

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

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