

**BRACKNELL FOREST ACCESS GROUP**  
**20 APRIL 2016**  
**7.30 - 8.25 PM**



**Present:**

Councillors Thompson (Chairman), Mrs Angell and Brossard (Substitute)  
Fiona Goodhand, Older People and Long Term Conditions  
Mrs Isabel Mattick, Red Diamonds  
Mary Waight, Community Learning Disability Services, BFC

**In Attendance:**

Alison Sanders, Director of Corporate Services  
Abby Thomas, Head of Community Engagement & Equalities  
Karen White, Dementia Advisor, Bracknell Forest Council

**Apologies for absence were received from:**

Councillor Jim Finnie  
Councillor Ms Ash Merry  
Tom Conlin, The Berkshire County Blind Society  
Geraldine Edmond  
Ray Edwards MBE, Limbcare  
Jane Figg, Macular Support Group  
Sarah Gaitely, Konnections  
Mira Haynes, Bracknell Forest Council  
Muriel Rawsthorne, Bracknell Forest Homes Tenants and Leaseholders Panel

**49. Minutes of Previous Meeting**

The minutes of the Bracknell Forest Access group meeting held on 10 November 2015 were agreed as a correct record.

**50. Forestcare demonstration**

Hayley Maunder and Paul Rogers, Forestcare, attended the meeting to give a demonstration of Forestcare's new technology.

They explained that although the previously installed Lifelines did not allow for movement and cover outside of the home. The new Pocketpal technology was reported to work in the same way as the Lifeline, but was a form of wearable technology which could be used anywhere to call for help. It was explained that the Lifeline could be set up to call anyone, and this made it useful to more people than just vulnerable adults. Lone workers had also found success using the Lifeline. However, it was reported that the team would encourage the Pocketpal user to install Forestcare as one of the contacts on their device to ensure a 24 hour service.

The Pocketpal had a built in falls detector which contacted the named contact to alert them to a possible fall. There was also a 'geofence' built into the system, to alert the named contact if the wearer left a specified location in their home or community. It

was reported that families could gain access to the system and could see the location of the wearer on a computer.

It was reported that although the product had a 24 hour battery life, a charger was provided and was often installed next to the user's bed to encourage overnight charging. When the battery ran low, Forestcare would call the user to remind them to charge their device.

The Pocketpal service cost £6.50 per week, including installation, device rental and line rental.

Since launching the product approximately seven weeks before the meeting, the team had installed approximately 50 devices. Lifeline customers were being encouraged to swap to the new product.

## 51. **Children, Young People and Learning Accessibility Strategy**

Graham Symonds, School Sufficiency and Commissioning Manager attended the meeting and presented the Children, Young People and Learning Accessibility Strategy 2016 – 2019.

Development of the strategy had been steered by the Children and Young People's Partnership in order to compliment legislation regarding accessibility. It was reported that schools must provide adequate provision for accessibility, and that governing bodies would be inspected on this. It was recognised that the steps taken by the council to improve accessibility around schools would likely benefit all school users, not just the disabled or minority groups.

It was highlighted that the strategy made it necessary for schools to make reasonable adjustment to accommodate disabled or minority group children, and to prevent barriers for individuals' participation from arising.

The group heard that SEN legislation and practice was included in the strategy, but was already well established across the Borough. The Council employed specialist teachers, behavioural psychologists and other specialist staff who could be used by schools who found a need for them.

The Local Authority was responsible for maintaining and adapting the schools' physical environment, including features such as stairs, doors and flooring. The strategy outlined the necessary steps which may need to be taken, and gave examples of the different needs which may be taken into account.

The Local Authority was obliged to make information available to all children and parents in whatever necessary format, for example large font. This information must be provided within a reasonable timeframe.

As a result of group members' questions, the following points were noted:

- The target timeframe for SEN statementing was 18 weeks, and this timeframe was monitored and reported on. It was commented that help was available to families awaiting a statement also.
- Schools had a budget for necessary adjustments to accommodate a child with a specific need or disability, although all new and upgraded schools had already been built to the necessary standard.
- The strategy covers the local authority, and it was expected that local authority and academy schools would all maintain their own accessibility

strategy. All schools were required to publish equalities information every four years under the Equalities Act.

- The Children and Young People's Partnership would provide governance for the strategy going forward.

## 52. **Disabled Go Annual Review**

Abby Thomas, Head of Community Engagement and Equalities updated the group on the ongoing work of Disabled Go and their annual review.

Disabled Go had been funded for a further three years' work in Bracknell Forest, due to funding from Bracknell Forest Council and Bracknell Regeneration Partnership. The group were reminded that part of this work entails an annual review process of the Disabled Go guide of venues, and that 25 new venues were added to the guide every year. The survey of existing venues would take place in June and July 2016, by phone. The 2016 guide was expected to be out in October 2016.

It was reported that Disabled Go would hold a consultation meeting on the 25 April 2016 to discuss the new venues added to the guide, and all group members were encouraged to attend with their community groups.

In 2017, it was anticipated that there would be a significant update to the guide to incorporate the venues in the new town centre, and to promote Bracknell as a disability friendly town centre. There would be a further engagement event in October 2016 to discuss the town centre redevelopment.

A question was raised over whether Disabled Go catered for dementia friendly venues, and it was commented that this was in development and that Disabled Go were already connected to the Safe Place scheme.

The Group thanked Abby for her update.

## 53. **Bracknell Forest Council Transformation Programme**

Abby Thomas, Transformation Programme Manager, gave an update on the Bracknell Forest Council Transformation Programme.

The Transformation Programme had launched in October 2015 with the Transformation Board. The aims of the Transformation Board were to embed the new Council plan, and promote early intervention, prevention and community resilience. The Board had been set up to review council services and provide savings.

The Council's Local Authority grant would be cut by 80% over the next three years compared to the expected cut of 40%. The necessary budget proposals were in consultation at the time of the meeting to achieve a balanced budget in 2016/17. The unexpected level of reduction to the budget had meant that the work of the Transformation board had now been focussed to review the delivery of all council service areas over three years. Abby highlighted three particular areas of the 2016/17 work programme which may be of interest to the group: libraries, leisure and the arts review.

The Library project board were focussing on library services in the borough, and investigating what the needs of a 21<sup>st</sup> Century library service are. There would be three public engagement sessions at the end of May 2016, and two focus groups running around the Borough. The group was assured that dates of consultation would be publicised in due course.

The Arts project board were considering the future of the Arts in the Borough, including South Hill Park. The Board was considering the evidence of need for the Arts, and would be holding public consultations in May/June 2016.

The Leisure project board were considering the evidence links between leisure facilities and health and wellbeing, the facilities being looked at include Bracknell Leisure Centre, Harmans Water swimming pool and Downshire Golf Centre. The public consultation period would run during June and July 2016.

The group were reminded that there were many opportunities to have input and get involved. It was reported that the key themes of the consultation would be publicised so participants would know that their voice had been heard.

The group thanked Abby for her update.

**54. Items for Future Meetings**

The following items were suggested for future meetings:

- Accessibility of Council Premises – Darren Burgess
- Accessible Information Standard – Reuben
- CCG Healthmakers Programme – Karen Maskell
- Transformation Programme (as a standing item)
- Year of Self Care – Matt Clift
- Highways
- Shopmobility

**55. Any Other Business**

There was no further business.