

┌ Councillors Ruhemann (Chair), ┐
Benson, Eden, Khan, Stanford-Beale,
Vickers and White

Our Ref: A&DWG 140320
Your Ref:

Direct: ☎ 0118 937 2368
e-mail: amy.bryan@reading.gov.uk

└ To All Members of the Access & ┘
Disabilities Working Group ┘

7 March 2014

Your contact is: Amy Bryan - Committee Services

**NOTICE OF MEETING - ACCESS AND DISABILITIES WORKING GROUP - THURSDAY
20 MARCH 2014**

A meeting of the Access and Disabilities Working Group will be held on **THURSDAY 20 MARCH 2014 at 2.00pm in the Kennet Room**, Civic Offices, Reading. The Agenda for the meeting is set out below.

AGENDA

	<u>PAGE NO</u>
1. WELCOME TO NEW MEMBERS AND APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE	-
2. COUNCILLORS' DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS	-
Councillors to declare any personal and prejudicial interests they may have in relation to the items on the agenda.	
3. MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 5 DECEMBER 2013	1-5

CIVIC CENTRE EMERGENCY EVACUATION: Please familiarise yourself with the emergency evacuation procedures, which are displayed inside the Council's meeting rooms. If an alarm sounds, leave by the nearest fire exit quickly and calmly and assemble at the Hexagon sign, at the start of Queen's Walk. You will be advised when it is safe to re-enter the building.

- | | | |
|-----|---|-------|
| 4. | MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES | - |
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Disabilities Pride Day • Home Care Consultation | |
| 5. | PLAZA WEST UPDATE | - |
| | Helen Bryant, Access Officer, Reading Borough Council | |
| 6. | TACKLING POVERTY IN READING | 6-14 |
| | Clare Muir, Acting Policy Manager, Reading Borough Council | |
| 7. | LETTER TO FIRST GREAT WESTERN FROM THE CHAIR | 15-16 |
| | Councillor Pete Ruhemann | |
| 8. | ROYAL BERKSHIRE HOSPITAL PARKING | - |
| | Councillor Pete Ruhemann | |
| 9. | DISABLED PEOPLE AND THE HOLOCAUST | - |
| | Helen Bryant, Access Officer, Reading Borough Council | |
| 10. | DISABLED PEOPLE LEADING INCLUSIVE COMMUNITIES | 17 |
| | Helen Bryant, Access Officer, Reading Borough Council | |
| 11. | ISSUES LIST - a look at the progress with the ongoing 'Issues List' (please see form printed at the back of the agenda papers) | 18 |
| 12. | ANY OTHER BUSINESS | - |

13. DATE AND TIME OF FUTURE MEETINGS

Dates for the meetings in the 2014-15 Municipal Year are:

Thursday 26 June 2014 at 2pm

Thursday 18 September 2014 at 2pm

Thursday 4 December 2014 at 2pm

Thursday 19 March 2015 at 2pm

MP QUESTION AND ANSWER SESSION

Alok Sharma MP and Rob Wilson MP were invited to attend this meeting for a Q&A with members, but look like being unable to do so due to Parliamentary business. It may be more possible for them to attend if the Working Group arranged to meet on a Friday.

ACCESS & DISABILITIES WORKING GROUP MINUTES - 5 DECEMBER 2013

Present:

Councillors Ruhemann (Chair), Eden, Khan, Vickers and White.

Also in attendance:

David Neale	AACT
Keith Hester	Berkshire County Blind Society
Carol Froud	Member of the Public
Diane Goodlock	MS Society
Peter Absolon	Readibus
Trish Wright	Readibus & MS Therapy Centre
Lisa Bamsey	Readibus & Service User
Bob Bristow	Reading Association for the Blind & Reading Talking Newspaper
Sam Harney	Reading Community Welfare Rights Unit
Dorothy Townsend	Reading Resident
Jenny Turner	Service User, Crossroads, Arthritis Matters & Readibus
Helen Bryant	RBC - Access Officer
Amy Bryan	RBC - Committee Services
Nick Butcher	RBC - Web Manager
Nina Crispin	RBC - Consultation & Engagement Officer

Apologies:

Councillor Stanford-Beale	
Sian Hooley	Berkshire PHAB
Alan Fleming	Enrych Berkshire
Joel Young	The Guide Dogs for the Blind Association
Gary Deards	Level Playing Field

1. DISABILITY HISTORY MONTH

Councillor Ruhemann reported that it was Disability History Month and offered those attending the opportunity to share their experiences of being a disabled person in Reading. The following experiences and issues were raised:

- Access to benefits was very important;
- Parking was very difficult for disabled people in the town centre;
- The Changing Places which had been installed was a positive addition to the town centre;
- There was concern expressed about the planned closure of one of the Town Centre post offices and a general point was made about getting around the town centre to specific points if there was not accessible parking nearby;
- Reading Buses had a fully accessible service;
- The Readibus service was praised;
- Schools needed to be more accessible.

Peter Absolon reported back from the recent Tackling Poverty Event and in a workshop for disabled people that he had attended the idea of a marketing

ACCESS & DISABILITIES WORKING GROUP MINUTES - 5 DECEMBER 2013

campaign of positive images of disabled people had been suggested and this idea was welcomed by the Working Group.

It was also suggested that a Disability Pride Day, similar to Reading Pride that was held in Kings Meadow every year, could be held to promote disability rights and to promote positive images of disabled people. Councillor Ruhemann said that he would talk to the Events Manager about the feasibility of such an event that could coincide with the anniversary of the Paralympics games, and asked the Working Group to consider what contributions they could make to the event.

AGREED:

- (1) That the position be noted;
- (2) That Councillor Ruhemann discuss the feasibility of a Disability Pride Day with the Events Manger;
- (3) That members of the Working Group consider what contributions they could make or ideas for a Disability Pride Day.

2. MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting held on 19 September 2013 were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

3. MATTERS ARISING

New Civic Offices Working Group

Diane Goodlock reported that she had attended a meeting regarding the new civic offices and reported that there would be both left handed and right handed transfer toilets and that the dimensions of the lifts would be bigger than in the current civic offices. Diane also reported that there would be somewhere suitable for Readibus to park and there would be a tactile panel on each section of the office so people were able to find their way around more easily. Diane said she had raised a concern about the open stairs and whether there was anything that could be done about the opening of the fire doors but there were no major concerns.

Helen Bryant, Access Officer, reported that there would be a special meeting of the Working Group on Thursday 6 February 2014 at 2pm about the New Civic Offices (Plaza West).

Changing Places at the Oracle Shopping Centre

Councillor Ruhemann said there was no update to report on this issue at the current time.

Reading Station - Readibus Stop

ACCESS & DISABILITIES WORKING GROUP MINUTES - 5 DECEMBER 2013

Peter Absolon, Readibus, reported that there would be a Readibus stop on the north side of Reading Station but it would not be available to use until March 2014.

Home Care Consultation with Users

Councillor Eden reported that following the previous meeting of the Working Group work was on-going and some people would be contacted to help shape the work that was being done in respect of supported living.

AGREED: That the position be noted.

4. WELFARE RIGHTS UPDATE

Sam Harney, Reading Community Welfare Rights Unit, attended the meeting to update the Working Group on some of the changes following the Welfare Reform Act 2012 that were currently coming into force. Sam reported on the following:

Personal Independence Payments (PIP) - Sam had knowledge of one decision that had been made so far for someone who had applied in June 2013. Assessments were taking some time to be completed and some people in Reading had been asked to attend an assessment centre in Slough. Sam reported that it had been confirmed that assessments could be rearranged to take place at a centre in Reading if necessary. The full rollout of PIP had been delayed and if your renewal was due soon then it might take some considerable time to be considered.

Mandatory Reconsideration - From 28 October 2013 if somebody failed their medical assessment they would have to ask for a mandatory reconsideration and there was no recommended timescale in which to complete this. Job Seekers Allowance would have to be claimed before somebody was able to start to claim Employment and Support Allowance again.

Job Seekers Allowance (JSA) - Disallowance Sanctions - If the Job Centre determined that someone had not been complying with JSA conditions then the Job Centre were permitted to make a disallowance decision, which came with a sanction for four weeks the first time and then if this happened a second time the sanctions could last up to three months.

Housing Benefit - Housing Benefit would be suspended if somebody's Job Seekers Allowance was stopped (see disallowance sanctions).

Hardship Payments - These could be claimed immediately if somebody was classed as from within a vulnerable group and after two weeks for others. Sam added that referrals to Readifood were currently up to approximately 20 per month, it had been two per month two years ago.

Under-occupancy Penalty "Bedroom Tax" - Case law had made some amendments so in some circumstances children would not have to share a bedroom. Some second tier tribunal cases had been successful and more challenges to the penalty were expected.

Benefit Cap - Sam had only dealt with a few issues in regards of the benefit cap.

ACCESS & DISABILITIES WORKING GROUP MINUTES - 5 DECEMBER 2013

Employment and Support Allowance - There had been an increase in the number of people being challenged in respect of their Employment and Support Allowance. It was noted that the company who ran the scheme was paid per person that was transferred into work.

The Working Group suggested that the two local MPs be invited to the next meeting of the Working Group to hear the views of the Group and to answer their questions.

AGREED:

- (1) That position be noted;
- (2) That Sam Harney be thanked for attending the meeting;
- (3) That Committee Services write to Rob Wilson MP and Alok Sharma MP to invite them to the next meeting.

5. READING BOROUGH COUNCIL WEBSITE

Nick Butcher, Web Manager, attended the meeting to inform the Working Group about the web improvement works the Council was embarking on. Nick said that the Council's website currently had over 4000 pages, a lot of which were not regularly updated or was duplicated information and work was underway to streamline the website and make it more accessible and to promote self service. Nick said that a focus group would be set up to work through the proposed new site and feed in opinions about how accessibility would work. If anyone was interested in being a part of the focus group they should contact Nick Butcher for details.

AGREED:

- (1) That the position be noted;
- (2) That anyone interested in being part of the focus group contact Nick Butcher for details.

6. SPECIAL SHOPPING EVENT FEEDBACK

Diane Goodlock reported that the Special Shopping Event for Older and Disabled People in Reading had been very successful but there had been an incident of verbal abuse which the police had dealt with. Diane also said that a lot of shops in Broad Street had not stayed open for the event but Marks and Spencer, John Lewis, British Home Stores and the Oracle Shopping Centre had all been open.

AGREED: That the position be noted.

7. ISSUES LIST

The following issues were reported at the meeting:

ACCESS & DISABILITIES WORKING GROUP MINUTES - 5 DECEMBER 2013

- The uneven pavement and gaps in the pavement had caused some people to fall out of their wheelchairs in Broad Street.
- Large piles of leaves were causing problems for people who used canes and people using scooters.
- The disabled access to Eldon Square Gardens was not being kept free of fallen leaves and this prevented anyone using a wheelchair accessing the gardens.
- The crossing on Sidmouth Street (London Road end) was still an issue and Helen Bryant said she would be investigating this herself.
- The button on the pedestrian crossing at London Street/Crown Street was not working.
- There was no bleep or noise emitted from the pedestrian crossing on Castle Street.

8. DATE OF FUTURE MEETINGS

There would be a special meeting of the Access & Disabilities Working Group on Thursday 6 February 2014 at 2pm about the new Civic Offices.

The Access & Disabilities Working Group would meet on Thursday 20 March 2014 at 2pm.

(The meeting opened at 2.00pm and closed at 3.49pm)

'Tackling Poverty in Reading' event, 19th November 2013 - report

1. Introduction

The aim of the Council's 2013 annual event on 19th November 2013 was to initiate the development of a strategy to tackle poverty in Reading in a context where welfare reforms, reducing public sector expenditure and the slow economic recovery are creating increasing hardship for many of residents, including some of the most vulnerable; and where there is an increasing negative public perception about people in poverty.

The Local Government Association estimates that as a result of welfare reforms, households claiming benefit in Reading will see their income drop by £1,665 a year. Many of those affected are people who are in work but have incomes that cannot meet the rising costs of living. 1 in 5 children are deemed to be living in poverty in Reading.

Calls to Reading Citizens Advice Bureau have almost doubled since June 2012. Reading Community Welfare Rights Unit reported that during the same period the number of people attending the open door drop in sessions had doubled, food parcel referrals had increased by 200%.

It was felt that whilst it may not be possible to change government policy or macro-economic conditions, it was important to seek to provide the best possible, coherent, local response in order to support Reading's residents.

This would include providing more opportunities for local people to benefit from what remains a strong local economy with good prospects for growth; using what resources there are available to gain maximum impact; and working together in partnership.

2. Design of the Event

A core group of partners were brought together to deliver the event:

- Reading Borough Council
- Reading Citizens Advice Bureau
- Reading Community Welfare Rights Unit
- Christian Community Action,
- Reading UK CIC

The event was designed to achieve the following outcomes:

- Understanding of what Poverty is and what it is like in Reading
- Understanding that poverty is everyone's business
- Identification and best use of the resources that are available
- Maximum benefit from the areas we can influence
- Specific practical actions that we will work on together.



www.reading.gov.uk



Reading
Borough Council
Working better with you

The programme for the event was designed to provide current facts along side the lived experience of poverty in Reading. Participants were each provided with a participant pack of facts.

Time	What	Who
Chair: Professor Gavin Brooks, Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Teaching and Learning) University of Reading		
6.00	Leaders Welcome	Cllr Jo Lovelock
6.10	Key note address	Alison Garnham, CEO, Child Poverty Action Group
6.30	What does poverty look like in Reading	RBC Reading CAB Welfare Rights Unit CCA and Readifood Reading UK CIC
6.40	What does Poverty Feel like in Reading	Zoe Brown - mother of 3 'My story' - single mum, W. Reading 'Poverty Rules My Life' Rosalyn and Grant's story
7.00	Group Sessions based on your feedback	Participants
7.45	Pledges of Action and Way Forward	Gavin Brooks / Cllr Lovelock

Alison Garnham, CEO, Child Poverty Action was invited to give the keynote address to provide a national overview, drawing on CPAG's 'People Like Us' campaign and their report 'Local authorities and child poverty: balancing threats and opportunities'.

Local partners provided short perspectives on 'What Poverty Looks Like in Reading. This was followed by a series of first hand-accounts on 'What Poverty Feels Like in Reading'. Two mothers provided written statements, a young man made a film called 'Poverty Rules My Life' and video was shown of an interview with a couple who volunteered with Christian Community Action.

The main focus of the event was participation in workshops to ensure the attendees had an opportunity to contribute to the development of the key priorities and take responsibility for action.

When participants registered for the event they were asked to say what their main concern was about poverty in Reading. Their responses were used to theme the workshops which were:

1. Advice on Tax credits and Entitlements
2. Affordable Credit
3. Support into Work
4. Best start in life
5. In work poverty
6. Affording Basic Needs
7. Disabled People
8. Older People
9. Tackling Poverty in a Multicultural Community
10. Health and Wellbeing

The task of each workshop was to come up with 3 priority actions that they would sign up to and for participants to make individual pledges.

To ensure that action would be driven forward, the workshops (in most cases) were led by a partnership or organisation that would be a natural lead for each theme so that the actions will be taken forward as a matter of course by each partnership.

3. Participants

Invitations went out to public service providers, businesses, employers, schools, providers of employment, training, voluntary and community organisations, trades unions, faith organisations and residents involvement databases, through both the Council's and partners' routes. The event was promoted through the website, twitter and press release.

Around 200 people attended on the night.

4. Priorities and Pledges

Over 50 pledges were made on the night. All the priorities and pledges made on the night are posted on our website at <http://www.reading.gov.uk/news/2013/nov/tackling-poverty-reading>

An invitation was provided to join the conversation on Twitter and Facebook #povertyrdg. Several participants and partners used this to generate interest prior to the event and to share pledges and information during and after the event.

5. Media Coverage

The event drew substantial media interest with a BBC South Today news item on the evening and large spreads in both the Reading Chronicle and Evening Post. BBC Radio Berkshire also conducted interviews in the following Monday with the council and a number of the partners.

6. Next steps

The priorities and pledges made will contribute to a new strategy to tackle poverty in Reading. This strategy will be overseen by the Tackling Poverty Delivery Partnership.

TACKLING POVERTY IN READING

Tackling Poverty in Reading Priorities for Action and Pledges

Best Start in Life

Priorities for Action

1. Working together in partnership especially with Reading's schools to provide enrichment opportunities for all children.
2. Recruitment of musical volunteers who have energy and passion to generate an interest in rhyme and communication to support the poorest children to learn from an early age
3. More resources to do home-visiting to improve the learning environment of the poorest children.

Lead Partnership: LSP Best Start in Life

Pledges

Help to volunteers to run early years music sessions.	Nicky Jerrome	
Continuing partnership working, signposting services, community engagement & supporting our residents. Out of the box thinking to engage with those residents who need the most support, but don't ask for it.	Kim Jakubiszyn	Southern Housing Group
To break the cycle of domestic abuse through facilitating therapeutic groups for children who have experienced domestic abuse.	Kathryn Warner	PACT
Making a proposal about the importance of getting volunteers to support early learning of rhyme.	Grant Evans	ABC to Reading, Boys Brigade, Christ Church Woodley
Visiting 3 families in Reading who are living in poverty for a couple of hours a week, helping the parents to address their complex problems and support them in encouraging their children's educational opportunities.	Jackie Oversby	Home Start Reading
Continuing to work with partners such as New Directions, Children Centres, schools and local community at SITE to give hope, opportunity and aspirations to local families.	Debs Edwards	Councillor
Talking to Parent and Toddler Group Network about capacity building around music and rhyme times volunteers	Ben Cross	RCVYS

Affordable Credit

Priorities for Action		
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Money management education for parents and schoolchildren* 2. Increase advertising for alternatives offering affordable credit 3. Increase visibility of credit unions, e.g. in town centre 		
Lead Partner: Community Savings and Loans Berkshire		
Links: *Advice Services Partnership		
Pledges		
Telling my friends and family about affordable credit and using my social media to spread the word and to teach my children about finance.	Sarah Hacker	RBC Councillor
Raising greater awareness in our community of Christians Against Poverty's free money education courses for adults, students and youth.	Suzanna Mitchell	Christians Against Poverty
Publicise the Credit Union as a source of loans.	Ricky Duveen	
Continuing to work as a councillor with credit unions in Reading to make them viable, visible and effective.	Richard Davies	RBC

Affording Basic Needs

Priorities for Action		
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Improved communication of what agencies are providing with a new signposting directory* 2. Run training sessions for agencies to come together (Reading Voluntary Action) 3. Draught proofing and insulating homes and providing funding to do so 		
Lead Partnership: Tackling Poverty Delivery Partnership		
Links: *Advice Services Partnership		
Pledges		
Convening a meeting of local trusts and funders to help ensure funding which tackles poverty in Reading is focused and groups with initiatives that tackle poverty are aware of funding sources available. (And can maximise funding available to those initiatives).	Andrew Middleton	Berkshire Community Foundation
Affirming the commitment of the Charity's Trustees to maximise the value of the Charity's resources for the benefit of the people in need with the Charity's area of operation.	Colin Cairns, Chairman of Trustees	Tilehurst Poor's Land Charity
1. Inviting trusts which are local to Reading to meet and agree: -strategic coverage of rising issues in Reading - deadlines staggered so charities can apply throughout the year. 2. To send my MTF staff to RVA's signposting session.	Lorraine Briffit	Mustard Tree Foundation & The St. Laurence Churchlands Trust
Ensuring that all our staff and volunteers are aware of the other agencies in Reading who our clients could access with regards to the poverty situation.	Nicola Bell	The Rahab Project
Helping make residents aware of service available, so they know what support is out there.	Ruth Martin	Catalyst Housing

Lobbying and encouraging the Council to rid our community of the blight of 'payday loan providers' from our town.	Tony Cowling	Frontline Debt Advice
Making it easier for individuals and agencies to approach the charity for grants.	Giles Winter	Tilehurst Poor's Land Charity
Helping those in fuel poverty to draught proof their homes. Specifically 30 last winter and 50 this winter.	Tony Cowling	Draught Busters
To run a second food bank in Reading	Salim Yakub	Private individual

Health and Well-being

Priorities for Action		
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Health and wellbeing - to more effectively work together across sectors 2. To promote closer working between agencies* 3. To improve access to information on health services e.g. homeless* 		
Lead Partnership:		
Links: *Advice Services Partnership		
Pledges		
Working with CCG's voluntary sector colleagues and RBC to focus on the three key priorities as determined by the Health and Wellbeing group.	David Harper	Reading CAB
Improve early intervention access to mental health assistance or counselling, to under represented groups e.g. ethnic minorities.	K Thresher	No.5/ BHFT
Making it easier for to register with GPs	Rod Smith	North and West Reading CCG
Providing health and wellbeing through growing food and having access to horticultural therapy. Nutrition, exercise, breaking down barriers, providing services so people can learn to grown veg in their garden and through a community growing project.	Sara Kopp	Sara's Gardens

Advice on Tax credits and benefits

Priorities for Action		
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Develop capacity for support and training for people on claiming 2. Provide venues and facilities 3. Co-ordinate the approach 4. Design a template for claiming 		
Lead Partnership: Advice Services Partnership		
Pledges		
Supporting/helping coordinated local capacity building to assist claimants.	Mark Walker	RBC
Tool Pack Help	Maureen McSevney	Hexham Residents
Working with elderly ethnic minority residents to make sure they get their entitlements (especially in Katesgrove.)	Rose Williams	Councillor RBC

Tackling in work poverty

Priorities for Action		
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Scheme for promoting ethical employer awards 2. Contractors paying the living wage 3. Focus on hospitality industry to explore why they use zero hour contracts 		
Lead Partner: Reading UK CIC		
Working in my job to encourage the living wage and to end zero-hours contracts and phoney self-employment/ Carrying on my advice work. Helping more people do return to work benefit checks and forcing my volunteers to do it.	Kevin Jackson	Unison
Championing the positive decision of employers and boycotting the negative by rallying those in my influence. Using social media to spread awareness and support for local movement.	Lynn Mann	Communicare
At work at RBC: Support Council Tenants that I work with by continuing to provide training, support and confidence to them. In UNISON: campaign locally and nationally for the living wage.	Rowan Constantinou-Stygal	Hamble Court
Presenting a regular radio programme on developments in 'Tackling Poverty in Reading', including interview with employers, politicians and working class people locally and nationally.	Antoinette Earl	RBC
Investigate setting up an ethical award scheme for businesses. Work with CIPD to raise awareness of local labour market and understanding of flexible working.	Eddie Winship	Blast Radio
	Clare Wright	Connect Reading

Disabled People

Priorities for Action		
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Finding ways of improving images of disabled people locally 2. Help and encouragement to claim 'benefits' people are entitled to*^ 3. Breakdown barriers to employment and volunteering. 		
Lead Partnership:		
Links: *Advice Services Partnership; ^Universal Credit delivery partnership (Tackling Poverty Delivery Group)		
Pledges		
Use the next meeting of the Access and Disabilities Working Group (in Disability History Month) as an open forum to allow disabled people to talk of their experience.	Pete Ruhemann	RBC
Making disability a far lesser taboo in regarding to poverty and raising the aspirations in all aspects of the employment spectrum.	Chukuemeka Obiorah	Field Network Social Enterprise Co.
Learning how to help disabled and sick people fill in benefit application forms.	Merry Cross	Berks DPAC
Engaging employers in employing, providing work placements, traineeship, for people with a disability.	Nigel Horton Baker	Reading UK CIC

1. Finding ways of improving images of disabled people locally. 2. help and encouragement to claim benefits people are entitled to (welfare/entitlement) 3. Breakdown barriers to employment and volunteering. 4. Achievement of what disabled people have done is sport and achieved.	J Dem
--	-------

Tackling Poverty in a multicultural community

Priorities for Action		
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Pooling knowledge of best practice 2. Empowering volunteers from ethnic minorities* 3. Linking skills and language and training* 		
Lead Partnership: Alliance for Cohesion and Race Equality		
Links: *LSP Productive Pathways group		
Pledges		
Joining a follow up group on tackling poverty in a multicultural community.	Jan David	RCAB
Joining a follow up group on tackling poverty in a multicultural community.	Sarah del Tufo	Reading Community Learning Centre
	Krishna Neupane	Nepalese Community Association
Trying to find the people in our area who need the most help and match them to services if they exist or try to create a service if not. To try to create a friendlier more inclusive community and remove barriers and isolation so people can be helped.	Abby Knowles	Katesgrove Residents Association
Hold consultation events with community organisations, individuals or focus groups as a means of following up the debate	Victor Koroma	Acre

Older People

Priorities for Action		
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Awareness - a community newspaper developed by the community* 2. Fuel poverty awareness campaign based on a fuel allowance amnesty^ 3. Healthy eating - using lunch clubs to improve the social experience** 		
Lead Partnership:		
Links: *Advice Services Partnership; ^Universal Credit delivery partnership (Tackling Poverty Delivery Group); **Health and Well-being		
Pledges		

Support into Work

Priorities for Action 1. Providing volunteering and support for volunteers 2. Provide holistic linked up support mechanisms 3. Training to build skills and help for applying for jobs*		
Lead Partnership: LSP Productive Pathways group		
Links: *Reading UK CIC		
Pledges		
Offering 12 free places a year on Level 2 food safety course for NEETs only	Pol Exeter	RBC
Sharing accreditation toolkits for up to 24 year olds. Sharing training tool kits to use with young people or adults that can be accredited.	Tina Heaford	RBC Youth Service
Focusing on poverty as part of preaching and prayer to highlight the needs of people in poverty and their right to equal respect, and to counteract myths about the 'undeserving' poor. Campaigning for more generous between rich and poor both through voluntary giving and taxation/benefits.	Robert Dimmick	Third Order of the Society of St Francis
Work with local business to provide training, advice and problem solving in learning disability and autism.	Leslie Macdonald	Reading Mencap
Identifying volunteering opportunities in my service & share current best practice with learning volunteers.	Barry Wren	RBC- New Directions
Exploring work experience opportunities with local employers for women being supported at/by Alana House.	Natausha Van Vliet	PACT/ Alana House
Working with local businesses to 'upskill' current employees.		Reading UK CIC
Working to join up the job club that Andy Dickens is running with the other parts of the picture in Reading.	Alan Magness	Reading BC
Provide support to graduates who find themselves unemployed after university. Support- Showing graduates more volunteering opps.-Provide help in CV writing interview skills etc.	Katy Ashford	Reading Student Union
I will assist where possible to do mock interviews.	Paul Lyden	Early Community Centre
Continuing to support young people in to work via mentoring and work experience.	Rachel Green	Starting Point Reading/ The Mustard Tree Foundation

Mark Hopwood
Managing Director
First Great Western
Milford House
1 Milford Street
Swindon SN1 1HL

Tel: 0118 941 5760
Fax: 0118 937 2591(Cllrs Services)

Labour Councillor Southcote Ward

Your Ref:
My Ref: pr/cda
Date: 07 March 2014

Dear Mr Hopwood

DISABLED TOILETS AT RAILWAY STATIONS

I am writing to you as Chair of Reading Borough Council's Access and Disabilities Working Group, but I also work for Fiona Mactaggart MP and in that capacity have been reading the very interesting FGW policy on support for disabled people which you sent her recently.

While there were many good things in that document, I felt the reference to disabled toilets at railway stations was a bit limited, and thought I should write to ask you to develop your policies on this, particularly in the light of discussions I have been involved in concerning the new Reading Station.

I would like, if I may, to make three points:

1. It is difficult if not impossible for many disabled people to use toilets on trains, which puts a premium on them having a toilet at the point of departure and/or arrival. In an ideal world, it would be good to have disabled toilets at all stations, but even if that has to be an ambition for the medium-to-long term I would have hoped FGW could have a short-term policy of ensuring that there were disabled toilets in larger stations. If Crossrail is going to require all its stations to be accessible, it might be worth looking at whether disabled toilets could be included as part of that work, at least for some of the larger stations like Slough and Maidenhead.
2. One issue that came up at Reading, which Neil Craig is well-sited on, is that there are two types of disabled toilets (left-hand transfer and right-hand transfer) as some disabled people can only use either one type or the other. While BS 8300:12.6.1 *Provision and Location of Wheelchair - accessible toilets* states "When more than one unisex accessible corner WC compartment is planned, a choice of layouts suitable for left-hand and right-hand transfer should be provided to cater for people who are paralysed or have limited mobility on one side or the other", Network Rail chose to interpret that as relating to each platform at Reading rather than to the station as a whole and every toilet was designed for left-hand transfer, which caused a great deal of concern to the Working Group. Thankfully, Sue Adams, your Director of

Communications, looked into the issue and understood the arguments, so the last toilet not having been completed, she was able to switch it to right-hand transfer, for which many thanks. However, the wider point is that when two or more disabled toilets are provided at a station there should be both left-hand and right-hand transfers, with appropriate signage to assist users.

3. Finally, I would want to make you aware of Changing Places toilets, which are designed for people with profound and multiple learning disabilities and their carers, and other disabled people, who need more space and equipment, including a height adjustable changing bench and a hoist (see www.changing-places.org). From earlier discussions with Network Rail, the Working Group had hopes that a Changing Places toilet would be provided at Reading, and though this sadly fell by the wayside we would be delighted if FGW could recognise the provision of these facilities as an ambition at least for the larger stations like Reading and Bristol.

I am sorry to write at such length about this issue, but it is one that causes members of the Working Group a great deal of concern, as without access to toilets people's independence can be hugely compromised. It is intended as constructive input and I look forward to your response.

With many thanks

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Pete Ruhemann', with a large, sweeping flourish underneath.

Councillor Pete Ruhemann
(Chair, Access and Disabilities Working Group)

DISABLED PEOPLE LEADING INCLUSIVE COMMUNITIES

ARE YOU MAKING YOUR LOCAL COMMUNITY MORE INCLUSIVE FOR DISABLED PEOPLE? IF SO, WE WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU.

We know that Disabled People's Organisations (DPOs) across the UK are doing great work to make sure that all disabled people have equal opportunities to be involved in their local community and that disabled people's voices are really heard in decision-making processes. We want to find out more about how communities are made 'inclusive' for everyone living with disability or long-term health conditions – so together we can influence change in commissioners and spread good practice. This is an opportunity to give national profile to what you are doing and what you have learnt.

Some DPOs work with local services to make sure leisure and transport facilities are easily accessible; some groups have started small businesses with programmes that help young disabled people to develop employment skills; others have set up 'people's parliaments' so that disabled people's voices are heard by the local council. Whether it's to do with using local services, volunteering, accessing information, getting a job, attending events or getting involved in politics or faith organisations – lots of things are going on that help disabled people to participate fully in their local community.

Whether you're a DPO working alone on a small project or you're collaborating with organisations, schools, businesses, service providers or local councils on something much bigger, Disability Rights UK want to hear from you. We want to collect examples of best practices into a central resource that everyone can access so you can advertise your successes and also learn from what other groups are doing. We also plan to use the information to advise local commissioners on their role in working with disabled people and DPOs to make local communities more inclusive. We will publish details of projects on-line and in our guidance for DPOs and local councils, but all personal information will be kept confidential.

If you think you have a good example of something that makes communities more inclusive for disabled people let us know at InclusiveCommunities@DisabilityRightsUK.org, or 020 7566 0116, or by post to Disability Rights UK, 12 City Forum, 250 City Road, London, EC1V 8AF. We'll get back to you as soon as possible to find out more.

PLEASE USE THIS FORM TO RECORD ANY ACCESS OR
DISABILITIES ISSUES THAT YOU WISH THE COUNCIL
TO INVESTIGATE

FILL IN AND HAND IN AT THE ACCESS AND
DISABILITIES WORKING GROUP MEETING

Name:

Contact Details (if you wish the Council to let you know the
progress with your enquiry - a telephone number or email address
would be useful):

Issues: