

Councillors Eden (Chair), Gavin,
Khan, Vickers and R Williams

To all Members of the Access &
Disabilities Working Group

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24 November 2014

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NOTICE OF MEETING - ACCESS AND DISABILITIES WORKING GROUP - THURSDAY 4 DECEMBER 2014

A meeting of the Access and Disabilities Working Group will be held on **THURSDAY
4 DECEMBER 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 AND INTRODUCTIONS	-
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 26 SEPTEMBER 2014	1-4
4. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES	-

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.

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|-----|--|---|
| 5. | TAXIS AND PRIVATE HIRE VEHICLES | - |
| | Clyde Masson, Licensing Team, Reading Borough Council | |
| 6. | CARE ACT | 5 |
| | Information can be found at www.reading.gov.uk/careact | |
| | Emily Hodges & Karla Vickers, Reading Borough Council | |
| 7. | PLANNING APPLICATION - STATION HILL 'AMPHITHEATRE' | - |
| | Helen Bryant, Access Officer, Reading Borough Council | |
| 8. | DISABILITY HISTORY MONTH | - |
| 9. | ACCESS & DISABILITIES WORKING GROUP - 21 NOVEMBER 2014 - FEEDBACK | - |
| 10. | SPECIAL SHOPPING EVENT - FEEDBACK | - |
| 11. | NARROWING THE GAP EVENT - FEEDBACK | - |
| 12. | DISABILITY PRIDE DAY | - |
| 13. | ISSUES LIST - a look at the progress with the ongoing 'Issues List' (please see form printed at the back of the agenda papers) | 6 |
| 14. | ANY OTHER BUSINESS | - |
| 15. | DATE AND TIME OF FUTURE MEETINGS | - |
| | The next meeting will be held on Thursday 19 March 2015 at 2pm in the Council Chamber, Civic Offices, Bridge Street, Reading, RG1 2LU. | |

ACCESS & DISABILITIES WORKING GROUP MINUTES - 26 SEPTEMBER 2014

Present:

Councillors Eden (Chair).

Also in attendance:

Councillor Davies	Reading Borough Council
Elaine Austin	
Carol Marenghi	Chain Action & Stroke Association
Diane Goodlock	MS Society
Keith Seville	Member of the Public (Carer)
Lisa Bamsey	Readibus & Service User
Trish Wright	MS Therapy Centres/Readibus
Liz Cheyney	
Piyush Bharania	PDSN Network
Jonathan Denning	RBC - Energy Efficiency Officer
Helen Bryant	RBC - Access Officer
Richard Woodford	RBC - Committee Services

Apologies:

Councillors Gavin and Vickers

Joel Young	The Guide Dogs for the Blind Association
Keith Hester	Berkshire County Blind Society
David Wiltshire	Readibus User

1. WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

Councillor Eden welcomed everybody to the meeting and explained that Rob Wilson, MP for Reading East, was unable to attend the meeting to discuss the Government's policy on disabilities due to the recall of parliament to discuss airstrikes against Islamic State militants. Councillor Eden also explained that she had invited Alok Sharma, MP for Reading West, to take part in the meeting but he had informed her that he would not attend and that he would meet groups separately.

The Working Group discussed the position and expressed their disappointment that Alok Sharma MP had been unwilling to attend the meeting and it was suggested that the members of the Group could write to him individually asking him to attend.

Councillor Eden agreed that she would find an alternative date for the meeting, prior to the General Election in May 2015, and that she would write to Alok Sharma MP inviting him to attend.

AGREED:

That Councillor Eden arrange an alternative date, prior to the General Election in May 2015, for Rob Wilson MP and Alok Sharma MP to attend a meeting of the Working Group.

2. MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting held on 26 June 2014 were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

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3. MATTERS ARISING

Councillor Eden informed the Working Group that the new Adult Social Care User Panel had been launched and that members had been invited to the first Carers Conference in March 2015.

It was reported that a Disability Pride Day had been held in Belfast on 20 September 2014.

AGREED: That the position be noted.

4. ISSUES LIST

The following issues were reported at the meeting:

- The steps at the new northern interchange at Reading Station had no rail and the ramps had been situated at the far end of the square;
- An issue was reported with regard to disabled passengers being charged extra when using taxis in the Borough and it was suggested that an officer from the Licensing Section be invited to a future meeting of the Working Group to inform the Group about what people with a disability could expect when travelling by taxi in the Borough;
- An issue was raised with regard to the provision of interpretation services at events such as job fairs and Councillor Eden agreed to find out what the policy was nationally on the provision of such services.

AGREED:

- (1) That Councillor Eden raise the issues at the northern interchange of Reading Station with Councillor Page, Lead Councillor for Strategic Environment, Planning and Transport;
- (2) That an officer from the Licensing Section be invited to a future meeting to tell the Working Group what the position was with regard to what people with a disability could expect when travelling by taxi in the Borough;
- (3) That Councillor Eden find out what the national policy was on the provision of interpretation services at events such as job fairs.

5. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Winter Watch Scheme

Jonathan Denning, Energy Efficiency Officer, attended the Working Group to talk about the Winter Watch Scheme.

Jonathan told the Working Group that this would be the fourth year the Council would be running the scheme and that it would start on 1 November 2014 and run for five months until the end of March 2015, although people could make referrals

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to the scheme before the start for example to have a boiler checked before the cold weather set in. The scheme offered practical advice for any householder during the winter months but particularly for more vulnerable groups. A range of services would be on offer and two trained Energy Efficiency Officers would be available to visit homes. Emergency heating could be provided and help accessing grants to improve the energy efficiency of homes would also be available. There would also be the provision to provide emergency payments in periods of severe weather of around £50.

Leaflets had been produced providing information on the scheme and advice could be obtained by phoning 0118 937 3747, by email winterwatch@reading.gov.uk or on the web at www.reading.gov.uk/winterwatch

Jonathan informed the Working Group that people could refer themselves to the scheme or be referred by family, friends, council officers or external organisations.

Jonathan also informed the Working Group about The Warm Home Discount Scheme that offered eligible households £140 towards their winter energy bills.

AGREED: That the position be noted.

Polling Station Review 2014

Councillor Eden informed the Working Group that the Council was carrying out a review of polling districts and polling places in the Borough. The review had to be concluded by 1 December 2014 and any elector could make representations which could include comments on current polling district boundaries and proposals for specified alternative polling places as well as comments on the facilities for access to polling stations. The Council would be consulting directly with people who had an expertise in relation to access and disability. Representations for consideration would need to be made in writing no later than 30 September 2014 either to the Electoral Services Manager at the Civic Offices, by email to elections@reading.gov.uk or through the web site on <http://www.reading.gov.uk>

AGREED: That the position be noted.

Special Shopping Evening

The Working Group asked if a date for the Special Shopping Evening had been agreed.

AGREED: That Helen Bryant find out the date for the Special Shopping Evening and inform the Working Group.

Plaza West

Councillor Eden informed the Working Group that the move to the new Civic Offices at Plaza West would start at the end of November 2014 and be completed by mid-December 2014. The Working Group asked that a visit to the new Civic Offices be arranged before the offices were open to the public.

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AGREED: That a visit to the new Civic Offices at Plaza West be arranged for the members of the Working Group before the offices were open to the public in mid-December 2014.

Healthwatch Consultations

Lisa Bamsey informed the Working Group that Healthwatch were carrying out a GP Appointment Survey and that the CQC were seeking feedback on South Central Ambulance Service NHS Foundation Trust.

AGREED: That the position be noted.

Town Centre Access Restrictions

Helen Bryant reported that she had attended the meeting of the Traffic Management Sub-Committee on 11 September 2014 where it had been agreed that the operational hours of the access restrictions in the Town Centre should remain unchanged. The Working Group expressed their disappointment in the decision and Councillor Eden agreed that she would write to Councillor Page, Chair of the Traffic Management Sub-Committee, asking him if the Sub-Committee would reconsider its decision not to change the access restrictions in the Town Centre.

AGREED: That Councillor Eden write to Councillor Page, Chair of the Traffic Management Sub-Committee, on behalf of the Working Group asking him if the Sub-Committee would reconsider its decision not to change the access restrictions in the Town Centre.

Footpath in London Road

It was reported that the footpath in London Road in the Royal Berkshire Hospital area had been repaired and was now an ideal surface for wheelchair users. However, there was concern about the position of the new crossing at Cemetery Junction; officers in the Transport Section had agreed to monitor the crossing.

AGREED: That the position be noted.

Former Councillor Paddy Day

The Working Group held a minutes silence to pay their respects to former Councillor and Chair of the Access Forum, Paddy Day, who had died recently.

6. DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS

The Access & Disabilities Working Group would meet on the following dates in 2014/15:

- Thursday 4 December 2014 at 2pm
- Thursday 19 March 2015 at 2pm

(The meeting opened at 12.00 pm and closed at 12.45 pm)

AGENDA ITEM 6 - CARE ACT

The Care Act updates over 60 years of law around adult social care in England. The changes affect how councils support people with care and support needs (whether they get support from the Council or not) and carers.

The Care Act became law in May 2014. Most of the changes come into effect in April 2015, and reforms to the way care is funded come in from April 2016.

The changes that are introduced from April 2015 are wide-ranging. They cover assessment, eligibility, care planning, carers, the local care market, safeguarding, and prevention. There are also some changes to how care is funded, in preparation for 2016.

We have launched a formal consultation to capture as many views as possible from **17th November 2014**. The consultation will close on **Monday 16th February 2015**. We will use the responses to help us to decide if the proposals go ahead.

You can find more detailed information about the areas that we are consulting on and share your views through an online survey on the Council's website: www.reading.gov.uk/careact. From here you can have your say about all of the areas in the Care Act or just particular areas of interest.

If you would prefer paper copies of the consultation information and the survey, or have any questions about the consultation, please contact the Consultation & Engagement Officer by phone on 0118 937 2383 or by email: careact.consultation@reading.gov.uk.

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: