

NOTICE OF MEETING

**Bracknell Forest Access Group
Wednesday 6 March 2013, 6.30 pm
Easthampstead Baptist Church, South Hill Road, Bracknell, RG12 7NS**

To: Bracknell Forest Access Group

Councillor Thompson (Chairman), Councillor Finnie (Vice-Chairman), Councillors Harrison and Ms Wilson

Alan Dale, Be Heard in Bracknell
Barbara Draper, Be Heard in Bracknell
Ray Edwards MBE, Limbcare
Fiona Goodhand, Older People and Long Term Conditions
Geoff Hogg, Be Heard in Bracknell
Mike Jackley, Berkshire County Blind Society
Mrs Isabel Mattick, Triple A
Andrea McCombie-Parker, The Ark
Steph O'Connell, Dis:course Project
Barry Perrin, Limbcare
Simon Pettigrew, Be Heard in Bracknell
Muriel Rawsthorne, Bracknell Forest Homes Tenants and Leasholders Panel
Fred Rule, Keep Mobile Accessible Transport
Jacqui Ryder, Bracknell Shopmobility
Mary Waight, Community Learning Disability Services, BFC

cc: Substitute Members of the Committee

Councillors Mrs Ballin, Dr Barnard, Birch, Brossard and Virgo

ALISON SANDERS
Director of Corporate Services

PLEASE NOTE THE EARLIER THAN USUAL START TIME FOR THIS MEETING

This is to enable consultants for the Bracknell Town Centre Regeneration to attend the meeting.

If you require further information, please contact: Katharine Simpson
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Wednesday 6 March 2013, 6.30 pm
Easthampstead Baptist Church, South Hill Road, Bracknell,
RG12 7NS

AGENDA

Page No

1. **Apologies for Absence**
To note apologies for absence and the attendance of any substitute members.
2. **Minutes of Previous Meeting**
To receive and note the minutes of the meeting of the Panel held on 19 December 2012. 1 - 2
3. **Bracknell Town Centre Regeneration: Northern Retail Quarter**
To receive a briefing on the regeneration of Bracknell town centre and the Northern Retail Quarter.
4. **Personal Independence Payments**
To receive a briefing from Mira Haynes, Chief Officer: Older People and Long Term Conditions, on Personal Independence Payments.
5. **Disabled Facilities Grants**
To receive a briefing note on the Disabled Facilities Grant. 3 - 4
6. **Bracknell Access Group Conference**
To discuss the format and content of a conference to be hosted by the Bracknell Forest Access Group. 5 - 8
7. **Any Other Business**
8. **Dates of Future Meetings**
To note that future meetings will take place on the following dates:

Wednesday 3 July 2013 at 7.30pm
Wednesday 2 October 2013 at 7.30pm
Wednesday 29 January 2014 at 7.30pm
Wednesday 23 April 2014 at 7.30pm



**ACCESS ADVISORY PANEL
19 DECEMBER 2012
7.30 - 8.20 PM**

Present:

Councillors Thompson (Chairman) and Finnie (Vice-Chairman)
Ray Edwards MBE, Limbcare
Barry Perrin, Limbcare
Muriel Rawsthorne, Bracknell Forest Homes Tenants and Leasholders Panel
Mary Waight, Community Learning Disability Services, BFC

In Attendance:

Alison Sanders, Director of Corporate Services
Abby Thomas, Head of Community Engagement & Equalities

Apologies for absence were received from:

Alan Dale, Be Heard in Bracknell
Barbara Draper, Be Heard in Bracknell
Fiona Goodhand, Older People and Long Term Conditions
Geoff Hogg, Be Heard in Bracknell
Mike Jackley, Berkshire County Blind Society
Mrs Isabel Mattick, Triple A
Simon Pettigrew, Be Heard in Bracknell

8. Minutes of Previous Meeting

The notes of the previous meeting were approved as a correct record.

Matters Arising

- Abby Thomas, Head of Community Engagement and Equalities would be meeting the Chairman of the Wokingham Area Access Group to look at how the Group's scheme to improve shopping experiences for disabled people might be taken forward in Bracknell Forest.

9. Growing your Customer Base

The Panel received 'Growing your Customer Base to Include Disabled People: A guide for businesses' a publication, developed jointly by the Department for Business Innovation and Skills, the Employers' Forum on Disability, the Office for Disability Issues (DWP) and disabled people, providing information and advice to businesses of all sizes who wanted to open their doors to people with disabilities.

It was acknowledged that the contents of the publication complimented both the Safe Spaces Scheme and the work of the Wokingham Area Access Group. It was agreed that the publication would benefit from a wider circulation and that summarising and circulating it to local businesses would be beneficial. It was also agreed that it would be brought to the attention of the Economic and Skills Development Partnership and the Older People's Partnership. **(Action: Abby Thomas)**

10. **Access Advisory Panel Consultation**

The Panel considered a report providing a summary of the results of recent consultation carried out as a starting point for discussions over the future direction of the Panel.

It was noted that the consultation had run throughout November 2012 and that copies of the questionnaire had been circulated to members of the Access Advisory Panel as well as to groups who were not currently members through Bracknell Forest Voluntary Action, The Council's Long Term Conditions Group, the Learning Disability Partnership Board and the Dementia Group. Easy read versions of the questionnaire had also been made available.

A total of twelve responses had been received, eight from Panel Members, three from Groups not currently represented and one from a former Panel Member. All respondents thought that it was important that the Council continued to provide a forum to enable disability issues to be discussed and all Panel Members who responded indicated that they found the meetings useful. It was agreed that a summary of the responses in the form of a letter from the Chairman would be produced for circulation to all those who responded and for publication in Town and Country. **(Action: Katharine Simpson)**

Following a discussion of the response, it was felt that the frequency of Panel meetings, currently quarterly, was appropriate however it was felt that replacing one meeting with a half day conference would be a positive move that would provide both networking opportunities and the opportunity to gather views from a wider audience which could then be used to drive the agenda of future meetings. It was suggested that the annual conference be linked to a consultation and that any conference would need to be planned in partnership with Adult Social Care, Health and Housing. It was agreed that the support of the Adult Social care Department would be sought for this event. **(Action: Abby Thomas)**

It was felt that the name of the Panel should be changed to reflect wider access issues and it was agreed that the Access Advisory Panel would be renamed the Bracknell Forest Access Group.

It was agreed that the event would be explored in more detail at the Panel's next meeting

11. **Any Other Business**

- It was agreed that the Panel's membership list would be double checked for accuracy. Invitations to join the panel would be extended to non Panel members who responded to the questionnaire and to the Crowthorne Stroke and Disabled Club and the Bracknell Stroke Club. **(Action: Katharine Simpson)**

12. **Items for Future Meetings**

It was noted that the next meeting of the Panel would take place on 6 March 2013 at 7pm.

Access Advisory Panel: Briefing Note on Disabled Facilities Grants (DFG)

Legislation

Local Authorities are under a mandatory obligation to provide a grant to assist with adaptations to disabled persons home under the Housing, Grants, Construction and Regeneration Act 1996, as amended by the Regulatory Reform (Housing Assistance) Order 2002. The DFG assistance is available to eligible applicants for certain works, subject to a test of the applicant's resources.

Adaptations and eligible work

The purposes for which a DFG may be given are set out in the legislation and include:

- Facilitating access to and from the dwelling
- Provision of a room usable for sleeping
- Provision of a bathroom
- Making a dwelling safe
- Access to a principal family room
- Movement around the dwelling
- Facilitating preparation and cooking of food

An application for a DFG can only be made following a referral from a relevant Occupational Therapist within Adult Social Care.

Funding

Currently the Council receive an allocation from central government to fund the DFG programme and has allocated further funds through the Capital programme.

Each applicant completes a Test of Resources, or a "means test" which is undertaken in accordance with the legislation. Currently families of disabled children under 19 years are free from means testing.

The maximum amount of mandatory grant available is currently £30,000; however in 2010 the Council agreed a policy to increase this amount in appropriate circumstances, such as where a grant is being provided for a disabled child and the grant would enable the child to remain in their home without the need to resort to residential care.

Bracknell Forest Homes currently have a commitment to spend their own resources on disability adaptation that formed part of the offer document when BFH was

established. This commitment formally comes to an end in the not too distant future which may add additional financial pressure on to the council.

Demand for Service

The number of homes adapted in recent years is shown in the Table below. The rate of spend and throughput of grants is dependant on a number of factors, predominately the rate of referrals from the Occupational Therapists within Adult Social Care. Regulatory Services using staff with appropriate housing knowledge provide the necessary professional input to deliver a solution for a client once their need has been determined. It is difficult to predict the exact spend in advance as demand fluctuates, and on average it takes 12 weeks to progress a referral through specification, tender, approval and build.

	2009-2010	2010-2011	2011-2012	2012-2013 (to 31/10/12)
Number of adaptation (completed grants)	80	67	71	44
Council Contribution	£210,443	£303,416	£265,972	£350,000 (budget)
Government contribution	£300,000	£300,000	£320,700	£300,000
Total spend on adaptations	£510,443	£603,416	£586,672	£357,400

The basis of the Governments allocation used to be on a matched funded 50/50 contribution up to a predetermined limit. Expenditure beyond this limited required a bid being made to government for additional funds but with no certainty. Since 2010/11 the match funding ceased and the Council now just gets an allocation. The funding is not ring fenced. The Bracknell Forest Disabled Facility Grant policy was adopted by the Executive in March 2010. It set out conditions under which the Council would award funding above the prescribed maximum limit. The policy recognises that in some instances it is better to spend a little more on an adaption funded from these funds rather than have to find the balance from the Adult and Social Care budget. Either way the Council has a duty to fund the costs of the need.

TO: BRACKNELL FOREST ACCESS GROUP
6 MARCH 2013

BRACKNELL FOREST ACCESS GROUP ANNUAL EVENT Director of Corporate Services

1 PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To provide the starting point for discussions about the format and content of an annual Bracknell Forest Access Group half day conference. The report sets out a series of questions for the Group's consideration which will then be used to develop the format of the conference.

2 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 **Agree the preferred format and venue**
2.2 **Agree an initial invitation list**
2.3 **Agree the objectives of the conference**
2.4 **Nominate a member(s) of the Group to plan the event with the support of Council officers.**

3 REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 The recent review of the Access Advisory Panel highlighted that a number of people thought that an annual half day conference with speakers and workshops focusing on issues and concerns from a disabled persons perspective could be a productive way forward for the Panel and it was agreed at subsequent discussions at the Panel's meeting in December 2012 that the first conference would be organised in July 2013. This report sets out a number of key questions that need to be considered by the Panel to ensure the success of the proposed event.

4 ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 4.1 None at this time.

5 SUPPORTING INFORMATION

Logistics

- 5.1 In order to allow time to plan the event, and allowing for availability and other commitments it is suggested that the event be held in July 2013. Suggested dates for the event include:

- Tuesday 9 July 2013
- Tuesday 16 July 2013
- Friday 19 July 2013

- 5.2 A number of venues within Bracknell are available including hotels, halls and community centres. However there is a limited budget for the conference and any venue would need to be fully accessible, present a professional appearance and have access to conference facilities. Venues that fulfil these requirements include The Open Learning Centre and Easthampstead Baptist Church both of which have been used successfully for other conferences in the past. **Although final venue**

choice may be limited by availability a steer is requested from the Group as to venue preferences.

- 5.3 In terms of attendance it is suggested that 50 people would be the optimum number for an event of the scale envisaged. However, Easthampstead Baptist Church could accommodate up to 150 people in their main hall if numbers grew. This level would provide sufficient numbers to enable active and engaged discussion from a range of people whilst still being manageable. Respondents to the Access Advisory Panel Questionnaire were keen that the event be open to all whose lives were affected by disability. **The Group is asked to provide suggestions for groups to target with invitations and for ideas about how the event might be publicised to a wider audience of who may not be involved in support groups but who would welcome the opportunity to have their voices heard.**
- 5.4 It is proposed that the event be a half day event starting at 9.15am and running until approximately 1pm or starting at 1.30pm and running until approximately 4pm. This would allow enough time for discussion but recognises that resources are limited and a full day out of the office is difficult. A suggested timetable for the event has been given below:

9.15am / 1.15pm	Refreshments
9.30am / 1.30pm	Welcome
9.40am / 1.40pm	Scene Setting for the Day
10am / 2pm	Session 1
11am / 2.45pm	Coffee Break
11.15am / 3pm	Session 2
12.15pm / 3.45pm	Round up and Way Forward
12.30pm / 4pm	Finish

Objectives and Content of Event

- 5.5 Initial discussions over the content of the event highlighted the Group's view that it should provide both networking opportunities and the opportunity to gather views from a wider audience which could then be used to drive the agenda of future Group meetings. It was also agreed that the conference should be organised in partnership with the Council's Adult Social Care, Health and Housing (ASCH&H) Department if possible. ASCH&H have confirmed that they are happy to support the planning of the conference and may have a consultation that they would like to discuss at the conference.
- 5.6 In terms of potential subjects/themes that might be used at the event, based on feedback from the questionnaire and officer ideas these could include:
- Town Centre Regeneration – ensuring there is good disabled access and facilities. Wokingham Area Access Group have developed a customer service guide for local shops could we do something similar for Bracknell Forest as part of the Bracknell Town Centre Regeneration?
 - Link to an ASCH&H consultation?
 - Feedback on the Disabled Go access guide 2013 update
 - Feedback on the disability related Council Equality Scheme Actions – what have we achieved in our first year of implementing the strategy?
 - Proactive work to engage with family members, advocates and support staff from quality providers to listen and learn about their views and opinions of

services as well as looking at wider access issues for example information provision.

- Do disabled people get the lifestyle they want or do they lead a lifestyle of convenience for support providers and support staff due to restrictive budgets?

The Group is asked to consider the above points and put forward suggestions for subjects that the Event might cover.

5.7 In addition to general subject areas to be covered the Group's views are also sought on the following possible activities:

1. A Question and Answer Session - What topics might be discussed? Who might be appropriate to sit on the Answer Panel? Should this be an activity in its own right or part of a wider workshop session? How can we ensure that sufficient questions are asked to warrant holding such a session
2. Stands - Which organisations might be invited to have stands at an event? Should these be interactive simply information sources?
3. Speakers - Would a speaker be able to add value to the event? Do Panel members have any suggestions or contacts that might be used?

Background Papers

Access Advisory Panel Agenda and Minutes from meeting held 19 December 2013

Contact for further information

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