

ITEM 4

Time commenced : 6.30 pm
Time finished : 8.25 pm

DISABLED PEOPLE'S ADVISORY COMMITTEE 17 JUNE 2004

Present: Councillor Webb (in the Chair)
Councillor Chera

Representing Groups

Marta Hancock – Disability Direct
George Sanders – CAMTAD
Maurice Kilminster – Derby City Osteoporosis Group
Trevor Ford – Derwent Housing Association
Nancy Pountain – Derby Access Group
Pat Taylor – Derbyshire Association for the Blind

John Emery – Interpreter, Communications Unlimited

City Council Advisors

Sharhid Ashrif – Housing Equalities Adviser, Derby Homes
Sarah Burkinshaw – Consultation Support Manger, Policy Directorate
Martin Gadsby – Private Sector Housing Manager, Policy Directorate
Andrew Hopkin – Assistant Director, Environmental Health and
Trading Standards
Sharon Jackson – Corporate Customer Services Manager, Finance
John Moore – Senior Technical Officer, Derby Homes
Kate Owen – Democratic Services Manager, Corporate Services
Yvonne Pearson – Project Manager Carers and Disabled People's
Employment, Social Services, Corporate Services
Craig Scott – Environmental Projects Officer, Development and Cultural
Services
Gordon Stirling – Business Improvement and Change Manager, Finance
Pam Thompson – Consultation Support Officer, Policy Directorate
Sarah Turner - Members Services Officer, Corporate Services
Mick Watts – Access Officer, Development and Cultural Services
Ann Webster – Equality Standard Project Manager, Policy Directorate

63/03 Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Troup, Alison Hicking – Derby Deaf Forum, Sarah Fletcher – Derby Access Group, Amarjit Raju – Disability Direct, Linda Lucas – Derbyshire Coalition for Inclusive Living, Edith Storer – EMASH and Martin Austin – Freedom Forum.

64/03 Late Items Introduced by the Chair

In accordance with Section 100 (B) (4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the Chair agreed that the following item be admitted as a late item, as it needed to be considered before the next scheduled meeting of the Committee.

Update on the Repositioning of Policy Directorate Services

65/03 Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

66/03 Minutes of the Previous Meeting

The Minutes of the meeting held on 19 April 2004 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair subject to the following amendment:

Minute Number 56/03 - Derby Station Footbridge

'Marta Hancock advised that she had asked Robin Wood who was a member of the Passenger Consultative Committee to raise this issue at their next meeting.'

67/03 Update on Disabled Facilities Grants

The Committee received a verbal update on the Disabled Facilities Grants – DFG's - from Martin Gadsby, Private Sector Housing Manager. He wanted to allay concern over press coverage of adaptations and advised the Committee that the Government had redistributed DFG monies to the South East and North West of the country as it was seen that these areas were in greater need than the East Midlands. In response to this cut in funding the Council had increased the budget by £250,000, bringing the total budget to £1.4m, which was more than twice the level it was a year ago.

There were still issues with backlogs but this was much better than previous. All emergency and top priority cases were being processed without delays. However the lower priority cases were still experiencing backlogs.

68/03 Update on the Repositioning of Policy Directorate Services

The Committee received a verbal update on the repositioning of Policy Directorate Services. Sarah Burkinshaw introduced herself as the Consultation Support Manager and advised the Committee that her unit now looked after the Disabled People's Advisory Committee, the Minority Ethnic Community Advisory Committee and the Women's Advisory Committee. Pam Thompson would be directly responsible for the three Advisory Committee's Ann Webster would be the interim first point of contact for equalities issues in general.

69/03 Minutes of the Disabled Peoples Advisory Committee – Highway, Transportation and Development Focus Group 19 April 2004

Resolved to note the minutes.

70/03 Draft Public Health Strategy

A report of the Director of Corporate Services was considered, which set out a Draft City Public Health Strategy, which gave a framework for partnership working to improve health and tackle health inequalities. Andrew Hopkin gave the Committee an overview of the Strategy. He stated that the strategy would try to make people responsible for their own health. Councillor Webb asked for Members to consider if there were any disability issues that warranted being entered in to the strategy.

Resolved

- 1 To note the report.
- 2 To feedback any comments direct to Andrew Hopkin.

71/03 Draft Corporate Customer Service Strategy

A report of the Director of Corporate Services was considered, which stated that the Service Access Review, which had been completed earlier this year has recommended the development of a Customer Service Strategy for the Council. The Strategy outlined the Council's vision for customer service over the next three years. The draft strategy has been prepared and was available on the Council's website. The Strategy was being launched at the City Council's employee conference in September.

Ann Webster asked that the document include a reference to the Equalities Standard for Local Government.

Resolved to note the report.

72/03 Consultation on Council's New Environmental Policy

Craig Scott, Environmental Projects Officer, reported that the Council was reviewing its Environmental Policy and was seeking comments on what environmental issues were not addressed in the current policy and suggestions of any environmental issues, which should be included in the new policy. It was anticipated that the draft policy would be consulted upon during the autumn of 2004. A questionnaire had been prepared to seek people's views.

Mick Watts asked that the following be amended:

Page 4 – point 2 – ‘...to make sure it is diverse, pleasant, safe and **accessible.**’

Ann Webster suggested changing the title of point 9 on page 5 from Biodiversity to something more user friendly.

Resolved to note the report.

73/03 Derby Homes: Disability Discrimination Act Part III Compliance Report: Executive Summary

The Committee considered a report from the Director of Derby Homes about the progress made by Derby Homes' towards compliance with the Disability Discrimination Act. John Moore, Senior Technical Officer gave an overview of the audits being carried out to ensure Derby Home's compliance with the DDA requirements. Areas being audited were:

Local Housing Officers
Counters and Cash windows
Interview Rooms
Entrances, Approaches, Circulation Areas and Fire Exits
Sensory works
Category 2 Sheltered Schemes (Communal Areas)
Motorised Scooters
Common Rooms/Community Rooms
Park Homes Mobile Home Park
Keldholme Road Community Resource Centre

Actions plans were being drawn up to address any areas of non-compliance.

Mick Watts stated that he would discuss details raised by the Committee directly with John.

Resolved to note the report.

74/03 All Postal Elections 2004

Kate Owen, Democratic Services Manager, addressed the Committee to discuss the recent local and European all postal elections that took place on 10 June. Kate advised the Committee that the Council provided one assisted delivery point in the City at the Guildhall. The Committee had previously requested more assisted delivery points but due to the costs of running these the decision was taken to only provide one. Also a member of staff attended the Derbyshire Association for the Blind and Disability Direct for half a day each to assist and advise members on voting.

The Committee were advised that approximately 77,000 ballot packs were returned which was a 43% turnout. Over 5,000 packs were rejected before the count stage. The Council returned declaration of identities that were completed incorrectly resulting in over 600 being matched correctly.

Pat Taylor commented that many visually impaired people couldn't read the initial card that was sent out advising of the upcoming elections. The font was point 10 and it was black on white. She had written to Michael Foote, the Returning Officer,

voicing her concerns. She suggested using black on yellow and that the Council should advertise the election more on the radio and through agencies.

Kate responded that the Council did not have control over the cards that went out. The government stated what went on the cards and how big they would be. All this information would be fed back to the Electoral Commission.

Pat stated that she would like to work with the Council on the next election and would like to set up a meeting to discuss procedures for next time. Many visually impair people had been telling Pat that they had felt excluded at this election.

Councillor Webb commented that the timescale had been much too short but that the Electoral team had done an excellent job in the time they had.

Kate advised that she would be attending an evaluation meeting in Leicester and would ensure the comments of the Committee would be passed on. She was sure that other Authorities that took part in the pilot would have the same concerns.

Councillor Webb asked that any developments be reported back to the Committee at a future meeting.

75/03 Derby Station Footbridge

Mick Watts, Access Officer, advised the Committee that Derby Station was going to have a new station footbridge without lift access to the island platforms. This was very disappointing but unfortunately there was little more the Council could do. It would now be up to disabled passengers to raise any concerns they had about this issue with the rail service provider. Mick had sent the Disability Rights Commission copies of all the relevant correspondence, and representations made and would keep the committee briefed of any developments.

Councillor Webb thanked Mick for all the work he had done and thanked Marta Hancock for her work on this issue. Marta stated that she would be taking the issue up with DDA on 2 October.

76/03 Towards Work Disability Partnership

Yvonne Pearson, Project Manager Carers and Disabled People's Employment, presented a verbal report to the Committee on the progress of the Towards Work Disability Partnership.

Firstly Yvonne advised that EMDA had turned down the Council's bid for a co-ordinator for the Employees Network on Disability. Yvonne had been appointed Diversity Manager. It had been difficult getting funding because the focus of the work didn't fall easily in to the usual funding stream.

The Pathway to Work Pilot or Incapacity Pilot seemed to have really taken off attracting far higher numbers than originally anticipated. This had led to the recruitment of new job brokers – there were now 6.

Yvonne demonstrated a database that they had been developing for information advice and guidance on careers for disabled people. The database was being

developed by Disability Direct and included information on job centres, libraries and many other organisations. Yvonne wanted members of the Committee to look at the database and give their comments

Councillor Webb commented that this was an exciting presentation and he asked that members visit the site and forward comments to Disability Direct - simon@disabilitydirectderby.co.uk.

Pat Taylor stated that this was a very important tool. It could be used to identify organisations that did not have facilities for blind people.

Yvonne advised that there would be pilot viewing to check the accuracy of information on organisations held on the site. It was anticipated that the site would be launched in September.

76/03 A-Boards in the City

Pat Taylor, Derbyshire Association for the Blind - DAB, asked that the Council provide a written report about what was happening regarding the situation with A-Boards in the City. Pat advised the Committee that walking from the Cathedral up to the top of St Peter's Street there were 162 A-Boards. One of DAB's members had fallen over one and injured themselves. This was not acceptable.

Mick Watts stated that he was concerned that a visually impaired person had been injured by an A-Board. Pat commented that the Council needed to consider what action it was going to take about this issue. Pat asked, and committee agreed that a detailed report on the A-Boards issue should be presented at the next meeting.

MINUTES END