

# Minutes of the West Berkshire Council

## Disability External Scrutiny Board

### Meeting 17 July 2014

Item	Notes
<b>Board Members in attendance</b>	Jan Rothwell (Chair), John Carr, Sue Hinks, Keith Hester.
<b>Others</b>	Councillor Graham Pask, Councillor Roger Hunneman, Elizabeth O’Keeffe (Newbury Town Council), Valerie Witton (Access Officer), James Stevenson (BBOWT), Neil Stacey (Principal Engineer – Highways), Stewart Souden (Grounds Maintenance Manager), Elaine Walker (Principal Policy Officer),
<b>1. Introduction and apologies.</b>	The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting.  Apologies: Apologies were received from Mick Hutchins and Alan Fleming
<b>2. Minutes and Matters Arising.</b>	The minutes of the meeting of 24 April were agreed.  <b>January Meeting</b>  <b>Action 3:</b> MH to circulate the response to his Freedom of Information request into the DRE policy.  This response was circulated prior to the meeting. JC considered that the refused information ought to have been available electronically and therefore not subject to the 18 hour rule, but said that he had not intention of taking this further. EW confirmed that information is only recorded electronically if there is a need for the Council to do so. In this case there isn’t a need and so only paper information is kept.  <b>Action 7:</b> MH to write a press release and submit to EW. EW to ask the Council’s PR team to release this.  Not Complete. Carry forward.  <b>Action 8:</b> SH to contact the Kennet Gazette for this article to be included once published  Awaiting Action 7, therefore not complete. Carry forward.  <b>Action 10:</b> Lesley Wyman to meet with Councillor Mason and Adrian Barker (the West Berkshire Representative on

Item	Notes
	<p>Healthwatch) to discuss what Healthwatch is doing for West Berkshire and to feed in the district's needs.</p> <p>A letter forwarded by Cllr Mason was circulated by email on 8 May.</p> <p>Nick Carter offered to look into the issue of late and incorrect invoicing of adult social care users.</p> <p><b>'Incorrect' Invoices</b></p> <p>If a client receives multiple services in a week i.e. homecare and day centre each service will appear as a separate item on the invoice. The space on the invoice will only allow for four entries per page so invoices are regularly over more than one page. A client will only receive a one page invoice if they only receive one service per week through the four week period.</p> <p>At the end of December the hourly rate for homecare was reduced to reflect the reduction in charges from the providers. This unfortunately caused some adjustments which were reflected on the invoices causing some individuals to receive multiple pages for one invoice.</p> <p>At the bottom of each page is a carried forward (C/F) balance with the final page having a total balance due figure. (Adding these figures together would mean arriving at a significant and incorrect sum of money as opposed to the actual total balance due figure.)</p> <p><b>Late Invoicing</b></p> <p>This was an issue last year with some providers when we went live with RAISE finance. There was a period last year when there was an issue with several providers and their invoices either not being correct or not being received on time.</p> <p>As we invoice clients on the service they actually received we are unable to invoice clients until the providers submitted the correct invoices. The Contract Team have done some work with providers to try and ensure they invoices correctly and at the appropriate time.</p> <p><b>April meeting</b></p> <p><b>Action 1:</b> Tandra Forster to raise issue of respite payments not being paid on time.</p> <p>Response awaited. Carry Forward.</p> <p><b>Action 2:</b> Tandra Forster to provide an update on the Care Bill in October</p> <p>Added to the agenda</p> <p><b>Action 3:</b> Rachel Craggs to enquire as to whether it might be possible to install temporary CCTV at an individuals home to identify the perpetrator of harassing behaviour.</p>

Item	Notes
	<p>We have been advised that Sovereign would install temporary CCTV at a person's home to identify the perpetrator of harassing behaviour if it was deemed high risk and persistent and ongoing. Consideration would also need to be given to where the camera pointed so it didn't overlook anyone else's property.</p>
<p><b>3. Consultation on public toilets</b></p>	<p>Stewart Souden informed the DES board that there was a proposal to introduce a 20 pence charge for the use of the public toilets at the Wharf in Newbury and Thatcham Broadway, and asked for the views of the board as to how this might affect different groups of disabled people. He added that it would not be viable to input a payment system in all Council owned public toilets, just these two blocks which were well used.</p> <p>SH asked whether Radar keys would still be useable, and if so, could this remove the need to pay? It was clarified that toilets in these two blocks would all be charged 20 pence per visit. JC commented that Radar keys were frequently abused as they were easily available for anyone to purchase.</p> <p>SH added that it would be necessary to tell people in an accessible way that the charge was being imposed, including having a Braille sign at the toilet block (although not all blind people read Braille). The method for paying was also important, How would a person with a visual impairment know where their money should go, and if they dropped their coin, they would not be able to locate it easily.</p> <p>Councillor Hunneman suggested that it was more important for people to have access to the toilets than to prevent it out of concern for abuse of a Radar key. He was also concerned that the cost of implementing a payment system for disabled toilets in particular, would not be covered by the income received from their use.</p> <p>JC asked that the consultation be circulated more widely than just consultation finder (the Council's standard consultation web portal).</p> <p>EW suggested that there were two questions to be answered, would people be happy to pay? And what mechanism can be put in place that will make it possible for people with disabilities to pay? RH added the question of whether the income would cover the cost of the change.</p> <p>EO'K asked if charges were made elsewhere in the country. Stewart Souden replied that it was quite common elsewhere.</p> <p>JR added that for people without disabilities there was likely to be a greater choice of alternative, free, toilets available to them in shops, etc. JC advised that all betting shops have accessible toilets which are free to use.</p> <p>SH asked whether thought had been given to people wanting to steal the money.</p>

Item	Notes
	<p><b>Action 1:</b> Stewart Souden to ensure that a wider consultation is undertaken.</p>
<p><b>4. BBOWT</b></p>	<p>James Stevenson from the Berkshire, Buckinghamshire and Oxfordshire Wildlife Trust (BBOWT) gave an overview of the organisation and his role. He said that BBOWT currently owned or leased and managed 85 reserves across the three counties. In West Berkshire there are 9 reserves plus the Discovery Centre at Thatcham. This year, his role is to audit the accessibility of these reserves and report on options for improvement. He wanted to ask the DES board for their thoughts and ideas.</p> <p>James was aware of previous issues with the height of entry barriers to the car parks, and he was considering options to improve this, as the issue also affected others, for example those who transported their bicycles on the roof of their car. JC commented that the height would need to be higher than the height of a transit van, and noted that it also affected people in wheelchairs with a box on top of their cars. James Stevenson suggested that an answer would be to leave the barriers open during the day, and lock them at night.</p> <p>Councillor Pask commented that the reserves differed in their current level of accessibility, some having paved pathways and some were completely natural and not accessible. He suggested that the efforts of BBOWT should be to improve selected reserves. James Stevenson replied that this was the intention given the available resources for the work. It was intended that reserves that already had some of the infrastructure in place for accessibility would be improved and subsequently advertised.</p> <p>JC asked what material would be used for pathways and car parks noting that gravel was not at all accessible. James Stevenson advised that where possible, materials from the site would be used and that bonded surfaces were generally found to be suitable. Different mixes and different coloured surfaces were also being considered.</p> <p>Councillor Hunneman offered his view that there should be at least one fully accessible circular route available at the chosen sites.</p> <p>James Stevenson went on to mention access through gates on the site, improved signposting, and particularly signposting to the most suitable car park for the reserve.</p> <p>JC asked what the policy is for toilets at these sites. James Stevenson replied that at Snelsmore Common it was operated by Radar key, and at the Discovery Centre the toilets had outside access. Not all sites had toilets, and there were no plans to install them at all sites.</p> <p>James Stevenson asked what the best way to advertise the accessible sites were so as to reach the relevant people. Councillor Hunneman suggested a link to the BBOWT website be added to the Council website. JC</p>

Item	Notes
	<p>suggested that contacts could be contacted directly by email either via JC or Valerie Witton. EW suggested that the information be added to the West Berkshire Access Guide.</p> <p>James Stevenson added that an event guide was produced which included accessibility information.</p> <p>Councillor Pask commended BBOWT for the work they were doing in West Berkshire.</p>
7. AOB	<p><b>Pedestrian Crossing Control Units</b></p> <p>Neil Stacey and Valerie Witton brought two examples of pedestrian crossing control units to the meeting to gain the views particularly of KH and SH as to their ease of use. The units are to replace the previous version which had failed mechanically. SH commented that the unit needed to have a button so that a person with a visual impairment could feel that it had been depressed, rather than a touch pad which might not be certain. SH suggested that units could be developed with both a touch pad and a button to cater for different needs. Valerie Witton commented that these units were not currently available and so were not an option for us at this time, but suggested that the WBDA campaign for this design if it was felt to be beneficial.</p> <p><b>Overview and Scrutiny Management Commission (OSMC) review into Disability Related Expenditure (DRE)</b></p> <p>Alan Fleming provided an update from the last OSMC meeting where Councillors considered the need to review the DRE element of the Fairer Contributions Policy. He confirmed that Members were sympathetic to the issues and had requested that they contribute to the review of the policy being undertaken by Officers, through a Task Group.</p> <p>SH commented that some issues could have been avoided if alternative formats of the documents were available up front so that people could access the information in their own time. EW confirmed that Council guidance suggested that this should be happening where the needs of the audience were known (other information was only available in alternative formats on request). GP requested that this be reviewed to ensure Officers were aware.</p> <p><b>Action 2:</b> EW to publicise the alternative format guidance internally.</p> <p>Councillor Hunneman requested that the OSMC task group be informed of this discussion.</p> <p><b>Action 3:</b> EW to inform the OSMC task group of the DES board discussion.</p> <p>Councillor Hunneman asked how the DES board might be involved in the task group. EW replied that once a date had been agreed for the task group, it was usual for witnesses to be invited to input into the review.</p>

Item	Notes
	<p><b>Action 4:</b> EW to inform the DES board once a date is set for the task group to begin.</p> <p><b>Action 5:</b> Tandra Forster to provide an update in October on the review of the policy being undertaken by Officers.</p> <p><b>Other AOB:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Councillor Hunneman informed the board that the bridge at Newbury train station was to be replaced but there were no plans to install lifts. Councillors are trying to get them to reconsider this decision, but Councillor Hunneman asked the DES board to add their voice to the argument and ask for lifts to be installed. JC agreed to contact Jenny Graham to reconvene the Transport Group temporarily to raise this issue.</li> </ul> <p><b>Action 6:</b> JC to contact Jenny Graham to reconvene the Transport Group temporarily.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- KH informed the group that the Ramblers in Newbury and the Pang Valley had agreed to accompany people with visual impairments on suitable walks.</li> <li>- KH informed the board of a recent incident of a social worker attending his home, but who would not make an unplanned visit to a neighbour who was also in need, at the same time. KH felt that this was not a good use of resource as a social worker would be visiting the neighbour, but would now have to make a specific journey to do so.</li> </ul> <p><b>Action 7:</b> EW to inform Tandra Forster of this concern.</p>
<p><b>8. Agenda Items for next meeting</b></p>	<p>The next meeting is scheduled for Thursday 17 July 2014, 10:30am – 1pm - Committee Room 2. Possible Agenda Items:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Update on the Care Bill – Tandra Forster</li> <li>- Update on the review of the DRE policy</li> </ul>
<p><b>Meeting dates for 2014/15</b></p>	<p>Thursday 16 October 2014, 10:30am – 1pm - Committee Room 2</p> <p>Thursday 22 January 2015, 10:30am – 1pm - Committee Room 2</p>