

Disability Liaison Group

Wednesday, 28 March 2007

Present:

Chorley Borough Councillors:

Councillor David Dickinson (Chair) and Councillors Daniel Gee, Mrs Marie Gray, Catherine Hoyle, Miss June Molyneaux, Rosemary Russell, Mrs Iris Smith and Ralph Snape

Chorley Borough Council Officers:

Gary Hall (Director of Finance), Lesley-Ann Fenton (Director of Policy and Performance), Margaret Stansfield (Compliance Manager), Sarah Dobson (Performance Advisor - Corporate and Customer), Paula Fodor (District Partnership Officer), Elaine Knott (Engineering Services, LCC) and Ruth Hawes (Democratic Services Officer)

Disability Forum Representatives:

Eileen Bee (Disability Forum Co-Ordinator), Terence Reynolds (Disability Forum Vice-Chairman), Mr Coxhead (Disability Forum), Judy Daniels (Disability Forum), Alison Hansford (Disability Forum) and Maureen Kay (Deaf and Disability Forum)

Sign Language Interpreter:

Val Hall (Interpreter)

Also in attendance:

Sergeant Adrian Beardmore, PC Alison Bleasdale and PCSO Ray Chadwick

07.DLG.01 WELCOME BY THE CHAIR

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting and introduced the officers in attendance.

07.DLG.02 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Ivy Carroll, Alan Capstick, Steven Cross, Albert and Rita Jeffrey, Devi Nicholson, Maurice Waterhouse, Councillor Stella Walsh and Clive Yates.

07.DLG.03 DECLARATIONS OF ANY INTERESTS

None of the Members declared any interest in relation to matters under consideration at the meeting.

07.DLG.04 MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting of the Disability Liaison Group held on 15 November 2006 were confirmed as a correct record.

Councillor Snape welcomed news that there would be provision for toilets at Chorley Library. It was noted that letters had been sent to all of the County Councillors.

07.DLG.05 WELCOME TO THE POLICE

The Chair welcomed Sergeant Adrian Beardmore to the meeting. Sergeant Beardmore reported that he held the responsibility for dealing with disability issues across the district. Sergeant Beardmore introduced PC Alison Bleasdale and PCSO Ray Chadwick from the Chorley team.

It was agreed that the Democratic Services officer forward up to date contact details to all members of the Disability Liaison Group and Borough Councillors after the elections.

It was confirmed that there was a text phone in the Communications Room. It was noted that the Community Beat Managers could text and most officers have email addresses.

The Group discussed the arrangements for contacting the Police at night. Most Stations were not open at night, at some there was an intercom. The best form of contact was to call the emergency number, although this was not an option for deaf people.

Officers were being training in sign language and there were four officers who were trained to level two.

The type talk emergency procedure is as follows:

Text phone user dials the TYPETALK 18000 freephone emergency number.

The call is answered by the TYPETALK emergency operator who will verify callers details. The TYPETALK operator will request details of emergency service required and will dial 999 on behalf of the Textphone user. The call will also be connected to BTs operator assistance centre in Warrington.

The minicom number is 0845 1 25 35 45.

07.DLG.06 BENEFITS TAKE-UP STRATEGY

The Group welcomed Margaret Stansfield from the Council's Revenues and Benefits section.

Margaret gave feedback on actions arising from the last meeting. A mailshot had been sent out to publicise the benefits calculator on the website. A bookmark was distributed with the contact details for the section.

The Council would be launching a new website in April, this would include the functionality to change the font sizes and the use of screen readers. The Communications Manager would be invited to a future meeting to discuss the new website.

An additional section had been added to the scripts used within the Contact Centre to highlight that information could be distributed in large print and in various languages if requested. A new form was in the process of being drafted relating to the two adult rebate.

When a new claim was made home visits were offered and assistance would be given to complete the claim forms.

It was noted that the Benefits take-up strategy would be presented to Members shortly. Further updates would be presented to the Group.

The Group thanked Margaret for her attendance.

07.DLG.07 UPDATE ON CHORLEY REGISTRY OFFICE

Cindy Lowthian updated the Group on the Chorley Registry office. Plans were under consideration by the County Council relating to a new facility. County officers would be working closely with Chorley Borough officers. Further information would be presented to the Group in the future as part of the consultation process.

07.DLG.08 UPDATE ON THE EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ACTION PLAN

Sarah Dobson updated the Group on the Equality and Diversity Action Plan.

Key developments included reviewing the complaints procedure to identify any trends, developing a consultation strategy to ensure consultation is effective and reviewing the training given relating to Equality and Diversity. If there were any members of the Group that wished to get involved in the training aspect they were requested to contact Sarah.

There was a loop system used for the Community Forums and the system was under review for the meeting rooms at the Town Hall. A review would shortly be undertaken of the Polling Stations in the Borough. Further information would be presented to the Group on this issue for feedback.

Chorley Community Housing had now taken over responsibility for the housing stock. Steps would be taken to ensure tenants received the same levels of customer service.

Equality and Diversity was the subject of an ongoing Overview and Scrutiny Inquiry, the recommendations of this Inquiry would be brought to a future meeting. Regular updates on the Equality and Diversity Action Plan would be presented to the Group.

07.DLG.09 ONGOING ISSUES

The Group considered a schedule listing issues that have been considered at past meetings of the Liaison Group and summarising the action that has either been taken or proposed by Officers. The following points were discussed:

Dropped Kerbs

It was noted that the officer who held the budget for dropped kerbs at Lancashire County Council was Terry Fredericks.

Road Crossings

It was reported that there were discussions ongoing relating to a scheme at the front of the Town Hall, Saint Thomas Road and Market Street. It was noted that this issue needed to be resolved as the road crossing provision at the junction of Saint Thomas Road and Market Street was not adequate. Further information would be provided to the Group when a draft plan had been agreed.

Other Issues

The Group discussed the problems caused by A boards in Chorley Town Centre obstructing footpaths. The problem was made worse by cars parked on the area as guide dogs follow the pavement or the shop line. The area of Market Walk did not cause a problem as the area for people to walk was clearly marked.

This would be highlighted in the newsletter distributed to Town Centre traders by the Communications Team and to the Town Centre Manager. The Council's economic development officer would be invited to a future meeting to discuss the town centre audit.

07.DLG.10 UPDATE ON DISABILITY AWARENESS DAY

Eileen Bee updated the Group on the plans for the Disability Awareness Day. The event would be held on 3 and 4 August on Market Street and Fazackerley Street between 11 and 3. There would be stalls from both voluntary and statutory organisations and a range of entertainment and displays.

There were plans to launch the event in the Lancastrian. The Group would be kept informed of the plans at each meeting.

07.DLG.11 ANY OTHER ITEM(S) THAT THE CHAIR DECIDES IS/ARE URGENT

The Group noted that there were now six hackney carriages suitable for wheelchairs. Eileen had been involved in the interview process for the licenses and this had been a really positive step forward.

It was noted that the lift in Chorley Library was not reliable. Members of staff at the Library would assist people in using the lift if requested.

07.DLG.12 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The Group noted that the next meeting was scheduled for 18 April. This was closer than usual due to the date of this meeting being changed.

It was agreed to use the meeting to review the role and function of the Group.

Chair