

Unrestricted

**BRACKNELL FOREST ACCESS GROUP  
14 OCTOBER 2014  
7.30 - 8.40 PM**



**Present:**

Councillors Thompson (Chairman) and Ms Wilson  
David Ariss  
Alan Dale, Be Heard in Bracknell  
Geraldine Edmond  
Jane Figg, Macular Support Group  
Sarah Gaitely, Konnections  
Fiona Goodhand, Older People and Long Term Conditions  
Mira Haynes, Bracknell Forest Council  
Muriel Rawsthorne, Bracknell Forest Homes Tenants and Leasholders Panel

**In Attendance:**

Sue Cuthbert, Principal Engineer (Transport)  
Alison Sanders, Director of Corporate Services  
Kirsty Hunt, Deputy Head of Community Engagement and Equalities

**Apologies for absence were received from:**

Councillor Jim Finnie  
Ray Edwards MBE, Limbcare  
Helen Barnett, Bracknell Regeneration Partnership

**31. Minutes of Previous Meeting**

The minutes of the previous meeting of the Bracknell forest Access Group held on 2 July 2014 were agreed as a correct record.

Matters Arising

The Bracknell Forest Retailers Guide would be officially launched by Bracknell Regeneration Partnership at their Annual Awards Event on 6 November 2014. Copies had been circulated to the Group and were being distributed on request. To date, all feedback on the Guide had been positive. Thanks were expressed to all those who had participated in its development.

**32. Supported Bus Service Contracts and Community Transport**

Sue Cuthbert, Principal Engineer (Transport), presented a report detailing planned changes to the supported local bus network.

The Council's Local Transport Plan set out the Council's role regarding bus service transport in the Borough and this includes the procurement of 'socially necessary services that are not provided by the free market, subject to external funding' i.e. those services which in the Council's view are necessary to provide communities with

access to their daily needs but are not considered to be viable routes by bus operators.

A review of the bus network to identify any gaps in services and to assess the accessibility of the bus network had found that although there were no obvious gaps in the commercial services and that there was good coverage across the Borough there were opportunities to enhance services in some areas and increase efficiency. Additional services for residents unable to access conventional public transport services owing to their age, physical disability, sensory impairments or learning difficulties were provided through a contract with Keep Mobile.

The Group noted the table of revised supported bus services and arising from the Group's questions and comments the following points were noted:

- Where appropriate and practical a number of existing routes were combined to improve reliability and reduce the overall number of buses required
- Buses on new Route A would follow the route of the current 162 service through Ascot
- New Route B would replace the current 199 service. This was a shopper service which currently ran two days a week
- Real Time Information Systems would be installed at bus stops across the Borough. At stops where it was not practical to install these, QR codes would be displayed so that information could be obtained via smart-phones
- It was acknowledged that the lack of late buses made visits to the theatre or concerts in the evening difficult
- In other areas carers were able to travel free on buses if they were with the person being looked after. In Bracknell Forest carers had to pay for their fares
- The provision of time tables in bus stops was the responsibility of bus operators. Whilst large print timetables were available online it was acknowledged that it would be useful to have them at bus stops too. This request would be passed to the bus operators **(Action: Sue Cuthbert)**
- Improvement works at the bus station meant that the bus stands would be changing regularly. Although there were notices up informing passengers where to catch their buses from it some people found it difficult read these and additional support would be appreciated. This request would be followed up **(Action: Sue Cuthbert)**
- Keep Mobile services were considered to be expensive and because the service did not run after 7pm they were not an option in the evenings
- Buses did not always pull into bus stops so that the exit was level with the pavement. A situation that proved particularly difficult for those who were partially sighted. It was agreed that this would be raised with the bus operators **(Action: Sue Cuthbert)**
- The criteria for those able to use the R Bus Service was under review and an update would be brought to the Group's next meeting. **(Action: Mira Haynes)**
- Any further significant changes to bus services would be consulted on

The Group was informed that First Buses was in the process of rolling out the 'Safe Journey Card' to help those who needed extra help or support when using their buses. The scheme consisted of a special high visibility wallet with slots for a person's bus pass and for cards printed with a selection of requirements for example 'I am hard of hearing. Please speak slowly' or 'Please wait for me to sit down in case I fall'. The wallet could then be used to draw a driver's attention to an additional need

so that appropriate help could be offered. The wallets were free and were available from First Buses' office in Market Street.

First was also in the process of providing additional training for staff through the 'Swap with Me' project to help give their staff a better understanding of people's needs.

The Group thanked Sue Cuthbert for the update.

### 33. **Any Other Business**

#### Disabled Parking

It was agreed that clarification would be sought over whether the 40 minute parking limit in the surface car park behind Barclays Bank in Bracknell Town Centre applied to Blue badge holders too or if the standard three hour limit applied. **(Action: Mira Haynes)**

The enforcement of parking restrictions in car parks on private land for example The Peel Centre and Tesco was the responsibility of the land owner. Cars parked in disabled bays without a Blue Badge on display should be reported to the land owner or store in question in the first instance.

It was confirmed that the entitlement criteria for Blue Badges was set nationally by the Department of Transport.

#### The Ark

Whilst the Ark was still located in Market Street its drama and arts programmes had been relocated to a venue in Ascot. It was agreed that this would be raised with Healthwatch. **(Action: Kirsty Hunt)**

#### ReThink Mental Health

ReThink Mental Health would be closing on 31 October 2014 unless alternative premises were secured. It was agreed that an update on the current position would be circulated with the minutes. **(Action: Mira Haynes)**

### 34. **Items for Future Meetings**

It was requested that an update on the regeneration of Bracknell Town Centre be given at the next meeting.

It was suggested that the Group visit Bracknell Library to view the refurbishments and access improvements that had been made. It was agreed that the possibility of holding a future meeting at the library would be investigated.

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