

**Improvement and Review Commission
Task and Finish Group – Final Report
Services to adults with disabilities in Wycombe district**

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Membership of the Task and Finish Group (TFG)

The following WDC Members served on this TFG

Cllr Brian Pollock (Chairman)

Cllr Julia Adey

Cllr Paula Lee

Cllr Michelle Neudecker

Cllr Matt Knight

Cllr Wendy Mallen represented Bucks County Council

There were also two co-opted members

Alison Lewis is Chairman of both Wycombe Area Access For All and the Bucks Service User & Carer Organisation / Self-Directed Support Service User and Carer Reference Group.

Ian Cormack is Co-Chairman of Buckinghamshire Carers Partnership Board and is Vice Chairman of the Self-Directed Support Service User and Carer Reference Group and is himself a carer.

Meetings and Methodology

The Task and Finish Group held its first meeting on 28 February 2012 and its final meeting on 14 August 2012.

The TFG met with a range of WDC officers and received written reports from the relevant business units at WDC (see Appendix A). The officer specialist support during the course of the review was provided by the WDC Cohesion & Leisure Manager.

As Alison Lewis has an advocacy role that also touches upon a wide range of physical and sensory impairments, the actual meetings of the TFG were opportunities for elected members and officers to be made more aware of the following:

Hearing Loop

The type of hearing loop supplied for the meeting was the sort only suitable for one-to-one meetings. Alison said that personally she would be fine without the loop given the small size of the group, as long as the other members did not look away or have their hands across their mouths while speaking.

Disability Accessible Toilets and Signage

The toilets near WDC reception which are designed for the disabled do not have any signage on the doors to indicate this. The sign on the nearby pillar pointing towards them is all in upper case, and needs to be changed to normal case. Other signs were noticed where the same applies. Laminating notices, unless in matt, causes unhelpful reflections.

Bucks CC support of the review

A countywide perspective for the TFG was made possible by the welcome extended by the two partnership boards most directly connected with the subject area of this review, namely the Physical and Sensory Disability Partnership Board (with participation in two of their meetings by the TFG Chairman – see Appendix B) and the Carers Partnership Board, visited by TFG member Cllr Matt Knight.

Councillors were extremely impressed by the range of both the nuts-and-bolts and the strategic issues being addressed at these boards, whose membership provides an effective interface between commissioners and providers, as well as service user representatives.

Visit to Northampton Centre for Independent Living

Several members of the TFG visited the Northampton Centre for Independent Living where they met with the Chief Executive, the CIL Manager and the CIL Disability Rights & Inclusion Officer.

Appendix C is the write-up of the visit to Northampton

Consultation meeting in Marlow on 24 May 2012

“Improving services to adults in Wycombe district with disabilities”

Appendix D is the report of the meeting in Marlow

Scope of the meeting

To gather insights and narratives from service users and providers, in order to identify areas of improvement in service delivery within Wycombe district.

This invitation was sent to those with physical disability, sensory loss, learning difficulties, and to those with access needs because of mental health or growing older.

Invites were sent to service users included elderly local residents and people with:

- Physical disabilities
- Sensory loss
- Learning difficulties
- Mental health issues

Of those attending, the largest group was ten (10) people with access needs living in Marlow

Members of the TFG expressed their particular appreciation of the attendance by the Chairman of the Physical and Sensory Disability Partnership Board who is also the Joint Planning and Commissioning Manager

Others who attended were representatives of the following:

- Carers Bucks
- Local representative of AGE UK
- Connection (part of Bucks Floating Support)
- District coordinator of befriending service

- Community Occupational Therapist
- Bucks Connect
- Aureus Care
- Cressex Supported Solutions

The following WDC elected members attended and assisted with the event:

- Cllr Matt Knight
- Cllr Brian Pollock
- Cllr Paula Lee

Also attending:

- Alison Lewis, co-opted member of review group
- Sandra Masini, personal assistant to Alison Lewis
- Ian Cormack, co-opted member of review group
- Mrs Viv Pollock
- Ted Piker, WDC Scrutiny Support Officer
- Carolina Lindahl, Engagement Officer, WDC

The meeting focused around two questions which participants were encouraged to discuss in smaller groups of 5-7 people:

- What services are working well?
- What services need to be different or improved so that there is independent living is made more possible?

Appendix D gives the detailed responses to the above questions.

Commitment to a follow up meeting to the Marlow event

Cllr Brian Pollock asked those attending if they would like a follow up meeting in the autumn to be briefed on the recommendations that arose from the meeting and other work of the TFG, as well as how those recommendations were received and any commitments to action that were made as a result. Those assembled gave their enthusiastic support.

Executive Summary

Introduction

The theme of the review was as follows:

Removing current barriers and avoiding future barriers, to enable open access to independent living, in the following key areas: Housing, planning, the built environment, transport, employment, leisure, and information.

At the first meeting of the Task and Finish Group (TFG) it was agreed that many older people experience similar limitations to those more traditionally classified as disabled, in that they too may have needs for enhanced personal care with daily living and for access to transport, particularly to hospitals.

Those with learning disabilities and mental health needs may also have other physical and sensory impairments.

It was agreed to focus more on the specifics of what an individual was, or was not, able to do. Otherwise there was the danger that some could be alienated if their needs were not considered to be within the remit of the group.

The Task & Finish group started with the view that their investigations should be based on the social model of disability and not the medical model thereby ensuring that a holistic view of disability needs was investigated, not just based on a person's medical needs.

People need to access a range of services from a whole range of providers, including WDC. Many services are delivered as cross authority working, presenting partners with opportunities to achieve efficiencies that benefit service users and that can be more cost effective.

What is working well?

At the open meeting held in Marlow on 24 May 2012 (See above section "Consultation meeting in Marlow on 24 May 2012" and also Appendix D) the TFG was able to get an insight into the breadth of provision that is valued by those with a disability.

The following were mentioned when participants were asked what they felt was working well:

Some compliments on advice from WDC on benefits and housing
The operation of Wycombe District Council area offices
Shopmobility
Park & Ride buses
Good access to the Swan Theatre
Extra blue badge parking places on Marlow High Street
The befriending service - fantastic for vulnerable people
Age UK offer (toe nail cutting service, hairdressing and handyman)
Blue Badge parking
Red Cross Transport
Age Concern – good benefit advice and information line.
Marlow 'Town Bus' service
The Hub lunch clubs

Appendix A sets out how WDC services engage with needs of those with a disability, both currently and planned for the future

Some examples from Appendix A are as follows:

Waste collections

Assisted waste collections for residents with disabilities are available, this entails the contractors going onto the property taking the bins to the vehicle and emptying them and then returning to the agreed collection point.

Disabled Facilities Grant (DFG)

This grant provides financial aid to any disabled person wishing to make adaptations to their home. These adaptations include - level access showers, ramps and stair lifts.

Website accessibility

We have a website that has been tested for accessibility and are looking to work towards the BS8878 Accessibility standard. Our website is accredited by the Digital Accessibility Centre and has won a national award for website accessibility.

Sports Development

2012 Projects – We actively seek to engage and educate young people through disability sport. Recent examples include the Stoke Mandeville Experience days, run with WheelPower, where over 120 children took part in wheelchair basketball, rugby and a historical tour of the stadium.

Wycombe And District Sports Association for the Disabled (WADSAD) provides facilities (via Handy Cross Sports Centre) for all types of disabilities to engage in sports and social activities.

Progress needed and additional issues raised

As well as its successes, those with a disability still face considerable challenges in being able to access transport, employment and housing, even in the light of training and awareness raising both within the council and by the council (district and county).

Those on the Task and Finish Group who had been involved with the issues for a number of years kept the group informed of the background of previous times that the issues it was exploring had been already been raised and the frustration over slow progress in some areas.

This report updates the reader on the measures in place at WDC and the goals for further improvements

Centres for Independent Living

The WDC Task and Finish Group made a visit to Northampton Centre for Independent Living (CIL) (see Notes from visit attached to this email). The picture of the provision for Buckinghamshire is very different from Northamptonshire/Bedfordshire. Bucks CC (in consultation with districts) has decided to focus much more on a locality basis (to establish 6 locations across the county) for the provision of day opportunities. As well as offering a range of activities, also on hand in Bucks will be information about how to access other service provision.

This is a different approach to the Northampton CIL where there is the space to have on-site a range of specialist equipment and adaptations, and where staff with a disability act as advisors to, and advocates for, others with a disability.

In addition to the above Buckinghamshire day opportunities, service users and of course Bucks CC itself, would like to see a replacement of the provision at the previous independent living centre. The understanding of the TFG is that this is very much a work in progress at the time of the writing of its report but would like to emphasise its view that the provision of information and advocacy provided at the Northampton CIL was highly desirable and meant that there is currently a differential in the provision that a disabled resident of Northamptonshire and Bedfordshire could receive compared to a Buckinghamshire resident.

The role of the WDC access function

The role of the WDC access function changed in 2004 from a developmental role a compliance role. This was at the time when changes in legislation took out from the planning application arena all but a building's access route. Another factor in the change of role was that matters controlled under Building Regulations are not material planning considerations and cannot be taken into account when determining a planning application.

The TFG felt that the original combination of legislation and specific disability advice at the planning application stage (usually before the detailed design work for the building had been completed) had been very valuable and resulted in many positive changes to building design. There were also benefits to other WDC services (in addition to the Planning Service) and on occasion elected members, who made good use of that officers knowledge of the obstacles to independent living faced by those with a disability.

Nonetheless, legislation has changed and WDC had to respond to those changes. The function now resides within Building Control, whose role primarily is to check applications for compliance with the building regulations.

Marlow Post Office

The relocation of post office provision to the location on Institute Road, unlike the previous facilities, does not make provision for wheelchair access nor can the inside be reached by some frail elderly. The TFG believes that this inevitably creates a differential between the able and the disabled. It also believes that there are valuable lessons to be learned by the partners and organisations involved.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendations to Cabinet

Some of the recommendations may have financial implications and WDC Cabinet will need to consider whether there is funding available.

The Equality Act 2010 makes reference to public authorities considering the adverse impact on groups protected by the general equality duty. See Legal Implications set out at the start of the report.

Accessible Housing

Recommendation 1

The needs of those with a disability that are referred to in sections 35 and 50 (see note at foot of recommendations) of the National Planning Policy Framework (March 2012) Department for Communities and Local Government) to be incorporated in the Local Plan review

Recommendation 2

For residential properties, targets to be established for

- Improvement of number and size of parking spaces that are wheelchair accessible
- Numbers of new houses built to disability access standards
- Numbers of existing properties brought up to disability access standards and Lifetime Homes standard

Recommendation 3

Increase the maximum Home Independence Grant from £500 to £1,000, within the current total budget, whilst seeking to maintain a balance between the range of improvement works eligible and the total number of applicants who can benefit

Recommendation 4

Within a timescale appropriate to available resources:

4a Establish an accessible housing register that captures data so that suitable properties can be matched with the clients' needs

4b Produce an update on the proportion of social housing that has wheelchair access

4c Review how the current WDC Choice Based Letting scheme is working for those with a disability (to include feedback from clients)

4d Review the current policy of who can be given accessible properties: Can greater flexibility be introduced based on needs as well as age?

Accessible Public Toilets

Recommendation 5

Increase number of wheelchair accessible toilets and more publicity about this

Recommendation 6

Where wheelchair accessible toilets are external to other buildings these should all be RADAR-key only accessible to reduce risk of vandalism

New sports and leisure centre

Recommendation 7

Seek advice of disability access specialist at each stage, with particular attention to be given to:

7a Inclusion of a high dependency toilet and changing room, built to standard of www.changing-places.org

7b Sufficient blue badge parking bays. Enforcement of abuse of spaces

7c Signage

7d Push buttons at wheelchair height to open doors

7e Door widths for scooters

Access to information

Recommendation 8

Appendix D as disability guidance notes covering Making Written Information Accessible, Dietary Requirements, Selecting a Venue, and Accessible Venues in Wycombe district
The above guidance notes were created by:

Wycombe Area Access for All

Wycombe District Council

Bucks Vision

on behalf of the Wycombe Partnership. The Partnership accepted these in 2006 and 2007 with commitment to adopt them.

The recommendation is that Wycombe District Council updates the guidance and implements it throughout all services of the Council.

Recommendation 9

WDC services provided the TFG with summaries of current provision and planned improvements of how the needs of those with disabilities are being addressed. The recommendation is that these reports are available as a download on the disability page on the WDC website.

Recommendation 10

The Customer Service Centre the CSC is requested to do a disability related mystery shopper exercise, by telephone.

Disability Awareness

Recommendation 11

A member training session to present the TFG report, with a focus on what ward councillors can do to improve the lives of those with a disability, especially in regard to the Disability Facilities Grant. An all member email be sent to identify if sufficient numbers to warrant this (minimum of 10 confirmed member bookings)

Recommendation 12

Run a disability awareness event (special goggles, wheel chairs, etc) and involve local media to participate alongside elected members.

Employment

Recommendation 13

The Skills Centre to explore the potential of a job club specifically focused on the needs of those with a disability, and to pursue the external funding for this initiative as appropriate.

Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Vehicles

Recommendation 14

A meeting between taxi drivers and licensing – to seek the help and support of drivers (also include private hire as well as Hackney Carriage). Amongst issues to be raised: Charging, availability (especially during school term times)

Recommendation 15

An advice note to be placed on the disability page on the WDC website that, when using Hackney Carriages, passengers should expect the driver to only start the meter once they are ready to commence the journey

When using private hire vehicles, before starting the journey, passengers should seek confirmation of the price that was agreed when the vehicle was booked.

Publicising the report

After the report has been to both the Improvement and Review Commission and WDC Cabinet:

Recommendation 16

Offer the report to Bucks CC (Overview & Scrutiny and Health Scrutiny) and to other districts within the county

Publish report on the Centre for Public Scrutiny website

Recommendations to Bus Companies

The Task and Finish Group acknowledges the progress that has been made by local bus services to improve both the upgrading of the fleet for wheelchair/scooter access and the access to disability relevant timetable information

Since making the publication of the report, there has been a response to Recommendations 17 through 25 from Transport for Buckinghamshire, so this release of the report includes those responses alongside the original recommendation.

Recommendation 17

The TFG would like to see improvements over time in the following areas, with the aim of achieving consistency of disability access on all routes

Recommendation 18

More stops to have access for both wheelchairs and scooters

Response from Transport for Buckinghamshire

Most low floor buses have ramps or can kneel at stops, though both the operators and ourselves recognise that, despite driver training, there are still some drivers who are not always using this facility appropriately. We are working with them to address this. We also recognise that infrastructure improvements such as hard-standing at rural stops, raised kerb heights etc would be of benefit at a number of stops. However, we are in a climate where budgets are being steadily reduced and we do not have a dedicated capital budget for these types of works currently. We are though, bidding for dedicated funding for this area of work in our current business planning process. It is also possible for any specific problem locations to be made the source of a bid for funding through the Local Area Forum.

Recommendation 19

A smaller bus is needed that can go up the slope to directly outside Wycombe Hospital main entrance.

Response from Transport for Buckinghamshire

The incline leading to the hospital entrance is a recognised issue. However, it is difficult to resolve without funding for a dedicated shuttle vehicle, and even then, there is the question of who this would serve and/or how it would connect to the rest of the bus network. When this has been tried previously, as with the cressexpress service, the service proved unsustainable partly due to the size of the bus. A taxi shuttle that operated from the bus station for a number of years had to be withdrawn due to lack of use.

Recommendation 20

All buses between Wycombe Hospital and Stoke Mandeville, and also to Amersham Hospital and Wexham Park Hospital, to meet the needs of those with a disability

Response from Transport for Buckinghamshire

The vehicles used on these routes are already low-floor, easy access buses. We recognise that there are issues over the location of the stops, particularly for High Wycombe and Stoke Mandeville and are working with the Hospital Trust over these. It must be borne in mind however, that Wycombe Hospital is very difficult to serve directly by bus, as per the response to recommendation 19, and Stoke Mandeville, though very well

served by Red Route 9 from Aylesbury, would require an unacceptable diversion for passengers on Line 300 for buses to get much closer to the hospital entrance.

Recommendation 21

In the roll out of accessible vehicles, prioritise areas of greater social housing and lower car ownership

Response from Transport for Buckinghamshire

The County Council already specify accessible vehicles when tendering new services. On routes operated commercially, which account for the vast majority of bus services, the vehicle choice is entirely in the hands of the bus operators. However, after considerable investment in recent years by the operators, most buses in Buckinghamshire are now low floor, accessible vehicles and this includes all Carousel buses and all but 14 Arriva vehicles. In addition, legislation will mean all single deck buses are accessible by January 2016 and all double deckers by January 2017.

Recommendation 22

Better access to information about timetables for those who do not access the internet, and clearer information on the internet

Response from Transport for Buckinghamshire

We strive to ensure our Internet information is clear and accessible, and the Transport for Buckinghamshire Service Information Centre has won awards for this. We would welcome any specific comments as to how we could further improve the clarity of information.

We also produce comprehensive timetables in booklet form (also available in large print) that supplement the operators own publications. These are distributed widely across the county and we have a comprehensive network of distribution channels. Also, most bus stops have a printed timetable or electronic display. A recent national survey has ranked us 6th in the country for resident's satisfaction with Passenger Transport information. Again, we would welcome any specific details of how we could improve the information we produce within our budget.

Recommendation 23

Real time information in accessible format at bus stops. Take into account the needs of wheelchair users when setting the heights of the data boards, the effect of sunlight reflecting off the boards and the provision of audible announcements for those with visual impairment.

Response from Transport for Buckinghamshire

We will try to take more account of this need when locating displays. Our 'Ibis' real time display units already have audible timetables, but unfortunately the current range are not very user friendly, requiring pre-knowledge of exactly where to press the screen to get the audible display. We are working with the company that designs the units to resolve this for the next generation of display, and we are also trialling a retro-fit solution for the current ones.

Recommendation 24

The website Next Bus tells you which routes and which stops have wheel chair access, which is commendable. However times are given as number of minutes from the starting point of the route to the bus stop you want to use, making it complicated to work out in some cases.

Response from Transport for Buckinghamshire

The real time display gives the number of minutes the bus will take to get to the stop you are looking at, not the time from the start of the route. If the bus is not being tracked, then the display shows the scheduled arrival time.

Recommendation 25

Additional publicity needed on new arrangements for scooter users

Response from Transport for Buckinghamshire

We will liaise with the bus operators to clarify what wording they would like us to use and incorporate in any new publications as appropriate.

Note to Recommendation 1

National Planning Policy Framework - March 2012
Department for Communities and Local Government

<http://www.communities.gov.uk/documents/planningandbuilding/pdf/2116950.pdf>

35. Plans should protect and exploit opportunities for the use of sustainable transport modes for the movement of goods or people.

Therefore, developments should

- be located and designed where practical to accommodate the efficient delivery of goods and supplies
- give priority to pedestrian and cycle movements, and have access to high quality public transport facilities
- create safe and secure layouts which minimise conflicts between traffic and cyclists or pedestrians, avoiding street clutter and where appropriate establishing home zones
- incorporate facilities for charging plug-in and other ultra-low emission
- vehicles; and consider the needs of people with disabilities by all modes of transport.

50. To deliver a wide choice of high quality homes, widen opportunities for home ownership and create sustainable, inclusive and mixed communities, local planning authorities should:

- plan for a mix of housing based on current and future demographic trends, market trends and the needs of different groups in the community (such as, but not limited to, families with children, older people, people with disabilities, service families and people wishing to build their own homes)
- identify the size, type, tenure and range of housing that is required in particular locations, reflecting local demand;
- and where they have identified that affordable housing is needed, set policies for meeting this need on site, unless off-site provision or a financial contribution of broadly equivalent value can be robustly justified (for example to improve or make more effective use of the existing housing stock) and the agreed approach contributes to the objective of creating mixed and balanced communities. Such policies should be sufficiently flexible to take account of changing market conditions over time.

Appendix A

How WDC services engage with needs of those with a disability, both currently and planned for the future

Environment

Parking – Off Street car parks

- Disabled bays with extra room are provided in our car parks
- People with disabled badges can also use any bay within the car park. Carers and personal assistants are covered when accompanying the badge holder.
- Enforcement – Genuine disabled badge holders are provided all assistance and extra help if badges have expired or incorrectly displayed to avoid sanctions.
- Blue badge abuse is reported to the badge issuing authority to protect the disabled badge system integrity.
- We are investigating new technology in streamlining parking systems and control for car parks and disabled issues will be evaluated and considerations explored regarding future options.

Assisted waste collection

Assisted waste collections for residents with disabilities are available, this entails the contractors going onto the property taking the bins to the vehicle and emptying them and then returning to the agreed collection point, this is known as a “collect and return service”.

Public toilets

Toilet sites are available with facilities for disabled throughout the district although not all sites have this access is by use of radar key.

Private sector housing team

The Private Sector Housing team in the Environmental Services division engages with people with disabilities, including children, and the elderly by providing information, advice and assistance by ensuring that they can gain access to and facilities within their home.

Disabled Facilities Grant (DFG)

There is a mandatory statutory duty placed on the council to provide financial aid by way of a Disabled Facilities Grant (DFG) to provide adaptations to homes occupied by disabled people. These adaptations include Level Access showers, ramps and stair lifts. This assistance is ‘means tested’ (except for children) to ensure that the most vulnerable are not disadvantaged. Each DFG is to a maximum of £30,000

Any proposed works must be supported by Bucks County Council Occupational Therapy Service (the Welfare Authority) confirming that the works are necessary and appropriate to meet the disabled person’s needs. Wycombe are then required to determine whether the works are Reasonable and Practical.

A county wide group, comprising of Aylesbury Vale D.C., Chiltern D.C., South Bucks D.C., Wycombe D.C., Occupational Therapy Service, and the larger Registered Providers meets quarterly to exchange ideas, information and best working practices to ensure that there is a consistent and joined up approach throughout the county. A protocol has been agreed and implemented ensuring that all parties are aware of the others responsibilities.

With the constant realignment of services and staff the group has been able to mitigate any shortfalls by reviewing the working practices.

At the operational level good working relations are in place with the Occupational Therapists so ensuring that the disabled person needs are identified and met as soon as possible.

These DFG's have been in this form since 1989 when 'means testing' was introduced. The works are funded by a yearly contribution from Government (£482,000 for 2011/12) and from the councils capital funds (approx £409,000 for 2011/12). We have yet to be informed of next years (2012/13) allocation from Government but the council have provisionally agreed a five year programme of £800,000/£805,000 which will include any allocation. It should be noted that within this total other assistance may be funded e.g. Energy efficiency works

There has been no notification that the DFG mandatory requirement will be altered although we have been advised that the way the Government calculates their allocation to Councils may be reviewed.

Within the system there is approx £390,000 committed with a potential spend of approx £800,000 within the system.

Home Independence Grant

We are also able to help disabled people quickly with small works to their homes to enable them to be discharged from hospital quickly or indeed stop them being admitted. An example was to replace the shag pile carpet with laminated flooring to allow a disabled person to propel their wheelchair.

At present the limit is set at £500 but consideration is being given to increasing this to £1,000. This form of assistance is financed from the £800/850,000 mentioned above.

Flexible Home Improvement Loan

Wycombe is a founder member of a consortium of 15 Local Authorities that has successfully bid to Government for funding to help elderly (over 60 years of age) homeowners to carry out improvements works to their home. This assistance is in the form of an equity loan at a competitive interest rate

The original bid was for £14m some two/three years ago. There has been no indication that any of this monies will need to be returned, in fact additional monies for another project has been successfully bid for. This money will be available until spent but as it is a loan the balance of the fund should increase in the longer term.

Property Services

Property Services interact with providing services for people with disabilities in three areas:

Estate Management

This is the management of the investment property estate. There are occasional requests from groups representing or supporting people with disabilities to lease or acquire properties. These are considered sympathetically alongside our duty to obtain best price reasonable obtainable for our income generating portfolio. The team are also involved in adaption of properties for access and use by people with disabilities, either by giving Landlord's consent or instigating adaption work at a tenant's request

Facilities Management

This service manages and maintains the Council's operational property. A budget is held to allow adaption of public buildings for disabled people's use based on access audits carried out in conjunction with the Council's Access Officer. The team work with other Council departments, mainly Community, to ensure the needs of people with disabilities are accounted for in any work done. Recent examples are the adaption of lifts at WDC and the Swan MSCP to comply with the latest recommendations on disabled access.

Major Projects

The needs of people with disabilities are taken into account in the development of major projects. This is done through the initial public consultation exercise as well as direct contacts with representative groups. Final design is also scrutinised during the planning process to ensure compliance with legislation.

Homes and Housing

In terms of strategic housing and enabling, the District Council's Housing Service has supported funding bids to the Homes and Communities Agency by Registered Providers for the development of supported housing for people with disabilities – programmes in partnership with Buckinghamshire County Council. The Housing Service also continues to engage with Steve Goldensmith at Buckinghamshire County Council regarding supported housing issues.

The Housing Options team works closely with the County and other professionals to identify the needs of clients in order to make an appropriate allocation to the client. All applications to the housing register are welcome and each individual will be assessed on their needs

The allocation of social housing is made to enable the applicant to be able to live independently, sometimes with support which is often provided through a care package.

As long as the Council has a statutory duty to maintain a housing register, we envisage that we will be working more in partnership with others as there will always be vulnerable people in need of housing who need help to find suitable accommodation.

Democratic Legal and policy Services

Communications

We have a website that has been tested for accessibility
Our publications are available in large print.

Democratic Services

Councillors are entitled to claim for carer allowances.

We do make specific arrangements for meetings when requested, for example, sign-language interpreters have been used in the past.

Community Services

Community Safety

Community Safety is a service dealing with crime, disorder and Anti Social Behaviour. Work is delivered in Partnership. We offer the same approach to all people.

If we had a request for anything special we would investigate and provide an alternative approach if appropriate.

CCTV

This service undertakes monitoring public space CCTV. Operators will respond to help point calls and assist all members of the public.

Operators will 'keep an eye' on any one who appears to be struggling for whatever reason to ensure we protect these individuals - this may include people with a disability but will also include people who are temporarily less capable of looking after themselves through drink or drugs.

Equalities

Support to members of the public with disability related issues. (If they phone or use the equality mailbox).

Advertising of external organisations and their events via WySpace and the internet (NAS mainly, but others are included in the Equality Framework).

Overseeing of projects, policies etc via Equality Impact Assessments, working to ensure that the 3 aims of the Public Sector Equalities Duty are met.

Grants

There are no organisations in receipt of small community support grants that specifically supply services to people with disabilities and their carers. Of the large revenue grants, there are 5 organisations:

- Age UK Bucks
- HW Citizens Advice Bureau
- Community Impact Bucks (indirectly through organisations they assist)
- Shopmobility
- Dial a Ride

LEISURE CENTRES

Automatic entrance doors at all leisure centres

Wycombe Sports Centre

Facility - Access ramp, Lift, a section of low counter for Wheel Chair Users, Disabled toilet / changing area. Disabled pool side hoist

Activities

WADSAD – meets alternate Sunday evenings using a variety of facilities

Horizons – club meets weekly

Around 35% discount for specific groups

Discount – Leisure Card (depending on circumstances). Carers swim free. Disability Swim charged at standard discount rate.

Court Garden Leisure Complex

Facility - Access ramp at CGLC to Court Garden House allows access to Leisure Complex. Rear of Centre via Higginson Park through to Café ramp does not conform to DDA compliance.

Evacuation chairs. Fire doors held open on magnets to assist access.

Disabled pool side hoist. Lift.

A section of low counter for wheel chair users

Disabled toilet / shower facilities

Activities

Discount – Leisure Card (depending on circumstances). Carers swim free. Disability Swim charged at standard discount rate.

PHAB – disability social club meets weekly

Risborough Springs Swim & Fitness Centre

Facilities – One level throughout building.

Disabled toilet / shower area / changing area

A section of low counter for Wheel Chair Users

Poolside hoist

Activities

Discount – Leisure Card (depending on circumstances). Carers swim free. Disability Swim charged at standard discount rate.

Carers free on most activities. Disability Swim Session

Wycombe Resource Zone

No ramp access – although wheeled entry is possible through main door
Volunteers include people with disabilities

Woodlands Service

Volunteers and sessions are accessible. Links to local organisations exist to run regular weekly sessions with adult social care. Work with the pupil referral unit.

Access points into woods have mobility friendly gates and paths are made as accessible as the landscape will allow and this includes increasing the number with steps on very steep sections.

HALLS AND COMMUNITY CENTRES

Reggie Gove Centre

Automatic front door
Accessible ground floor and toilet

Small lift to first floor with limited access to first floor

Guildhall

Automatic front door

Accessible toilets

Lift to first floor

Castlefield Community Centre

Automatic front door

Accessible toilets

Museum

- We have sloping paths and ramps to the front door and to all learning and exterior store spaces
- All ground floor doorways sufficiently wide for wheel chair use
- Full equipped disabled accessible WC internal to the museum
- Steps are all equipped with handrails and are gently pitched; flood lit in evenings
- Car park has a dedicated disabled parking space
- Signposted drop off point part way up driveway allows wheel chair users to disembark to use long sloping path to front
- Induction loop available to carry around for use with AV aids in gallery
- Stairs to first floor have yellow nosings and double handrails; every attempt has been made to investigate means of providing direct access to first floor for walking impaired visitors and the current plans for relocation of the museum arise in large part because of the impossibility of making sufficient alteration to the building to accommodate his need.

- Reminiscence boxes were prepared during 2010/11 for use with elderly groups in care home or other settings
- The Informal Learning team remains responsive to all invitations to develop events of possible special interest to disabled individuals or groups; the current lottery bid will also target activity and events on such groups
- Redevelopment of the museum following the HLF bid will provide comprehensive new facilities to extend the use of induction loops, alternative means of communication such as QR panels, sound guides and feelie tours

Health Promotion

Support Movers and Shakers project with partners.

Support local Older Persons Action Groups and have representative on Older Peoples Partnership.

Two Health Fairs run annually.

Green Space

Kingsmead, The Rye, The Cemetery and Gossmore Rec Ground

We have several changing rooms with disabled shower areas including Shelley Recreation Ground, The Rye, Hazlemere and Kingsmead.

We also provide items of play equipment suitable for disabled access across our sites.

Several of our recreation grounds also have disabled parking bays.

Arts Development

The Arts Development service is a district council responsibility but works closely on projects in partnership with other local authorities in Buckinghamshire through joined up working. In our arts project planning we assess the needs of all service users including people with disabilities.

Examples:

- 1) In consultation with our Access Officer we work with operators of our Arts buildings such as Wycombe Swan and Arts4Every1 to help them to meet the physical and programme needs of disabled people. We require reporting on this either through client/officer meetings or through performance indicators. In the case of Wycombe Swan we have DDA works programme.
- 2) For our one-off arts projects, in consultation with other providers, we do risk assessments which integrate the needs of all our service users including people with disabilities
- 3) We advise when requested by 3rd party arts organisations that wish to engage specifically with people with disabilities in their projects either in consultation with our Equality Officer or through knowledge of providers

Arts Development service engages as follows:

- Devised in partnership with other Buckinghamshire local authorities (Creative Bucks) a 3 year project which brought inward investment to Buckinghamshire from Arts Council and Legacy Trust. In the project called Driving Inspiration* we worked with

Paralympians, disabled artists, and disabled and non disabled students at Cressex School.

- We require Wycombe Swan to report on how its management is addressing access. DDA is an agenda item in each Wycombe Swan quarterly client officer mtgs. And in 2010/11 we carried out refresh works which included works to enable the building to be DDA compliant where it hadn't previously.
- Art at the Shelter project with Wycombe Museum and Wycombe Homeless Connection is working with a number homeless people that have mental health issues.
- Working with Signdance Collective (disabled dance organisation based at Bucks New University in Wycombe) which includes ensuring they are part of the development of Arts4Every1. Signdance Collective regularly performs at the Arts4Every1 centre.
- With local artists targets specialist groups. A local artist runs weekly art sessions with Wycombe Mind and we have contracted her to work on the Art at the Shelter project with us.
- With Garsington Opera who want to target Special Schools in setting up their Community Opera Group

The above examples are typical of work done and similar will be done in the future because the Arts is an area that can engage very well with people with disabilities

Sports Development

Holiday Activities – All holiday activities advertised are through local sports clubs, the vast majority of which are accessible for people with disabilities

2012 Projects – We actively seek to engage and educate young people through disability sport. Recent examples include the Stoke Mandeville Experience days, run with WheelPower, where over 120 children took part in wheelchair basketball, rugby and a historical tour of the stadium. We have also commissioned work to Ian Rose, the 5 time Paralympic Judo Competitor, who will deliver visually impaired judo sessions to over 600 Secondary School children.

Grants – Our sports grants, individual grants and Sir Steve Redgrave grant schemes are all available to disability groups, providing they meet the criteria in the application forms.

Sports Awards – Our sports awards, due to start in 2012, will be open to disability groups for all categories (including coach of the year, volunteer, young volunteer, project, club and the lifetime achievement award).

Coach Education – Our coach education booklet, produced with Bucks Sport, incorporates the disability awareness courses but for all courses, we ensure that the venue used is accessible.

Sports Club Development – The Sports Accreditation Award is available to all clubs, including disability clubs or clubs with a disability section.

Active Universities – Working with Bucks New University, all projects are open to all students and community members.

School Games – The competitions are run through the School's with the Sports Development Teams assistance and there are specific competitions for disability groups.

Live Site – The Community Festival on The Rye (August 5th) will be open access with tracked walkways and disabled parking to ensure that all people have equal opportunity to view the big screen or the stage areas.

Bucks Legacy Project – The LOCOG Inspire Marked project, endorsed by Sir Steve Redgrave, has numerous local events and clubs that cater for people with disabilities and are clearly marked within the publication.

Tourism

Princes Risborough Tourist Information Centre (TIC), Marlow TIC & HW TIC

- All offices have sufficient width doors to allow access for wheelchairs
- All office internal layouts have been tested and comply with wheelchair accessibility
- Disabled toilet available at HW TIC only, but there are disabled toilets within a close proximity to other 2 offices.
- We have a 'lower access' counter available at all offices
- All information is displayed at a reasonable level to allow everyone to be able to reach and access it
- All posters we create meet the needs of the DDA using the correct font and colour schemes etc.
- We offer the same service to all visitors no matter what disability they have but will adapt it to suit where necessary.
- Hearing loop available at HW only at present
- Princes Risborough and Marlow offer a wide range of information on disability benefits and other information

Planning & Sustainability

Spatial Planning

District responsibility:

Scope of work

- Planning Policy: production of the Wycombe Development Framework (statutory planning policy for the district), and input to regional planning policy and county/local transport strategy
- Research and Information: monitoring of development, progress with WDF delivery, etc
- Provision of specialist technical advice on conservation, trees, landscape planning, and ecology/biodiversity
- Environmental Co-ordination: corporate work on the promotion of sustainability and drafting of sustainability policy

Current level of engagement and service provision

There is no data/information available that suggests the service is affecting particular groups of people as it impacts on everyone.

Particular efforts are made to promote:

- Checking of all policy wording in the WDF for consistency and that where opportunities for the provision of development / services in line with the seven equality strands, including disability, have been identified, that these are reflected within policies.

There is a requirement to engage/involve all sectors of the community including those which are identified as 'hard to reach'. Experience to date suggests that effective engagement with these sectors remains low.

All leaflets are available in large print upon request.

Future Plans

Consultations are evaluated to determine whether improvements can be achieved in future rounds of consultation for the WDF and other planning policy documents.

The wording in the customer charter for the service will be reviewed to reflect the accessibility to the service for all user groups

Development Management

District responsibility:

Scope of Work

- provision of Planning Regulation Advice,
- processing Planning Regulation applications, consultations and notifications,
- pro-active compliance/ reactive enforcement action,

- pro-active Urban Design, and,
- defend the Council's decisions against Appeals (Public Inquiries, Hearings & Written Representations)

Current level of engagement and service provision

There is no data/information available that suggests the service is affecting particular groups of people as it impacts on everyone. But suitable accessibility is considered for all planning applications.

Extensive public consultation is integral part of the work and Planning Notices are printed on a matt yellow paper to assist those with visual impairment.

Currently legislation enables planning application fees to be reduced for those with disabilities.

The planning web pages have been reviewed and more information is now provided on line.

All leaflets are available in large print upon request.

Future plans

The wording in the customer charter for the service will be reviewed to reflect the accessibility to the service for all user groups

Building Control

District responsibility:

Scope of Work

- To ensure building work complies with the minimum standards of Health, safety and welfare under the Building Regulations (this includes provision for inclusive accessibility)
- Street Naming and Numbering
- Dealing with dangerous structures, demolition

Current level of engagement and service provision

Equalities questionnaire carried out of Building Regulation applicants for several years until 2008 when it was amalgamated with the customer satisfaction questionnaire in 2010. The results do not suggest that people with disabilities are any less satisfied or treated less favourably than non disabled customers.

Where adaptations to buildings for people with disabilities are covered by a Disabled Facilities Grant, liaison between the two departments helps "smooth the process" for the applicant.

Where work is solely for the benefit of a disabled person, the legislation exempts this work from Building Regulation charge.

All leaflets are available in large print upon request.

In circumstances where a person who is elderly and/or has a disability and is unable to access the service adequately whether in person, on the internet or on the telephone, we

can arrange home visits or to another location (eg area office) to discuss the Building Control process and help with forms and give advice.

It is important to note that customers can chose the Private Sector for Building Control and so not all building projects are “supervised” by Wycombe District Council, however, both private and public sector Building Control apply the same Building Regulation requirements

Future plans

Customer survey including equality survey just ended for Street Naming and Numbering service. Results to be examined to identify levels of customer satisfaction and any differing levels of satisfaction from minority groups, including those who have disabilities - further action will depend on the results.

Response will be provided on the government consultation on changes to Part M (inclusive access) of the Building Regulations.

The wording in the customer charter for the service will be reviewed to reflect the accessibility to the service for all user groups

Human Resources, Information & Communications Technology, Customer Services

Monitoring

- The Council monitors the following in terms of age and disability:
 - Recruitment and selection activity
 - Make up of the workforce
 - Access to training and development
 - Incidents of harassment and bullying
 - Benefits and reward
 - Disciplinary and grievance cases
 - Reasons of employees leaving the Council’s employment
- The Council benchmarks itself comparator authorities in terms of the proportion of its employees who are disabled/in management positions
- An employee disability survey is carried out every two years and anomalies addressed individually
- Every three years the Council undertakes an Investors in People formal review where the assessor interviews a cross section of staff across the Council. The assessor collects evidence across various indicators which include equalities

Recruitment

- The Council holds the “Positive about Disabled People” award given by Job Centre Plus to employees who have agreed to take action to meet five commitments regarding the employment, retention, training and career development of disabled employees.
- The recruitment website conforms to web content guidelines. On-line applications allow for wide participation. Applicants may request a hard copy application form if desired. Accessibility checks are made on the format and language of the forms.
- The application process includes a commitment to shortlist disabled people who meet the minimum criteria and allows for reasonable adjustments to the process. Adjustments to premises, equipment or working practices may be made to enable a person with a disability to carry out the work.
- A health check is made on take up of post and any reasonable adjustments required identified and implemented.

Through the lifecycle of the employee

- A range of people management policies help to support protected groups including:
 - Stress management policy
 - Sickness absence and ill health policy and procedure
 - Grievance policy
 - Fair Treatment at Work Policy
 - Equalities and Diversity – Employment Statement
- The Council will make any reasonable adjustments required over the life cycle of the employee. Advice is taken from the occupational health service and from experts such as the British Dyslexia Association as required
- Software provided to support staff with special needs includes screen readers for the visually impaired and voice recognition software for employees with difficulties using the keyboard
- Where possible The Council will aim to retain the services of an existing employee who becomes disabled through adjustments and/or consideration of suitable alternative work and appropriate training.
- Sickness absence is managed in accordance with equality principles. Manager’s identifying any underlying medical conditions will consider reasonable adjustments which can be made, for example changes to working practices, patterns or workload.

Staff Training

- “Valuing Others” diversity training was delivered to all staff between 2008-2010
- Other training available to staff includes:
 - Disability Awareness
 - Deaf Awareness and Sign language
 - Hidden Disabilities Awareness

- Autism Awareness
- Dementia Awareness
- Safeguarding Vulnerable Adults
- Equal Opportunities and Child Protection
- Equality Impact Assessments
- Stress awareness for staff and managers
- Preparation for retirement
- The Council's e-learning system E-Train conforms to disability guidelines and incorporates screen readers for the visually impaired

Building

- There are designated parking bays for disabled people at the front and rear of the building
- The Council's main reception area is wheelchair accessible
- Accessibility guidelines are published for meeting rooms. Many are wheelchair accessible and have hearing loops available.
- A wheelchair platform stair lift allows access to the Council Chamber and the Committee rooms
- Evacuation Chairs are situated throughout the building to allow safe evacuation of those unable to use the stairs in the case of a fire
- Regular access audits are conducted. From these, improvement works are identified and action taken as appropriate. For example the passenger lift in office building C has been equipped with DDA compliant call buttons.

Customer Services Centre

- CSC recruitment policy promotes diversity and equality. The workforce is in balance with the community.
- Customer surveys which include equality data are conducted monthly and findings analysed and reported quarterly. The CSC use Service Mail to record comments, complaints and compliments. Each month these are reported on as part of monitoring Northgate's contract with the Council. Any relating to equalities are monitored by the Community Development Officer and the Strategic Equalities Group.
- Monthly meetings are held with service areas to discuss operational issues, trends and matters arising, these meetings are documented and feedback is formally recorded and logged on a service area specific spreadsheet
- The CSC are part of a benchmarking group and measure performance including diversity against other group members on a quarterly basis
- CSC staff undergo an annual e-learning diversity workshop and assessment
- The CSC offer various adjustments for customers which include hearing loops, a signing officer, visual and auditory announcements for visitors, private interview rooms and a floor walking service

Appendix B

Feedback from the Physical and Sensory Disability Partnership Board meeting held on 26 July 2012

Attended by Cllr Brian Pollock and Ted Piker

During discussion the following comments were received.

Added note:
The following includes points that relate to districts as well as points that refer to Buckinghamshire as a whole

Transport

- Access to transport is poor.
- There is a lack of public transport services where needed i.e. villages.
- There are problems with mobility scooter access on public transport
- Taxis are hard to get and are expensive. Councillor Pollock explained that any new licensed taxi has to have disability access. Comments about the charging structure will be fed back to the relevant department in Wycombe District Council as reports received have been about private hire vehicles.
- A voluntary sector organisation is providing Community Buses in the Risborough area (a registered bus service using volunteer drivers) as the disappearance of bus services in rural areas has multiplied.
- There is the need for real time information about public transport in an accessible format i.e. text messages

Employment

- There is the need for carer friendly and carer supported employment practices
- Respite for carers on a daily or long term basis needs to be provided. The Bucks Connect website signposts to services which provide respite for carers but only three homes cater for young people.
- Young people is an important area to look at as more and more young people are being diagnosed with multiple sclerosis and are on the disability register.
- People need to be educated on how they can access services.
- Young people need to be signposted to services who can give them advice on areas such as match funding and brokerage.
- There is a variable response from employers. What should employers be doing? Councillor Pollock advised that employment was not originally in the scope of the review as the ability to employ a disabled person fluctuates i.e. multiple sclerosis. The review is not about discrimination in particular areas; it is about what is accessible. Elaine Norris advised that The Access to Work programme is a

Jobcentre Plus grant scheme, which assists disabled people who are in paid employment, or with Job/Work Trial, by providing practical support in overcoming work related obstacles resulting from their disability. Access to Work grants will contribute to the additional employment costs.

Housing

- There is a gap in the general housing stock of the delivery of specialist housing. There needs to be closer working with planners and District Councils etc.
- Design standards in housing plans need to be addressed i.e. larger parking spaces and larger front doors.
- There is the need for dedicated wheelchair accessible housing.

Town Centres

- There needs to be an improvement in wheelchair access on paths and pavements. Mobility in general is important.
- A wheelchair can be tilted but a mobility scooter cannot. There needs to be dropped kerbs to accommodate mobility scooters.
- Pavements are very often obstructed by vehicles
- Shared surfaces in the town centre are of concern especially for those with sight impairment

Access to Information

- Access to information on the internet – should there be the provision of a generic service and a specific person/body to contact to give help and assistance.
- Could libraries supply this service for the elderly without a charge?
- Outreach provides excellent services and advice. They can give a good insight into how things work.
- In general the ability to access information is variable. The DWP provide very good support.
- UK Online co-ordinate the network of community based UK online centres across England, which assist people in getting started with computers and the internet.

Appendix C

Notes from Visit to Northampton Centre for Independent Living 28 June 2012

Northamptonshire Centre for Independent Living
Gladstone Road Resource Centre
Gladstone Road
Northampton
NN5 7EJ
Tel: 01604 588501
Website: www.northamptonshirecil.org.uk

Present

Cllr Brian Pollock

Alison Lewis

Sandra Masini

Viv Pollock

Ted Piker

Mick Dillon, Chief Executive, The Disability Resource Centre

Ashley Poulton, CIL Manager

John Smith, CIL Disability Rights & Inclusion Officer

The Northampton Centre for Independent Living is funded from Northamptonshire County Council

Life Choices for Disabled People - Legislation in 2005/2006

By 2010 all first tier authorities should have Centres for Independent Living

They have a user scrutiny panel with 12 trustees

County council role is to promote personalisation

District council role is information and advice led

Due to geographical proximity, some people from Buckinghamshire use the Disability Resource Centre in Dunstable

Further information can be found at www.drcbeds.co.uk Tel 01582 470900

The service delivery at the Northamptonshire CIL is staffed as follows:

1) Information & Equipment Officers

Equipment Service

A Service that facilitates access to technical aids and daily living equipment including demonstrations of low level equipment allowing customers to have more choice and control. The service will also be able to signpost to other local and national sources as well as developing assessable information libraries.

2) Welfare Benefits Officers

Information and Advice Service

A countywide DIAL UK and ADVICE UK accredited independent disability information and advice service to Disabled People, their Carers, family and advisors.

The service will embrace the full breadth of disabilities, including but not restricted to, physical and sensory impairments, mental health and learning disabilities, which are experienced within the county.

3) Carers Information Officer

Enhanced Carers Information Service

A dedicated service within the CIL, which acts as a focal point for free and independent information and advice for Family Carers (i.e. informal Carers) normally resident in Northamptonshire. The service is promoted countywide throughout the CIL Disability Information, Outreach and Welfare Benefits services and facilitates the Carers Voice group.

4) Disability Rights & Inclusion Officer

Disability Rights Service (collective advocacy)

A focal point for Disabled People throughout Northamptonshire to understand their rights and equal opportunities, as well as improving awareness, understanding and respect for Disability People's rights by non-disabled people. The service addresses individual and collective issues where discrimination may prevent access to a service or environment within the community. The Disability Rights Officer also delivers a planned programme of talks and training to a range of stakeholders, service providers and customers.

5) Direct Payment Support Workers

Personal Budget and Direct Payment Support Service

A service that supports and enables Disabled People to take on and employ Personal Assistants

6) Payroll and Holding Accounts Administrators

Points covered in discussion

- A Payroll Service for people employing personal assistants from timesheet to payslip.

- There are 24 members of staff (only few are full time) as well as volunteers.
- There is a good tie-in between equipment advice and welfare advice.
- Although clients are encouraged to use the normal drop-in days, the CIL is very flexible in responding to people coming in on other days.
- It is still a challenge to ensure that people know we are here.
- We provide outreach at public events to promote the service.
- We do home visits.
- There is an equipment user group
- There is a user led organisation for the housing needs of those with a learning disability
- We speak up for those who do not have a voice
- John Smith, Disability Rights & Inclusion Officer who works 16 hours over 3 days said that some clients do not know their access rights or who is their care manager
- John mentioned the five principles for better information for disabled people.
 - 1 Ensure that disabled people are involved from the start.
 - 2 Provide information through a range of channels and formats.
 - 3 Ensure your information meets users' needs.
 - 4 Clearly signpost other services.
 - 5 Always define responsibility for information provision.

Taken from the toolkit for local authorities to help them producing better information for disabled people

<http://odi.dwp.gov.uk/docs/wor/imp/toolkit.pdf>

Appendix D

Consultation meeting held in Marlow on Thursday, 24th May 2012

Improving services to adults in Wycombe district with disabilities

Scope

To gather insights and narratives from service users and providers, in order to identify areas of improvement in service delivery within Wycombe district.

This invitation was sent to those with physical disability, sensory loss, learning difficulties, and to those with access needs because of mental health or growing older.

Invites were sent to service users included elderly local residents and people with:

- Physical disabilities
- Sensory loss
- Learning difficulties
- Mental health issues

Of those attending, the largest group was ten (10) people with access needs living in Marlow

Members of the TFG expressed their particular appreciation of the attendance by the Chairman of the Physical and Sensory Disability Partnership Board who is also the Joint Planning and Commissioning Manager

Others who attended were representatives of the following:

- Carers Bucks
- Local representative of AGE UK
- Connection (part of Bucks Floating Support)
- District coordinator of befriending service
- Community Occupational Therapist
- Bucks Connect
- Aureus Care
- Cressex Supported Solutions

The following WDC elected members attended and assisted with the event:

- Cllr Matt Knight
- Cllr Brian Pollock
- Cllr Paula Lee

Also attending:

- Alison Lewis, co-opted member of review group
- Sandra Masini, personal assistant to Alison Lewis
- Ian Cormack, co-opted member of review group

- Mrs Viv Pollock
- Ted Piker, WDC Scrutiny Support Officer
- Carolina Lindahl, Engagement Officer, WDC

The meeting focused around two questions which participants were encouraged to discuss in smaller groups of 5-7 people:

- What services are working well?
- What services need to be different or improved so that there is independent living is made more possible?

The following comments were made by participating services users and providers during the group discussions:

What services are working well?

- Park & Ride buses – brilliant service, essential that there is free parking (? For blue badge holders?) and a continuation of the excellent circular route if moved to the coachway/leisure centre
- Marlow ‘Town Bus’ service takes people to Maidenhead and High Wycombe and around Marlow. The drivers are very obliging and drop people off at surgeries and near their own house. It’s a very flexible service.
- Dial-a-Ride is good although limited hours
- New leisure centre could have high dependency toilet (with hoist) included
- Sheltered accommodation – the availability of bungalows is good
- Good access to Swan
- Information Office in Marlow-Very useful
- Hub Lunch Clubs – Wednesday
- Movers & Shakers
- The befriending service - fantastic for vulnerable people.
- Age UK Offer (toe nail cutting service, hairdressing and handyman)
- Blue Badge
- Red Cross Transport
- Advice from Council very good re benefits, housing, etc.
- Age Concern – good benefit advice and information line.
- Extra parking places on Marlow High Street.

What services need to be different or improved so that there is independent living is made more possible?

Health, Social and Employment Needs

- Need to keep services at Wycombe Hospital. Amersham & Stoke Mandeville are too difficult to access for disabled.
- Hospital and community health care workers passing jobs to carers
- Concerns over new arrangements for public transport from Wycombe Hospital to Stoke Mandeville
- Lack of referrals by GPs to organisations from GPs
- Day Services by BCC being cut, especially mental health. Can WDC (in partnership) make more facilities available e.g. day centres, drop-in, craft, etc.
- We need a decent lunch club in High Wycombe for vulnerable people – with transport.
- Not satisfied with social housing for the those with a disability and the elderly
- More nursing home care for younger people with disabilities, so not stuck in home with the very elderly
- Improve access to leisure centres
- Holywell Mead – long walk from London Road if coming by public transport

Buses and Taxis

- Taxi services lack of accessible vehicles, need for voluntary code of conduct. Taxis difficult to get on school days
- Need for voluntary code of conduct
- Some drivers reportedly start the meter as they begin to assist the wheelchair user – they should not start the meter until they are ready to depart
- Taxis (Hackney Cab) /Private Hire - There was one example given of a private hire firm charging an exorbitant charge for a return journey in an allegedly accessible vehicle. The electric wheelchair had to be manhandled at the top of the ramp into the vehicle, because the gradient of the ramps was too steep and so it grounded.
- People felt that there should be statutory enforceable regulation on these vehicles both in terms of price and accessibility
- Taxis should be allowed to stop in unauthorised areas to drop off disabled without interference from parking wardens.
- Accessible buses – not frequent enough on all routes.

- One guest complained that Arriva buses don't pull close enough into kerbs to enable more infirm passengers to get onto the bus easily as they should do.

Access to buildings

- A recent example was given of the conversion Sainsbury's had undertaken in Marlow to the store that had been Waitrose. Previously there had been level access to the store, which had been ideal for disability access. Now there are steps up into the store and although a ramp had been provided this takes people straight up into the congested till area, which was not ideal.
- Shops – not enough room in aisles, Marks & Spencer (new shop) very poor disabled access.
- Educate shop owners on requirements on requirements/attitude towards people with disability.
- WDC be active in casting their eye over plans particularly of buildings used by the general public, such as shops and Post Offices and to proactively use their expertise, good offices and influence to ensure that best practice disability access will be achieved, before the building work actually starts.
- Sheltered accommodation bungalows for disabled – too small if there is a lot of equipment needed (wheelchair, hoists)
- Shower modifications provided by Council – carers get soaked and the pump system extremely noisy.

Access to information

- There needs to be some sort of standard induction/information pack given to disabled and elderly people by councils when they first contact them to give them the relevant information and how to make a comment, make a complaint or seek advice.
- This should be a proactive process, as otherwise many of these people would not be reached.
- Mobile Advisor from WDC on housing, benefit etc to visit vulnerable people at home.
- It was emphasised that most older disabled people in their 80's and 90's did not use the internet to access information, but increasingly, on grounds of cost, that is the only place that statutory authorities place certain information.
- WDC's automated telephone helpline re Council Tax Benefit and Housing Benefit were said by a professional attending the event to be very difficult and frustrating to use even for her and she felt many customers would find it impossible to use. Difficult to get through to the right person at Customer Service Centre
- One lady, who had a visual disability said that what she had difficulty with nowadays was reading her bank statements and similar documents. The problem was that this can be very confidential information and she wanted someone trustworthy and independent to help her with this. It was suggested that Bucks Vision might be able to offer help in this respect, but also that it is the sort of minor individual help to maintain independence, which might be addressed through the new Prevention programme.

Access around and about

- Shopmobility in High Wycombe – lack of dedicated free car parking.
- Need more disabled bays in Parade at Bourne End and the signage and painted lines need improvements.
- Parking on pavement (especially Frogmoor/Crendon Street) hard for wheelchairs to get past. Paving slabs in poor state of repair, not enough supervision on works carried out badly. Wheelchairs hard to push in town centre due to surface.
- Generally, High Wycombe Town Centre was seen as been being more accessible than Marlow Town Centre to people either walking with walkers or using wheelchairs and mobility scooters. High Wycombe Town Centre – the older shops are not very accessible
- Adverse cambers often sloping outwards towards the carriageway could cause discomfort and danger of lurching out into the road. Dropped curbs needed to be at the corner of the road junction and this was not always the case
- Tree roots and uneven paving stones could make pavements uneven and dangerous to a person with a walker or a wheelchair.
- Particular mention was made about free standing shopkeepers advertising boards on shopping streets in Marlow, which could make the pavement like an obstacle course. These obstructions are often placed on level pieces of pavement forcing disabled pavement users out onto adverse cambers. One guest said that she felt the police should stop them doing it.
- One attendee, who lived in Marlow did all her shopping in High Wycombe. She said that Shopmobility in High Wycombe was really helpful and would bring a mobility scooter out to her and the shops and pavements were more accessible. She felt Shopmobility in Marlow was in the wrong place in Court Gardens and that it's not really any good for mobility scooters in Marlow.

Questions Raised

- How are access issues dealt with now that the role of the previous access officer has changed?
- Is there a WDC area facility in Bourne End as in Marlow and Princes Risborough?

Commitment to a follow up meeting

Cllr Brian Pollock asked those attending if they would like a follow up meeting in the autumn to be briefed on the recommendations that arose from the meeting and other work of the TFG, as well as how those recommendations were received and any commitments to action that were made as a result. Those assembled gave their enthusiastic support.

Appendix E

These documents were produced in 2006 and 2007

Recommendation 8 in the report is that Wycombe District Council updates the guidance and implements it throughout all its' services.

WDC Disability Guidance – Leaflet No. 1

MAKING WRITTEN INFORMATION ACCESSIBLE

Why should I make information accessible?

We should produce our information in a way that ALL our customers and staff can read because:

... it's fair –

- Deaf, Blind or partially sighted people, or those with a learning disability should receive information that is accessible to them. Information enables all of us to make decisions and lead independent lives.

... it's the law –

- There is now a legal duty to meet the information needs of all of our customers following the implementation of Section 21 of the Disability Discrimination Act in October 1999.

... it makes business sense –

- There are two million people in the UK with a sight problem alone, plus many more who are deaf or have a learning disability and who may benefit from documents in plain English. (There are also those who have English as a second language and may find reading Plain English preferable). This is a sizeable customer base which must not be ignored. Meeting the needs of all our customers makes good business sense.

How can I make information accessible?

Blind and partially sighted people read information in different ways. For many partially sighted people, well-designed print information is all that's required.

For some who are deaf or have a learning disability clear print in Plain English with relevant images is beneficial.

How much does it cost?

Making information accessible is often cheaper and easier than many people think. When compared with how much the council spends on standard print information, the cost is probably very small, and adopting Clear Print guidelines can be done immediately.

Basic checklist to use when writing letters or reports (rules apply to both letters and numbers)

DO

- ✓ Ensure the typeface is at least 12 or above (Royal National Institute for the Blind recommends 14 point)
- ✓ Use a sans serif (plain) font (such as Arial regular or bold)
- ✓ Use text aligned to the left margin
- ✓ Use short sentences (max 20 words) and paragraphs
- ✓ Ensure that text contrasts clearly with the background (eg. Dark text on Light coloured paper)
- ✓ Use paper or laminate folders that have a matt finish
- ✓ Use plain English and avoid unnecessary jargon
- ✓ Use pictures to help explanation where necessary

DO NOT

- × use glossy paper as this can obscure print as a consequence of glare or reflection
- × use centrally aligned text (except for headings)
- × write whole words or sentences in capital letters (except occasional important words)
- × use unnecessary jargon or abbreviations
- × split words between two lines
- × underline text

- × use italics
- × overwrite images or photographs with text or other images

If producing large numbers of documents, or if you want to specifically target your document you may wish to use the following information in addition to that already listed.

DO

- ✓ Have 60–70 characters per line
- ✓ Allow enough space between columns and paragraphs
- ✓ Use a page layout that is clear and unfussy
- ✓ Use page numbers and headings consistently and in the same place on each page
- ✓ Separate paragraphs using line spacing, numbering, bullets etc
- ✓ Provide a contents list
- ✓ Write text horizontally
- ✓ Allow enough space for large hand written responses. Care should be taken when double siding that any tear off strip does not have important information on the reverse.
- ✓ Clearly and plainly describe images
- ✓ Place images next to the text they are explaining, but clearly separated
- ✓ Use a page size which is easy to handle
- ✓ Produce a document that can be flattened, so it can be placed under a scanner or magnifier
- ✓ Separate out elements of a page layout –headings, photos, illustrations text captions
- ✓ Use consistent features in one or a series of documents
- ✓ Use dark text on white or light coloured paper

- ✓ Choose paper that weights over 90gsm (a sheet of photocopying paper usually weighs 80gsm)

DO NOT

- × Have any uneven gaps between words or letters
- × Set text around shaped illustrations
- × Have folds that obscure the text
- × Print text too close to the page edge or centre of the spine

Other guidance

- If necessary split a line of text using two columns with a wide separator (gutter) or preferably a vertical line.
- Reversed type e.g. white type on a black background is not recommended, and you should always avoid switching between regular and reversed type
- For some people with a visual impairment core information is best conveyed through text and by use of white space, headings, boxes and ruled lines. For those where Plain English is most important pictures will really help explain the topic
- In a multi-page document consider using images to help the reader find their way around, e.g. insert one at the start of each section
- For illustrations Line drawings with thick, dark strokes or outlines are preferred by those with visual impairments
- For those with a visual impairment pictures such as pale watercolour paintings and abstract images are best avoided unless this is the purpose of the document
- Print Room can professionally recreate black and white or colour A4 documents as A3 (increasing font size by approx. 40%) – ask them for assistance

- For further guidance please contact Alan Switalski (Access Officer) on 01494 421438, or Claire Hook (Community development Officer) on 01494 421833
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This document was produced in July 2006 and will be reviewed annually, and reissued as required.

WDC Disability Guidance – Leaflet No. 2

SELECTING A VENUE

When organising a meeting or conference The Disability Discrimination Act 1995 requires that a venue is accessible to everyone.

The key thing is to ask invited people of their needs **before** the event, this way you will be able to determine which, from the following list, are most relevant to your meeting. It is also useful for you to know what is required before the meeting so that you don't waste effort in unnecessary provision.

However, for an open public meeting it is important to remember that anybody may turn up without previously informing you so you and your venue need to be prepared.

The following Checklist may help:

DO

- ✓ Provide invitations and joining instructions in clear English in a plain font of minimum size 12. All documentation should be available in larger print (large print is 16-22 point)
- ✓ Ensure that the paper is of sufficient quality and thickness so the print is easily readable if you need to print on both sides (90 gsm)
- ✓ Enquire about access requirements and if they will be bringing a personal assistant or be accompanied by an assistance dog. Arrangements should be made to provide water for the dog, and, if the meeting lasts for more than 2 hours the dog may need a place to exercise
- ✓ Enquire as to whether an interpreter or signer is needed
- ✓ Ensure the venue is accessible by public transport if attendees will be arriving this way
- ✓ Determine if there is a taxi rank near the bus and train station and ensure invitees know where these all are. It may be beneficial to arrange to meet a disabled person there
- ✓ Reserve parking bays as close to the entrance as possible - remember, a person with a disability is no more disabled than any other person when in a car, problems start when parking the car

- ✓ Check that parking bays have a transfer zone alongside and at the rear of the bay to allow for the safe unloading of a wheelchair or other equipment
- ✓ Check that the route from the parking area to the main entrance is level or gently ramped, and if being used at night time well lit - a building with level access is always the best option
- ✓ Check that any ramps leading to the entrance are as shallow as possible, with handrails on both sides to allow those who have limited use of one side of the body to use the rail. - A shallow ramp will allow a user of a manual wheelchair to access the building independently
- ✓ Provide access via automatic or semi automatic doors if possible
- ✓ Provide clear signs using symbols or plain English
- ✓ Consider having someone on the door to assist attendees into the building and direct them to the correct room
- ✓ Ensure the reception is at a wheelchair accessible height
- ✓ Ensure there are wheelchair accessible toilets in the building (minimum required size is 2m by 1.5m)
- ✓ Check that if there is a lift it is suitable, it should be 1100mm x 1400mm. If not, there needs to be a platform stair lift that can take a wheelchair and is equipped with a fold-down seat
- ✓ Provide an attendant to operate the lift and assist as required
- ✓ Ensure that all 'accessibility' equipment is in good working order, and that someone is available in the event of a break down
- ✓ Check the staircase has continuous handrails on both sides, treads whose rise do not exceed 170mm and going of 250mm, plus colour contrasted nosings - some people prefer steps to ramps
- ✓ Fit the room being used with a hearing induction loop, or other hearing enhancement system
- ✓ Ensure adequate circulation space is maintained to allow a person with a disability to access the seating area, refreshments and toilets

- ✓ Ensure that the speaker / presenter has full access to all equipment, and the stage if necessary
- ✓ Enquire about special dietary needs if providing food. E.g. Soft diet, gluten free, nut allergy. Food should be appropriately labelled

DO NOT

- × Use portable ramps unless as a last resort, and then only with assistance

- For further guidance please contact Alan Switalski (Access Officer) on 01494 421438, or Claire Hook (Community Development Officer) on 01494 421833
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WDC Disability Guidance – Leaflet No. 3

DIETARY REQUIREMENTS

Dietary requirements can be required on health or religious grounds, below are some guidelines to help you plan menus,

Gluten Free Diet

All foods that contain gluten must be excluded in this diet. Gluten is present in Wheat, Rye, Barley and Oats with wheat being the most common. This diet is very complicated due to the diverse range of food that has to be avoided. Wheat, rye, barley, oats and their flours are also used in staple foods such as bread, cakes, biscuits, pasta and breakfast cereals, these must also be excluded or a gluten free alternative used.

Foods that are naturally gluten free include rice, corn, soya, potato, pulses, fresh meat, fish, dairy products, fruit and vegetables.

Gluten free drinks include wine, cider, tea, coffee and fruit juices.

For more information visit: www.coeliac.co.uk

Wheat Free Diet

In this diet it is wheat that must be excluded and not gluten. Again Rye, barley and oats are suitable for a wheat free diet and can usually be eaten freely.

For more information visit: www.nutrition.org.uk

Soft Diet

Beverages – allowed All

Soups – allowed mildly seasoned broth, bouillon, or cream soup; strained vegetable soup

not allowed - bean, gumbo, split pea, or onion soup; chunky soups or chowders

Meats – allowed any moist, tender meats, fish, or poultry (lamb, veal, chicken, turkey, tender beef, liver stewed pork); eggs (see exceptions); creamy peanut butter.

not allowed Fried chicken or fish; fish with bones; shellfish; fried, salted, or smoked meats; sausage; cold cuts; raw or fried eggs; dried beans; nuts and seeds

Dairy - allowed all low-fat milk products, smooth yogurt, mild-flavoured cheese, cottage cheese

not allowed (avoid milk if lactose-intolerant), yogurt with nuts or seeds, sharp or strong cheeses, cheeses with whole seeds or spices

Fruits – allowed cooked or canned fruit, soft, fresh banana or avocado, fruit juice **not allowed** all raw fruit (except banana or avocado), dried fruit (dates, raisins), and coconut

Vegetables – allowed soft-cooked or canned vegetables (see exceptions), fresh lettuce or tomato, potatoes (mashed, baked, boiled, or creamed), vegetable **not allowed** gas-forming vegetables (broccoli, brussell sprouts, cabbage, cauliflower, cucumber, green pepper, onion turnip), whole kernel corn, raw vegetables (except lettuce or tomato), fried vegetables, french fries, hash browns

Grains - allowed Refined cooked or ready-to-eat cereal; refined white, wheat, or rye bread, rolls, or crackers; plain white rice; pasta **not allowed** whole-grain breads and cereals (bran, rye with seeds, or whole wheat); breads or rolls with coconut, raisins, nuts, or seeds

Fats - allowed butter, margarine, mild salad dressing, mayonnaise, gravy, cream, cream substitute, sour cream, vegetable oil **not allowed** Spicy salad dressings, fried foods

Desserts and Sweets - allowed smooth ice cream, ice milk, or frozen yogurt; sherbet; fruit ices; custards; puddings; cake or cookies made without nuts or coconut **not allowed** desserts or candy made with dried fruit, nuts, coconut; candied fruit; peanut brittle

Seasonings - allowed ketchup; cheese, cream, tomato, or white sauces; soy sauce; chopped or ground leaf herbs **not allowed** garlic, horseradish, chilli powder, whole or seed herbs and spices, barbeque or cajun seasonings, worcestershire sauce

Vegan Diet

The vegan diet completely excludes all animal products including meat, poultry, game, fish, animal by-products, dairy products, eggs and often honey.

Fruitarian - This can be also be classed as a vegan diet.

For more information visit: www.vegansociety.com or www.veganvillage.co.uk

Vegetarian Diet

A vegetarian diet excludes meat, poultry, game and fish, and animal by-products such as gelatine and animal fats. There are different divisions of the vegetarian diet and therefore dairy products and eggs may also be included.

For more information visit: www.vegsoc.org

Lacto-ovo-vegetarian - This diet includes dairy products and eggs. This diet is the most common class of vegetarianism.

Lacto-vegetarian - This diet includes dairy products but not eggs.

Halal Meat

Animals must be (slaughtered according to Islamic Rites) in order to be suitable for consumption.

Halal meat should not be eaten by a Jew (although a Muslim can have Kosher meat).

Kosher Meat

The mammals and birds that may be eaten must be slaughtered in accordance with Jewish law. This method is widely recognized as the most humane method of slaughter possible.

- For further guidance please contact Alan Switalski (Access Officer) on 01494 421438, or Claire Hook (Community Development Officer) on 01494 421833
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WDC Disability Guidance – Leaflet No.4

ACCESSIBLE VENUES IN WYCOMBE DISTRICT

Please note that this list is not exhaustive and that the information is subject to change at any time.

Please also read in conjunction with the other WDC disability guidance, particularly Guidance 2 – Selecting a Venue.

Please also note that to use a ‘designated’ parking bay you must be a ‘blue badge’ holder, and that accommodation sizes quoted do not allow for any extra room that may be required by individuals to meet specific needs.

High Wycombe Town

The Oak Room

Accessed via lift or stairs from the Town Hall Lobby, the lift is smaller than recommended and it would be advisable to have an attendant on hand to assist people when using it.

The room is level and creates no major access difficulties, although the bar does not have a lowered section for wheelchair users.

Has a wheelchair accessible toilet by the entrance doors.

No hearing enhancement system.

The Town Hall

2 designated parking bays (not suitable for larger vehicles) are directly outside the side entrance to the hall. This entrance is accessed by a shallow ramp.

The hall is level and creates no major access difficulties.

There is no access onto the stage, and the bar does not have a lowered section for wheelchair users.

Has a wheelchair accessible toilet.

No hearing enhancement system.

The Swan Theatre

Theatre can accommodate up to 1076 people.

Multi-storey car park next door with 5 designated parking spaces.

Theatre has a number of wheelchair spaces available.

Has ample wheelchair accessible toilets within toilet blocks, plus a unisex facility close to the main entrance.

Has a hearing enhancement system.

To book any of the above ring 01494 552885

Reggie Gove Centre

In the centre of High Wycombe and easily accessible by public transport.

2 designated parking bays within 30m of the entrance (however, these bays are usually full on market days).

Access in the main hall is level.

A wheelchair accessible toilet is in the foyer, or alternatively a small lift at the rear of the building gives access to the upper floor, where there is a 2nd wheelchair accessible toilet.

No hearing enhancement system.

To book ring 01494 421883

West End Hall

There is on-street parking opposite the hall and a small drop off area in front of the doors. The nearest designated parking is in Desborough Road car park approx. 50-60 metres away.

Automatic doors open into a lobby which contains a wheelchair accessible toilet, and the main hall is level.

No hearing enhancement system.

To book ring 01494 421883

Guild Hall

2 designated parking bays nearby, but quite often in use, especially on market days. Semi automatic door opens on to a lobby containing lift and stairs. Lift comes up into main hall.

Has a wheelchair accessible toilet on the landing at the top of stairs.

No hearing enhancement system.

To book ring 01494 421883

The Environment Centre

Located on the Rye, has designated disabled parking close to the entrance ramp.

The upper floor meeting room is accessed via a small lift or an ambulant disabled staircase, and this room is level.

Has a wheelchair accessible toilet on the ground floor.

No hearing enhancement system.

To book ring 01494 511585

Wycombe District Council

Portable hearing induction loops are held in the Customer Service Centre.

The Council Chamber (WDC)

Can accommodate 143 people boardroom style, or 133 if an informal style is used.

2 designated parking bays are in front of the council offices.

A wheelchair platform stair lift is in the foyer, or by prior arrangement the staff lift can be used.

Changes in level mean the chamber is not suitable for all.

A wheelchair accessible toilet is near to the Chamber.

Has a hearing enhancement system.

Committee Rooms 1 & 2 (WDC)

Room 1 can accommodate 28 people.

Room 2 can accommodate 16 people.

The 2 rooms can be joined together.

2 designated parking bays are in front of the front of the council offices.

A wheelchair platform stair lift is in the foyer, or by prior arrangement the staff lift can be used.

Neither room creates any major access problems.

A wheelchair accessible toilet is next to the Committee rooms.

No hearing enhancement system.

Paul Ensor Room

Can accommodate up to 6 people.

No access problems, although furniture may need to be moved to accommodate a wheelchair user.

No hearing enhancement system.

Bob Barber Room

Can accommodate up to 4 people.

No access problems although furniture may need to be moved to accommodate a wheelchair user.

No hearing enhancement system.

Edwin Burrows Room

Can accommodate up to 8 people.

No access problems although furniture may need to be moved to accommodate a wheelchair user.

No hearing enhancement system.

Joan Cooper Room

Can accommodate up to 10 people.

This room causes no major access problems,
No hearing enhancement system.

Training Room (WDC)

Can accommodate 12 people.

The training room is on the ground floor of building C.

3 designated parking bays are in the rear car park - during office hours arrangements need to be made with main reception to allow visitor access.

The publicly accessible toilet is in main reception, a staff wheelchair accessible toilet is on the 2nd floor of building C.

No hearing enhancement system.

Briefing Room

Can accommodate up to 5 people.

No access problems although furniture may need to be moved to accommodate a wheelchair user.

No hearing enhancement system.

Use the Intranet booking system to book any of the above.

Princes Risborough

Risborough Area Information Centre

This is located in the centre of Princes Risborough opposite Budgens Supermarket, with the nearest parking next to Budgens.

A pelican crossing with tactile paving allows people to cross the busy road safely. The Information Centre is accessed via a short ramp up to automatic sliding doors.

Ground floor meeting room

Can accommodate 12 people.

There is a wheelchair accessible toilet.

No hearing enhancement system.

First floor meeting room

Can accommodate approx. 12 people, but is not suitable for people with mobility problems, as it is stair access only.

No hearing enhancement system.

To book ring 01844 274795

Princes Risborough Community Centre

Can accommodate approx. 60 people.

5 designated parking bays next to the community centre, and ample general parking in the nearby Mount Car park.

The Community Centre has 2 large halls which both have easy level access.

Has a wheelchair accessible toilet cubicle, but this is slightly undersized and does not meet current standards.

No hearing enhancement system in either hall.

To book ring 01844 343287

Marlow

Court Garden House

Situated in Pound Lane Marlow next to the leisure centre and overlooking Higginson Park and the River Thames.

Designated parking is available close to the building, although the slope leading to the ramped entrance is steep and some users may require assistance. The ramp leads to a level platform with a semi-automatic entrance door.

The General Higginson Room

Can accommodate 55-140 people dependant on room layout.

There are toilets next to the room, but the nearest wheelchair accessible one is about 15m away next to the café.

Has a hearing enhancement system.

The Jane Seymour Room

Can accommodate 15-40 people dependant on room layout.

In certain layouts circulation space for wheelchair users will be restricted.

The doors into the room are quite stiff to open and those with a disability may have difficulty opening them independently.

No toilet facilities. A wheelchair accessible toilet is about 15m away.

No hearing enhancement system.

The Steve Redgrave Room

Can accommodate about 12 people in a conference style setting.

No toilet facilities. A wheelchair accessible toilet is about 15m away.

No hearing enhancement system.

The Shelley Theatre

Can accommodate up to 250 people.

Located on the 2nd floor of the leisure complex.

The theatre is accessed via stairs or a small lift located in the back of the Leisure Centre. There is currently no access to the removable stage.

Has a wheelchair accessible toilet on the floor below, next to the lift.

Has a hearing enhancement system.

To book any of the above ring 01628 405205

Little Kimble

Stewart Hall

Can accommodate about 80 people.

Reasonably large car park, with uneven gravel in places.

No designated parking.

Ramped access to side entrance door.

Main hall is level throughout.

Has a wheelchair accessible toilet in lobby.

No hearing enhancement system.

To book ring 01296 615844 (evenings only)

Lane End

HTS Pavilion

Can accommodate over 100 people.

HTS is a large conference centre, but only certain areas are accessible to people with disabilities.

Large tarmac car park.

No designated accessible parking bays although one can be reserved on request. A paved pathway leads from car park to pavilion.

Main Hall has level access throughout.

The bar does not have a lowered section for wheelchair users.

Smaller room is suitable for buffets or sit down lunches.

HTS have their catering team so specific dietary requirements can be requested.

Has a wheelchair accessible toilet.

No hearing enhancement system.

To book ring 01494 881171

Adams Park Conference Facilities

Large car park with a number of designated parking bays. The largest number of which are located close to the Woodlands Suite and are undercover.

Wycombe Wanderers Football Club has its own catering team to meet specific needs.

Induction loops are available on request.

Woodlands Suite

Can accommodate 220 people for a formal meeting, or 150-180 if tables are used.

Accessed via a lift or ambulant stairs, and a 70m level corridor.

Manual entrance doors to the suite.

Circulation around the room is not a problem, although care should be taken if tables are used.

The bar does not have a lowered section for wheelchair users.

Has a wheelchair accessible toilet.

No hearing enhancement system.

The Vere Suite

Can accommodate up to 500 people depending on the layout.

Access into and around the main room is not a problem.

Unisex wheelchair accessible toilet in the foyer.

No hearing enhancement system.

The Ercol Boardroom

Can accommodate up to 30 people.

The nearest Unisex wheelchair accessible toilet is located in the foyer of the Vere Suite.

No hearing enhancement system.

The Hypnos Lounge

Can accommodate up to 100 people.

Toilets available, but no wheelchair accessible cubicle.

No hearing enhancement system.

Joyson Holland Lounge

Can accommodate 30 people.

No toilet facilities.

No hearing enhancement system.

The Chiltern Room

Can accommodate up to 20 people.

No toilet facilities.

No hearing enhancement system.

Executive Boxes

Can accommodate up to 15 people.

Accessed via the corridor leading to the Woodlands Lounge.

No accessible toilets (although one is located in the first aid room at the entrance to the suite).

No hearing enhancement system.

To book any of the above ring 01494 455718

- For further guidance please contact Alan Switalski (Access Officer) on 01494 421438, or Claire Hook (Community Development Officer) on 01494 421833
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