

Northampton Borough Council - Northampton Disabled People's Forum

Tuesday, 13 May 2014

Present: Cllr. Larratt (Chair), Martin De Rosario (Co-Chair), Martin Austin (Nimbus), Ann Timson, Adore Perrie, Peter Mains (British Polio Fellowship Northampton Branch), Chris Woodhams, Barbara Barber, Larry Barber, Martin Jarvis (Network Rail), Andy Latham (Network Rail), Patrick Evers (Network Rail), Graeme Wilson (Northampton Leisure Trust), Stefanie Weldon (NAB), Hugh Spence (NAB), Louise Musson (Call Care), Anjali Ninawe (Call Care).

1. WELCOMES, INTRODUCTIONS AND APOLOGIES

Apologies received from Vicki Rockall (NBC), Carl Weininger (BPF) and Keith Goodwin (Door to Door Service).

2. MINUTES AND MATTERS ARISING

Minutes were agreed as a true record.

3. NETWORK RAIL - NORTHAMPTON TRAIN STATION

A number of issues were discussed, following queries which were raised with Network Rail at a previous forum meeting (Feb 2013);

Why are two lifts not being provided within the station building?

There are four 16 person capacity lifts within the station building, two of which providing access to the platforms, and two within the building (one for public and one for goods/staff). These lifts are accessible, with the buttons for the lifts placed at an accessible height and located in a clear and accessible space.

The lifts are designed to meet the requirement of the pedestrian flow modelling survey/report undertaken during the design process.

It was confirmed that tactile controls and audio announcements will be included in the lifts, further detail around these elements will be confirmed by Network Rail at a later date.

What alternative access will be provided if the lift breaks down?

There will be assistance phone lines in each lift. If there is a maintenance issue there is another lift available within the staff area – this is easy to access and staff will be able to assist those who need to use it. A forum member asked what would be in place to assist if the lifts to the platforms break down. MJ advised that questions such as this which are about the operation of the station should be directed to London Midland. However, the forum was advised that there will be an emergency access gate which will go directly from the drop off point to the platforms.

ACTION: Invite London Midland to the next forum meeting to discuss these operational issues.

A forum member asked whether there will be regular times that the lifts are out of action due to servicing regimes.

ACTION: MJ will provide a response to this question from Stannah at a later date.

Were alternatives to a lift/stair solution explored, including the use of an escalator?

MJ advised that alternatives were explored, however it was decided that an escalator would not be included due to the maintenance issues and costs. A forum member asked why steps have been included into the design, and not a level access. Network Rail advised that a number of designs were considered. The final design has been a balance between different options, but the preferable option has been taken forward.

Will there be 'assistance points' in the station and on the platform?

This question should be raised with London Midland.

Where will disabled parking be located if/when the new MSCP is built?

The MSCP is not part of this current scheme, and therefore Network Rail was unable to comment on these plans. Currently drop off access is at the front door of the building, and in the future accessible parking will be located in the area closest to the building. The main entrance of the building is at the back, opposite the current buildings main entrance.

Design of the building was also discussed. Visual contract has been considered in the design, with a clear large space which is easy to navigate inside lit by natural light. With reference to the furniture design, it was agreed that Network Rail and London Midland would engage with Northamptonshire Association for the Blind, outside of the forum, to ensure that furniture is accessible to people with visual impairment. NAB also would like to engage with London Midland when signage is being designed.

The new station building will be open on Sunday 24th August – the demolition of the old building will then start as soon as possible. The taxi point and cycle area will then take the place of the old station – the estimated completion date for this is February 2015.

The forum agreed that there needs to be a communication strategy for disabled people in Northampton to know how to access the building on the opening day.

ACTION: AM to contact other disabled people's organisations around the borough, to discuss how we can work together with Network Rail in communicating with disabled people around the town.

The forum requested that they are included in consultation for Phase Two site developments

4. CREDABILITY - MARTIN AUSTIN

Credability is a quality assurance mark introduced by Nimbus Disability Consultancy Service, which aims to tailor organisations to be right for the individual customer. There are three quality assurance marks available: CredAble Provider, CredAble Access and CredAble Employer. Credability has also introduced an access card

which evidences that a person is disabled in terms of the equality act. Symbols are allocated to the access card depending on the needs of the disabled person. All providers then need to have a policy which outlines what they can do for each symbol on the card.

Northampton Volunteering Centre is taking the lead advertising this locally. Credibility can also be found online and on social media.

More information can be found here: www.credability.uk.com

5. CALL CARE - ANJALI NINAWA AND LOUISE MUSSON (NBC)

LM spoke to the forum about Call Care - a monitoring service which provides an instant response service for vulnerable people, who may need peace of mind while living independently. Further details around the Call care package can be found here: <http://www.northampton.gov.uk/callcare> , or please phone 01604 230227 for more information.

6. ACTION PLANS - UPDATE

VR and AM have been working on a communications drive – this has included press releases, tweets, Facebook posts, leafleting at events, advertisement in the one stop shop and contacting local organisations and groups. AM said that she is very pleased that Hugh Spence and Stefanie Weldon from NAB have started to attend the forum to represent the needs of the blind and visually impaired community.

7. COMMUNITY INFORMATION EXCHANGE

AT – Lovells and the Decent Homes Standard. Flooding problems in flats.

LB – access to pavements in Kingscroft has become an issue - bushes need to be cut back.

AM – NBC park ranger Vikkie Maloney would like to ask the forum about any barriers disabled people face in accessing the town's parks. Vikkie is the park ranger for Delapre Park, and would like feedback from forum members especially around footpaths, and equipment at the park. Please email AM (alicemorgan@northampton.gov.uk) with any feedback, which will be passed on to Vikkie.

GW – Dave & Chris Lazenby (Twin Brothers) from Northampton with a learning disability competed for Great Britain in the World Cross Country Championships in Poland last month. More details on our website below: <http://www.northamptonshiresport.org/news/2014/05/northampton-twin-athletes-make-their-international-debut>

Disappointing turn out of only 9 people at the Danes Camp Disability Sport open day on the 26th April in which there were 9 sports on offer over 3 hours free of charge. The event was promoted intensively in the period leading up to it with flyers sent to every Student at all the special schools in Northampton, disability groups,

organisations, libraries, supermarkets, centre for Independent Living etc. It was all funded by £500 from a Councillors Empowerment Fund, so the worry is if disabled people don't start supporting events like this & participating in sports on offer then they won't be ran in future. GW is now trying to seek feedback from disabled people & their families/carers, support groups etc. as to why they didn't attend. There will always be people with other things on who may of like to attend, but Northamptonshire Sport would like to find out why some chose not to attend.

Eleanor Robinson (12 year old with Dwarfism) from Northampton competed in the International Para Swimming Championships in Glasgow over Easter. She performed really well breaking personal best times in every event & making 2 of the main finals against far older & more experienced swimmers. All the event results can be seen on the website below: <http://www.swimming.org/britishswimming/para-swimming/british-international/>

Northampton Sailability Club are holding their open day this Saturday 17th May at Pitsford Reservoir 10am – 3pm. More details below: <http://www.northamptonailability.org.uk/activity.html>

More similar news, events & activities can be found in the disability section of our new website which can be accessed by the link below: <http://www.northamptonshiresport.org/disability-sport>

SW – NAB have been working with NBC on the Abington Street developments. They have experienced a very positive working relationship with NBC with regards to the development.

PM – if anyone knows of someone who has suffered from Polio, please pass on the details of the Northamptonshire Branch of the Polio Fellowship. More details can be found here: <http://www.britishpolio.org.uk/latest-news/british-polio-fellowship-announces-new-northamptonshire-branch/>

AP – issues in St. Johns with accessibility. No access going to the bottom end of Bridge Street. Would like someone from highways/development site to explain what they are doing in the next months, and what they are doing to ensure that the needs of disabled people are taken into account.

8. ITEMS FOR NEXT AND FUTURE MEETINGS

Transport - including London Midland to discuss operational issues of the new train station.

9. DATE OF THE NEXT MEETING

The next meeting will be held on Tuesday, 22nd July from 5:30-7:30pm in the One Stop Shop, The Guildhall.