

BRACKNELL FOREST ACCESS GROUP
2 OCTOBER 2013
7.30 - 8.15 PM



Present:

Councillors Thompson (Chairman), Finnie (Vice-Chairman) and Ms Wilson
Sarah Gaitely, Konnections
Fiona Goodhand, Older People and Long Term Conditions
Geoff Hallett, BADHOGS
Mira Haynes, Bracknell Forest Council
Mary Waight, Community Learning Disability Services, BFC

In Attendance:

Sue Cuthbert, Principal Engineer (Transport IMP)
Danny Lamb, Transport Consultant
Alison Sanders, Director of Corporate Services
Abby Thomas, Head of Community Engagement & Equalities

Apologies for absence were received from:

Ray Edwards MBE, Limbcare
Barry Perrin, Limbcare

8. Minutes of Previous Meeting

The minutes of the previous meeting were agreed as a correct record.

9. Bus Strategy Consultation

Danny Lamb, Transport Consultant, provided the Group with an update on the development of a Bus Strategy for Bracknell Forest. The Strategy would identify what was needed over the next five to ten years to ensure that Bracknell Forest had quality bus services that addressed the needs of both current and potential passengers. An action plan which would identify a specific network and series of contracts for the provision of bus services in the Borough would also be developed.

The Draft Strategy was currently being consulted on and the Group's comments and views were sought. Arising from the Group's questions and comments the following points were noted:

- Although bus drivers were helpful they were sometimes unaware of the best bus service to use to get to particular destinations for example many cited the 194 Service as the best way to access South Hill Park when in fact the 171 and 174 Services were routed closer to South Hill Park
- Consideration needed to be given to providing a service that took in all the key places in the Borough on a circular loop for example Coral Reef, South Hill Park and Bracknell Town Centre
- Consideration needed to be given to ensuring that buses were user friendly

- Bus drivers didn't always stop close enough to dropped curbs to enable the deployment of the wheelchair ramps and ways to improve the situation needed to be explored

It was requested that any further comments and suggestions be fed back to the Passenger Transport Team either online through the Council's website or via pt@bracknell-forest.gov.uk by 15 October 2013.

10. **Bracknell Town Centre Regeneration Update**

Helen Barnett, Bracknell Regeneration Partnership, gave the Group an update in respect of the work taking place to regenerate Bracknell Town Centre.

The Bracknell Regeneration Partnership was working with the design consultants to ensure that the matters raised at the Group's July event were actioned appropriately. Other work of note included:

- A new Shopmobility concession was now operating in Princess Square
- Additional signage had been ordered for the disabled toilets and would be installed shortly
- Work was taking place to publicise the use of radar keys to access disabled toilets
- An additional dropped curb had been installed next to the drop off point in the High Street
- Additional disabled parking spaces had been made available in Princess Square and High Street car parks
- A DDA compliant ramp had been installed to facilitate access to the library
- Extra lighting had been installed round the town centre to ease movement
- To enable residents to view the progress of the regeneration work observation points had been incorporated into the hoardings near the Library and in Charles Square. Web cams were also recording the work and could be accessed online at <http://www.bracknell-forest.gov.uk/regenerationwebcams>
- The demolition was scheduled for completion in November 2013 and construction timetables were expected to be announced by the end of November 2013

Bracknell Regeneration Partnership was keen to support the development of a Retailers' Guide and had agreed to promote it to retailers at a retailers' event on 14 November 2013.

Arising from the Group's questions and comments the following points were noted:

- Work was taking place to identify alternative locations for ground level blue badge disabled parking following the removal of disabled parking spaces from service yards and outside the Red Lion Pub and the police station
- Work was underway to identify a way of improving the ticket barriers in the town centre's multi-storey car parks. It was hoped that an automatic number plate recognition system could be introduced. It was acknowledged that this might take some time to achieve in all the car parks however the High Street Car Park already had the system in place and the possibility of extending this service to disabled drivers with specific requirements would be explored. **(Action: Alison Sanders)**

The Group thanked Helen Barnett for her update.

11. **Bracknell Forest Access Group Event Feedback**

The Group received a report providing feedback on the Bracknell Forest Access Group Event. The report included details of the scale and take up of the event, an overview of the workshops and presentations, budget information and feedback and learning points and proposals for a way forward.

The intention of the event, held on 19 July 2013, had been to showcase the regeneration of Bracknell town centre and look at ways in which it could be made as accessible as possible and to ascertain the extent of support for the development of a guide that retailers and service providers could use to help them improve the experience that disabled residents and visitors experienced. The event was well supported with 71 people attending and the suggestion of a customer service guide for Bracknell Forest retailers and service providers had been well received.

It was agreed that the development of a retailer guide would be a positive move for the Borough and would help improve the experience of everyone who used the Borough's shops and services. It was also agreed that any guide that was produced should be a generic guide that could be used by retailers across the Borough. The production of a DVD or You Tube videos would be dependent on the budget available.

It was agreed that the Access Group would take ownership of developing a retailer guide and that a Working Group would be set up to develop and finalise its content and format. It was expected that the retailer guide would be ready for an official launch by the end of March 2014. Jim Finnie, Geoff Hallett, Sarah Gaitley and Helen Barnett agreed to become members of the Working Group. A Member would also be sought from Berkshire County Blind Society.

It was agreed that the report would be used as the basis for a newsletter providing feedback to all those who attended the event.

RESOLVED that:

- i. The contents of the report be noted and its use as the basis for the production of a conference report for delegates be approved
- ii. Authority to develop and finalise the format and content of a retailer guide be delegated to a small working group
- iii. The development of an action plan to incorporate other key actions suggested at the conference be approved

12. **Disabled Go Update Report**

The Group received the Disabled Go Annual Review Report for 2012/13. The report included: an overview of what was meant by access, an overview of the review process carried out by Disabled Go, a summary of the changes that had been made to the Bracknell Forest Disabled Go database, examples of improvements to Bracknell Forest facilities that had been noted by the Review Team and details of venues that had been either added or removed from the database.

The Disabled Go content was reviewed annually and it was requested that any suggestions for venues that might be included in the guide be forwarded to Abby Thomas. It was agreed that the playground in All Saints Rise in Warfield and the new Shopmobility premises be included in the next round of survey work.

It was agreed that the Disabled Go guide needed to be publicised as widely as possible and it was suggested that it be publicised through the Kerith Centre's Konnections Project, the Family Information Service and Kennel Lane Special School. It was requested that any further suggestions be forwarded to Abby Thomas.

The Group noted the report.

13. **Any Other Business**

There were no additional items of business.

14. **Items for Future Meetings**

It was noted that the next meeting of the Bracknell Forest Access Group would take place on 29 January 2014 at 7.30pm in Easthampstead Baptist Church. Agenda items would include:

- Town Centre Car Parking
- Access Improvements to Borough Council Properties