

**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.