

ACCESS AND DISABILITIES WORKING GROUP MINUTES - 12th September 2019

Present:

Cllr Rachel Eden, Reading Borough Council - Chair
Cllr Rose Williams, Reading Borough Council - Vice Chair
Cllr Helen Manghnani, Reading Borough Council
Cllr Karen Rowland, Reading Borough Council - Lead Councillor for Culture, Heritage & Recreation

Emma Baker - Acting Transport Planning Manager, RBC
Nina Crispin - Information & Engagement Officer, Wellbeing Team, Reading Borough Council
Sophie Molyneux - Web team, Reading Borough Council
Helen Bryant - Access Officer - RBC
Clare Muir - Policy and Voluntary Sector Manager - RBC

Liz Johnson - Readibus
Alice Carter - Parent and Service User
Nusrat Sultan
Nigel McAlister
Angie Burnish - "Peapods" and Parent
John Hoggett - "Save ERAPA"
Diane Goodlock - MS Society
Bob Bristow - Reading Association for the Blind
Stu Pearce - Guide Dogs

Apologies

Councillor Josh Williams
Fiona Price - Age UK Berkshire
Brian Oatway
Carol Froud

WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

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

COUNCILLORS' DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS

None

MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting held on 27th June 2019 were agreed as a correct record.

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MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

1. WH Smith Post Office - it was noted that a bell for the lift had been installed but did not have a tactile button so a blind person could not find it. **Cllr Rowland to follow up. She asked for any feedback to be sent to her.**

Diane Lovelock confirmed that Kings Point hoardings were moved back but now a diversion sign was blocking the way.

The Chair had visited Network Rail and a bid had been submitted to the Customer and Communities Infrastructure Fund for a range of measures, including tactile wayfinding at the main station. It was expected that the Council would hear if the bid had been successful in Spring. The Chair thanked EB for her quick turnaround of the bid.

5. Green Park Station - the Chair confirmed that she had submitted a response on behalf of the group. She said that not all that was requested had been included and there was a particular issue with the toilets, because they had been situated so that they opened up onto the platform. Cllr Rowland thanked AA for accompanying her on an accessibility visit. As a result when the planning application was considered by Planning Committee the committee sent the plans back for further work on the toilet requirements.

ACCESSIBLE PLAY EQUIPMENT

It was reported that there had been 2 meetings with providers of playground equipment and a number of proposals seen. It was clear that there was no standard for playgrounds and attitudes/understanding of providers varied. They tended to provide for the majority of more able children. They spoke about play for all but most offered no practical solutions for how this could be achieved.

The Chair concluded that we could not rely on suppliers and National standards so the Council would need to be clear about what it wanted to achieve and set its own standard, possibly working with a receptive provider on a one to one basis. It was suggested that PiPA could be brought to a local level standard. PiPA was an award scheme - Plan Inclusive Play Areas: <http://www.inclusiveplay.com/page-id1514/> There was a checklist to check inclusivity of play areas.

It was suggested that the play service would want to share ideas with a wider group of children on what play equipment is wanted.

The Chair asked for a report on the work of the Playgrounds group to go to HNL Committee. **Cllr Rowland to take forward.**

The Chair thanked all those involved for their hard work. She also noted that ERAPA was now listed on the Council's website.

It was asked that an accessibility map of playgrounds be provided on the council's website. It was understood that George Baptiste had already compiled one. The Chair asked for it to be on the agenda of next meeting.

HIGHWAYS - TRANSPORT CONSULTATION

Emma Baker, Acting Transport Planning Manager, RBC presented on the Reading Transport Strategy 2036 consultation which had been launched on 29th July and would finish on 20th September. It set out a vision for transport to 2036 and asked for feedback on the themes, what was missed and what residents wanted to be delivered. A new strategy was needed in order to be able to bid for funding in the future. RBC was aiming to achieve 3,000 responses.

The themes were:

Connecting People & Places
Supporting Healthy Lifestyles
Creating A Clean And Green Reading
Enabling Inclusive Growth
Embracing Smart Solutions

Next Steps

- Consultation deadline - 20th September 2019
- Develop Draft LTP & Action Plan for CCS Transport Theme - Autumn/Winter 2019-20
- Adopt Climate Change Strategy - Spring 2020
- Statutory Consultation - Spring 2020 (12 weeks)
- Update Transport Strategy - Summer 2020
- Adopt Transport Strategy - Autumn 2020

A number of questions and issues were raised. The Chair summarised these as:

Provision for cars needed to prioritise disabled accessibility
Public transport accessibility
Taxis - needed accessible design and driver training
Non- vehicular transport provision needed to take account of cycles/pedestrians/assistive dogs
Invest in pavements.

Cllr Williams reported that she was now on the board of Reading Buses and would keep accessibility on the agenda.

COUNCIL WEBSITE

Sophie Molyneux, the Council's Digital Content Designer, from the Web team, attended to explain that the Council's website needed to be updated to meet new accessibility standards. Due to the need to do this quickly content would be lifted as it was. The web team had previously consulted and tested the website with the public. It was noted that key content on the website should be clear information about accessible toilets and Blue badges. Camden LBC website was highlighted as a good site. Clare Muir to follow up with the services concerned to improve the content on Blue badges.

It was also noted that the website should be accessible for screenreaders. Sophie said that individuals were welcome to give further feedback on the website. **Helen Bryant to send round the invite and distribute the questionnaire.**

The Chair asked for the Council's website to be on the agenda for the next meeting and for a briefing from SM on the Contact Strategy.

ELECTORAL REGISTRATION

HB reported that unfortunately an officer from Electoral Registration was unable to attend the meeting but had circulated a registration reminder poster and a feedback form for providing feedback on any issues such as accessibility re polling stations.

ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Invite Reading Buses to next meeting - HB

The issue was raised that private businesses were not letting disabled people use their toilets even when they showed their "Can't Wait" card. Central library also did the same, but on being asked had now installed a RADAR key and disabled people could use the toilet.

Agreed - consider what could be done to raise awareness of the card.

Nigel McAlister raised that the Department for Transport had announced that it would set up a Task group to address Blue badge fraud. The LGA had reported that Blue badge theft had increased by 45% in 2018. **The Chair asked for the Blue Badge team to be asked to come to a future meeting to say what they would be doing.**

It was reported that bin operatives were leaving bins on footpaths. **The Chair would pick this up.**

The date for the Christmas shopping evening was requested. **HB**

Date of next meeting 28th November