



## **NOTICE OF MEETING**

**Bracknell Forest Access Group  
Wednesday 21 February 2018, 7.30 pm  
Easthampstead Baptist Church, South Hill Road, Bracknell, RG12 7NS**

### **To: BRACKNELL FOREST ACCESS GROUP**

Councillor Thompson (Chairman), Councillor Finnie (Vice-Chairman), Councillors Mrs Angell and Brossard

### **cc: Substitute Members of the Panel**

Councillors Harrison, Mrs Ingham, Leake, Peacey and Tullett

### **Also invited:**

Tom Conlin, The Berkshire County Blind Society

Ray Edwards MBE, Limbcare

Jane Figg, Macular Support Group

Sarah Gaitely, Konnections

Geoff Hallett, BADHOGS

Mira Haynes, Bracknell Forest Council

Dorothy Lim, Bracknell Forest Homes Tenants and Leaseholders Panel

Andrea McCombie-Parker, The Ark

Mrs Isabel Mattick, Red Diamonds

### **EMERGENCY EVACUATION INSTRUCTIONS**

- 1 If you hear the alarm, leave the building immediately.
- 2 Follow the green signs.
- 3 Use the stairs not the lifts.
- 4 Do not re-enter the building until told to do so.

If you require further information, please contact: Emma Young  
Telephone:  
Email: [emma.young@bracknell-forest.gov.uk](mailto:emma.young@bracknell-forest.gov.uk)  
Published: 14 February 2018



Muriel Rawsthorne, Bracknell Forest Homes Tenants and Leasholders Panel

Fred Rule, Keep Mobile Accessible Transport

Mark Sanders, Healthwatch

Mary Waight, Community Learning Disability Services, BFC

ALISON SANDERS  
Director of Resources

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Sound recording, photographing, filming and use of social media at meetings which are held in public are permitted. Those wishing to record proceedings at a meeting are however advised to contact the Democratic Services Officer named as the contact for further information on the front of this agenda as early as possible before the start of the meeting so that any special arrangements can be made.

**AGENDA**

	Page No
<b>1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE</b> To note apologies for absence and the attendance of any substitute members.	
<b>2. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING</b> To receive and note the minutes of the meeting of the Panel held on 11 October 2017.	5 - 8
<b>3. ACCESS TO BFC LIBRARIES</b> Verbal update and Q&A with Vincent Paliczka, Director of Environment, Culture and Communities.	9 - 14
<b>4. DISABLED GO SURVEY</b> Verbal update and Q&A with Sam Wood, Communities and Engagement Officer.	
<b>5. SAFE PLACE SCHEME</b> Verbal update and Q&A with Phil Jarvis, Development worker in Adults Social Care, Health and Housing.	
<b>6. FEEDBACK ON THE LEXICON</b> Discussion	
<b>7. ANY OTHER BUSINESS</b>	
<b>8. ITEMS FOR FUTURE MEETINGS</b> To note proposed items for discussion at the Panel's next meeting and consider any additional items for discussion at future meetings.  Items for future meetings: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Support for students with Downs Syndrome and Learning Disabilities at Bracknell and Wokingham College.</li></ul>	

The next meeting of the Access advisory Panel will be held on 20 June 2018 at 7.30pm in Easthampstead Baptist Church.



**BRACKNELL FOREST ACCESS GROUP  
11 OCTOBER 2017  
7.30 - 8.50 PM**

**Present:**

Councillor Michael Brossard, Bracknell Forest Council  
Councillor John Harrison, Bracknell Forest Council  
Councillor Mrs Sandra Ingham, Bracknell Forest Council

**Also Present:**

Fiona Goodhand, Older People and Long Term Conditions  
Mrs Isabel Mattick, Red Diamonds  
Mark Sanders, Healthwatch

**In Attendance:**

Phillip Burke, Bracknell Forest Council  
Alison Sanders, Director of Resources

**Apologies for absence were received from:**

Councillor Clifton Thompson  
Councillor Jim Finnie  
Councillor Mrs Jan Angell  
Tom Conlin  
Ray Edwards MBE  
Mira Haynes  
Muriel Rawsthorne  
Abby Thomas

**78. Minutes of Previous Meeting**

The minutes from the last meeting were approved as a correct record.

Arising from the last meeting, it was noted that the group would be interested in seeing the Lexicon's facilities in relation to access for people with additional needs. It was agreed that this would be organised with a minimum number of three Access Group members attending. **(Action: Veryan Lyons)**

The following comments were received from Tom Conlin prior to the meeting:  
"Agenda Item 72; Three visually impaired members from our Bracknell Blind Club were involved in the orientation visits to the new Lexicon development and found the session very informative and very encouraging in terms of the thought that has gone into the needs of blind and partially sighted people. They were very enthusiastic in reporting back to the club meeting following their visit, so well done on this initiative"

"Agenda Item 75: I attended and presented to the large group of schoolchildren who were involved in the "Green meets Grey" project at Honda's offices in Bracknell on 14 July. They came up with some very innovative ideas about inclusivity for visually impaired people visiting the Lexicon and it will be interesting to see if/how any of these ideas are brought to fruition during the mentoring period."

Mrs Isabelle Mattick reported that the Dementia Action Alliance had very good feedback regarding the Lexicon and particularly commented on the good visibility at night.

#### 79. **Town centre transport update**

Phillip Burke, Senior Transport Officer gave an update on transport in and around Bracknell and discussed with the Access Group any problems. It was noted that:

- The transport for the launch weekend of the Lexicon went smoothly with a few minor problems with ticket machines in the Avenue car park
- There was no longer any bike parking near the banks and this was going to be added in the coming weeks.
- The signage within the Lexicon was insufficient with regards to stopping cycling and skateboards which presented a risk to pedestrians. Bracknell Forest Council were limited in what signage could be put up as they already had signs for “no unauthorised vehicles” however The Lexicon would look at what signage they could put up.
- Phillip Burke would circulate locations of bike storage to the group. **(Action: Phillip Burke)**
- The LED displays showing parking spaces available were well liked
- There were problems with parking in Waitrose for their customers and at Skimped Hill even though they had employed security staff.
- The disabled bays at the Avenue car park were good.
- The colouring of the line markings on the ground floor of the Avenue carpark are difficult to see especially around the disabled bays as the paint and tarmac are both quite dark. This would be looked at in coming months.
- There was no bus station near the new Astbury Care Home and it was a struggle to access from the Bracknell Bus Station. Phillip Burke would investigate extending the 108 bus service and update the group. An update would also be put out on ward alerts to Members
- There were 390 bus stops in the borough with ownership split between parish and borough councils. Where possible the stops had hard standing, accessible by path and a nearby crossing for access.
- Any feedback regarding bus stops should be passed to Emma Young for collation and passing to the transport team. **(Action: All)**
- The bus stops were showing real time information and have key fobs which broadcast times for visually impaired people.
- Accessibility by taxi to the town centre was good with several taxi ranks located in areas where passengers would not need to go up or down steps to access the shops.

#### 80. **Town centre feedback**

Veryan Lyons, Team manager for Regeneration and Economy, gave an update on the new town centre. So far the town centre had been open for a month and the shops were reporting positive trading especially the eateries.

The key points were:

- Eateries were having some problems with recruiting experienced staff
- Developers were still on site fixing pavements, putting up signage and completing service gate (located outside Blue’s Smokehouse).
- 95% of floor space had now been let with new shops hoping to be open before Christmas.
- Management of the town centre including promotions and events was currently being looked at.

- When the Princess Square car park would be completed was questioned and Veryan would feedback to the group. **(Action: Veryan Lyons)**
- Good feedback had been received from people with dementia and their carers when visiting the new Fenwicks store. Marks and Spencer wasn't very good in this area due to the large number of mirrors and no clear pathways or areas to queue. Veryan agreed to pass this onto the retailer groups. **(Action: Veryan Lyons)**
- Oil stains left from trucks were being addressed by pressure washers
- Members of the public were still not aware of the lift access next to H&M and this should be advertised more
- The new Bracknell Market was well liked and had a good social media presence.
- It was noted that some of the empty shops were not smart however these were sublets and not under the control of Bracknell Regeneration Partnership.

#### 81. **Any Other Business**

Mrs Isabel Mattick reported that dropped kerbs often had 'bobbles' for the visually impaired. However, this created difficulties for those with mobility problems and asked if an area of smooth pavement on dropped kerbs could be investigated. Phillip Burke undertook to investigate and feed back to the Department for Transport. **(Action: Phillip Burke)**

Phillip Burke highlighted the current consultation on Accessibility from the Department for Transport which may be of interest to the group especially page 19 with regards to tactile paving.

Fiona Goodhand reported that this would be the last meeting for her due to retirement. The group thanked her for her contributions.

Mark Sanders reported concerns regarding the pedestrian area of Market Street which would be a risk to the public from delivery lorries. Phillip Burke undertook to investigate the possibility of installing a barrier or warning sign. **(Action: Phillip Burke)**

Mark Sanders also highlighted that the flumes at Coral Reef were not open at off peak times. He asked whether sessions could be included during the week as this was when autistic people and people with learning difficulties would most likely visit and they would like to access the full facilities.

#### 82. **Items for Future Meetings**

The following were proposed as items for future meetings:

- Phil Jarvis to report on Safe spaces in Bracknell Town Centre
- Bracknell and Wokingham College accepting students with Downs Syndrome and Autism
- Update on the accessibility of the Home library Service

Group Members were asked to forward any future items to Emma Young at: [emma.young@bracknell-forest.gov.uk](mailto:emma.young@bracknell-forest.gov.uk)

#### 83. **Date of Next Meeting**

The next meeting was to be held on 21 February at 7.30pm

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**TO: ACCESS GROUP  
21<sup>st</sup> February 2018**

## **BRACKNELL LIBRARIES: TECHNOLOGY ASSISTED OPENING Directors of Environment, Culture and Communities**

### **1 Purpose of the report**

- 1.1 To brief the Access Group on progress towards enabling extended access to Bracknell Forest Libraries through the use of Technology Assisted Opening and to seek its views on how this is implemented at Bracknell Library.

### **2. RECOMMENDATION**

- 2.1 **That the Access Group note the progress towards extended opening hours at all of Bracknell Libraries and gives its views on wheelchair access at Bracknell Library.**

### **3 REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATION**

- 3.1 Implementing technology assisted opening in Bracknell Libraries greatly increases access to all residents in the borough including wheelchair users. In the absence of a secondary means of fire escape, the structure of Bracknell Library poses difficulties in ensuring the safety of wheelchair users during technology assisted opening when the facility is not staffed, and the views of the Access Group on how this may affect wheelchair users is sought.

### **4 ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED**

- 4.1 The potential to ensure staff cover at Bracknell Library during all opening hours has been considered but is not financially viable in the current economic climate. A secondary means of fire escape is being examined but this is by no means straightforward.

### **5 BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

- 5.1 The Access Group may recall that following a transformation review of Bracknell Libraries which sought to identify £400,000 savings over two years (£250,000 in 2017/18 and £150,000 saving in 2018/19), the agreed plan to make this saving was to make substantial efficiency savings mainly from how we manage library stock, to develop a stronger community role within our libraries through the use of volunteers, and to significantly improve access to libraries, something which was identified as needed through public consultation, by introducing Technology Assisted Opening and self-service. Critically all libraries would remain open.
- 5.2 The project is progressing well with the stock efficiency savings being realised, excellent levels of volunteering achieved and a supplier of the technology has been procured. There has been a slight delay in the works needed to install the technology resulting in the £400,000 saving now being profiled as £250,000 in 2017/18, £120,000 in 2018/19, and the final £30,000 in 2019/20. Otherwise the plan following the transformation review is being implemented well although in fact the potential for project slippage as a consequence of the technological procurement was always identified as a risk.

- 5.3 In terms of opening, the basic plan was to retain the “core hours” where staff are present at all libraries broadly as is, although through transformation the potential to review this to ensure a more equitable approach at some stage in the future was identified. Outside these hours additional access would be made possible for those that wanted it through the use of technology. Essentially, access doors would be unlocked through the e+ card and a security code; lights, computers, self service kiosks and other equipment would be automatically switched on, and CCV cameras would offer a further level of security, and customers, who would have had an induction, can use the library as normal. They would self issue books through the new technology and leave the library.
- 5.4 Access for disabled users has been assessed at all libraries and with some modification 7 of 9 libraries are suitable for disabled access during technology assisted opening. With the plans to build a new library at Harmanswater, this will become 8 from 9. Consequently, access to Bracknell Libraries, whether staffed or not, is set to increase and is a positive additional opportunity for those that wish to avail themselves of it.
- 5.5 However, the structure of Bracknell Library itself creates some access issues for wheelchair users and it is on this matter that the views of the Access Group is sought.
- 5.6 There are three floors in Bracknell Library served by a lift and stairs. The lower ground floor has never operated effectively as part of the library offer and will now be used corporately as a training venue although there will still be community access for activities and meetings the scale of such access which will only fully be known once a detailed specification for corporate use is agreed. The basic library offer will therefore mainly come from the ground floor, which has the main entrance, and the first floor.
- 5.7 When there are no staff present (i.e. during technology assisted opening), the lift will be switched off and there will be no access to the first floor other than via the stairs at either side of Bracknell Library meaning that wheelchair users cannot access the first floor. Regrettable though this is, the risk to a member of the public being stuck in a failed lift in the event of a fire is so foreseeable that it simply cannot be allowed under any reasonable health and safety risk assessment. In isolation, this would not pose a serious detriment to wheelchair users since the library offer on the ground floor is extensive and most needs can be met most of the time.
- 5.8 More challenging is that the lack of a second fire escape route for wheelchair users on the ground cannot easily be accommodated given that the “ground floor” is in fact at a height of about 20 feet from ground level on the other three sides of the building away from the side the main entrance is on. Given the current position of the library, it is considered impractical, but potentially not impossible, to create a suitable ramp where a wheelchair user could safely manage their own escape from fire. The safety of wheelchair users in the event of a fire during the hours of technology assisted opening at Bracknell Library is therefore compromised under the current configuration and consideration must be given to this and the views of the group are sought.
- 5.9 While it is impractical to create a secondary fire exit, it may not be impossible. There is one potential solution being investigated which could create a new fire exit leading on to an elevated metal walkway leading back on to the large open space in front of the library. At the time of writing, it has not been confirmed whether this is feasible in

terms of building construction and the views of the Fire Officer is being sought to see if this is acceptable since the exit would be to the front of the building where the (theoretical) fire would be. Another important consideration is that the library potentially forms part of the wider development including Easthampstead House, Magistrates Court and potentially the Police Station. If development was to begin within say a two year period, the expense of creating another means of escape may be difficult to justify. While these issues crystalise over the next few months, it seems probable that Bracknell Library would be operating technology assisted opening prior to any secondary means of escape being created.

#### Discussion points

- 5.10 Bracknell Library has the longest staffed opening hours of all libraries and consequently wheelchair users have the greatest access to this library. The additional time where technology assisted opening would operate is therefore relatively minimal. In the absence of a secondary fire escape, access for wheelchair users may have to be prohibited for their own safety. If wheelchair users would like to access library services during those hours where the building is not staffed, they would of course have access to the other 8 libraries which would be fully accessible. Does the access group feel this is option is acceptable given the uncertainty of the library's long term future at its current location?
- 5.11 It was considered whether it might be possible to allow access for wheelchair users if they have some support from an able bodied person. Potentially, that person could have been trained to use the "evacu-chairs" situated in the stairwells that form the fire escapes such that in the unlikely event of a fire the safety of the wheel chair user could be better assured. Regrettably, our Insurance Team has confirmed this would not be considered an acceptable risk.
- 5.12 Clearly, the installation of a secondary fire escape is the ideal solution but there is likely to be a period when this is not in place. Some points for discussion have been raised, but if the Group has other observations these would be most welcome.
- 5.13 It is important to remember that access via technology assisted opening is in addition to existing service provision so this will not be compromised.

## **6 ADVICE RECEIVED FROM STATUTORY AND OTHER OFFICERS**

### Borough Solicitor

- 6.1 Not consulted.

### Borough Treasurer

- 6.2 Not consulted.

### Equalities Impact Assessment

- 6.3 Access to all libraries other than Bracknell Library is available to wheelchair users in exactly the same way as able bodied individuals. In the absence of a secondary fire escape at Bracknell Library there is differential access in favour of able bodied customers through the hours of technology assisted opening. Some mitigation exists in that all other libraries are accessible and the existing service at Bracknell Library offers the longest opening hours. Ideally, a secondary fire escape should be provided but this may not prove technically feasible and the long term future of

Bracknell Library may make any investment uneconomic in the short term.

Strategic Risk Management Issues

- 6.4 While the use of technology assisted opening greatly increases access to libraries for all users, the inability for wheelchair users to access the main library may bring reputational issues.

**7 CONSULTATION**

Principal Groups Consulted

- 7.1 Not applicable.

Method of Consultation

- 7.2 Not applicable.

Representations Received

- 7.3 Not applicable.

Background Papers

None

Contact for further information

Vincent Paliczka  
Director of Environment, Culture and Communities  
Tel 01344 351750  
[Vincent.paliczka@bracknell-forest.gov.uk](mailto:Vincent.paliczka@bracknell-forest.gov.uk)

## **LIBRARY OPENING HOURS**

### **Ascot Heath**

Monday - 9:30am to 1pm and 2pm to 7pm  
Tuesday - 2pm to 5pm  
Wednesday - Closed  
Thursday - 9:30am to 7pm  
Friday - 2pm to 5pm  
Saturday - 9:30am to 12:30pm  
Sunday – Closed

### **Binfield**

Monday - 2pm to 7pm  
Tuesday - 2pm to 5pm  
Wednesday - Closed  
Thursday - 9:30am to 5pm  
Friday - 2pm to 5pm  
Saturday - 9:30am to 4pm  
Sunday – Closed

### **Birch Hill**

Monday - 2pm to 5pm  
Tuesday - 10am to 5pm  
Wednesday - Closed  
Thursday - 10am to 5pm  
Friday - 2pm to 7pm  
Saturday - 9:30am to 12:30pm  
Sunday – Closed

### **Bracknell Central**

Monday - 9:30am to 5pm  
Tuesday - 9:30am to 7pm  
Wednesday - Closed  
Thursday - 9:30am to 7pm  
Friday - 9:30am to 7pm  
Saturday - 9:30am to 4pm  
Sunday – Closed

### **Crowthorne**

Monday - 9:30am to 5pm  
Tuesday - 9:30am to 5pm  
Wednesday - 9:30am to 5pm  
Thursday - 9:30am to 7pm  
Friday - 9:30am to 5pm  
Saturday - 9:30am to 4pm  
Sunday – Closed

### **Great Hollands**

Monday - Closed  
Tuesday - Closed  
Wednesday - 9:30am to 7pm  
Thursday - Closed  
Friday - 9:30am to 12:30pm and 2pm to 5pm  
Saturday - 9:30am to 12:30pm  
Sunday – Closed

## Unrestricted

### **Harmans Water**

Monday - 9:30am to 12:30pm and 2pm to 7pm

Tuesday - 9:30am to 12:30pm

Wednesday - Closed

Thursday - 2pm to 5pm

Friday - Closed

Saturday - 9:30am to 12:30pm

Sunday – Closed

### **Sandhurst**

Monday - 9:30am to 1pm and 2pm to 5pm

Tuesday - 9.30am to 7pm

Wednesday - Closed

Thursday - 9:30am to 1pm and 2pm to 5pm

Friday - 9.30am to 5pm

Saturday - 9:30am to 4pm

Sunday – Closed

### **Whitegrove**

Monday - 9:30am to 5pm

Tuesday - 9:30am to 5pm

Wednesday - 9:30am to 6pm

Thursday - 9:30am to 5pm

Friday - 9:30am to 5pm

Saturday - 9:30am to 4pm

Sunday - Closed