

Information/Discussion Paper

Social and Community Overview and Scrutiny Committee - 17th October 2005

Promoting Disability Equality

This note contains the information to keep Members informed of matters relating to the work of the Committee, but where no decisions from Members are needed

1. Why has this come to scrutiny?

- 1.1 At the 9th June meeting of this committee, terms of reference for a review of promoting disability equality were agreed. The first meeting of the review group was held on Friday 30th September. This information paper summarises the meeting.

2. Summary of the Issue

- 2.1 The first meeting of the review of promoting disability equality was held on Friday 30th September. The meeting was well attended and the following issues were discussed:
- 2.2 In terms of the project team, it was suggested that Tom Mimmagh (Property Maintenance Manager) be added as he deals with the council's property and Phil Williams (Assistant Director Integrated Transport) be added due to the links with transport and urban design. It was also suggested that other groups, such as MEND, Star College and the Phd Forum, be asked to attend for specific items.
- 2.3 It was suggested that June 2006 be added as a notional completion date for the review and that a formal report be brought back to Social and Community summarising the findings from the review at that time.
- 2.4 The group agreed that Cheltenham Disability Forum should be used a first port of call but that it is recognised that the group is not yet fully representative of different groups of disabled people such as those with learning difficulties or mental illness, but that there are other groups, such as user, carer and representative groups, who do represent these communities. It was suggested that an audit of these groups be undertaken for the next meeting and that they are involved in the review process. It was agreed that wherever possible, the review should be taken out to these groups and not expect them to come to the Municipal Offices.
- 2.5 The group found that the government's definition of disability as set out in the Disability Discrimination Act was overly complex and that the emphasis placed on effects lasting longer than 12 months might preclude conditions that only have a short term lifespan but might have severe implications for the individual's ability to access services. It was agreed that the group will not worry about constraining itself to a narrow definition as the review is about making our services accessible to all.

Outline Work Programme

Theme	Action	who
An audit of how well the council is complying with existing disability legislation	Access audits underway. Need to look at other communication issues such as language, signage and the web-site	Iain Houston
A consideration of the new disability legislation	Policy to carry out research	Richard Gibson
An assessment of demographic information	Policy to carry out research	Richard Gibson
Looking at the staffing structure of the council	Review of recruitment processes being undertaken by Human Resources	Human Resources
Carrying out an impact assessment of key service areas	<p>Consider the following areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Waste and recycling collection Housing – provision, tenancies, management Advice provision Urban design Community transport Access to council buildings Reception services Sport and play <p>The above are to be tested with Cheltenham Disability Forum to agree a final list</p>	all
Assessing and improving our consultation with disabled people	<p>Work with Disability Forum to hold an open event to discuss review and to agree which service areas should be a focus for the review</p> <p>Carry out an audit of user/representative/carer groups</p> <p>Attend meetings of groups to discuss the role of the council in promoting disability equality</p>	<p>Geoff Sloman / Richard Gibson</p> <p>Geoff Sloman</p> <p>all</p>

3. Next Steps - possible next steps for the committee to consider eg potential witnesses, further report, site visit etc.

- 3.1** The review group will meet again on Friday 4th November to progress the review and regular updates will be made to members of this committee.

Background Papers

Project Brief – Promoting Disability Equality in Cheltenham, agreed by Social and Community Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 9th June 2005

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Accountability

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Scrutiny Function

Social and Community Overview and Scrutiny
Committee