

Time commenced : 6.30 pm
Time finished : 8.20 pm

DISABLED PEOPLE'S ADVISORY COMMITTEE 5 FEBRUARY 2004

Present: Councillor Webb (in the Chair)
Councillors Chera, H S Dhamrait and Troup

Representing Groups

Alison Hicking – Derby Deaf Forum
Amarjit Raju – Disability Direct
Martin Austin – Freedom Forum
Edith Storer – EMASH
Nancy Pountain – Derby Access Group
Pat Fletcher – Derbyshire Coalition for Inclusive Living
Trevor Ford – Derwent Housing Association
George Sanders – CAMTAD
Marta Hancock – Disability Direct

John Emery – Interpreter, Communications Unlimited

City Council Advisors

Julie Basford – Property Review Officer, Corporate Services
Paul Dransfield – Director of Finance
Barbara Hillier – Policy and Procedures Officer, Social Services
John Holdridge – Best Value Implementation Manager, Social Services
Chris Newbold – Senior Health and Safety Advisor, Commercial Services
Yvonne Pearson - Project Manager Carers and Disabled People's Employment, Social Services
Gordon Stirling – Building for Excellence Programme Manager, Finance
Sarah Turner - Members Services Officer, Corporate Services
Mick Watts – Access Officer, Development and Cultural Services
Ann Webster – Equalities Advisor, Policy Directorate

38/03 Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Maurice Kilminster – Derby City Osteoporosis Group, Sarah Fletcher – Derby Access Group, Linda Lucas – Derbyshire Coalition for Inclusive Living, Pat Taylor – Derbyshire Association for the Blind and Muzar Syed –Head of Equalities, Policy Directorate.

39/03 Late Items Introduced by the Chair

There were no late items.

40/03 Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

41/03 Minutes of the Previous Meeting

The Minutes of the meeting held on 13 November 2003 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

42/03 Minutes of the Disabled Peoples Advisory Committee – Highway, Transportation and Development Focus Group 13 October and 11 December 2003

Nancy Pountain advised that the handrail on the Alvaston Bypass Bridge had been replaced, but access along Green Lane, at Alvaston was difficult due to footpath condition and flooding problems. Nancy also advised that the refuge guarding on the crossing at Alvaston District Centre was still held on by a piece of rope. Mick Watts, Access Officer, advised that he would investigate and report back to the next meeting.

Resolved to note the minutes.

43/03 Draft Revenue Budget 2004/05 to 2006/07

Paul Dransfield, Director of Finance, presented the Council's priorities and the Budget Proposals for 2004/05. In the presentation, the following issues were covered:

Priorities For Action - the Council was proposing ten priority areas where the Council wanted to significantly improve its performance, by instituting new ways of working and/or additional spending where required. The Priorities were in order of importance, starting with what the Council currently thought were the most important.

The Top Ten Priorities were:

1. Limit increases in Council Tax and improve value for money from Council services.
2. Improving customer service, including using new technology and investing in better buildings to provide our services from.
3. Promoting the city as a centre of industry, commerce, culture and tourism.
4. Improving management of the city and district centres, making them more attractive to residents and visitors.

5. Improve road and other transport links to remove traffic from city centre streets, as part of "Connecting Derby".
6. Help under-achieving schools improve their performance.
7. Improve the Council's fostering service for children in care and improve residential and community services for adults.
8. Increase recycling facilities, including at the point of collection from homes.
9. Speed up the process of deciding planning applications, maintaining good quality decision making.
10. Develop the leadership role of the Council, both a regional and local level to express the views of local people and work in partnership with other organisations.

The presentation also included the Revenue Budget 2004/05, the current budget for 2003/04, compared with the proposed budget for 2004/05 and a comparison of Council taxes. On budget submissions, the main issues, Council tax implications and timetable were set out.

A member of the Committee asked why there was no mention of issues relating to disabled people, particularly the DDA reasonable adjustment duties, which would come into force in October this year. Paul Dransfield advised that this was part of the Capital Programme and the minimum amount requested for this was £150,000. Mick Watts advised that as this was part of Capital funding it was not included of the revenue budget. He would advise the Committee of the outcome of the bid for funding at a future meeting.

A Member of the Committee stated that they would have appreciated the Council Tax increase to be kept in line with inflation. Councillor Webb responded that if the Council Tax were kept at the rate of inflation would have resulted in a serious cut in services. A member of the Committee stated that in the Conservative Manifesto last year, it was promised that the increase in the Council Tax for 2004-05 would be kept at the rate of inflation. Councillor Webb responded that the current administration was a Liberal Democrat / Conservative Alliance and although each party had their own priorities they had to work together and they considered this a fair increase at this time.

A Member of the Committee stated that they did not see the benefit of the proposed reduction in football pitches in Derby and the proposed increase in Youth Shelters. This seemed to be a case of removing one service for young people with another, which was a waste of Council resources.

Resolved

- 1. to note the report**
- 2. to ask Council Cabinet to consider the comments of the Committee.**

44/03 Summary of the Towards Work Disability Partnership

Yvonne Pearson presented the Committee with a report updating them on the progress of the Towards Work Disability Partnership.

No Limits Employers Network on Disability

The Committee were advised that the Jobs Fair had been postponed due to lack of capacity for organising it at Jobcentre plus. Yvonne had asked if they could attend the Jobcentre Plus mainstream jobs fair. Hopefully now the situation would improve. This jobs fair would go forward in the autumn.

Access to Wardwick Jobcentre plus for BSL users

The videophone was being installed and Communications Unlimited had been employed to access the videophone. Alison Hicking would be meeting with Jobcentre Plus to discuss how the service would be promoted.

Resolved to note the report.

45/03 Presentation on Visit to Osnabrück

The Committee received a presentation from Amarjit Raju and Alison Hicking about their visit to Osnabrück in November with Pat Taylor, arranged by Osnabrück to celebrate the European Year of Disabled People. There were also disabled people from Angers in France, Haarlem in the Netherlands and Twer in Russia. The event lasted for 3 days. During the visit delegates went to an event at the Stadthalle, which was inaccessible to disabled people in wheel chairs and a reception in the Friedenssaal, which was also inaccessible to wheel chair users. They also went on a visit to the Sutthausen Werkstatt, this workshop was a day service scheme for 500 disabled people. In the factory workshop disabled people were making parts for Mercedes, Audi, BMW and Volkswagen. Alarming the people that worked here did not get paid and could work for 20 years with only a small allowance paid on top of their benefits. Delegates also visited the Ellenhorf Therapy Centre, which was similar to the Disabled Persons riding centre in Scropton. The centre did not receive any funding and relied totally on donations. On the last day members visited the Montessori School, which was a school for disabled children. The school seemed to develop children's independence, teaching them how to cook and wash. However, the head teacher was not able to advise whether any pupils continued into mainstream further education.

Generally all delegates enjoyed their visit to Osnabrück. It was quite clear that the approach to disability issues in the UK was more advanced and superior to attitudes and facilities in Europe.

46/03 Service Access Review

The Committee considered a report from the Director of Corporate Services detailing the consultation findings of the Best Value Review of Service Access.

Mick Watts commented that as part of the review a number of reception areas had been audited. The audit had identified that a number of adjustments were required, which had been included in the DDA programme for which a capital bid had been submitted.

A Member of the Committee suggested that convenient access from Council House to bus stops was an important consideration for disabled people.

Councillor Webb advised that as part of the accommodation review, the Council were investigating many new locations for offices. The provision of bus services to any new location would be considered as part of this review.

Resolved to note the report.

47/03 Draft Day Services Manual for Social Services Staff

Barbara Hillier and John Holdridge presented a report of the Director of Social Services, which set out a draft Day Services Manual for people with learning difficulties, mental ill health and older people. The Committee were invited to request sections of the manual to look at and comment on and advise on its contents and feedback their comments to Barbara and John by 5 March 2004.

Resolved to note the report.

48/03 Implementing the Disability Discrimination Act in the Commercial Services Department

The Committee considered a report of the Director of Commercial Services advising on the progress being made in Commercial Services on implementing the provisions of the Disability Discrimination Act (1995)(DDA) and the Equality Standard for Local Government.

Resolved to note the report.

49/03 Disabled Employees Network

Ann Webster advised the Committee that the Disabled Employees Network had their first meeting in December and was very well attended. An action plan would be agreed at the next meeting on 1 March 2004. The Terms of Reference was being drawn up and would be approved by the Network.

50/03 Open4all

Ann Webster advised that the deadline for the final duties for removing physical barriers under DDA was October 2004. The Council wanted to show its commitment for access for disabled people and had signed up to the Disability

Rights Commission's campaign Open 4 all. The leaders of the three political groups attended a publicity event at Lancaster Sports Centre and each of them signed up to the national campaign, Open4all. Members were encouraged to visit Lancaster Sports Centre to see and try out their new facilities for Disabled People.

MINUTES END