

NORTHAMPTON BOROUGH COUNCIL

NORTHAMPTON DISABLED PEOPLE'S FORUM

Tuesday, 19 November 2013

Members: Co-Chairs Councillor Larratt and Martin De Rosario
Councillor Mennell, Christine Woodhams, Madeline Boys, Adore Perrie, Larry Barber, Barbara Barber, Rashmi Shah and Ann Timson

Officers: Alice Morgan, Vicki Rockall, Matt Steele, Graeme Wilson, Steve Johnson and Nathan Birch,

Guests: Gracie Okusanya, Elliot Boyd and Dean Eales

1. WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting

2. APOLOGIES

Lindsey Ambrose

3. MINUTES AND MATTERS ARISING

The minutes were AGREED.

Feedback regarding the new Railway Station was still awaited and would be reported to the next meeting.

The Group's comments on the parks consultation would be reported to the Scrutiny Panel next week and then to Overview and Scrutiny and Cabinet in due course.

4. CONSULTATIONS

4A. COUNCIL TAX REDUCTION SCHEME 2014/15

The Group received a presentation from Matt Steele, Benefits Manager, regarding the current consultation on changing the amount of funding available from the Council Tax Reduction Scheme (CTR). A Funding gap of £1million had been identified and the proposal was to reduce the CTR from 91% to 85%. The Council was required to undertake a consultation each time they wished to change the CTR Scheme. The consultation was underway and would run until 1st December 2013.

Members of the public could take part in the consultation by visiting the Council website, calling the Council direct or visiting the One-Stop-Shop.

Further information is available at <http://www.northampton.gov.uk/ctrs-year2-consultation>

4B. NEXUS PLANNING LTD - PROJECT ANGEL

Elliott Boyd, from BDH Architects, outlined the proposals for a new County Council building in Angel Street, Northampton. The new offices would bring together around 2000 staff, currently based in 12 buildings across the county. The design had been based on truly accessible building, one that could be an exemplar of disability access in a new build. The ground floor would be a public space, with a public square in the North-East corner (Angel Street/Fetter Street). There would be level access, with special attention to all details with regard to access including; surfaces; lighting; contrast of materials; an integrated hearing loop; acoustics; fire safety; door handles and toilets.

It was expected that this public space would be available for a variety of uses, including meetings, as well as serving as the reception for the building. There would be disabled parking available immediately outside the entrance and in the underground car park. It was anticipated that the planning application would be submitted in February/March 2014 and construction completed by December 2016.

Further details on Project Angel can be viewed at:

<http://www.northamptonez.co.uk/alive/project-angel/>

<http://www.northamptonshire.gov.uk/en/councilservices/environ/economic/pages/projectangel.aspx>

5. DISCUSSIONS / EVENT PLANNING

5A. DISABLEDGO

Dean Eales, Account Manager with DisabledGo made a presentation to the Group. DisabledGo is a free online access information resource, featuring detailed access information to over 100,000 public venues across the UK. In Northampton, DisabledGo have surveyed over 400 public venues. DisabledGo are due to review all the information contained on the guide in March 2014, at the same time there will be an opportunity to add between 25-100 new venues to the guide. Suggestions for new venues can be sent direct to Dean.

DisabledGo will shortly be launching a new and enhanced website, if anybody is interested in 'road testing' it before it goes live they should contact Dean. The new website will include:

- More accessibility options
- Improved usability and ease of navigation
- A venue review system so that best practice can be highlighted and shortfalls identified
- An online shop selling around 900 mobility products

- Features on financial services
- Dedicated partner/sponsor area to access reports on accessibility and compile bespoke hard copy guides
- There will also be mobile/tablet friendly versions of the site

DisabledGo are currently looking at meeting with key local groups and organisations with an interest in disability in the Northampton area to see if there are ways we can work together with promotion of services. Individuals can contact Dean if there are any local groups they feel would benefit from meeting with DisabledGo.

The website can be viewed at:

<http://www.disabledgo.com/en/org/northampton-borough-council>

Contact Dean Eales at: dean.eales@disabledgo.com

(T) 01438 842710 (M) 07920 238082

5B. HEALTHWATCH

Gracie Okusanya made a presentation on behalf of Healthwatch Northamptonshire. This was new organisation, set up in April 2013, which act as the consumer champion for health and social care. Healthwatch did not undertake individual casework, but gathered information to improve and develop local services. There are 152 local groups, of which Northamptonshire is one, and these feed into the national body Healthwatch England which can advise on national trends within health and social care.

Full details of local consultations and meetings can be found online at:

<http://www.healthwatchnorthamptonshire.co.uk/>

6. COMMUNITY INFORMATION EXCHANGE

Graeme Wilson and Steve Johnson of Northampton Leisure Trust reported that the Danescamp Leisure Centre was to undergo a review of its disability access. This was part of continued aim to widen access and remove barriers to participation. They suggested making a future presentation to the Group on access at local leisure facilities.

Details of the Leisure Centres are available on the DisabledGo site or at:

<http://www.northampton.gov.uk/info/200166/leisure-centres>

7. ITEMS FOR NEXT AND FUTURE MEETINGS

To be agreed by the Chair and the Community Development Officer.

DATE OF THE NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of the Disabled Peoples Forum will be held on **Tuesday, 21 January 2014.**

The Meeting Concluded At 7:43 pm