

**ACCESS ADVISORY SUB COMMITTEE
10 FEBRUARY 1999**

Present: Councillor Harrison (Chairman)
Councillor Mrs Clifford (Vice Chairman)
Councillor Finnie
Councillor Piasecki
Councillor Mrs Sutcliffe
Mrs R Ametyer, Red Diamond Disabled Sports Association
Ms C Dann, Bracknell Users Group
Mrs S Kearton, Bracknell Citizen's Advice Bureau
Mr M Jackley, Berkshire County Blind Society
Mr M Mace, Forestline Community Transport
Mr A Tarry, National Federation of the Blind
Mrs I Tilbry, Arthritis Care
Mrs B Thompson, Arthritis Care
Mr P Thompson, Arthritis Care

Apologies for Absence:

Mrs B Aird, Mencap
Mrs D Bolitho, British Red Cross
Mrs C Cowap, Bracknell Council for Voluntary Service
Mr R Edwards, Property Adaption Specialist
Ms H Hart, Berkshire Multiple Sclerosis Therapy Centre
Mrs P Sanderson, the Ark
Mrs M Thompson, Action Group for the Physically Handicapped

15. Minutes

The minutes of the meetings of the Access Advisory Sub Committee held on 14 October 1998 and 13 January 1999 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

16. Matters Arising from the Minutes

Minute 14 Bracknell Regeneration Trust (BRT) – Development Proposals for Bracknell Town Centre

The Director of Planning & Transportation gave the Sub Committee an update on BRT's proposals for Bracknell Town Centre. It was reported that the proposals had not been supported at the Planning Control Sub Committee held on 3 February 1999. Both BRT and Legal & General's proposals would now go forward to the call-in Inquiry and the Secretary of State.

17. Community Transport Strategy (Item 1)

It was reported that the Community Transport Strategy had been approved as policy by the Planning & Transportation Committee on 21 January 1999. The document had been subject to community consultation and a good response had been received. The Strategy would help with the town centre proposals, the Local

Transport Plan and allocation of grant aid. It was noted that more publicity on services currently available was needed.

Concerns were expressed regarding the accessibility and cost of transport to hospital. The Director of Planning & Transportation reported that the Borough Council hoped to provide financial assistance for hospital transport shortly. In addition to this, the Director reported that discussions had taken place with the bus company to improve a number of services and links to Wexham Park and Heatherwood Hospitals. It was noted however, that buses do not currently provide accessibility to all. Concern was expressed by members of the Sub Committee regarding usage of bus services. It was noted that the Borough Council subsidised current services.

AGREED that:

The representatives on the Sub Committee thank all members of their organisations who contributed to the consultation process and that the amended Community Transport Strategy be circulated as the adopted policy of the Borough Council.

18. Extension of Part M of the Building Regulations to New Dwellings (Item 2)

The Director of Planning & Transportation reported that a new regulation affecting Part M of the Building Regulations – Access and Facilities for Disabled People, would come into force on 25 October 1999. Each new dwelling would be required to provide a certain level of access and facilities. The main issues were as follows:

- level or ramped approach to dwelling
- a level threshold
- an entrance door which provides a clear opening width of 775mm
- accessible corridors, passages and internal doors in the entrance storey or principal storey
- a WC facility in the entrance storey or principal storey,
- accessible switches and socket outlets

The Director emphasised that the new regulation would not provide accessibility for everyone, however the changes would go some way to improve the accessibility in new dwellings. It was noted that existing buildings would not be required to comply with the new regulation, however, if existing buildings were to be changed then the regulations provide the ability to ensure that such buildings were not made less accessible.

The Director reported that building regulation applications received after 1 June 1999 would have to comply with the new regulations if they were likely to be built after 25 October 1999.

Concern was expressed by members of the Sub Committee regarding private building inspectors. The Director of Planning & Transportation reported that the Borough Council's building inspectors would be able to set their own fee levels for building inspection that would be competitive. Private building inspectors and Borough Council building inspectors have to comply with the regulations set down by Central Government. The Director suggested that a representative from a house building organisation be invited to a future meeting of the Access Advisory Sub Committee. Alternatively, members of the Sub Committee might attend a site visit with a house builder, to discuss concerns.

AGREED that:

The contents of the report entitled Extension of Part M of the Building Regulations to New Dwellings be noted.

19. **Access Advisory Sub Committee Training (Item 3)**

A training programme for participation in committee meetings for the Access Advisory Sub Committee members had now been arranged. It was proposed that two training sessions be organised before the end of March 1999 to be held in the 4th floor Meeting Room at Time Square. The times proposed were 4pm-6pm and 7pm-9pm. These sessions would be held on different days to ensure as many people as possible could attend. Training would be given by Leah Thompson and Peter Driver from the Corporate Services Department. The aim of this workshop would be to develop knowledge and skills about making meetings more effective, so that the level of satisfaction felt by those who attend was increased. The course would include:

- Explanation of the procedures and jargon used during meetings
- Explanation of the role of the Chairperson and Committee Administrator
- Exploration of typical problems experienced during meetings
- Exploration of the means by which Committee members can ensure that their views and concerns were voiced
- Use of assertiveness techniques to get the message across
- Planning and preparing what to say so that it makes the maximum impact in the shortest time

The dates of the training course have not yet been determined, however members of the Sub Committee would be advised in due course.

20. **Meeting Room**

The Sub Committee were asked to determine whether the Council Chamber or the ground floor meeting room at Time Square were more appropriate for future meetings of the Access Advisory Sub Committee.

AGREED that:

The Council Chamber at Easthampstead House be used for future meetings of the Access Advisory Sub Committee.

The meeting commenced at 7.30pm and concluded at 8.30pm

CHAIRMAN