

West Berkshire Council Disability External Scrutiny Board

Minutes of the meeting held on Thursday, 14 April 2016

Board Members in attendance: John Carr, Alan Fleming, Keith Hester, Mick Hutchins, Gwen Mason and Jan Rothwell (Chairman)

Others: Nick Carter (Chief Executive), Andrea King (Head of Prevention and Developing Community Resilience) and Brian Leahy (Team Manager - Licensing), Rachel Craggs (Principal Policy Officer (Equalities))

1 Introduction and Apologies

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting.

Apologies were received from: Jo England, Marcus Franks and Sue Hinks

2 Minutes from previous meeting held on 28 January 2016 and matters arising

The Minutes of the meeting held on 28 January 2016 were agreed.

For an update of previous actions, please see the attached sheet.

Action 1: January 2016 meeting – AF is not able to attend the July meeting, as he will be on holiday, so it was agreed to ask Mary Page to attend the October meeting to discuss the Adult Social Care complaints process.

Action 2: January 2016 meeting – As Jo England had been unable to attend the April meeting to discuss the 'Charges for your Care' documents, she will attend the July meeting. Jo had advised that they may possibly be changing the guidance notes and thought the DES Board may wish to input into this. Consequently, RC distributed copies of the guidance notes to the Board for consideration prior to the next meeting. **Action 1: RC to email the guidance to KH and SH**

Action 3: January 2016 meeting – Links have been inserted from the Public Health & Wellbeing and Adult Social Care website pages to the CCG.

Action 4: January 2016 meeting – RC emailed Neil Scott at Reading Buses on 15/2 and 22/3 about the inaccessibility of the information board to wheelchair users and the non-functioning of the PA system but has not received a reply. **Action 2: RC to chase Neil Scott again**

AF advised that Reading Borough Council is having discussions with the DfT about the feasibility of changing the bus design to enable two wheelchair users to travel together. If this is agreed, it may take 10 years to be implemented.

Action 6: January 2016 meeting – The Board advised that the use of Braille is not out of date and felt that this format should be provided free of charge to users in order to comply with the Equality Act. An audio alternative would not suffice as the person may not have the equipment to listen to it and would not be able to use the information outside their home. It was felt that information in Braille should automatically be provided to residents who are registered blind as they would not have access to the information advising that a Braille format was available on request eg voting cards, council tax bills and other correspondence received from the Council. **Action 3: RC to discuss with the appropriate officers**

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Action 8: January 2016 meeting – RC will discuss with Paul Hendry whether the Access Officer being recruited by BBOWT could assist with the Linear Park audit. **Action 4: RC**

Action 9: January 2016 meeting – JC commented that EoK is standing for Newbury Town Council again. It was agreed that the Board will invite EoK to apply for membership and a collective decision will then be taken. **Action 5: JR to contact EoK**

3 Questions to the Chief Executive

Nick Carter (NC), the Chief Executive was able to attend the meeting at short notice and invited concerns from the Board.

MH noted there were no advocates to help people with disabilities find their way through the system, especially people accessing it for the first time. AF advised he had received a phone call from a different care agency to say they had taken over his care, without any advance warning from ASC. NC advised that the Board should discuss these issues with Tandra Forster as the Council is moving to a new way of working and she is the architect of the new system. The aim is to avoid people going into long term residential care and look at other ways of supporting people. A pilot has been underway for the last 2 years and it had been very successful. **Action 6: NC to raise this with Tandra Forster and RC to invite her to a future meeting**

JC observed it would be useful to know what is available for people with disabilities and that a directory of grants could help with this. NC said that he thought there was a directory on the website, although he appreciated this would not easily accessible to everyone.

AF mentioned he had attended a meeting a while ago when the redesign of the grant system was discussed but he had heard nothing since.

JR added that at the CAB they print off information for people from the Council's website, as does the Council's contact centre.

NC remarked it was possibly the navigating of the website that was the problem and it may be necessary to go to different parts of it in order to access all the information that people require.

The website was redesigned about 2-3 years ago around customers' requirements and the majority of people were most interested in the digitised functions such as reporting pot holes or making a council tax payment. NC will ask Phil Rumens to meet with Board members to work through their needs. MH, JC, KH and JR said they would like to be involved in this session. **Action 7: NC to discuss with Phil Rumens/RC to arrange the session and transport for KH**

GM asked if pictorial symbols had been included in the new website and NC said that this should also be raised with Phil Rumens.

GM mentioned a case she was aware of involving a 16 year old with Spina Bifida and NC asked her to email him the details so he could take it up with Mac Heath in Children's Services. **Action 8: GM to email the details to NC**

It was noted that the Social Care Information Point (SCiP), available via the WBC website, is hosted externally.

AF mentioned that the road service in Hilden's Drive required attention as the concrete joints had failed. NC said that he was undertaking an inspection with Ward Members in the near future and would take particular note of this. JC said there were similar problems in the Digby Road area in Speen and Newbury town centre where the slabs have failed. **Action 9: NC to advise the date of his walkabout in Newbury and inspection with Members in Tilehurst to enable JC and AF to join him**

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AF raised the lack of double yellow lines at the bus stop in Hilden's Drive, which resulted in residents parking in front of the kessel kerb. **Action 10: NC to investigate**

NC advised that the construction work at Junction 12 of the M4 was being paid for Ikea, although the Council has to approve all the designs.

KH said he is not on the list of the Sensory Needs department at Upper Pincent's Lane and as a result they do not visit him. He wondered if the service had been affected by the savings proposals. **Action 11: NC to investigate**

4 Update on Disability Training for the Taxi Trade

Brian Leahy (BL), Licensing Team Manager is meeting with the 5 other Berkshire unitary authorities on 14 April to discuss the provision of countywide top up training for the taxi trade, which he hopes will include disability awareness. The cost of the training will be met by the taxi trade which they are not happy about. If the Access Officer post had been retained it would have been possible to develop robust in-house training to include child sexual exploitation and safeguarding.

BL will be taking a report to committee on the proposal after he has undertaken consultation to counteract the possibility of a legal challenge. The report will include the outcome of the consultation and it will then go to the Licensing Committee for a decision.

There is a move to restart the Taxi Association that is being led by Richard Brown and the Council is helping to facilitate this.

BL advised that he is retiring in the next couple of weeks and he will let the Board know the name of the officer who will be replacing him. **Action 12: BL**

The Board asked for their thanks to be recorded to Brian Leahy and Valerie Witton for all their help and support.

5 Update on Building Community Together Programme and Restorative Practice Training

Andrea King (AK), the Head of Prevention & Developing Community Resilience attended the meeting. Over the next 4 years she will be working with the public, private and voluntary sectors and schools to improve emotional health and wellbeing; reduce domestic abuse; help people struggling with substance misuse; reduce school exclusions; help adults who are struggling to get back into work; and help protect vulnerable adults and children.

An Emotional Health Academy was set up following a meeting in July 2015 to counter the high number of children and young people who were unable to access emotional wellbeing support, due to the Healthcare Trust's limited resources.

The Academy is funded by various organisations and provides outreach workers in the community. At 1 April 2016 all the young people who had been referred had received support and the Academy has received national recognition for best practice, which will be celebrated in June.

They have started community conversations in Hungerford, Lambourn, Calcot, Mortimer, Newbury and Thatcham, known as Building Community Together. The conversations provide an opportunity for people to raise issues of concern to them and highlight where they are able to assist. This can include visiting people in their homes if they can't get out and if someone has an idea, they are able to submit a bid for funding. The bids are evaluated by representatives from Sovereign, Thames Valley Police, Greenham Common Trust and Health.

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Consequently they would welcome any ideas or assistance from the Board. Training is also available to become a restorative facilitator, which would enable them to bring people together and start a conversation.

MH suggested there should be a cross over for young people with disabilities once they reach the age of 19, when current services are no longer available and the responsibility falls to the parents. He suggested that AK discusses this with Castle School and Mencap as they would be able to identify young people who are experiencing problems.

They are training people to work with families and adults who are struggling and they would like to train people with disabilities so they could assist.

An outreach support worker is provided by Jobcentre Plus to support people in their homes get back into work and they have asked the Jobcentre for another worker. This service is advertised on posters in community buildings and on the Building Community Together website. It was noted this could be included in a directory and it was not on the SCIP so AK will look into this. JR also asked for the CAB to be sent the details.

GM noted that there is limited data on domestic abuse amongst the disabled and AK will discuss this with Jim Boden, the Domestic Abuse Reduction Co-ordinator.

AK will send RC the details of the meeting being held in June as everyone is invited.

Action 13: AK

6 Any Other Business

Frequency of meetings: As there were a number of items for inclusion at the next 2 meetings, this would remain unchanged. However if there are insufficient items for future meetings, the Board will be asked if it should be cancelled.

Access Panel Update: AF advised that the Access Panel had ceased to exist and the Board expressed their disappointment that the demise of the Access Officer post had led to the demise of the panel as it was a useful meeting.

JC mentioned that he is picking up messages on the Scrutiny Board answer phone that have nothing to do with the Board and expressed concern that they were not getting through to the right service. **Action 14: RC to investigate.**

7 Agenda items for next meeting

- Jo England: grants and assistance available to people with disabilities
- Mary Page: Social Care Complaints procedure (Oct meeting)
- Tandra Forster: update on the new way of working in ASC
- Withdrawal of free bus passes from people with learning disabilities
- Update on disability training for the taxi trade
- Feedback from session with Phil Rumens on the Council's website

8 Future meeting dates

Thursday 14 July 2016, 11:30 – 2pm: Committee Room 2

Thursday 27 October 2016, 11:30 – 2pm: Committee Room 1

Thursday 26 January 2017, 11:30 – 2 pm: Committee Room 1