

Minutes of the West Berkshire Council

Disability External Scrutiny Board

Meeting 15 October 2015

Item	Notes
Board Members in attendance	Jan Rothwell (Chair), John Carr, Alan Fleming, Keith Hester and Sue Hinks
Others	Paul Coe (Access for All Service Manager), Rachel Craggs (Principal Policy Officer, WBC), Glyn Davis (Principal Engineer – Traffic Management & Road Safety), Karen Felgate (Contracts & Commissioning Manager), Matthew Metcalfe (Senior Transport Services Officer), Mary Page (Adult Complaints & Public Liaison Manager) and Stewart Souden (Grounds Maintenance Manager)
1. Introduction and apologies.	<p>The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting.</p> <p>Apologies: Received from Tandra Forster (Head of Adult Social Care. WBC), Councillor Marcus Franks, Mick Hutchins and Elizabeth O’Keefe (representing Newbury Town Council).</p>
2. Minutes and Matters Arising.	<p>The minutes of the meeting of 16 July 2015 were agreed. For an update on previous actions, please see the attached sheet.</p> <p>Action 2: March meeting – AF advised that Thames Valley Police has completed their investigation; however his case is still ongoing.</p> <p>Action 1: July meeting – the information that RC had emailed to the Board was not what was required. AF said it had been discussed at a Council meeting about new grants in December 14 – January 15 and Jo England had been present. Action 1: RC to invite Jo England to the next meeting to discuss</p> <p>Action 2: July meeting – the Board felt that they are not being informed about consultation eg the Council Tax Reduction Scheme. RC was asked to obtain consultation dates to enable the Board to discuss the issue prior to it going out to consultation. Action 2: RC to obtain dates</p> <p>JC advised that he is no longer on the Council’s consultation list. This appears to have started on 17/8 when he stopped receiving emails from WBC. Action 3: RC to investigate</p> <p>Action 3: July meeting – RC provided an update on the issue with the car park transponders. She was asked (i) if the tender includes the ability of the new transponders to operate in both of the Newbury multi storey car parks (ii) if Blue Badge holders will have to apply for the new transponders. (iii) that the Board is advised of timescales for any changes. Action 4: RC to check</p>

Item	Notes
	<p>Action 7: July meeting – RC advised that Barbara Billett wasn't sure if there were any specific links from the Council website to the CCG but had said they would be happy to add links if the Board could identify where these should be. Action 5: RC to discuss this with AF</p>
<p>3. Commissioning Care Providers – how users are or can be involved in the decision making process and how complaints are handled</p>	<p>Karen Felgate (KF) and Mary Page (MP) attended the meeting. The Council has an obligation under the Equality Act to involve service users in procurement. Most involvement occurs at the pre-spec stage when focus groups are held. Service users can also be involved in the tender process but they are unable to score the evaluations if they are not part of the council. AF asked if they could make notes which could feed into the evaluation process. KF said their input would be very helpful when defining the specification and asked Board members to let her know if they would like to be involved. Action 6: Board Members to contact KF if they want to be involved in defining tender specifications</p> <p>AF advised that he had never been consulted about the type of care he would like and he doesn't see why he should have to reduce his social opportunities because of the council's policy. KF said that the issue has become more acute over the last few months as providers have issues with recruitment and retention.</p> <p>AF commented that the in-house social care team are superb and it would be ideal if the same standards applied to other providers. He added that service users are frightened of complaining about their care in case it is withdrawn.</p> <p>MP advised that the Care Quality Intelligence Board meets once a month to talk about each provider and score them against a risk matrix. If the providers fall below a certain standard, they work with them to resolve the issue.</p> <p>KF said her team is looking at the approved provider list to see if it is possible to reduce travel time by appointing lead providers that would enable care agencies to focus on a specific area.</p> <p>They have tendered for the rural care contract and ABI will be delivering this. They are looking at the domestic care issue to see if they can set up something totally different but it is early days. So they are aware of the problem and trying to address it. Care Provider Forums are held to discuss the issues and if the Board has any suggestions they would like to hear from them. However, recruitment and retention of staff is the key issue.</p>
<p>4. Update on Transport issues in relation to the bus service</p>	<p>Matthew Metcalfe (MM) attended the meeting and gave a presentation. All buses are DDA compliant so steps are taken to make them more accessible. They have also worked with Go Ride regarding low floor mini buses. Wheelchair spaces are designed according to the DfT's guidelines and as a result they are not large enough for the bigger wheelchairs.</p>

Item	Notes
	<p>AF said that he had been unable to get his wheelchair into the space provided by Stagecoach. SH said that often the audio system is switched off and it isn't possible for people with a disability to read the bus stop information. In addition, it isn't possible to have 2 wheelchairs travelling together on Reading Buses and AF asked if WBC was able to do anything about it. Action 7: MM to advise if it is possible</p> <p>MM said that the introduction of Kassel kerbs is still ongoing as it is reliant on the availability of S106 funding. They do try to highlight the location of Kassel kerbs on their literature and MM will email a location map to JC so he can put it on the www.wbda.org website. Action 8: MM</p> <p>AF mentioned that there was a bus stop in Hilden's Drive with no markings and people are parking there as a result. Action 9: MM to investigate</p> <p>AF noted that it would be handy if the information cards with driver information were available in Braille. Action 10: MM to investigate</p> <p>MM also advised:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All bus drivers have to hold a CPC qualification and Reading Buses are an accredited CPC training agency. • The Blue Assist Scheme can now be accessed from a mobile phone and can be changed to suit people's needs, so it is not just available for buses. Bus stop signage is now in a larger font and real time passenger information is available. • Newbury Bus Station is to be closed in October 2016 and buses journeys will be commencing and terminating from the car park by the Library. The planning application in relation to this is due to be considered shortly. • Most bus services do not run after 7 pm and from 31/12/15 the night time bus from Newbury to Thatcham will be terminated. • From January 2016, a bus service will be starting at the Racecourse development and will operate from Monday – Saturday.
<p>5. Accessible usage of Pelican crossings</p>	<p>Glyn Davis (GD) attended the meeting and gave a presentation. He advised that design specifications have to be adhered to for any new equipment that is installed. Poles at pelican crossings should be 500mm from the kerb line and 500mm off the tactile paving. However if the required width of pavement is not available they can either not install the crossing or install it so that is accessible, even if it doesn't meet the design guidelines. They also have to work the installation of the poles around the location of utilities underground. For example, they had to work round a gas pipe when they were installing the crossing at St John's Roundabout. This resulted in it being placed further back on the footpath. AF commented that this was a better location as it meant it was easier to control a wheelchair.</p> <p>The Pelican crossing push button should always be on the side of the oncoming traffic; however it is still put on the right-hand side in one way</p>

Item	Notes
	<p>streets, which, it was noted, is not helpful for someone with a guide dog. GD asked the Board if they could raise any issues of this sort with him.</p> <p>The tactile cone turns green at the Sainsbury's roundabout crossing to indicate that it is safe to cross, however pedestrians are not aware of this as the buttons don't control the lights. A revised junction with new crossings is due to be developed here in the next 2 years.</p> <p>In response to feedback about the Newtown Road crossing, controls with audible signals will be installed. JC commented that the green man at the crossing by St John's Road Post Office should be on the opposite side of the road as it is currently only on the pole adjacent to the pedestrian. GD advised that this was the new style of crossing and that it would have been helpful if the DfT had run a national public awareness campaign to advise people of the changes. The DfT had felt this would be perceived as patronising by the public, which was why it did not take place. Action 11: GD to check on the legality of moving the green man to the pole on the opposite side of the road</p> <p>The council has moved away from touch sensitive buttons to push buttons as the touch ones were very unreliable and there was a two month wait for a replacement when they went wrong.</p> <p>In London there are crossings that state how long pedestrians have to wait until they are able to cross the road. This may be rolled out in West Berkshire in the future, if the feedback is positive from the London scheme. Crossings with speed detectors are operated in West Berkshire. These can extend the time of the crossing if a pedestrian is taking a long time to cross the road.</p>
<p>6. Access to Public Spaces</p>	<p>Stewart Souden (SS) attended the meeting. He showed the Board the proposed kissing gate solution for Linear Park and advised that funding was being provided to pay for their installation. AF asked if they could be installed in areas which aren't too steep and SS will ask Valerie Witton to carry out an access audit of the area. Action 12: SS</p> <p>SS will ask the Parish Council if they can look at the accesses that AF had identified that they control eg the access at Mapledurham Drive where there is a height difference on either side of the access point.</p> <p>The access to Linear Park at Albury Gardens will be amended with the S106 funding received from Ikea.</p> <p>AF asked about the overhead barriers that restrict the height of vehicles entering the car parks. He understood that a mechanism was going to be inserted to enable vehicles with wheelchairs to open and shut the barrier. Action 13: SS to investigate</p> <p>SS will provide RC with an update on progress. JC will draw a solution of how the barrier could operate and email it to SS. Action 14: SS & JC</p>

Item	Notes
<p>7. Update on the Implementation of the Care Act</p>	<p>Paul Coe gave a presentation to the Board, which RC will email out with the minutes. He advised:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Phase 2 of the Care Act has been postponed until April 2020, due to the cap that has been placed on care costs. • The principle of wellbeing is central to the Care Act and the test is whether there is a significant impact on someone's wellbeing. • The emphasis is on Local Authorities having regard to minimising the need for future care and support. • Carers need to be treated in a similar way to the people being cared for. Local Authorities can charge carers for the support services provided to them but WBC doesn't charge and has no plans to do so. • Eligibility is now set nationally and there are no local differences. WBC is currently negotiating with the DoH for financial help to manage the change from the critical level to the new national standard. • Legislation says that if someone is eligible for care, a duty is placed on the Local Authority to co-operate and provide care, but it doesn't state how quickly this should be in place. However there is a duty to provide information and advice and co-ordinate wider provision. • Since the introduction of the Care Act, safeguard concerns have increased as they now include additional criteria such as domestic abuse.
<p>8. WBC Equality Policy & Equality Objectives</p>	<p>RC advised that the refreshed WBC Equality Policy had been signed off at Individual Executive Member Decision (IEMD) in September and included a number of changes.</p> <p>The WBC Equality Objectives 2015-19 had also been signed off at IEMD and are as follows:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure our workforce is reflective of our communities. • Endeavour to minimise unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and advance equality of opportunity for employees and all members of our communities. • Implement new ways of working to develop communities to be more resilient in meeting the needs of vulnerable people • Close the education attainment gap for vulnerable pupils. <p>RC was asked to invite Andrea King to the next meeting to provide an update on the new ways of working that are being implemented.</p> <p>Action 15: RC</p>
<p>9. AOB</p>	<p>Access Panel update: there was no update as the meeting is taking place in November.</p> <p>Publication of DES Board minutes: RC to request that the minutes of the DES Board meetings from 2007 are put back on the Equalities page of the WBC website so they are available for people who are unable to attend the meetings. Action 16: RC</p>

Item	Notes
	<p>Council Tax Reduction Scheme consultation: This should have been available in Braille. It was noted that JC, KH and AF were not directly consulted on this. Action 17: RC to discuss with the Consultation Team and Bill Blackett</p> <p>Membership of the Board: it was agreed that Gwen Mason would be invited to join the Board as a co-opted Member due to her extensive experience of disability issues and the ToR will be amended to read 'The Board can agree to co-opt members with relevant personal experience'. Action 16: JC to invite Gwen to join the Board / RC to amend the ToR</p> <p>Concern was expressed about the attendance of EOK at Board meetings as the Board's role is to scrutinise WBC and it did not seem appropriate for someone to be reporting back to Newbury Town Council on this. Action 17: JR to discuss this with EOK</p> <p>JC advised that Brian Leahy had produced a report following consultation with the taxi trade on the requirement for equipment to be marked the taxi registration, training etc. This had resulted in the consultation period being extended until the end of November and Board members being invited to the consultation forum taking place on 29/10.</p>
<p>10. Agenda items for next meeting</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Jo England to provide information on grants and assistance available to people with disabilities • Andrea King to provide a presentation on Restorative Practice • Brian Leahy to provide an update on the taxi usage • RC to set the January 2017 meeting date and invite Nick Carter to attend
<p>Meeting dates for 2016</p>	<p>Thursday 28 January 2016, 10:30 – 1pm: Committee Room 1 Thursday 14 April 2016, 10:30 – 1pm: Committee Room 1 Thursday 14 July 2016, 10:30 – 1pm: Committee Room 1 Thursday 27 October 2016, 10:30 – 1pm: Committee Room 1</p>