

Disability Liaison Group

Wednesday, 10 October 2007

Present:

Chorley Borough Councillors:

Councillor David Dickinson (Chair) and Councillors Rosie Russell and Iris Smith

Chorley Borough and Lancashire County Council Officers:

Gary Hall (Director of Finance), Tim Murphy (Corporate Director of Information and Communication Technology), Sarah Dobson (Performance Advisor - Corporate and Customer), Louise Cunniffe (Senior Communications Officer) and Ruth Hawes (Assistant Democratic Services Officer)

Disability Forum Representatives:

Terence Reynolds (Disability Forum Chairman), Julia Berry, Jim Cochrane (Chorley and South Ribble Branch - Parkinsons Disease Society), Elspeth Cochrane (Chorley and South Ribble Branch - Parkinsons Disease Society), Christine Crankshaw (Galloway's Society for the Blind), Judy Daniels (Disability Forum), Maureen Kay (Deaf and Disability Forum), Marilyn Porter, Hayley Scholes (Rainbow House) and Frank Stringfellow (Chorley Deaf Club)

Sign Language Interpreter:

Kath Mowe (BSL Interpreter) and Catherine Moxon (BSL Interpreter)

Also in attendance:

Sergeant Adrian Beardmore and PCSO Ray Chadwick

07.DLG.15 WELCOME BY THE CHAIR

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting. People present introduced themselves and their role at the meeting.

07.DLG.16 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Councillors Nora Ball, Cath Hoyle, Ralph Snape, Eileen Bee, Alan Capstick, Ivy Carroll, Lesley-Ann Fenton, Albert and Rita Jeffrey, Brian Kelly, David Lyon, Peter Mounsey, Devi Nicholson and Maurice Waterhouse.

07.DLG.17 DECLARATIONS OF ANY INTERESTS (COUNCILLORS ONLY)

No Councillors declared an interest in relation to matters under consideration at the meeting.

07.DLG.18 MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting of the Disability Liaison Group held on 11 July 2007 were confirmed as a correct record, subject to the inclusion of apologies for absence from Councillor Nora Ball.

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 is proposed by Officers.

The following points were discussed:

- The dropped kerb at Millbrook Close in Wheelton has been completed. There has been an issue of cars parking on Millbrook Close in Wheelton – this would be raised with the Parking Manager.
- It was queried whether the toilets should be open on Coronation Recreation Ground – this would be queried with officers.
- An update was requested on the ongoing queries with Chorley Railway Station. The Assistant Chief Executive would chase this up again.
- Disabled access to the Lancastrian stage was discussed. Officers explained that there had unfortunately been delays in the Council signing a contract with Liberata regarding the provision of property services. This had recently been signed and an update would be presented to the next meeting.
- It was noted that the route of the bus service 114 had changed. Officers undertook to investigate this.

07.DLG.19 COMMUNITY COHESION STRATEGY

Sarah updated the Group on the Council's Community Cohesion Strategy. The strategy aims to set out the challenges and opportunities facing the Borough in terms of Community Cohesion. Members of the group were asked to take away the strategy and respond to the consultation by the 20 December 2007.

Further information on this was available from Sarah. It was noted that the document had been forwarded to Eileen Bee at the Disability Forum.

07.DLG.20 FOCUS GROUP ON THE CHORLEY COUNCIL WEBSITE

Tim Murphy and Louise Cuniffe advised the Group that the Council's website had been relaunched in April. The purpose of this item was to gauge opinion about what currently works well in terms of accessibility on the website and what improvements the Group would like to see made.

Improvements to the website included adjusting the text size, submitting planning applications and applying for benefits online. Further suggested improvements by the Group included increasing the font size of text of the largest text size option and improving the text only option as at the moment it just removes the graphics.

It was noted that on the Disability Rights Commission site there was a Sign Language interpreter as the majority of adult deaf people don't read English very well and can find grammar confusing. A minimum of level 4 was needed for interpreters; Co-sign was used to provide interpreters for the meeting and could be a useful contact for this. This was needed for deaf people to undertake transactions on the web site.

The following websites were noted as being excellent: www.actionforblindpeople.org.uk and www.guidedogs.org.uk.

It was agreed that a Focus Group be set up to consider improvements to the Council's website, Maureen and Judith volunteered to get involved. It was suggested that contact be made with the PCT on this issue.

07.DLG.21 DISCUSSION ON COUNCIL LITERATURE

Louise Cunniffe distributed some mock ups of letter headed papers, complement slips and business cards.

It was noted that the text size needed to be at least 14 for visually impaired people and the contrast of the colours used could be improved. The strapline on correspondence was noted. It was requested that the fax number be added to the information.

07.DLG.22 PROGRESS UPDATES ON YARROW VALLEY COUNTRY PARK AND CHORLEY LEISURE SERVICES INCLUSIVE FITNESS INITIATIVE

Sarah reported that there had been improvements made to Yarrow Valley Country Park, including an accessible viewing platform.

Community Leisure Services manage the leisure centres in the Borough and were running all inclusive fitness awards. For information the website is www.clschorley.co.uk.

It was noted that if use of facilities was prescribed by a doctor payment would have to be made if the doctor was outside the Chorley area. This would taken up with the Corporate Director (People) and the PCT.

07.DLG.23 UPDATE ON THE PAVEMENT CAFE DESIGN AND LICENSE GUIDE

Sarah reported that the Council had now adopted the Guide, considered at the last meeting. The comments of the Group had been incorporated into the Guide, including the need for consultation on licence applications.

Establishments with pavement cafes will have to apply for a licence, enforcement action will be taken by the council where required. It would be clarified whether A-boards were included in this policy. Obstructions on pavements for people with visual impairments were dangerous and inconsiderate.

A copy of the adopted Guide is enclosed with the minutes.

07.DLG.24 REVIEW OF POLLING DISTRICTS/POLLING PLACES - POINT OF INFORMATION FOR THE GROUP

Ruth reported that there was a requirement to carry out a review of Polling Districts/Polling Places every 4 years with the first review to be completed by 31 December 2007.

This was primarily a review of polling premises and locations to access their geographical location suitability within the polling district concerned and the suitability of the premises themselves for such things as disabled access and other access/usage issues.

The review continues until 9th November 2007 and further information can be found for downloading at www.chorley.gov.uk/pollingstations. For more specific details and/or a hard copies of any of the above please contact Phil Davies in Democratic Services on 01257 515131 or via e-mail on elections@chorley.gov.uk.

It was highlighted that forms, in particular requests for a postal vote, were confusing and should be written in a clear way. This would be fed back to the Elections Office.

07.DLG.25 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

9 January 2008

07.DLG.26 ITEMS FOR THE NEXT AGENDA

It was noted that there were regular patrols through Astley Park including the blind garden to combat antisocial behaviour and vandalism.

The Group discussed items for the next meeting, including an update on changes to the Housing Benefits.

Chair