

Disability Advisory Group Meeting
3 June 2015

Minute of Meeting of 3 June 2015
held in Town House, Aberdeen

Present:-

Alastair Williamson	Chairperson
Wendy Edmond Stuart	Vice Chairperson
Councillors Allan, Lesley Dunbar and Kiddie	Aberdeen City Council
Len Mellis and Gerry Malley	Deaf Community
Katrina Erskine	Shopmobility
Margaret Kennedy	Independent
Mary Rasmussen	Independent
Christa Reid	Independent
Ian Stones	Independent. Chairperson – Learning Disability Group of Aberdeen
Dr Jim Webster	Independent
John Digby	N.E.S.S

Officers in Attendance:-

Lynsey McBain and Stephanie Dunsmuir	Democratic Services
Sandra Bruce, Baldeep McGarry and Faiza Nacef	Customer Service and Performance
Pete Leonard and Donald Urquhart	Communities, Housing and Infrastructure
Sally Wilkins	Adult Social Care

External Agencies and Individuals:-

Emma Bennett	DisabledGo
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The agenda and reports associated with this minute can be located at the following link:-

<http://committees.aberdeencity.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CIId=134&MIId=3712&Ver=4>

Please note that if any changes are made to this minute at the point of approval, these will be outlined in the subsequent minute and this document will not be retrospectively altered.

Disability Advisory Group Meeting
3 June 2015

APOLOGIES

1. Apologies were intimated on behalf of Pamela Burnett, Liz Howatson, Councillor Townson, Carol Gordon, George McCulloch and Gordon Leslie.

ANNOUNCEMENT

2. The Vice Chairperson advised that since the last meeting of DAG there had been various developments.

The Vice Chairperson indicated that (a) she had spoken with the Standards Commission and provided them with a full and detailed account of the current situation with DAG, (b) she had submitted an official complaint to the Standards Commission, (3) the Director had not been able to access important emails sent to him, (4) the current situation was having an impact on eleven people and (5) MP's were now involved.

Katrina Erskine questioned whether the complaint that was being referred to was submitted on behalf of DAG, and also asked why this was being discussed. The Vice Chair explained that the complaint was not submitted from DAG but from herself and the Chairperson.

The Vice Chairperson further highlighted that both she and the Chairperson had been advised not to attend today's meeting but following discussions, they decided to attend.

Councillor Allan questioned what organisation the Vice Chairperson was representing when she submitted the complaint. The Vice Chair responded that it was Aberdeen Action on Disability and the Access Panel. Councillor Allan then questioned why this was brought to the Standards Commission and who gave permission to involve DAG.

Finally Christa Reid asked if any of this complaint was available in writing and the Vice Chair explained that she would share the written complaint with the group.

Disability Advisory Group Meeting
3 June 2015

At this juncture, the clerk advised the Group to draw the matter to a close and move forward with the items on the agenda for consideration at today's meeting.

AGENDA ORDER

3. The Chairperson advised that there would be a presentation from Emma Bennett from DisabledGo which would be heard first on the agenda.

DISABLEDGO

4. The Advisory Group heard from Emma Bennett from DisabledGo, who provided a detailed presentation on the work of DisabledGo.

Emma advised that (a) DisabledGo was established 14 years ago by a disabled man who was frustrated at the lack of venues that he could access in his local community, (b) the guide was developed by disabled people for disabled people, (c) DisabledGo visited every single premise which was included in the guide, (d) they worked on behalf of Local Authorities, universities, NHS Trusts and private sector organisations to publish detailed access information on well over 125,000 places of interest across the UK and the Republic of Ireland and (e) they had a national network of steering groups that guided their work and supported the continuous development of their service.

Emma went on to explain that during the annual review completed in April 2015, 30 venues were added to Aberdeen's access guide, of which 4 were Key Access Guides and 26 were Detailed Access Guides. Emma also highlighted various improvements that had been made to a number of venues in Aberdeen to improve accessibility for disabled people following visits from DisabledGo.

Members then asked Emma a number of questions. The Chairperson highlighted that at the bus station, the toilets were normally locked before the last bus departed which was an inconvenience for bus passengers. Emma explained that she could feed this back to the bus station. Ian Stones also questioned whether the guide was available in an easy read

Disability Advisory Group Meeting
3 June 2015

format. Gerry Malley also asked whether BSL was one of the 52 languages in which the guides were available. Emma indicated that she would find out and get back to the group in due course. Councillor Kiddie also questioned whether they liaised with the local access panels.

The Advisory Group resolved:-

- (i) to request that the clerk circulate Emma's contact details to members of the group;
- (ii) to request that Emma feedback to the group once she finds out whether BSL is included in the guides;
- (iii) to request that Emma contact the bus station in regards to leaving the toilets open until the last bus leaves the station; and
- (iv) to otherwise thank Emma for an informative presentation.

MINUTE OF PREVIOUS MEETING

5. The Advisory Group had before it the minute of the previous meeting of 1 April 2015.

The Advisory Group resolved:-

to approve the minute as a correct record.

MATTERS ARISING

6. With reference to article 7 of the minute, Councillor Allan questioned whether the Code of Conduct had been agreed at the previous meeting. The clerk advised that it had been approved as part of the proposals paper.

Ian Stones also questioned why he appeared as an independent member on the minute. The clerk explained that he had been elected to the Group as an independent member, however it was reflected that he was also the Chairperson of the Learning Disability Group of Aberdeen.

Disability Advisory Group Meeting
3 June 2015

MEAL ORDERING SERVICE

7. The Advisory Group had before it a briefing paper on the Accord Scheme new meal ordering service. The Group also received a presentation from Bruce Reid, Accord Card Manager, who provided information on the new meal ordering and payment system for Very Sheltered Housing.

Bruce explained that currently there was a built in standard charge for meals charged to tenants along with rent for the property, however it was identified by the Housing for Varying Needs review that a new consistent approach to meal charges was needed and after an options appraisal, the existing Accord Card technology and ICT systems were identified as the best way to achieve the goal.

Bruce went on to explain that the key objectives of the new system were (1) to be more equitable and have a consistent approach to meal ordering and charging policy across the city, (2) for the removal of paper menus, (3) to reduce the administrative burden for all, (4) to allow flexibility on when and how to pay, (5) to have the ability to pay on-line and (6) to have the ability for relatives/representatives to manage and oversee meal ordering and meal payment off-site.

Members then asked a number of questions in regards to the new system. Councillor Allan asked about the payment system and how secure it was if carers were paying on behalf of tenants. Bruce explained that if tenants didn't have close family to deal with their finances online, they could still continue to pay by cash or cheque as normal. Members also raised concerns that tenants may cut back on meals to save money, however Bruce explained that at present tenants were required to pay a fee for meals every week, even though they were not present to receive the meal, and that by changing to the new revised system it was more beneficial for tenants. Bruce also intimated that staff would have the facility to check what tenants were ordering and at the click of a button, family members could check up on what the tenant was ordering, if they were concerned. This facility was not presently available.

Disability Advisory Group Meeting
3 June 2015

Donald Urquhart also explained that they were looking at different ways for tenants to pay, namely direct debit and chip and pin, which would help tenants who were not keen on paying online.

Mary Rasmussen also spoke about how people with visual impairments could use the system and suggested that a speech facility be made available with the system to help visually impaired users. Bruce advised that this was not presently available but they would look into it to see how it could be incorporated. Bruce also advised that he would communicate with NESS to help improve the system for tenants with hearing and visual impairments.

The Advisory Group resolved:-

- (i) to request that Bruce liaise with John Digby at NESS in regards to the added facility for tenants with visual and hearing impairments;
- (ii) to request that the clerk pass Ian Stones contact details to Bruce Reid; and
- (iii) to otherwise note the information provided.

ABERDEEN STRATEGIC TRANSPORT

8. The Advisory Group had before it an information paper on the Aberdeen Strategic Transport Study.

The paper explained that in collaboration, Peter Brett Associates, SIAS Limited and Natural Capital had been appointed by NESTRANS to undertake the Fraserburgh and Peterhead to Aberdeen Strategic Transport Study. It was noted that the purpose of the study was to identify and examine strategic transport connections between Fraserburgh, Peterhead and Aberdeen, incorporating the Energetica corridor, and the study would examine all modes of transport including rail, bus, road and active travel connections.

The paper sought feedback from members of the Advisory Group and listed a number of questions which could be answered. Sandra Bruce explained that if members submitted a response to her by Wednesday 10 June she would collate a joint response on behalf of DAG.

Disability Advisory Group Meeting
3 June 2015

Councillor Kiddie raised the issue of buses and the substantial problems with bus services in Aberdeen and Aberdeenshire.

The Advisory Group resolved:-

- (i) to request that members submit a response to the study to Sandra Bruce by Wednesday 10 June in order for her to submit a response from DAG; and
- (ii) to otherwise note the information provided.

GUIDE DOGS AND TAXI DRIVERS

9. The Advisory Group had before it, an information paper prepared by the Licensing department, which provided details on a new campaign established by Aberdeen City Council.

The paper explained that following a successful campaign by guide dog owners in Aberdeen, the Council had introduced a new tactile certificate to indicate when taxi drivers had a genuine medical exemption that would prevent them from carrying dogs in their cabs.

The paper indicated that drivers could be issued with the certificate if the Licensing authority was satisfied that it was appropriate to do so on medical grounds, and noted that people who apply for an exemption would be referred to a nominated medical practitioner for examination.

Mary Rasmussen led the campaign, and spoke in furtherance of the paper. Mary expressed her gratitude to Aberdeen City Council for getting the new certificate up and running, and she explained that the new certificate would hold an embossed E in the corner that blind people could feel. This would be tactile and not in braille as not all blind people read braille. Mary also indicated that it would be very beneficial to other local authorities if they followed Aberdeen's lead. Mary advised that there was an issue with the licensing certificate being displayed and Councillor Allan agreed to raise this with the Licensing Committee.

The Advisory Group resolved:-

- (i) to congratulate Mary for pursuing the campaign and to thank her for her continued efforts;

Disability Advisory Group Meeting
3 June 2015

- (ii) to request that Councillor Allan raise the masking issue in regards to the certificates with the Licensing Committee; and
- (iii) to thank everyone who had been involved with the campaign and for all of their hard work.

BIKEABILITY

10. With reference to article 7 of the minute of meeting of 5 March, 2015, the Advisory Group heard from the Chairperson who explained that this would be deferred until the next meeting in order for Police Scotland to be in attendance to answer questions.

The Advisory Group resolved:-

- (i) to note that this item be deferred to the next meeting; and
- (ii) to request that the clerk continue to try to get an officer from Police Scotland to attend the next meeting.

NEW DAY CENTRE AT MASTRICK

11. The Advisory Group heard from the Chairperson who explained that the new day centre at Mastrick had been brought to his attention by a journalist at the Press and Journal newspaper.

The Chairperson advised that once he had been made aware of the new centre, he arranged a meeting with the architect and he was very impressed with the layout and the centre as a whole and explained that it had a huge garden for clients to use.

Sally Wilkins explained that the day centre was available for younger adults up to 65 year olds who were assessed as requiring the use of a day centre.

Pete Leonard explained that a more detailed presentation on the day centre was available from the social work department and this could be shared with the Advisory Group if required.

The Advisory Group resolved:-

Disability Advisory Group Meeting
3 June 2015

- (i) to request that the presentation from social work be shared with the Advisory Group; and
- (ii) to otherwise note the information provided.

ANY OTHER COMPETENT BUSINESS

12. The Chairperson opened the meeting for any other competent business, whereby (1) a member of the public asked if he could raise an issue with the Advisory Group. The clerk explained that members of the public were not permitted to participate in the meeting.

(2) The Chairperson explained that the Scottish Accessible Transport Association had asked for volunteers to join and were holding their Annual General Meeting in Edinburgh in September. The Chairperson advised that he would pass the contact details for the person in SATA to the clerk, for passing on to members.

(3) Gerry Malley explained of issues he had trying to gain access to the train station. The Chairperson advised that he would deal with this. Councillor Kiddie also highlighted that there was reduced access to the station car park at present due to building works.

(4) Dr Jim Webster explained that the toilet block on King Street had been disused and blocked for some considerable amount of time and also highlighted that there was a sign for drivers to keep the area clear for disabled access, however drivers were still parking in front of the toilet area. Pete Leonard explained that he would take this forward and would respond to the Group in due course.

(5) Councillor Allan explained that she had recently visited Duthie Park where a new sensory part was being added to the garden area. Katrina Erskine also advised that Shopmobility can get scooters to the park for people to use, and to get in touch with her if anyone required the use of one.

(6) Christa Reid highlighted that she was recently waiting at the Bus Station at Union Square and noticed that there wasn't a roof or canopy to protect bus users from the rain. Councillor Kiddie explained that the bus

Disability Advisory Group Meeting
3 June 2015

station was owned by Stagecoach and a result there was not a lot the council could do. The Clerk advised that she would write to Stagecoach on behalf of DAG.

(7) Ian Stones spoke about Union Bridge and the lack of progress in preventing people from jumping from the bridge. Pete Leonard advised that a scheme was prepared however planning permission was not granted and so they were looking at alternatives proposals. Sally Wilkins also intimated that although there was a delay with putting a physical barrier in place, there had been measures put in to help prevent individuals jumping from the bridge, which included 24 hour patrols by the police and city wardens. Councillor Kiddie suggested that a report be brought to the Advisory Group as soon as possible on what was being done in this regard.

DATE OF NEXT MEETING

13. The Advisory Group noted that the date of the next meeting was presently scheduled for Wednesday 2 September at 10.30am, however this could possibly change. The clerk advised that she would keep members informed of any changes.

- **Alastair Williamson, Chairperson**