

**DISABILITY ACCESS STUDY – UPDATE
(Report by the Head of Head of Democratic and Central Services)**

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide the Panel with an update on the study into disability access.

2. DISABILITY ACCESS STUDY

- 2.1 A study on disability access previously has been completed. The study template is attached for information at Appendix A. At a previous meeting of the Social Well-Being Panel, a number of matters were identified for further investigation. In Appendix B an update is provided for each of these matters.

3. CONCLUSION

The Panel is

RECOMMENDED

to note the contents of the report and to identify any further actions.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

Report and Minutes of the meetings of the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Service Delivery) held on 6th January and 7th July 2009 and of the Cabinet held on 29th January 2009.

Report and Minutes of the meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Social Well-Being) held on 7th July and 1st September 2009.

Contact Officer: Miss H Ali – Democratic Services Officer **(01480) 388006**

AREA OF REVIEW	DETAILS/COMMENTS
Title of Study (name of Working Group)	Disability Access Study
Appointing Panel	Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Service Delivery)
Members Assigned (including date Working Group appointed)	Panel Study
Possible Co-Options to the Group	N/A
Interests Declared	None received.
Rapporteur	Councillor S J Criswell - Chairman
Officer Support	Mr Roy Reeves – Head of Administration, HDC Mr A Roberts – Democratic Services Officer Miss H Ali – Democratic Service Officer
Purpose of Study / Objective (specify exactly what the study should achieve)	To investigate access for those with disabilities to premises, facilities and other sites in the District, excluding those provided by the District Council.
Rationale (key issues and/or reason for conducting a study)	An issue raised previously by the Council and in the light of a draft Disability Equality Scheme, the Panel chose to research the matter further.
Terms of Reference	Existing HDC policies.
Links to Council Policies/Strategies	Yes ~ ties into 4 of the Community Aims identified in the Corporate Plan “safe, vibrant and inclusive communities”, “healthy living”, “access to services and transport” and “to improve our systems and practices”.

ACTION BY WORKING GROUP	
Methodology / Approach (what types of enquiries will be used to gather evidence)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consultation questionnaire sent to all Town and Parish Councils relating to disability issues. • Map sent to all TC and PCs regarding specifically issues of illegal parking and dropped kerbs. • Representatives from Directions Plus and Hunts Forum of Voluntary Organisations invited to a meeting of the Panel. • Letter sent to CCC and Police regarding issues of illegal parking and dropped kerbs. • Letter sent to disability organisations to invite consultation on the development of Council policies.
External/Specialist Support	N/A
Existing Documentation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Response from questionnaire and maps sent to TC and PCs. • Information from CCC – blue badge parking and enforcement.
Evidence to be Obtained (e.g. witnesses, documents, site visits, consultation, research, etc)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gerri Bird, Forum Manager for Disability Cambridgeshire attended meeting of the Panel (01/04/08) • Blue Badge Application process and enforcement procedures.

Reference Sites	HDC's Website www.huntsdc.gov.uk CCC's Website www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk Hunts Forum of Voluntary Organisations http://www.huntsforum.org.uk/ Age Concern http://www.ageconcern.org.uk/
Investigations	With HDC and CCC Officers. Consultation with Town and Parish Councils and Voluntary Organisations.
Witnesses	N/A
Site Visits (if necessary) (where and when)	N/A
Meetings of the Working Group	Progress reports regularly submitted to Panel meetings.
Costs (resource requirements, additional expenditure, time)	Officer time ~ both to provide support and to conduct research. No other external costs identified to date.
Possible Barriers to the Study (potential weaknesses)	None identified.
Projected Timescale (Start and end times)	Start ~ 7 th November 2006 (study item first raised) Finish ~ 29 th January 2009.

	OUTCOME	ACTION	UPDATE
A	Make representations to Cambridgeshire County Council to ensure that enforcement of blue badge parking is recognised in any new arrangements for decriminalised parking.	Letter sent to the Director of Highways and Access.	<p>Response received from the County Council's Head of Network Management (South & City):</p> <p>“The County Council currently operates civil parking enforcement in Cambridge only, although consideration is being given to extending the operation to other districts.</p> <p>In Cambridge, the enforcement regime does include action to address the misuse of disabled parking spaces by unauthorised users. This is a particularly important element of the enforcement regime given the demand for blue badge parking and the limited opportunities to create additional provision.</p> <p>Civil enforcement Officers also check on the authenticity of blue badges to ensure that the dispensation that allows blue badge holders to park for up to 3 hours on ‘no waiting’ restrictions is not abused by drivers using fake blue badges or by able bodied drivers misusing blue badges.</p> <p>Should the decision be taken to extend civil parking arrangements to other districts it would be expected that similar enforcement activities would be adopted in these areas.”</p>
B	Initiates discussions on the potential for comprehensive joint advocacy / advice services and the other opportunities for joint working between organisations	A joint commissioning agreement covering general advice and benefits eligibility has been agreed by HDC and Cambs. County Council with	Bi-annual monitoring report on the agreement to be submitted to the Panel.

	supporting people with disabilities.	Disability Information Services Huntingdonshire (DISH). The service includes home-visits where required. The service specifically targets residents with disabilities whether those disabilities are physical, sensory or learning. Joint targets have been agreed with all partners and the first 6-month monitoring report will be available for the Scrutiny Panel in November 2009.	
C	Consult the Papworth Trust on whether the high dependency toilets at the Saxongate Centre, Huntingdon might be made available for public use.	Letter sent to the Chief Executive of the Papworth Trust seeking a response to the previous letter.	Councillor R J West to approach Chief Executive of Papworth Trust for response.
D	Action has been taken to address defective or absent kerbs and unhelpful parking identified by Town and Parish Councils.	Letter sent to the Director of Highways and Access requesting information on the installation and maintenance of dropped kerbs.	<p>Response received from the County Council's Head of Network Management (South & City):</p> <p>“With regard to the matter of the defective dropped kerbs identified through Parish and Town Council surveys, the County Council does not have a specific budget identified for dropped kerbs but wherever possible we incorporate improvement work for dropped kerbs within general maintenance work.</p> <p>The Area Maintenance Manager for the Huntingdonshire area is aware of the sites identified in your letter dates 4th September and he will attempt to make improvements as and when work is planned in the locality.”</p>

		<p>Letter sent to the Cambridgeshire Constabulary's Traffic Management Officer requesting an update on enforcement of parking.</p>	<p>Response received from the Traffic Management Officer:</p> <p>“It was the case that I liaised with Miss Habbiba Ali on the submissions, which ultimately led to my forwarding the information to the relevant Neighbourhood Policing Teams (NPT).</p> <p>The NPTs deal with topics of concern through many different streams of communication. The submissions in relation to the submitted parking issues added to concerns already expressed or were issues raised for the first time.</p> <p>Our NPTs typically have agreed priorities with regular Neighbourhood Policing Panels. This allows the Teams to focus on issues that affect the community. The submissions given did not, in isolation, feature as such a priority but served to inform the NPTs.</p> <p>Some of the submissions were very specific in the problems encountered, some less so. Parking issues will have been dealt with since the submissions but which are as a direct result of the submissions has not been quantified.</p> <p>The test for the study and ourselves is to determine whether the situation has had a perceived change where enforcement activity would have had impact.”</p>
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E	The Growth and Infrastructure Thematic Group of the Huntingdonshire Strategic Partnership has been asked to consider the needs of those with disabilities in the design of the local hardscape.	<p>The Thematic Group's Action Plan contains the following objectives:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improved public transport – Implement Accessibility Action Plan for 4 priority wards. • Improve access experience to bus services for people with disabilities as a pilot project • Enhanced physical integration of bus / train / taxi / cycle / pedestrian services (including provision for people with mobility issues) <p>Update also requested from the Thematic Group.</p>	Progress against the Action Plan to be submitted to the Panel as part of the process to scrutinise the Strategic Partnership.
F	Verify that all buses will be low level by 2010.	Programme of replacement proceeding as planned.	
G	Investigate whether the Council can provide information on local taxi services that cater for those with disabilities.	Licensing Officer consulted.	Agreed to do.
H	Consult Carers UK on its campaign for carers to be provided with free bus travel.	Information requested from Carers UK.	Sense, a charitable organisation for deaf people, has organised a national campaign to obtain free bus travel for carers. Support has been expressed for the campaign.
J	The Growth and Infrastructure and the Health and Wellbeing Thematic Groups	See E above.	Progress against the Action Plan to be submitted to the Panel as part of the process to scrutinise the Strategic

	<p>of the Huntingdonshire Strategic Partnership have been asked to promote the needs of those with disabilities in the District.</p>	<p>The Health and Wellbeing Thematic Group's Action Plan contains the following objectives:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide accessible opportunities – things to do, particularly...those with disabilities. • School holiday programme tailored for disabled participants; disability multi-sport festivals. <p>Update also requested from the Thematic Groups.</p>	<p>Partnership.</p>
K	<p>The Scrutiny Panel's intention to inform Town and Parish Councils of the outcome of the study.</p>	<p>To be undertaken following receipt of answers from the County Council and the Police in A and D above.</p>	