

**DISABILITY ACCESS STUDY – UPDATE AND OTHER MATTERS
(Report by the Head of Administration)**

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide Members with an update on the disability access study. It also provides an opportunity to pursue other matters that have been raised as worthy of consideration in the course of the study.

2. CONSULTATION ON COUNCIL POLICIES

- 2.1 The Panel previously has suggested that the Council should introduce a list of organisations and individuals representing those with learning, physical and sensory impairments who would be involved as a matter of course in all consultations on policies. There would be no obligation on consultees to respond but they would be given the opportunity to do so if they thought it necessary. Details of potential consultees were requested and a list of advisory bodies operating in the area was submitted to the meeting in January. As a result the Panel suggested that these bodies should be contacted to solicit whether they would be willing to assist the Council in this way. A letter has been sent to all the bodies listed and responses are awaited.

- 2.2 During the consultation with Town and Parish Councils a question was asked whether any disabled groups operated in their areas. The following were identified:

- Age Concern – National
- Caresco
- Community Nursing Team
- National Federation of Shopmobility UK
- Peterborough PCT
- St Ives Access Group
- Patient Advice and Liaison Services (PALS)

These organisations also have been written to, likewise, to ask whether they would be interested in being consulted on Council policies. The Cambridgeshire Parliament also has indicated that it would like to be included in the list of consultees.

- 2.3 Members are requested to consider whether there are any other organisations or individuals who might be added to the list of consultees.

3. DIRECTIONS PLUS

- 3.1 A representative of Directions Plus had been invited to the Panel's last meeting to discuss the study. Unfortunately, owing to illness, she was unable to be present. It has now been arranged that she will attend the April meeting.

4 BLUE ROUTES

- 4.1 At a previous meeting it was suggested that the Council previously had introduced "Blue Routes", which guided those with disabilities around the District's towns. Despite extensive investigation no trace of these routes has been found. even if blue routes are found to have existed, it appears they are no longer in use. Given this the Panel may wish to consider whether the concept of Blue Routes might be pursued as part of the study.

5. ADVOCACY SERVICES

- 5.1 The provision of advocacy services around the District is something that was discussed with the Cambridgeshire Parliament. The Parliament indicated that it would be prepared to make available to representatives to provide an advocacy service at Council premises. The Panel might want to consider the principle of providing advocacy services and, if it is endorsed, the locations in which they might be provided and whether any other organisations should be approached also to provide this service.

6. ILLEGAL PARKING

- 6.1 Problems associated with illegal parking were pursued during the consultation with Town and Parish Councils and an approach to dealing with them has been agreed and is being implemented. However, a further aspect to this issue concerns unauthorized parking in disabled bays in car parks. The Council clearly will undertake enforcement in the car parks for which it is responsible. Members might consider the prevalence of this problem and whether any action should be recommended to address it.

7. INFORMATION

- 7.1 During the consultation exercise Town and Parish Councils reported that the majority of information surrounding disability needs and requirements was sought directly from disabled people themselves and, in relation to friends or family with a disability, from members of the community. The District Council also featured as a useful site for obtaining information. There may be an opportunity for the Panel the review the information the Council provides and the way it is presented.

8. FUNDING

- 5.7 Funding and financial support was a key issue emerging from the consultation. Town and Parish Council felt there is a lack of information generally and confusion regarding whom to approach to obtain funding. The need for better communication and flow of information on available funding and facilities for disabled people was a common finding throughout the consultation. Although this is not the Council's responsibility, Members could consider how this situation might be improved.

7. OTHER MATTERS

- 7.1 During the initial stages of the study the Panel recognised the importance of the Council's documents being produced in larger size

print. This idea, together with a number of other recommendations, has already been incorporated into the Council's new corporate identity.

- 7.2 Another idea that emerged at an early stage concerned the opportunities available to promote the needs of those with disabilities through the Strategic Partnership. This is something that the Panel might make a recommendation on at the conclusion of the study.

8. CONCLUSION

- 8.1 This report provides an update progress of the study since the last meeting. It also brings together a range of issues that have arisen during the study. Members are requested to note the progress made and to consider whether any action should be taken in respect of the matters raised in the report.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

Disability Equality Duty Research Findings

Disability study file held in the office of the Director of Central Services.

Reports and Minutes of meetings of the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Service Delivery)

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