

**ACCESS COMMITTEE
3 DECEMBER 1997**

Present: Councillor Ward (Chairman)
Councillor Mrs Sutcliffe
Ms M Abbott Downside Resource Centre
Mrs V L Ashby Bracknell Carers and Stroke Club
Miss T Azam Bracknell and Wokingham Muscular Dystrophy Group
Ms C Dann Bracknell Users Group
Mr P Fox MENCAP
Mrs H Hart Berkshire Multiple Sclerosis Therapy Centre
Mr L Harvey Forestline Community Transport
Mrs S Kearton Bracknell Citizens' Advice Bureau
Mr M Nagle Forestline Community Transport
Mrs J Plumb Mental Health Carers
Mrs J Revans Community Resource Worker, Berkshire Social Services
Mr A Tarry National Federation for the Blind
Mrs B Thompson Arthritis Care
Mrs M Thompson Action Group for the Physically Handicapped
Mr P M Thompson Arthritis Care
Mr J Tilley Arthritis Care

Apologies for Absence were submitted on behalf of the following

Councillor Mrs Clifford
Councillor Finnie
Mrs A Ball Parents Together
Mrs D Drummond Community Council for Berkshire
Miss R Leedale Bracknell Council for Voluntary Service
Mr E Mallett Red Diamond Disabled Sports Association
Mr F Rule Keep Mobile
Mrs P Sanderson The Ark Drama Club
Mr M Shrimpton Berkshire Disability Information Network

80. Minutes

The minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 7 July 1997 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman, subject to an amendment to the list of members present.

81. Presentation by the Director of Social Services & Housing

Mr Trevor Farmer, Director of Social Services & Housing, gave a presentation on the work of the Social Services & Housing Department. He outlined the benefits and opportunities of bringing these two services together in a single department from 1 April 1998 and explained that work was continuing to establish organisational structures and budgets. He stated that one of the biggest challenges would be to draw together voluntary organisations, users and carers. As part of the process of dialogue between these groups, consultation on the Community Care Plan and the Children's Services Care Plan was due to begin shortly.

The Director answered questions on a variety of topics relating to service provision levels and budget constraints. He was thanked for his presentation.

82. **The Use of Tactile Paving Surfaces and Dropped Kerbs**

The Access and Mobility Officer reported on extended guidance on the use of tactile paving surfaces, recently published by the Department of the Environment, Transport and the Regions, which recommended the use of different types of tactile paving for various features: blister paving (paving with raised “domes”) would continue to be used for pedestrian crossing points; corduroy surfaces (surfaces with raised “ribs”) would be used as warnings of specific hazards such as steps or level crossings; with variations of these two surfaces used to indicate the presence of other features. The report also included information on the Mobility Issues Policy of Berkshire County Council.

AGREED that the Highways Sub Committee be requested to adopt, with effect from 1 April 1998, the guidance of the Department of the Environment, Transport and the Regions on the use of tactile paving surfaces, drafted September 1997 with the exception that tactile paving would not be installed where a dropped kerb could be offset from a junction; this policy to apply to new installations and where there would be appropriate maintenance to existing installations.

83. **Bracknell Town Centre: Urban Design Framework**

Following a decision of the former Planning Committee a town centre design framework had been developed. A draft document had been approved for public consultation by the Planning and Transportation Committee in October, with responses to the consultation being reported to that Committee on 15 January 1998. Comments on the framework had been set out in the agenda. In addition to the general comments on the overall accessibility for people with disabilities, specific comments related to transport; traffic management and parking; the pedestrian environment; mixed uses; and public spaces. The Committee endorsed these comments.

In the course of the discussion, reference was made to the provision of parking spaces for people with disabilities, in particular those people using high vehicles which could not generally access multi-storey car parks in Bracknell Town Centre.

AGREED that the comments contained in Appendix 1 of Item 7 of the agenda be forwarded to the Borough Planning Officer as a response from the Access Committee on the consultation report.

84. **Disability Discrimination Act 1995 - The Government's Proposals for Taxis**

The Department of the Environment, Transport and the Regions had issued an informal consultation document on the implementation of provisions of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 in relation to taxis. The Committee was advised that the Council's Hackney Carriage Sub Committee had made a response to the consultation on behalf of the Council. The response covered various aspects of the accessibility provisions for taxis, but concentrated on the dimensions for entry to the vehicle and the specifications for steps, seats, wheelchairs and leg room. The Committee noted the response of the Hackney Carriage Sub Committee to the Government consultation paper.

85. Access Committee Training

Bracknell Users Group requested a discussion on training for members of the Access Committee on participation at its meetings. Members of the Committee considered that it would be useful to undergo such training and it was agreed that training would be pursued. Members of the Committee were requested to indicate if they were interested in participating in any training.

The Committee also discussed the format and venue of meetings of the Committee and it was agreed that further consideration would be given to this matter.

86. Integrated Transport Policy - Consultation

The Access and Mobility Officer reported that the Council had been consulted by the Government on a document entitled "Developing an Integrated Transport Policy", which invited ideas and views on a broad range of transport issues. A response to the document had been made on behalf of the Council by the Integrated Transport Focus Group on 5 November in relation to accessibility three questions had been posed: How can we best promote the transport needs of disabled people? How can we best take account of the transport and accessibility needs of all sectors of society, including the young and the elderly? How can we best take account of the differing accessibility needs of urban and rural communities? The Access Committee noted the responses to these questions, but in relation to the second question it was agreed that an additional sentence should be included highlighting the fact that the transportation and accessibility needs of elderly people were generally not being met.

Members of the Committee also discussed the bus pass scheme operated by Beeline and the taxi token scheme operated by Wokingham District Council. The Committee also discussed accessibility to buses in general, and members acknowledged that low floor buses were operating the park and ride service in Reading. The Access and Mobility Officer agreed to take up some of the points raised by members.

87. South Hill Park

The Chairman advised that the determination of the application for funds from the National Lottery for South Hill Park was due within the following two weeks. He stated that the national allocation of funding had been reduced from £236 million to £100 million. On this basis he was not optimistic of the scheme proceeding.

88. Launch of Designing for Accessibility

The Access and Mobility Officer reminded Members of the Committee that the launch of the document entitled Designing for Accessibility would be held at 12.30pm on Thursday 4 December 1997, on the fourth floor of Time Square, Market Street, Bracknell.

The meeting commenced at 7.30pm and concluded at 9.25pm.

CHAIRMAN