

Time commenced : 6.30 pm
Time finished : 8.35 pm

DISABLED PEOPLE'S DIVERSITY FORUM
(formerly Disabled People's Advisory Committee)
2 NOVEMBER 2006

Present: Councillor Turner (in the Chair)
Councillors Harbon, Rawson, Troup and Webb

Representing groups

Martin Austen – Freedom Forum
Judi Bateman – DCIL
Beverly Bowman – Derby Shop Mobility
Pat Fletcher – DCIL
Trevor Ford – D H Forum
Marta Hancock – Disability Direct
Alison Hicking – Derby Deaf Forum
Amarjit Raju – Disability Direct
George Sanders - CamTAD
Roy Taylor – Derbyshire Association for the Blind

City Council Advisors

Andrew Auld – Corporate & Adult Social Services
Nicki Johnson – Derby City Council Deaf Arts Officer
Pam Thompson – Consultation Support Officer
Sarah Turner – Constitutional Services Officer
Pauline Vernon – Note taker for Derby Arts Officer
Mick Watts – Regeneration & Community
Ann Webster – Equality Standard Project Manager
John Wilcox – Corporate & Adult Social Services

Also Present

John Emery – BSL Interpreter
Mary Walters – BSL Interpreter

29/06 Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Chera and Liversedge, Andrew Findley – Derby Access Group, Maurice Kilminster – Derby Osteoporosis Group, Nancy Pountain – Derby Access Group, Pat Taylor – Derbyshire Association for the Blind and Edith Storer – EMASH.

30/06 Late Items Introduced by the Chair

The Chair introduced the following late item for discussion by the Forum:

Visual Impairment Leaflet

31/06 Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

32/06 Minutes of the Previous Meeting

The Minutes of the meeting held on 21 September 2006 were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

33/06 DPAC Project Group Minutes – 2 October 2006

The Forum considered the minutes of the DPAC Project Group held on 2 October 2006.

Mick Watts – Access Officer, advised the Forum that the issue regarding cycling on St Peter's Street had been discussed at the Environment Commission and the Environment Commission had asked to reconsider this issue as a retrospective scrutiny item. A report was being prepared by officers for the Commission. Mick Watts advised that he would keep the Forum updated of any progress on this issue

Resolved to note the minutes

34/06 Loop System at the Crematorium

George Sanders from CamTAD advised the Forum that he attended a funeral recently and the Loop system was not working. He mentioned it to the Funeral Director and it was reported to the Crematorium. By the time he got home there had been a call from the Crematorium and the Council and he was advised that the system was checked yearly. George reported that he advised the Council of a piece of test equipment that they could use to test the system on a more regular basis and this piece of equipment was ordered and used on the crematorium equipment. He was glad that the Council and the Crematorium had taken his comments on board. The Crematorium needed to ensure that this was still working and switched on at all times. Councillor Webb added that he thought that this testing equipment should be used across the Council for all Loop systems. Mick Watts commented that the Council had an annual maintenance contract for all Loop systems but this piece of equipment could be used for more regular checks. He would speak to maintenance colleagues to see if they were able to purchase this piece of equipment. Alison Hicking added that if the Crematorium changed to an infrared system there would be no interference from other rooms.

Resolved to ask Mick Watts – Access Officer, to contact maintenance colleagues regarding testing of the Loop system and the Crematorium about the interface of the system with music.

35/06 New Forum Working Arrangements

The Forum considered draft working arrangements for the Disabled People's Diversity Forum that would take effect from 1 February 2007. Pam Thompson – Consultation Support Officer, advised that a sub-group of the Disabled People's Advisory Committee had met to discuss the working arrangements of the Forum. If agreed, the working arrangements would be presented to Full Council in January 2007 along with the working arrangements of the other two forums and, subject to approval, would be implemented soon after.

Resolved to approve the draft working arrangements for the Disabled People's Diversity Forum

36/06 Blue Badges

Beverley Bowman from Shop Mobility provided members of the Forum with two booklets regarding the Blue Badge scheme. She advised that she had been checking the validity of Blue Badges at different places in the city. She hoped that the Council could find a way to educate the public as to why disabled people needed to use disabled people's parking spaces. She commented that Forum members should take the serial number of any badge if there was any doubt as to the validity of the person using it.

Beverley had spoken with Sainsbury's at the Wyvern and Kingsway and with Tesco's and each store manager was very committed to preserving Blue Badge spaces for disabled people and they systematically checked usage. All store managers were very interested that Derby were looking at the Blue Badge problem and were interested in helping.

John Wilcox – Support Services Manager, advised that the Council took the abuse of the blue badge system very seriously but unfortunately the Council could only enforce on the highway. He was interested and pleased to see that some supermarkets were enforcing a fining system of their own and it would be good if all supermarkets did something similar. He advised that all new applications and all renewals for blue badges were provided with information of fines if the system was abused. He was currently speaking with Parking Services on how the Council could reduce and enforce the abuse. He advised that the abuse was very hard to manage but they did get a lot of people ringing in anonymously but unless there was absolute proof the Council could not do anything. If proof was given individuals would be written to.

John advised that Parking Attendants were out regularly enforcing more rigorously than ever before. Everyone had a responsibility to make sure the scheme was a success. Officers had noticed a difference in how people parked in the city but it would take a while for it to improve significantly.

Ann Webster advised that there was an issue with traffic on The Spot near Babington Lane as bollards were not being put up each day which meant traffic was travelling both ways down Babington Lane towards The Spot and vice versa. There used to be a sign that said 'No Traffic Except Blue Badge Holders' but this didn't seem to be there anymore. Mick advised that the Council had a duty to ensure that signs were appropriate in all areas and that he would look into this issue.

37/06 Deaf Forum

Alison Hicking reported that the Forum were moving on issues linked to the Gold Card bus pass and she had tried to contact Derbyshire County Council as they ran the Gold Card scheme and the Deaf Forum were hoping that Derbyshire County Council would send a representative to the next Deaf Forum meeting.

Mick Watts suggested that the Forum could invite a Gold Card scheme colleague from the City and County Council and a representative from the bus companies to a project group meeting or a future meeting of this Forum.

Andrew Auld advised that he would also pick this issue up with the County as they produced the printed information about the Gold Card. Ann Webster asked if the County could be persuaded to produce the information in the City Council's corporate style.

38/06 Derby and Derbyshire Local Access Forum Update

Judy Bateman advised members that the annual general meeting was recently held where officers from the City and County Council updated their members on the progress of the draft Rights of Way Improvement plans. The next meeting will be held on Friday 8 December at Derbyshire County Council, venue to be arranged. She reminded members that these were public meetings.

39/06 Independent Members for School Admissions and Exclusions Appeals

The Forum received a report regarding the difficulties Derby City Council were having in appointing independent members for school admissions and exclusions appeals and asked the community groups to encourage possible members to put their names forward.

Resolved to note the report

40/06 Cityscape

Members of the Forum that had attended a recent meeting with Cityscape gave feedback to the Forum. Members were concerned that at the meeting Cityscape was considering using furniture that would not be welcomed by disabled people. This issue had been discussed with Cityscape previously and members felt that Cityscape were just going through the motions and were not listening to the views of disabled people or other groups in the city. A member of the Forum advised that Cityscape seemed keen to do something innovative and keen to promote themselves but were not looking at the needs of disabled people. Councillor Turner advised that he had formed the same impression although he did want to emphasise the importance of Cityscape to the city and that members should value this but there were definitely a lot of things that did need to change.

Andrew Auld responded that the Consultation Support team had supported Cityscape in producing and planning for their consultation and the team had advised strongly to consult with the Disabled People's Diversity Forum and he was disappointed to hear the feedback and comments from members of the Forum. He advised that he would discuss the Council's consultation strategy that was agreed recently with Cityscape and advise them that they needed to actively consider the comments received. He suggested inviting someone from Cityscape to the next meeting to discuss how they could consult effectively with disabled people. Councillor Webb added that he thought the consultation period with Cityscape was now over but he felt that Cityscape would benefit from talking to the QUAD project team who had got the consultation process right.

Members of the Forum felt that Cityscape needed Equality Disability training and felt that Cityscape did not take on board the visually impaired people's need for colour. Member's were also concerned over the detail of the project.

Mick Watts advised the Forum that the Council had not formally commented on the draft strategy and that he was on a working group formulating a response for members to consider. He had articulated many issues raised by members of the Forum and he supported them. He would ensure that these issues and comments were brought out in the document. There will be further opportunity for the Council to have input into the process when looking at the detail of elements of the project.

Andrew Auld added that involving disabled people was a very positive process and Cityscape needed to realise this. Marta Hancock commented that she was concerned that a lot of effort had been put into Connecting Derby and that it had been for nothing. She felt that the same thing was going to happen to Cityscape. Beverley Bowman added that this Forum should be able to advise on new projects and suggested that it would be useful for Cityscape to work or liaise with disabled people in the city. There has been a very proactive group involved with QUAD and it was felt that a very proactive group could be involved with Cityscape.

41/06 A-Boards Update

The Forum considered a report from the Corporate Director of Regeneration & Community regarding the control of advertising boards – A-Boards. The report sought Forum members' views on the suggestions by some Trader representatives to adopt a guideline approach to the control of A-Boards. If a guideline approach were to be trialled it could perhaps be introduced relatively quickly and rolled out street by street in the city centre over a six month period. Its effectiveness could then be monitored over 12 months. If the trial proved not to have significantly reduced the number of A-Boards further measures could then be considered.

Mick Watts – Access Officer, advised that although this was not a zero-tolerance approach it would make a significant improvement to the number of A-Boards in the city. Judi Bateman advised that she had discussed this issue with the Derby Access Group and they were unanimous that a zero-tolerance approach was their preference but they would sooner see a guideline approach than none at all. Roy Taylor – Derby Association for the Blind, advised that his group wanted to see a zero-tolerance approach to A-Boards in the city. The Forum felt that it would take as much effort to enforce a zero-tolerance approach as it would a guideline approach and the Forum still believed that a zero-tolerance approach was the way to approach the issue of A-Boards on the highway.

Resolved to affirm the Forum's view that a zero-tolerance approach to A-Boards on the highway should be agreed and not a guideline approach

42/06 International Day of Disabled People

The Forum received an update on the arrangements for the International Day of Disabled People.

Resolved to note the update

43/06 Work Programme

The Forum received an update of the work programme for 2006/07.

Resolved to note the update

44/06 Issues raised by members of the Forum

The Forum members raised the following issues during the meeting:

Lancaster Sports Centre

Roy Taylor on behalf of the Derbyshire Association for the Blind asked, following the closure of the Lancaster Sports Centre, had provision been made elsewhere.

Andrew Auld responded that he would check and report back to the next meeting as he felt that provision had now been made at Queen's Leisure Centre.

National Scheme for the Visually Impaired

Roy Taylor on behalf of the Derbyshire Association for the Blind advised that there was a national scheme saying that local authorities should produce and provide information to opticians and the Council had not yet produced this information.

Resolved to invite the Sensory team to a future meeting of the Forum

Chair of the next ensuing meeting of this Committee
at which these Minutes were signed