

Information/Discussion Paper

Social and Community Overview and Scrutiny Committee – 10 July 2006

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 On 9th June 2005, this committee agreed terms of reference for a review of promoting disability equality. The review group has now met seven times. This information paper summarises progress to date.

2. Update on work programme

- 2.1 At the first meeting of the group, the following work programme was agreed as the basis of the review. I have updated the programme with the latest progress.

Theme	Progress	who
An audit of how well the council is complying with existing disability legislation	Revised programme of access audits completed on 13 of the council's public buildings. The findings of these will then be built into planned maintenance programme. The review will also look at other communication issues such as language, signage and the web-site	Iain Houston
A consideration of the new disability legislation	Briefing note on the new requirements brought to committee on 3 April 2006	Richard Gibson
An assessment of demographic information	Briefing note on demographic produced brought to committee on 3 April 2006	Richard Gibson
Looking at the staffing structure of the council	Review of recruitment processes to be undertaken by Human Resources	Human Resources
Carrying out an impact assessment of key service areas	To be carried out in the following areas: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Waste and recycling collection • Housing – completed 	all

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Urban design – to be carried out on 12 July • Concessionary transport and community transport • Access to council buildings • Reception services and advice provision • Parking provision - completed • Leisure provision, sport and play • development control and building control 	
Assessing and improving our consultation with disabled people	Longlist of 90 groups identified. These have been shortlisted down to 10 organisations that members of the group will meet to discuss disability issues	Geoff Sloman / Richard Gibson

3. Key developments

- 3.1 Two service area reviews, covering housing management and parking services, have been completed since the last update to this committee. The reviews involved members of the disability forum and the relevant council officers and generated significant debate about how the council can provide its services in ways that will be better for disabled people. The key issues arising from both are as follows:

Housing Services Review

Issue	Potential actions
The need to increase the supply of suitably adapted properties for those with disabilities across all tenures.	<p>The council needs to use the planning system more proactively to increase the supply:</p> <p>The emerging development plan document on housing as part of the local development framework needs to be more explicit about this need. This document needs to set a quota for suitable properties as part of the planning obligation on affordable housing.</p> <p>The council needs to then work with the Cheltenham and Tewkesbury Housing Market Partnership to ensure that new developments coming through the programme are built wherever possible to lifetime homes standards.</p>
The need to increase the number of adapted properties.	The council needs to continue to invest in Disabled Facilities Grants and this will be subject of a separate report to this committee.
The need to ensure that disabled people on the housing register are dealt with appropriately.	The council needs to monitor the numbers on the disabled persons housing register.

Ongoing support and care	The council needs to ensure that CBH and Registered Social Landlords are taking sufficient care over the placing of disabled tenants in communities and that the ongoing care packages are fit for purpose. The council also needs to work within the supporting people framework and promote the welfare rights advice service.
The need to work in partnership to provide appropriate services and care	The council needs to work in partnership with social services, the primary care trust and the voluntary sector to support disabled people in their homes.

Parking Services Review

Issue	Potential actions
<p>Management of off-street car parks The council manages 17 car parks across the borough that have 3,000 spaces.</p> <p>The council has a programme to improve disabled facilities in all car parks through introducing DDA compliant bays on all car parks by mid- 2007. Currently, 60% of car parks have suitable bays.</p>	The group welcomed the roll out of more disabled bays and encouraged the council to publicise these more widely
<p>Enforcement The abuse of the disabled parking bays is a big concern for the disabled community concern. Despite only have 8 members if staff, the council does have a high enforcement rate.</p>	Enforcement resources will be increased by the introduction of de-criminalised parking enforcement (DPE) which will see the council becoming responsible for town-wide parking enforcement. This will see a significant increase in the number of parking enforcement officers – this will (in time) create a culture of zero tolerance towards abuse of disabled parking bays.
<p>Civic Pride Now that the preparation of an urban design framework for the town is underway, it is important to ensure that the right balance is struck between ensuring disabled access and measures to improve the street scene such as pedestrianisation.</p>	The Urban Design Manager will be invited to discuss proposals at the next meeting of the forum on 12 July.

4. Next Steps

- 4.1** The review group will continue to progress the service area reviews and will start the programme of meetings with the 10 representative disabled community groups. Any thoughts or comments from this committee will be fed into the next review group meeting.

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

Cllr. Anne Regan, Cabinet Deputy Stronger and Safer Communities

Cllr. Andrew Wall, Cabinet Deputy Internal Performance and Service Improvement

Scrutiny Function

Social and Community Overview and Scrutiny Committee