

Councillors Rose Williams (Chair),
Eden, Grashoff, Hoskin and Khan

To all Members of the Access &
Disabilities Working Group

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26 February 2016

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**NOTICE OF MEETING - ACCESS AND DISABILITIES WORKING GROUP - THURSDAY
10 MARCH 2016**

A meeting of the Access and Disabilities Working Group will be held on Thursday 10 March 2016 at 2.00pm in the Council Chamber, Civic Offices, Bridge Street, 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 3 DECEMBER 2015	1-4
4. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES	-

CIVIC OFFICES EMERGENCY EVACUATION: If an alarm sounds, leave by the nearest fire exit quickly and calmly and assemble on the corner of Bridge Street and Fobney Street. You will be advised when it is safe to re-enter the building.

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|-----|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------|
| 5. | LIBRARY SERVICE REVIEW | - |
| | http://old.reading.gov.uk/PRlibraryreviews | |
| 6. | TRANSPORT UPDATE | - |
| 7. | ADULT WELLBEING POSITION STATEMENT 2016-17 | - |
| 8. | TELECARE | 5-6 |
| 9. | FIRE SAFETY JOINT INITIATIVE | - |
| | http://old.reading.gov.uk/PRFireSafety | |
| 10. | ISSUES LIST | - |
| 11. | ANY OTHER BUSINESS | |
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Register to Vote • New Carers Support Contract • Benefits and Discounts for Disabled People • Attendance Allowance • Information from Bracknell Forest Council: | 7-16 |
| | http://www.bracknell-forest.gov.uk/warningoverbluebadgescamwebsites.htm?news=1 | |
| | http://www.bracknell-forest.gov.uk/forestcaresnewproduct.htm?news=1 | |
| 12. | DATE AND TIME OF FUTURE MEETINGS | - |
| | To be confirmed. | |

ACCESS & DISABILITIES WORKING GROUP MINUTES - 3 DECEMBER 2015

Present:

Councillors Rose Williams (Chair) and Grashoff.

Also in attendance:

Alan Fleming	Enrych Berkshire
Joel Young	Guide Dogs
Liz Cheyney	Member of the Public
Diane Goodlock	MS Society Reading
Trish Wright	MS Therapy Centre & Readibus
Laxmi Kachwaha	Readibus
Lisa Bamsey	Readibus & Service User
Jenny Turner	Readibus & Service User
Bob Bristow	Reading Association for the Blind
Helen Bryant	RBC - Access Officer
Nina Crispin	RBC - Consultation and Engagement Officer
Peter Dawson	RBC - Public Health Programme Manager
Marian Marsh	RBC - Transport Planner
Amy Bryan	RBC - Committee Services

Apologies:

Councillors Eden and Khan

Sian Hooley Berkshire Phab

Carol Froud

1. MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting held on 17 September 2015 were agreed as a correct record.

2. CYCLING IN BROAD STREET - CONSULTATION

Marian Marsh, Transport Planner, informed the Group of the current consultation that was taking place regarding cycling in Broad Street.

Marian reported that in the early 1990's, Broad Street was initially partially pedestrianised resulting in the introduction of a cycling ban between the West Street/St. Marys Butts Junction and Queen Victoria Street. When the full length of Broad Street was pedestrianised in 2000, the existing cycle links on Broad Street East were retained to allow access via Cross Street and Queen Victoria Street to the north of the Town Centre. However, the existing moving traffic restrictions in Broad Street West had remained, including the cycling ban. The Council was reviewing the current no cycling restriction in Broad Street West and to consider the suitability of permitting or banning cycling for the whole length of Broad Street. The results of the consultation would be reported to Traffic Management Sub-Committee in January 2016.

Marian had copies of the consultation for the Group to complete; alternatively the consultation could be completed on the Council's website.

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Marian also reported that the Council was part of a trial to develop an app which would assist blue badge holders in finding a vacant on-street disabled bay car parking space within the town centre. There would be a meeting on Friday 15 January 2016 to launch the pilot and a presentation at the meeting would provide full details of the project. If anyone was interested in taking part in the pilot they should attend the meeting on 15 January 2016 or contact Marian.

AGREED: That the position be noted.

3. JOINT STRATEGIC NEEDS ASSESSMENT

Peter Dawson, Public Health Programme Manager, gave a presentation on the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA). Peter explained that the JSNA was the means by which the Council assessed the health, care and wellbeing needs of the local population, now and in the future. The JSNA helped the Council to understand the key issues faced in improving the health and wellbeing of the population and informed the priorities of Readings' Health and Wellbeing Board. The Reading Health and Wellbeing Board produced a health and wellbeing strategy which was based on the needs identified within the JSNA.

Peter showed the Group what the JSNA looked like and how Ward data and reports on specific issues and conditions could be accessed. The vision for Reading's new JSNA was for it to be accessible, web based, providing relevant data that was easy to understand, share and use. The JSNA should also tell the local story, use Ward data as a tool for planning local services and provide people with data for planning and commissioning services. Peter explained that the Council's Public Health team would be leading the production of a new JSNA for 2016-19 in the coming months with the new JSNA being presented to the Health and Wellbeing Board in March 2016.

The Group discussed the presentation and what data might be helpful to include in the new JSNA. Some members of the Group commented that not everyone had access to the internet and it should be considered how the JSNA could be accessed in different ways. If anyone wanted to comment on the new JSNA directly to the Public Health team they could email Peter Dawson (peter.dawson@reading.gov.uk)

AGREED: That the position be noted.

4. CHANGING PLACES FACILITIES IN READING

Helen reported that she had received complaints regarding the changing places toilet in the Broad Street Mall, which was kept locked and it was a long wait for someone to come and open the toilet. Some members of the group had previously stated that they thought there should be a changing places toilet at Reading Station. Helen reported that there was a cost of £50,000 to install a new changing places facility. It was also noted that shopmobility was not signposted from Broad Street.

AGREED: That the position be noted.

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5. CAR PARKING AT THE ORACLE

Helen Bryant reported that she had received confirmation from the Oracle Shopping Centre that there was a period of 15 minutes before you had to pay in the car parks. This enabled people to drop someone into Shopmobility and leave the car park within 15 minutes without having to pay.

AGREED: That the position be noted.

6. DISABILITY PRIDE DAY

Further to Minute 7 of the previous meeting, Helen Bryant reported that she had met with Lisa Bamsey to discuss the proposed Disability Pride Day. Helen and Lisa had suggested that Forbury Gardens would be a suitable venue and that it could possibly be held in conjunction with another event. It had also been suggested that there could be sports demonstrations and arts groups could provide entertainment.

AGREED: That the position be noted.

7. ISSUES LIST

A number of issues that had been reported regarding problems with contractors blocking dropped kerbs and disabled parking bays were still an issue. It was reported that disabled parking bays in St. Mary's Butts had been taken up with building work and nothing had been put in place as an alternative. It was also reported that some members of the group were not able to use the disabled parking bays near the central library because there were no dropped kerbs.

It was reported that the issues reported at Queens Road had been fixed.

It was reported that walking along Gun Street was difficult because of the number of A-boards blocking the pavement.

It was reported that tall vehicles could not park at the train station due to height restrictions.

It was reported that incorrect tactile paving was at the top of the stairs at the train station.

AGREED: That the position be noted.

8. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

It was reported that the special shopping event would be taking place on Monday 7 December 2015 between 5pm and 7pm.

A member of the Group asked what the usage of the new pedestrian/cycle bridge was like and if it was well signposted.

AGREED: That the position be noted.

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9. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The Access & Disabilities Working Group would next meet on Thursday 10 March 2016 at 2pm.

(The meeting opened at 2.00pm and closed at 3.33pm)



Dear Reading Resident

Reading Borough Council is currently developing a strategy for assistive technology such as telecare. It is felt that increased focus on this technology can offer benefits to Reading residents and improve services. As part of this project we would like to get your feedback about your experiences, thoughts and ideas around telecare.

Please complete the questionnaire overleaf to feedback. Here is some information about telecare and assistive devices for those who need some background.

A little bit about assistive technology/ telecare

- Assistive technology includes telecare (which is linked to a support centre or family) but also includes stand alone and independent systems that help people at home
- A pendant alarm which is a simple alarm button that can be pressed to raise help is the most common form of telecare that people use
- Also often used are sensors eg. Bed sensor, that responds if someone gets out of bed or if they do not go back to bed after a certain time. Other examples of sensors are door, chair, falls, movement, temperature
- There are also prompt devices such as pill dispensers that remind people to do things
- More sophisticated systems can map a persons' routine and activity allowing others to be alerted when anything is not the persons usual routine
- Telehealth or telemedicine are devices that can monitor a persons' medical conditions
- You can get devices that work on telephone lines, internet connection, radio waves, and GPS

Please return questionnaire in the prepaid envelope or to
Mary Thorne, Project Manager - Assistive Equipment and Technology,
Level 2 North, Civic Offices, Bridge Street, Reading RG1 2LU
Tel - 01189 374163
Or email comments to transformation@reading.gov.uk

Thank You

What is your experience of telecare or assistive technology?
What do you think is useful about telecare?
What do you think should change?
How do you think telecare/ assistive technology could be better used in Reading?
What do you think would be the benefits of using it more?
What ways do you think people in Reading should be able to access/ get telecare?
Do you think people will have concerns about using or agreeing to use telecare and if so what would these be?
Any suggestions for how barriers or concerns could be overcome?
Any other comments you would like to make?

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1 Introduction

There are many benefits, reductions and concessions that are available to people with disabilities. This includes long term mental illness but these benefits rarely seem to be explained to those of us who have a mental rather than a physical disability.

The following list is not exhaustive, but hopefully, will still be beneficial to those with ongoing mental health problems.

This document is aimed at those living in Reading, Berkshire; however many of the items are nationally applicable.

2 Benefits from DWP

2.1 PIP (formerly DLA)

Personal Independence Payment (formerly Disability Living Allowance) should be applied for, for any long term mental illness. Certainly, for a diagnosis, which is classified as 'severe and enduring', it is worth applying. You might need some help with the forms from one of the advice organisations (such as Citizens' Advice Bureau).

More information, including how to claim: <https://www.gov.uk/pip/overview>

There are several charities providing detailed help for completing the form:

<http://www.rethink.org/living-with-mental-illness/money-issues-benefits-employment/personal-independence-payment>

2.2 ESA (formerly Income Support) and other benefits

One key issue is that once you are paid Income-related ESA (or Income Support), many other items are available free. This also applies to several other benefits, such as income-based Job Seekers Allowance. These items include:

- Free prescriptions: complete the back giving your National Insurance Number
- Free dental care
- Free eye examination
- Reduced cost spectacle frames
- Travel costs to medical appointments

A complete list (of qualifying benefits and free care) is available from the CAB website:

http://www.adviceguide.org.uk/england/healthcare_e/healthcare_help_with_health_costs_e/help_with_health_costs.htm

2.3 Other Benefits

There are numerous other benefits to which you may be entitled. The CAB (Citizens Advice Bureau) and other local charities provide a free check of your entitlement. This is often a better way to establish your entitlement to benefits than to ask the DWP.

Reading CAB:

Minster Street, Reading RG1 2JB

Advice Line 0845 071 6379 Admin Line 0118 952 3060

www.readingcab.org.uk/ www.adviceguide.org.uk

Reading Community Welfare Rights Unit,

101 Oxford Road, Reading, Berkshire RG1 7UD

Direct Line 0118 9551071 Advice Line 0118 9551070

www.readingcommunitywelfareunit.co.uk/

Communicare,

233 King's Road, Reading, West Berkshire RG1 4LS

Tel 0118 926 3941

<http://www.communicare.org.uk>

The moneysavingexpert website has a useful benefits check up:

www.moneysavingexpert.com/family/benefits-check

Turn2us has a benefit calculator at:

www.entitledto.co.uk/, which is part of Turn2us www.turn2us.org.uk

Turn2us has a **free** telephone line to get help with benefits:

0808 802 2000 Mon-Fri 8am-8pm

3 Benefits from Local Councils

3.1 Council Tax Support Benefit & Housing Benefit

Those receiving Income-related ESA (and some other benefits) can apply for a council tax benefit. In Reading (2014/5 this meant that many council tax bills were reduced to approximately 15% of the full charge).

Those living in rented accommodation can apply for Housing Benefit to cover (or pay towards) their rent.

Reading Borough Council provides an online calculator to determine both housing benefit and council tax support **and to make a claim**:

For Reading Borough Council contact:

Telephone: 0118 937 3707

<https://becs.reading.gov.uk> (Housing Benefit/Council Tax Support Calculator)

www.reading.gov.uk/ (Home page Reading Borough Council)

3.2 Bus Pass

A disabled Bus Pass can be obtained from the Local Council. A form has to be completed and signed by a Health care professional (such as your GP, Psychiatrist, social worker). [You need to be in receipt of DLA at the Higher Mobility Rate, or unable to drive due to your condition and/or medication].

This pass gives free bus travel but not on certain long distance buses. (Long journeys can often be made for free by taking several shorter routes).

Note it is possible to obtain a Companion bus pass that allows you to be accompanied for free on bus journeys.

Forms are available from Reading Borough Council, Civic Offices Reception or via your CMHT worker.

Reading Borough Council: 01189 373787

More information is provided by Reading Borough Council website:

<http://beta.reading.gov.uk/buspass>

3.3 Passport to Leisure

In the Reading Borough Council area, you are entitled to a Passport to Leisure card, which gives discounts to residents. If you have long term mental health issues you may qualify for 'Concessionary Membership' (the disabled version of the Passport to Leisure card), which gives, further discounts (such as free use of sports and leisure facilities at certain times such as swimming pools).

Forms from Reading Borough Council on 0118 937 2011 or see website:

<http://beta.reading.gov.uk/yyp>

4 Concessions

4.1 Savings & Bank Account Interest Tax Free

To claim ask your bank for form R85, complete and return (do this for each bank and building society where you have interest earning accounts). Alternatively, you can find the form and associated notes at:

Provided your income is below £15,600 per year (2015/16), you can receive any interest from savings and banks accounts tax free. This limit is higher if you receive:

- Blind Person's Allowance
- Marriage Allowance
- Married Couple's Allowance
- Age-related Personal Allowance

To claim ask your bank to register you for tax free interest on all your accounts. Note it is possible to claim back overpaid tax for the tax year 2015/16 by using form R40 (See link below for details).

<https://www.gov.uk/apply-tax-free-interest-on-savings/tax-free-savings>

4.2 Gas and Electricity Charges

Provided your energy supplier is part of the Warm Home Discount (WHD) scheme, you may qualify for an annual rebate of £140 (2013/14) on your energy bill. The exact benefits that are required for qualification can differ between suppliers.

The Home Heat Helpline (free telephone) can help with Warm Home Discounts and with tariffs as well as other help for reducing bills.

Warm Home Discount:

<https://www.gov.uk/the-warm-home-discount-scheme/eligibility>

Home Heat Helpline:

<http://www.homeheathelpline.org.uk/how-we-can-help/>

Free Tel: 0800 33 66 99

Reading CAB:

Minster Street, Reading RG1 2JB

Advice Line 0845 071 6379 Admin Line 0118 952 3060

www.readingcab.org.uk/

www.adviceguide.org.uk

4.3 Gas, Electricity and Home Insulation, Free Boiler

The **Home Heat Helpline** can assist with obtaining a Warm Home Discount from your suppliers. They can help with:

- Ensuring that your supplier(s) know that you are disabled and/or have long term health problems. You will be placed on the Priority Service Register, which provides you with a free annual gas safety check for all your gas appliances. (Note this is **not** an annual service).
- Grants for free home insulation
- Help prevent disconnection
- Application for a free boiler

The Home Heat Helpline can be contacted on:

0800 33 66 99 (*which is a **free** call*)

Or see website:

<http://www.homeheathelpline.org.uk/how-we-can-help/>

4.4 Disabled Person's Railcard

A railcard giving you:

- 1/3rd off most fares
- For you **and** a companion

It costs £20 per year (2015).

To qualify you must receive DLA:

- at either low or high mobility components or
- personal care at middle or higher rates or
- PIP
- meet one of the other qualifying criteria which are listed in the website:

<http://www.disabledpersons-railcard.co.uk/what-is-a-disabled-persons-railcard/am-i-eligible>

Information can also be obtained from your local station. Note it must be applied for by post and can take up to 10 days to arrive.

4.5 Cinema Reductions

There is a scheme whereby disabled people can obtain a pass giving a free ticket (for a carer) when paying for one full-priced ticket. Note the pass lasts for 1 year and costs £6 (2015).

To qualify you must be in receipt of DLA, PIP or Attendance Allowance (or be Registered blind).

An application form can be obtained from cinemas in the scheme or downloaded from the website given below.

Telephone 023 9224 8545

Details can be found online at

<http://www.ceacard.co.uk/>

4.6 Theatres and Shows

If you are receiving DLA, PIP or Carer's Allowance then you may request a concessionary rate when buying or reserving tickets at productions. Sometimes you may be entitled to a free ticket for a carer to accompany you. [South Hill Park, Bracknell and The Hexagon and other venues operated by Reading Borough Council, operate this policy]. I have successfully used this method for several London shows.

5 Free Advice

5.1 Free Debt Advice

5.1.1 Citizens' Advice Bureau (CAB)

The CAB has debt advisers who can assist in dealing with your debts. They will help you to produce a financial statement showing your income and expenditure. The CAB is able to negotiate with your creditors (those you owe money to) for you. They can ask for interest payments to be suspended and arrange for your creditors to accept a small monthly payment instead of the normal payments.

Reading CAB:

Minster Street, Reading RG1 2JB

Advice Line 0845 071 6379 Admin Line 0118 952 3060

www.readingcab.org.uk/

www.adviceguide.org.uk

5.1.2 National DebtLine

NDL provides a free telephone service and website. This is an available free regardless of income, savings or benefits (including none). Their telephone number is a **free 0808 number**.

Telephone 0808 808 4000

Hours: Mon – Fri (excluding Public Holidays) 9am – 9pm
Sat (excluding Public Holidays) 9:30am – 1pm
Sun - Closed

www.nationaldebtline.co.uk

5.1.3 Communicare

Communicare provides free advice on debt and other issues:

Telephone 01189 263941

Hours: Mon 9am – 3pm
Tue 10am - 4pm
Wed 10am – 3pm
Thu 10am – 4pm
Fri 10am – 1pm
Sat - Closed
Sun - Closed

6 Money Saving Websites

6.1 *Moneysavingexpert*

This is a up to date website giving banking, credit card, car and home insurance and many other items including a 'Freebies' listing.

www.moneysavingexpert.com

6.2 *Megashopbot*

This amazingly named site is part of moneysavingexpert and allows you to use several comparisons website together. It is very easy to use.

www.megashopbot.com/

6.3 *Moneysupermarket*

Another financial website:

www.moneysupermarket.com

6.4 Freecycle

Obtain items for free that others no longer need, or offer your items for free. There is the facility to place 'Wanted' requests for free.

<http://groups.freecycle.org/ReadingUK/posts/all>

6.5 Uswitch

Particular helpful in finding ad switching to cheaper electricity/gas tariffs. Having a year's consumption of electricity (and gas if applicable) to hand is likely to produce more accurate results.

www.uswitch.com/

6.6 MySuperMarket

Allows fast and easy comparison between supermarket prices.

<http://www.mysupermarket.co.uk>

6.7 Asda Price Guarantee

The 10% Asda price guarantee works in this way:

1. Save your receipt after shopping at Asda
2. Go online to:

<http://www.asdapriceguarantee.co.uk/Compare-Prices/ASDA-receipt.aspx>

3. Enter info required information-NOTE YOU DO NOT HAVE TO ENTER EVERY ITEM!
4. The website works out if you could have bought your shopping cheaper at other main supermarkets and gives you a voucher if you could
5. Print out voucher-NOTE YOU NEED TO TAKE VOUCHER WITH YOUR RECEIPT next time you shop
6. Also has to be SAME Asda store

6.8 PetrolPrices.com

This free site provides up to date information on petrol prices in your area. You may optionally request a free weekly email giving the 5 cheapest petrol stations closest to your address.

www.petrolprices.com