

Disability Liaison Group

Wednesday, 18 April 2007

Present:

Chorley Borough Councillors:

Councillor David Dickinson (Chair) and Councillors Rosemary Russell and Ralph Snape

Chorley Borough Council Officers:

Gary Hall (Director of Finance), Lesley-Ann Fenton (Director of Policy and Performance), Sarah Dobson (Performance Advisor - Corporate and Customer), Paula Fodor (District Partnership Officer) 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), Maureen Kay (Deaf and Disability Forum) and Sergeant Adrian Beardmore

Sign Language Interpreter:

Val Hall (Interpreter)

07.DLG.01 WELCOME BY THE CHAIR

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

07.DLG.02 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Councillors Danny Gee, Marie Gray, Cath Hoyle, June Molyneaux, Iris Smith and Stella Walsh, also Margaret Stansfield, Alan Capstick, Elaine Knott, Nancy Banks, Ivy Carroll, Harold Rimmer and Maurice Waterhouse.

07.DLG.03 DECLARATIONS OF ANY INTERESTS (FOR COUNCILLORS ONLY)

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

07.DLG.04 DISCUSSION ON THE WAY FORWARD FOR THE GROUP

Sarah explained that this discussion item aimed to highlight good things that the Group achieved, things that needed to be addressed and any suggestions for the future.

The Group highlighted the following points:

Good

The involvement of the Group in scrutiny inquiries, such as the One Stop Shop, had resulted in positive changes.

The involvement of the Forum in determining licenses for hackney carriages had ensured disability issues were properly considered.

Bad

There were ongoing issues with Chorley Railway station, in particular the edging contrast needed on the steps to the underpass.

For future consideration

In the past there had been a sub group that made comments on Planning Applications that affected public places. The sub discussed practical issues, such as signage, that were outside the remit of planning law. Input from the group with Town Hall and Union Street building works had been really positive. It was agreed that this sub group be started again and report back to main group. This sub could link in to a Planning Forum that the Development and Regeneration Directorate were setting up.

It was suggested that the Group be involved in equality and diversity training for Chorley Council officers and Councillors. Members of the Group would need adequate notice of sessions. There was potential to involve other agencies in the developing training program.

There is a need to ask children more about what they need and want and to get them involved.

The ability to select different font sizes on the Council's new website was good, there were plans to make use of screen readers in the future. The level of English on the site was not suitable for deaf people and it was suggested that a sign language interpreter be available in the corner of the screen like the Lancashire County Council web site.

It would be helpful to have an agreed definition of consultation and reasonable timescales for responses. There was a feeling that the consultation relating to Astley Park had not been effective.

The Group discussed general headings,

Transport,

Access and Accessibility: e.g. road crossings.

Town Centre review: the Town Centre Strategy and rural areas,

Information: needs to be clear from business and service providers.

Street furniture: refuse, bins, bollards, A-boards causing obstructions.

Parking: e.g. on pavements. (There is a useful project report on guidedogs.co.uk).

Crossings: e.g. St Thomas' Road outside Town Hall (this is being looked at) crossings on corners are difficult for deaf people.

The Group discussed widening the representation and membership, to include organizations such as Dial a Ride, the Local Strategic Partnership, Chorley Widcats etc. It was agreed that officers would write out to organizations to invite them to the meeting. It was noted that if the numbers increased Committee Room 1 would not be large enough, this would be kept under review.

It was agreed to create some guidance for officers who came to the meeting including not using jargon, the provision of handouts with one slide per page and how to use a BSL interpreter.

It was agreed to limit the number of presentations/topics to two per meeting. The start time was considered and a trial period of starting at 7pm was agreed, this would need to be reviewed for the meetings in the winter. It was noted that sandwiches were no longer provided at the start of the meeting.

The creation of a work program was considered. The program would be updated at the end of each meeting to determine the agenda items for the next meeting. The program would be drafted based on the information collected at this meeting. It was important that the meeting be action focussed.

07.DLG.05 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of the Group would be Wednesday 11 July 2007 commencing at 7 pm.

Chair