

Access and Disabilities Working Group - Thursday 29 February 2024

Present

Cllr Jan Gavin (Chair) – Caversham Ward Councillor
Cllr Karen Rowland – Lead Councillor for Environmental Services and Community Safety – Abbey Ward Councillor
Cllr Anne Thompson – Tilehurst Ward Councillor
Cllr Andrew Hornsby-Smith – Church Ward Councillor

Helen Bryant – Access Officer, RBC
Alex Wylde – Policy and Performance Manager, RBC
Donna Pentelow – Assistant Director, Culture, RBC
Sarah Cox – Arts and Venues Manager, Culture, RBC
Andy Lockwood – Project Portfolio Manager, Culture, RBC
Kerry Whiffin – Co-production and Engagement Officer, Adult Social Care, RBC
Michelle Tenreiro-Perez – Transformation Project Manager, Adult Social Care, RBC

Lucy Picardo – Director, Haworth Thompkins
Helen Allen – Inclusive Design Consultant, Haworth Thompkins
Rose Burgoyne – Architect, Haworth Thompkins
Fiona Price – Chief Executive, Age UK Berkshire
Brian Oatway
Trish Write – MS Therapy Centre
Jenny Turner – Readibus

Apologies

None

WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

Cllr Gavin welcomed everyone and asked attendees to introduce themselves.

The minutes of the previous meeting were agreed as an accurate record.

MATTERS ARISING

Cllr Gavin reviewed the actions from the previous meeting.

There was a request for clarification on whether the computers in the new library would be fully accessible for people with disabilities. It was agreed that Donna Pentelow would provide a response by correspondence.

ACTION: Donna Pentelow to provide clarification on whether the computers in the new library will be fully accessible for people with disabilities.

There was an action to find out further information on threshold ramps for the Safe Space Hub by Reading Minster. Cllr Rowland confirmed that work to improve accessibility to the Hub is ongoing.

An action to circulate a list of locations where new handrails and dropped curbs are being installed was completed. It was agreed that this list would be added to the minutes of the meeting (see end of document).

There was an action to conduct a town centre walk around with Sam Shean (Highways and Traffic Services Manager, RBC) to review accessibility issues (e.g. pavements). Cllr Rowland agreed to follow this up to arrange this in the Spring.

ACTION: Cllr Rowland to contact Sam Shean to arrange a town centre walk around in the Spring.

COUNCILLORS' DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS

Cllrs Gavin, Rowland, and Hornsby-Smith declared an interest in relation to the item on the Hexagon and Hexbox as they are members of the Planning Committee.

THE HEXAGON AND HEXBOX

Lucy Picardo gave a presentation on plans for the new Hexagon studio theatre scheme.

The new studio theatre will not involve any work to the Hexagon theatre itself. It is a Levelling Up Fund funded project and is currently going through the planning process.

Lucy set out how the new building will be an exemplar of sustainable and accessible architecture. It will have a timber frame structure throughout with natural ventilation and solar panels on the roof. In addition to the main theatre space there will be a rehearsal space and community room. There will be step free access into the main entrance as well as improved accessibility to the main Hexagon building itself.

Helen Allen gave further details on the accessibility features of the building, including step free access, lifts, and accessible toilets.

Cllr Hornsby-Smith asked whether the slats in the proposed wooden flooring could be an obstacle for wheelchair users. Lucy confirmed that this would not

be an issue and this flooring material has been used in four theatres already and is a well-tested, durable timber floor.

Fiona Price asked if there were any plans to improve lighting outside the Hexagon as this can often be very dark in the evening. Andy Lockwood confirmed that the studio theatre project will not involve changes to the lighting in the wider podium area as this is part of the separate development of the Minster Quarter area.

Brian Oatway asked about the accessibility of the bar area for wheelchair users, the capacity of lifts to accept more than one power wheelchair at a time, whether thought has been given to where captions will be displayed in the theatre, whether the number of unisex toilets will result in more people using disabled toilets because there is nowhere for them to go, and whether disabled toilets will say on the door that not all disabilities are visible.

Lucy confirmed that the bar has a lowered counter area at the end for accessibility for wheelchair users. The number of toilets is in accordance with building regulations and the ABTT guidance, which is specifically for theatres, and requires more toilets than for an average building.

Cllr Rowland asked about how close the accessible toilets will be to the studio performance space, so they are quickly accessible during an intermission. Lucy confirmed that the changing places facility is at stalls level right next to the auditorium, and all the other toilets (bar one) are at that level as well.

ACTION: Lucy Picardo and Helen Allen to provide a response to the questions raised by Brian Oatway not addressed in the meeting.

AGE-FRIENDLY CITIES

Fiona Price gave a presentation on age friendly communities – an opportunity to adapt our neighbourhoods and communities to work for us better. This applies not just for older people but also for people with disabilities. Age friendly communities are places where age is not a barrier to living well.

Fiona set out a four-step programme that places can use to develop age friendly policies and practices.

Cllr Hornsby-Smith asked if there was any possibility of us sharing the audit of accessible toilets in Reading (including in private businesses) with the Older People's Working Group. Cllr Gavin committed to talk to the chair of the Working Group on this issue and more broadly on whether there are more opportunities for joint working.

ACTION: Cllr Gavin to contact chair of Older People's Working Group to identify areas for joint working.

ADULT SOCIAL CARE ASSESSMENT/SHAPING ADULT SOCIAL CARE

Michelle Tenreiro-Perez gave a presentation on how the adult social care service at Reading Borough Council are preparing for assessment by the Care Quality Commission.

Kerry Whiffin introduced the work that adult social care are doing on co-production and engagement. This will involve creating a service user panel. Members of the public are invited to get involved and can find out more by contacting Kerry at kerry.whiffin@reading.gov.uk

ACTION: Kerry Whiffin to share details of how to get involved with those on the access and disabilities mailing list, via Helen Bryant.

FUTURE OF THE WORKING GROUP

Cllr Gavin introduced this item, noting that meeting attendance has declined and that it was therefore timely to consider the purpose and future of the group.

Brian noted that it isn't clear to him what the remit of the group is and that he had never been formally invited to join the group. If we want more people to join, we need to invite them.

It was agreed that the group needed to be advertised, possibly in doctor's surgeries, community notice boards, and libraries.

ACTION: Cllr Gavin, Cllr Rowland, and Alex Wylde to plan and deliver a programme of work to advertise the Group to potential new members.

AOB AND CONCERNS

Cllr Gavin gave an update on plans for Disability Pride Day 2024. The events team are currently confirming the details of the budget and an update will be provided once this is confirmed.

The meeting ended at 15:55.

DATE OF NEXT MEETING

To be confirmed following local elections.

ANNEX – CIL SCHEME HANDRAILS ON PUBLIC STEPS AND DROPPED CURBS

Project Type	Location	Ward	Description
Handrails	Forbury Road/Valpy Street entrance to Forbury Gardens	Abbey	No handrails, 4-7 steps
Handrails	Baltimore Park	Caversham	Baltimore Park entrance to Baltimore Drive, no handrails 8-12 steps
Handrails	Lower Henley Road	Caversham	Lower Henley Road to Anglefield Road, no handrails 4-7 steps
Handrails	28 Anglefield Road	Caversham	No handrails, 8-12 steps
Handrails	65 Surley Row	Caversham Heights	No handrails, 8-12 steps
Handrails	By 73 Surley Row	Caversham Heights	No handrails, 4-7 steps
Handrails	71 Coley Avenue	Coley	One handrail, 4-7 steps
Handrails	73 Coley Avenue	Coley	One handrail, 8-12 steps
Handrails	77 Coley Avenue	Coley	One handrail, 8-12 steps
Handrails	82 Coley Avenue	Coley	One handrail, 4-7 steps
Handrails	83 Coley Avenue	Coley	One handrail, 8-12 steps
Handrails	87 Coley Avenue	Coley	One handrail, 4-7 steps
Handrails	101 Coley Avenue	Coley	One handrail, 4-7 steps
Handrails	21 Lowfield Road	Emmer Green	No handrail, 4-7 steps
Handrails	Mellor Walk	Katesgrove	Junction with Elizabeth Walk, one handrail, 4-7 steps
Handrails	7 Mellor Walk	Katesgrove	One handrail, 4-7 steps
Handrails	12 Mellor Walk	Katesgrove	No handrail, 4-7 steps
Handrails	Mellor Walk	Katesgrove	Some steps with only 1 or no hand rails, all of them on Mellor Walk
Handrails	Outside 384 Tilehurst Road	Norcot	No handrail, 4-7 steps
Handrails	Outside 382 Tilehurst Road	Norcot	No handrail, 4-7 steps
Handrails	Sun Street to Kennetside	Park	One handrail, more than 12 steps
Handrails	Kennet Walk	Park	One handrail, more than 12 steps
Handrails	11 Church End Lane	Tilehurst	No handrail, 8-12 steps
Handrails	7 Fern Close	Tilehurst	No handrail, 4-7 steps
Step repair work	Coley Avenue	Coley	At least one set of steps on Coley Avenue, southern part of Berkeley Ave, are different heights.
Step repair work	Kings Bridge	Thames	Anti slip on steps is very poor

Project Type	Location	Ward	Description
Step repair work	Crown Bridge	Abbey	Steps to be repaired
Step repair work	Coley Avenue	Coley	At least one set of steps on Coley Avenue, southern part of Berkeley Ave, are different heights.
Dropped kerbs	Manchester Road	Park	Junctions with Norton Road
Dropped kerbs	Manchester Road	Park	Junctions with Filey Road
Dropped kerbs	Manchester Road	Park	Junctions with Radstock Road
Dropped kerbs	Wykeham Road	Park	Junctions with Brington Road
Dropped kerbs	Wykeham Road	Park	Junctions with Auckland Road
Dropped kerbs	Wykeham Road	Park	Junctions with Clarendon Road
Dropped kerbs	Wykeham Road	Park	Junctions with Adelaide
Dropped kerbs	Wykeham Road	Park	Junctions with Lennox Road
Dropped kerbs	Grange Avenue	Park	Junctions with Bishops Road
Dropped kerbs	Grange Avenue	Park	Junctions with St Edward's Road
Dropped kerbs	Grange Avenue	Park	Junctions with Norris Road
Dropped kerbs	Wokingham Road	Park	A dropped kerb near the bus stop between Hamilton Road and Bulmershe Road
Dropped kerbs	Mayfair	Tilehurst	Crossing on Mayfair near 27-31 at the turning into the residents car park
Dropped kerbs	Corwen Road	Tilehurst	Junction with The Meadway
Dropped kerbs	St Michael's Road	Tilehurst	Junction with The Meadway
Dropped kerbs	Mayfair	Tilehurst	Junction with Park Lane
Dropped kerbs	School Road	Tilehurst	Junction with Recreation Road
Dropped kerbs	Chapel Hill	Tilehurst	Junction with Park Lane
Dropped kerbs	New Lane Hill	Tilehurst	Junction with The Meadway
Dropped kerbs	Halls Road	Tilehurst	Junction with The Meadway

Project Type	Location	Ward	Description
Dropped kerbs	City Road	Tilehurst	Junction with Park Lane
Dropped kerbs	Chapel Hill	Tilehurst	Junction with Westwood Glen
Dropped kerbs	Westwood Glen	Tilehurst	Junction with Lower Elmstone Drive
Dropped kerbs	Elmstone Drive	Tilehurst	Junction with Lower Elmstone Drive
Dropped kerbs	Curzon Street	Battle	All junctions north to south
Dropped kerbs	Catherine Street	Battle	All junctions north to south
Dropped kerbs	Audley Street	Battle	All junctions north to south
Dropped kerbs	Promenade Road	Thames	Where cycle route 5 meets Promenade Road
Dropped kerbs	Addison Road	Thames	Randolph Rd end. Kerb been dropped on Denbeigh Place side but not on the other side
Dropped kerbs	York Road	Thames	Junction with Ross Road. Both sides of Ross Road and one side of York have dropped but remaining side of York does not.
Dropped kerbs	Coldicutt Street	Thames	Gosbrook Road end has a dropped kerb on one side but no matching on the other.
Dropped kerbs	Send Road	Thames	Gosbrook Road end is dropped at one side, for vehicle access, but not on the other
Dropped kerbs	Piggotts Road	Thames	Champion Road end
Dropped kerbs	Champion Road	Thames	Mill Road end
Dropped kerbs	Queens Road	Thames	Mill Road end
Dropped kerbs	Kings Road, RG1	Thames	Entrance to Reading college car park
Dropped kerbs	Orts Road	Thames	Entrance to Orts Road off Kings Road western end
Dropped kerbs	Kenavon Drive	Thames	Western end, dropped no tactile
Dropped kerbs	Forbury retail park	Thames	Entrance to the retail park, dropped no tactile
Dropped kerbs	Craven Road	Redlands	Junction with Addington Road
Dropped kerbs	Craven Road	Redlands	Junction with Erleigh Road

Project Type	Location	Ward	Description
Dropped kerbs	Addington Road	Redlands	West of Alexandra Road until the junction with Redlands Road
Dropped kerbs	Addington Road	Redlands	At entrance to Redlane Court
Dropped kerbs	Addington Road	Redlands	Entrance to Malvern Court, west side of entrance insufficiently dropped
Dropped kerbs	Addington Road	Redlands	Junction with Eastern Avenue
Dropped kerbs	Erleigh Road	Redlands	South side both ends when crossing Alexandra Road
Dropped kerbs	Addington Road	Redlands	N (northern) side on both ends when crossing Alexandra Road
Dropped kerbs	Erleigh Road	Redlands	N side on both ends when crossing Denmark Road
Dropped kerbs	Addington Road	Redlands	N side on both ends when crossing Donnington Gardens
Dropped kerbs	Addington Road	Redlands	S (southern) side on E (eastern) end when crossing Donnington Gardens
Dropped kerbs	Craven Road	Redlands	Vehicle entrances to hospital on Craven
Dropped kerbs	Erleigh Road	Redlands	Junction of Erleigh and Addington
Dropped kerbs	Erleigh Road	Redlands	No tactile at junc near new zebra, no dropped kerb opposite the island on N side by chemists
Dropped kerbs	Junction Road	Redlands	Junction of Eastern Avenue and Junction Road
Dropped kerbs	Hexham Road	Redlands	Crossing of entrance to garage forecourt area, next to 20 Hexham Road
Dropped kerbs	Hexham Road	Redlands	Crossing from Corbridge Road footpath (eastern side) to Hexham Road (Southern side) footpath, at the T-junction of Hexham/Corbridge
Dropped kerbs	London Road	Redlands	Crossing of Fatherson Road
Dropped kerbs	Canterbury Road	Katesgrove	Southern side, crossing Canterbury Road loop x2
Dropped kerbs	Canterbury Road	Katesgrove	Northern side, crossing Home Farm Close loop x2
Dropped kerbs	Canterbury Road	Katesgrove	Northern side, crossing the vehicular crossing to the automotive business at the western end of Canterbury Road
Dropped kerbs	Pell Street	Katesgrove	Junction with Sherman Street

Project Type	Location	Ward	Description
Dropped kerbs	Francis Street	Katesgrove	Junction with Hill Street
Dropped kerbs	Alpine Street	Katesgrove	Junction with Edge Hill Street
Dropped kerbs	Waldeck Street	Katesgrove	Junction with Charndon Close
Dropped kerbs	Henry Street	Katesgrove	Junction with Dorothy Street
Dropped kerbs	Dorthory Street	Katesgrove	Junction with Orchard Street