a forum in July and will advise Mick Hutchins of dates once available.</p> <p>Action 7: JE to set up a presentation on personalised budgets and benefits for a future Board meeting.</p> <p>Action 8: JE to set up a presentation on the proposed service model for Day centres.</p> <p>Action 7 & 8 are planned to be agendas item at the next DES Board on Thursday 30th June 2011.</p>
	<p>Update on Hildens Drive Tilehurst: Road safety concerns about a crossing point on Hildens Drive, Tilehurst. An email providing details on a site visit conducted by Mark Cole was read out to the meeting. (See appendix 1).</p> <p>Keith Hester commented that the tactile pavement was not sufficient and proper signage was required. Alan Fleming and John Carr thought that it was safer to remove the plateau which was then agreed by the Board. Cllr David Betts accepted an action to request Mark Cole to remove the plateau. Wardens would be asked to talk to large vehicle drivers parking in the immediate area. A traffic count and speed survey would take place in April. Mark Cole was thanked by the Board for arranging the site visit. Road markings for the bus stop in Hildens Drive needed renewing. Cllr David Betts to action.</p>
<p>4 – Day Services</p>	<p>Nigel Owen summarised the progress made on written questions and supplementary questions raise regarding the changes in Day Services. There had been 25 original questions raised on behalf of the WBDA, WBNA and the Friends of Ormonde service which had been responded to by WBC. This was followed up by 12 supplementary questions and responses. Nigel Owen and Mick Hutchins held a meeting to finalise a full understanding and Mick Hutchins was now happy with the level of response provided by WBC.</p> <p>Bob King was pleased with the progress made, he felt that the Board had been able to question the changes and taken the matter forward to the benefit of all. The next phase was for users to work with Jan Evans and Nigel Owen.</p> <p>John Carr asked that a standing AOB item should be added to agenda to receive an update report on the implementation of Day Services and the roll out of Personal Budgets. Nigel Owen supported a regular update report to the Board and thought this would be a useful approach.</p> <p>The Board agreed to add a new standing AOB agenda item covering an update report on Personal Budgets and implementation of changes to day services. Action NO.</p> <p>There was a discussion around the need for local providers of services to offer greater flexibility – for example late evening services. Jan Evans confirmed that providers were being made aware of the need for more flexibility and over time users will get more power to influence service content.</p>

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	<p>Sue Hinks raised a question relating to Personal Budgets – was the money treated as personal income and did it have any effect other benefits? Jan Evans replied it was difficult to comment on specific cases and advised Sue to talk to Jo England (Client Financial Services Manager).</p> <p>Alan Fleming asked what was the latest position regarding the financial concerns surrounding Southern Cross residential care company. Jan Evans replied that WBC had approximately 100 residents placed under Southern Cross care. A contingency plan was being worked up for WB residents. As WB sites were fully utilised even if Southern Cross was to be placed in administration she expected that the WB sites would continue to operate or could be sold off as a going concern.</p>	
5 – AOB		
5.1	JC	<p>Transport Forum Update: Last meeting had a interesting presentation on the Wheelchair Passport Scheme</p> <p>John noted a consultation was reported in the Newbury Weekly News about a pedestrian crossing planned outside the Tesco store in London Road Newbury. Councillor David Betts agreed to follow up the matter. Action Cllr DB. Graham Hunt commented that this was raised at a Newbury Town council meeting about 6 weeks ago.</p>
5.2	Cllr DB	<p>Consultation was taking place with parish councils on a car parking review. A residents' leaflet was being produced and residents' comments could be submitted through the web site or to local parish councils.</p>
5.3	AF	<p>Home Care User Group Update: Next meeting was scheduled for next week. Alan asked a question relating to registered disabled people being able to claim back VAT on some types of home improvement works. James Hamilton was asked to raise a letter for registered disable people covering details on what services were covered by the scheme and to provide the VAT registration Number necessary to raise the a valid claim. ACTION JH.</p> <p>Note: Initial investigation confirmed that there is no national register of disabled people. Also it is suspected that any VAT exemption scheme was now long defunct.</p>
5.4	JC	<p>Access Panel Update: The panel was working well and applications were coming through for discussion.</p> <p>John asked that the presentation on 'Barriers to housing experienced by young disabled people' planned for the September DES Board meeting covered the housing scheme selection criteria and described what disabled groups the housing department consulted with when developing new housing policy.</p>

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5.5	NO	Community Solution Fund had been announced for community groups to apply for pump priming or bridging finance in situations where local services had been reduced or cut.
5.6	JC	<p>Informed the meeting that both the WBDA & WBNA had been nominated under the Queen's Award for Voluntary Services. Results of nominations were expected to be published in early June.</p> <p>Expressed disappointment that WBC had refused to reprint the 'Getting There' Access Guide on cost grounds. The Access Guide would be made available on the website but this was not available to many potential users.</p> <p>A question directed to Elaine Cox (Snr ROW Officer) – should each PROW application have an Equality Impact Assessment raised? Action EC</p> <p>Reporting accidents/ near misses – John gave an example of a near miss between a disable person and a bus in Northbrook St. It was thought that accidents/ near misses should be reported through Street Care. Councillor David Betts agreed to check if there was any specific reporting system. Action Cllr DB</p> <p>Congratulated WBC on continuing to fund Val Witton's role.</p>
5.7	All	There was a general vote of thanks to Bob King for his excellent leadership of the DES Board over the last 4 years. Bob replied by thanking the board for their support and wished Jan Rothwell every success in her role as the new chair.
6 – Meeting dates for 2011/12	<p>Dates agreed for future meetings:</p> <p>Thursday 30th June 2011 in Committee Room 2 Market St</p> <p>Thursday 29th September 2011 in Committee Room 2 Market St</p> <p>Thursday 26th January 2012 in Committee Room 2 Market St</p> <p>Date for the next meeting has been set for Thursday 30th June 2011 in Committee Room 2 Market St</p>	

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	<p>Agenda Items:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A presentation on personalised budgets and benefits. Action JE/NO • A presentation on the proposed service model for Day centres. Action JE/NO <p>This meeting will be held in Committee Room 2 at the Council Offices in Market Street,</p>
	<p>Meeting was closed at 12.25 p.m.</p>

Note: Elaine Walker gave birth to a baby boy on Friday 11th February at 11.22 am. Baby has been named as Dominic Francis and weighed in at 8lbs 13oz – Both Elaine and Dominic are progressing really well.

Appendix 1

Site meeting in Hildens Drive, Tilehurst held at 2.00pm on 15 March.

It was agreed that a formal crossing was clearly not justified.

I agreed to organise an up to date speed survey at the location of the current hump at the shops as it is some time since the last one was undertaken. I expressed the view that I thought this would confirm that speeds are still low but we need to have current information.

It was noted that the road markings are worn out and I said this would be rectified at the start of the new financial year. This will highlight the hump more and probably reduce speeds further.

Councillor Joe Mooney requested that we explore the use of Elderly People Crossing signs. I said that I suspected that the regulations would not support this at this location but that we will look into it.

The possibility of extra humps was discussed but I advised that there were not really suitable locations for these and I doubted that they would have any impact anyway.

It was noted that a large vehicle regularly parks right next to the existing informal crossing point and this impairs visibility. I agreed that we will investigate removing this space altogether to improve visibility. If we can find out who the vehicle belongs to we might be able to ask the owner to park further away from the crossing point. If the owner refuses or cannot be identified then we could proceed with removal of the space.

I anticipate that we will carry out these investigations in April.

Mark Cole Highways Officer