

ACCESS AND DISABILITIES WORKING GROUP MINUTES - 27th June 2019

Present:

Councillors Eden (Chair), Rowland, Khan, J. Williams

Helen Bryant - Access Officer - RBC

Clare Muir - Policy and Voluntary Sector Manager - RBC

Nina Crispin - Wellbeing Consultation & Engagement Officer - RBC

Alison Amoah - Principal Planner - RBC

Carolyn Jenkins - Landscape Services Manager - RBC

George Baptiste - Playground Officer - RBC

Alan Fleming - Enrych Berkshire

Bob Bristow - Reading Assoc for the Blind (RAB)

Jenny Turner - Arthritis Matters/Readibus/Service user

Trish Wright - MS Therapy Centre

Angie Burnish - Peapods

Diane Goodlock - MS Society

Sara Davies - Save ERAPA

John Hoggett - Save ERAPA

Tevye Markson - Reading Chronicle

Apologies

Cllr Helen Manghnani

Nigel McAlister

Fiona Price - Age UK Berkshire

Alice Carter

Douglas Dean - Thames Valley Pensioners' Convention.

1. WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

The Chair welcomed everyone and introduced herself. She invited everyone to introduce themselves.

2. COUNCILLORS' DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS

Councillors Josh Williams and Rowland declared an interest in Item 5 and excluded themselves from the Green Park discussions.

3. MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting held on 7 March 2019 were agreed as a correct record.

4. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

7. Bob Bristow, Helen Bryant and Cllr Rowland reported that they had visited the WH Smith Post Office on 3rd April and raised issues about accessibility in particular the lift. Alison Amoah advised that it would be worth checking if the lift in WH Smith meets Building

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regulations and DDA compliance.

Agreed: Chair and Cllr Rowland to raise with WH Smith and bring back to a further meeting.

Diane Goodlock raised that it was impossible to access the crossing outside Kings Point due to hoardings. She had rung Highways and they had moved the hoarding back but it is still a problem.

Agreed: The Chair would follow this up.

The Chair asked if there had been any feedback from Network Rail regarding the request for tactile markings at the Station forecourt. No response has been received.

Agreed: The Chair would follow this up and request a site visit if necessary.

It was reported that a number of builders skips had been placed in parking bays. **The Chair said she would take this up**

5. GREEN PARK STATION PLANNING APPLICATION - Alison Amoah

Alison Amoah brought 3 hardcopy bundles of papers relating to Green Park for the group to view. She said that all documents are also on-line.

She said that planning permission for a station at Green Park was given a while ago. Now a new submission had been received. The station building is within the Reading borough boundary and the rest is within West Berkshire. Comments should be sent to both councils but if they are sent to Alison she can send them on to West Berkshire council.

Alison outlined that the proposal is for a single storey structure, waiting room, ticket booth and footbridge with lifts to allow up and over access to the other platform. Alison said she understood that the plans accorded with current standards. Refuge points would be provided at either end of platform.

Alison said that due to cost constraints the design is simple. She encouraged the group to raise any specific things that they noticed were missing or any issues and said she would be happy to talk further with members of the group.

Angie Burnish asked why the accessible toilet was accessible from platform when all others are inside the building. Alison responded that she had been told that this was to enable 24 hour use even when the station building was closed. Alison pointed out on the plan the out of hours entrance.

The group raised the following points:

- The toilet is small can this be made larger?
- Can the entrance be accessed from both inside and outside?
- Outside toilets are prone to vandalism
- Is it a manned station? Alison said she understood that there will be staff for some hours but building won't be open for all hours that trains are running - it would be similar to Earley station.
- The height of ticket booths can be a problem if not manned. Can ticket machines be installed that can be accessed by all. However it was noted that no one in the group knew of any station with accessible ticket machines. The Chair suggested that

Network Rail be asked and for this to be installed. Alan Fleming to pass details of the Network Rail access officer to Alison

- Is it possible to make the toilet Changing Places? Alison said these are only provided at terminus stations. It was raised that there are new Government proposals that where new builds of public buildings were of a certain size Changing Places should be incorporated.
- Need to check compliance of lift
- Need sufficient blue badge parking
- check route from parking to station entrance to make sure the route is accessible - Alison to check parking bay plans and the route from parking to station entrance and feedback at next meeting.

Agreed: Alison to take these comments into account and report back at next meeting

It was noted that the group and Cllr Ruhemann who was Chair at the time had fought very hard to get a Changing Places at Reading Station and failed. But were told that by 2019 Network Rail would provide Changing Places with Cross Rail.

Agreed: Chair to follow this up.

Alison said it would be helpful to have the groups comments in writing but may be best once she has got back on the questions raised

Agreed: Chair to respond on groups behalf and individuals to respond as they wish

A site visit was suggested but Alison pointed out that this was a problem at the moment as it is a building site. However the planning committee had been asked which site visits it wished to make over the year and she would find out if this was one of them.

6. ACCESSIBLE PLAY EQUIPMENT

George Baptiste, Caroline Jenkins and Cllr Karen Rowland, Lead Councillor for Culture, Heritage & Recreation were in attendance at the invitation of the Chair who said she had asked for an update from officers, in particular on Orts Road and Canal Way, due to the high interest. She said she would then like attendees to break into 3 groups and feedback on the following:

- How should children with access needs be consulted in the future?
- What would good provision look like?
- What are you going to do to take it onto next stage?

George said that children's play equipment is subject to strict standards and over the last few years standards have changed. He has taken on board comments by public and visited inclusive schools - The Avenue and Brooklands to ask how provision could be improved. Unfortunately the schools had not responded.

He said there were 2 schemes in plan at the moment: Iydene and Coley and one in train at Canal Way. Funding from Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) is being used to upgrade the equipment.

George said playground designers need us to tell them what is needed. He is a national inspector and gets to see lots of playgrounds but they are not as inclusive as they ought to be.

George informed that there are different levels of park:

LAP - Local Area of Play

LEAP - Local Equipped Area of Play different size play

NEAP - Neighbourhood Area of Play - e.g. Christchurch, Prospect Park

Sara Davies pointed out that there is accessible play equipment at ERAPA and that we need to consider provision across Reading as a whole.

The Chair noted the Save ERAPA presence at the meeting and their concerns about the future of the playground. George clarified the equipment at ERAPA is meeting H&S standard currently. The inclusive roundabout has had repairs and will remain in use for as long as it meets standards. However he said that one unit is American and parts are hard to find so he can't say how long its life will be. He is keeping it under inspection. The last inspection was October 2018 and will be done again in October 2019. George said he visits it monthly. If he deemed it to be unsafe he would raise it with his line manager and provide a report for a decision.

Sara raised that that a number of different narratives had been given on the Council's position regarding the future of ERAPA.

Agreed:

The Parks service to provide clarification in writing.

The Parks service to enable the group to feed into the decision making process.

7. WORKSHOP DISCUSSION ON PREFERENCES FOR ACCESSIBLE PLAY EQUIPMENT

Attendees broke into 3 groups to discuss and feedback on:

- How should children with access needs be consulted in the future?
- What would good provision look like?
- What are you going to do to take it onto next stage?

Outcomes were:

How should children with access needs be consulted in the future?

- Allow children to show the way - what works for them
- Multiple option so can access consultation in multiple ways^
- Go to Reading Family Forum and * for input on the Design brief
- Establish a forum before the design stage and before specification. This would look at the overall budget and have input on which revamps and when.
- Site visits to test what works
- Provide information about what is possible and available as they are not experts.
- Check out designers in field
- Have clear commissioning - what equipment for whom and which abilities

*

Children's Charities

Voluntary sector bodies

Peapods

Schools

Sensory consortium

Berkshire Autistic Society
Mencap
Family Information Service
Reading Voluntary Action
Fifi's Vision

^

Advertise in GP surgeries
Website
Leaflets
Large maps
Timing to suit children and parents

What would good provision look like?

- Have one or two good accessible sites with good public transport access
- Provides adventurous, accessible equipment.
- Provide access for disabled parents
- A flagship space that people are willing to travel to but ideally some nearer by
- Sand and bark replaced with accessible alternative
- Secure fencing and gate
- Clear information about where and what equipment is accessible.
- Clear information about car parking, paths gates, colour contrast, surfaces etc.
- Provide quiet spaces.
- Use the 5 identified sites as test for future strategy

What are you going to do to take it onto next stage?

- Signpost to ERAPA on the RBC website and point out it is wheelchair accessible
- Ask REMAP to advise on equipment
- Be clear about budget and timeframe for ERAPA.
- Mapping of what equipment is where.
- Get a forum together with the manufacturers and show what is available. GB
- Draw up a list of people to be on the forum. Cllr R to take names. Ask RVA for links to groups to consult.

Cllr R also highlighted that the Canal Way designs were available at the meeting for people to feedback to George.

8. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Alan Fleming raised that there is a Changing Places facility in the old part of Paddington station which is a listed building so there is no reason why one shouldn't be installed at Reading Station

Agreed: Chair to follow up through the Transport department

The Chair clarified that a Motion passed by Council on banning single use plastic excluded single use plastic for medical and health reasons.