

## **WEST NORFOLK DISABILITY FORUM**

**Thursday 29<sup>th</sup> November 2012 at 2.30pm**  
**in Meeting Rooms 1, 2 & 3, King's Court,**  
**Chapel Street, King's Lynn**

### **AGENDA**

1. **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

2. **MINUTES**

To confirm as a correct record the minutes of the meeting held on 12<sup>th</sup> September 2012 (attached at Appendix 1 – pages 1- 8).

3. **MATTERS ARISING AND NOT COVERED ELSEWHERE ON THE AGENDA**

4. **MY GUIDE – REDUCING ISOLATION AND BUILDING INDEPENDENCE**

To receive a presentation from The Guide Dogs for the Blind Association

5. **SUPPORT FOR THE ELDERLY IN THE WINTER**

To discuss ways to support elderly people in the winter.

6. **TERMS OF REFERENCE**

To review the Terms of Reference for the Forum (pages 9-10)

7. **TABLES & CHAIRS ON BROAD STREET**

8. **SECRETARY'S CORRESPONDENCE**

9. **ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

10. **DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

To note that the next meeting will be held on 23<sup>rd</sup> January 2013 in the Committee Suite, King's Court, Chapel Street, King's Lynn.

**BOROUGH COUNCIL OF KING'S LYNN AND WEST NORFOLK**

**WEST NORFOLK DISABILITY FORUM**

**Notes of a Meeting of the West Norfolk Disability Forum held on Wednesday 12<sup>th</sup> September 2012 at 2.30 pm in the Committee Suite, King's Court, Chapel Street, King's Lynn.**

**PRESENT:**

**Representing the Borough Council:**

Councillors Stephanie Smeaton (Chairman), Mrs L Allen, A Bubb, M Langwade and Michael Chenery of Horsburgh (Substitute for Councillor Sandell)

**Officers:**

Allison Bingham and Brenda Moore

**Representing Disabled People:**

Wendy Blades, Jill Darling, Pat French (Vice-Chairman), Genee Henshaw, Sylvia Pomeroy and Kathy Warner

**By Invitation (for item 1):**

Jo Stanton – Revenues & Benefits Manager  
Laura Leicester – Benefits Manager

**Apologies for absence were received from:**

Councillors David Johnson and Garry Sandell

		<b>ACTION</b>
<b>1.</b>	<b><u>COUNCIL TAX SUPPORT SCHEME</u></b>  A presentation was given by the Revenues and Benefits Manager on changes to the Council Tax Support Scheme. It was explained that the current scheme was fully funded by Central Government. However, under changes proposed in the Welfare Reform Act 2012 and the Local Government Finance Bill, funding from Central Government would be fixed at the start of the year and would be reduced by 10%, leaving an estimated shortfall of £1.13M in 2013/14.  It was explained that the Council was free to design its own Council Tax Support Scheme which had to be in place by 31 January 2013. After considering various options, Members	

resolved to design a scheme which would fall within the new budget. It was noted that a draft scheme was currently out for consultation until 18 October and was available on the Council's website. Members of the Forum were invited to comment on the proposals.

The draft scheme was outlined and the changes explained. The maximum amount of support would be 75% of entitlement. It was emphasised that certain vulnerable groups would be protected under the proposed scheme, as follows:

- Pension Age people (as prescribed by Central Government)
- Household with at least one child under 5
- Households entitled to a disability premium in their applicable amount (disability living allowance)

These groups would see no reduction in their support under the new scheme. War pensions would also continue to be fully disregarded.

It was highlighted that work incentives would be introduced and the amount someone could keep before their benefit was affected would be increased by £10 per week.

The Revenues and Benefits Manager advised that extensive consultation was taking place with as many affected groups as possible, as well as writing to individuals in receipt of benefits. A drop in session was held in King's Lynn on 11 September and further sessions were due to take place in Downham Market on 8 October and Hunstanton on 10 October.

It was explained that the scheme could be amended each year and it was anticipated that a more fundamental review would take place after year 2, benefiting from the experience gained.

In response to questions and comments from Members of the Forum, the Revenues and Benefits Manager confirmed that other benefits in kind, such as free bus passes, would not affect the amount of support provided under this scheme. A Hardship Fund would be established for those vulnerable people who may not be included within the protected categories. Members of the Forum were advised that the Council had tried to work with the other district councils in Norfolk to see if a single scheme could be

	<p>developed, but differences in the demographics of each district had made this approach problematic. It was noted that only way to ensure that the scheme could be contained within budget was to limit the level of support to 75% of entitlement.</p> <p>With regard to revaluation of properties for council tax, the Revenues and Benefits Manager advised that this was a Central Government function and there had been no revaluation exercise undertaken. However, individual properties were revalued when a property was sold and where the property had been improved or extended.</p> <p>The Chairman thanked the Revenues and Benefits Manager for attending the meeting to explain the draft scheme and urged the Members of the Forum to access the Council's website and comment on the scheme.</p>	<p><b>ACTION</b></p> <p><b>ALL</b></p>
<p>2.</p>	<p><b><u>MINUTES</u></b></p> <p>The minutes of the meeting held on 22 May 2012 were agreed as a correct record, subject to the inclusion of Genene Henshaw in apologies for absence.</p>	
<p>3.</p>	<p><b><u>MATTERS ARISING AND NOT COVERED ELSEWHERE ON THE AGENDA</u></b></p> <p>There were no matters arising.</p>	
<p>4.</p>	<p><b><u>FEEDBACK FROM CELEBRATE ABILITY EVENT</u></b></p> <p>The Celebrate-Ability event had been held on Monday 3<sup>rd</sup> September in the Corn Exchange. Allison Bingham reported of the feedback received. It was felt that fewer people had attended then previously, which was thought to be because of the day the event had been held. It was reported that it had been a successful networking event and while most of the feedback had been positive, comments had been made that there were no stands offering the opportunity to try disability equipment. It was noted that many of the aids were no longer available free of charge through Social Services and had to be purchased, but offering the opportunity to 'try before you buy' might be a welcomed.</p>	

	<p>Members of the Forum discussed how the event might be improved in the future, including using alternative venues, holding mini events in smaller venues around the borough, including a demonstration in the programme, providing transport and improving publicity.</p> <p>The Chairman requested that a letter of thanks be sent to those businesses and organisations in the borough which had displayed posters publicising the event. Allison Bingham advised that posters had been sent to a large number of contacts and organisations and it was not possible to identify all those which may have displayed them. Sylvia Pomeroy suggested that an open letter be sent to the Lynn News thanking everyone who had helped to publicise the event.</p>	<p><b>ACTION</b></p> <p><b>AB</b></p>
<p><b>5.</b></p>	<p><b><u>WEBSITE UPDATE</u></b></p> <p>Allison Bingham reported that the West Norfolk Disability Forum page on the Council's website need to be updated and read out suggested wording, as follows:</p> <p><i>The forum comprises of Borough Councillors, representatives of people with disabilities or are involved with groups or individuals who are concerned about disability issues within West Norfolk.</i></p> <p>Allison also suggested that links could be included to the show the contact details each of the voluntary organisations involved with a link to their own websites. She advised that she had spoken to the web team who had advised that this would be possible.</p> <p><b>AGREED:</b> That the West Norfolk Disability Forum website be updated as described.</p>	<p><b>AB</b></p>
<p><b>6.</b></p>	<p><b><u>BUDGET</u></b></p> <p>Allison Bingham reported that just under £2,000 had been spent in the current financial year, which included expenditure for the Opportunity Awards, leaving some £19,000 in the budget. It was highlighted that any monies not spent at the end of the year may be lost and the future budget may be reduced.</p>	

		<b>ACTION</b>
7.	<p><b><u>AGM 2013 and Opportunity Awards</u></b></p> <p>Allison Bingham advised that when planning events at the Corn Exchange, she liaised closely with the venue to establish when there was flat floor availability, which reduced the hiring fee considerably. With regard to the AGM for 2013, it was suggested that this be brought forward to Monday 1<sup>st</sup> July, when the Corn Exchange was available. The AGM to be held at King's Court in the afternoon and the Opportunity Awards to be held at the Corn Exchange in the evening.</p> <p><b>AGREED:</b> That the AGM 2013 and Opportunity Awards be held on Monday 1<sup>st</sup> July 2013.</p> <p><b><u>SUPPORT FOR THE ELDERLY IN THE WINTER</u></b></p> <p>Councillor Harwood had previously raised the issue of holding an event to support the elderly in the winter. Allison Bingham advised that the Corn Exchange would be available on Monday 16<sup>th</sup> September 2013 and suggested that a 'Winter Check-up' event might be held, bringing together all the information and organisations.</p> <p>Sylvia Pomeroy suggested that a hot meal eg soup and a roll, could be provided. She commented that this type of environment would be more relaxed and friendly, which may encourage more elderly people to attend.</p> <p>Jill Darling commented that it was important to provide free transport to the event.</p> <p>Members of the Forum discussed ideas and potential participants for such an event. It was considered that events should be held at Downham Market and Hunstanton, in addition to King's Lynn. Allison Bingham to contact the venues to ascertain the possibility of holding such an event.</p> <p>Members of the Forum were invited to bring any further ideas and contact details for organisations to the next meeting in November.</p>	<p><b>AB</b></p> <p><b>ALL</b></p>

	<p>Councillor Langwade requested that the Terms of Reference for the Forum be brought to the next meeting. This would enable Members of the Forum to consider whether these proposals were in line with Terms of Reference and ensure that available funds were being channelled in the right direction.</p>	<p><b>ACTION</b></p> <p><b>AB</b></p>
<p><b>8.</b></p>	<p><b><u>SECRETARY'S CORRESPONDENCE</u></b></p> <p>Allison Bingham advised that a complaint had been received concerning tables and chairs placed outside The Lounge restaurant in Broad Street, King's Lynn. The complaint had been referred to the Town Centre Manager.</p> <p>It was understood that The Lounge was situated in an area which was the responsibility of Highways and had been granted planning permission for the placing of tables and chairs outside.</p> <p>Allison Bingham advised that a solution to the problem was currently being investigated and the outcome would be reported back to the Forum.</p> <p>Allison Bingham reported that she had been asked to comment on the proposals for future development of Tuesday Market Place, in terms of accessibility under the Disability Discrimination Act.</p>	<p><b>AB</b></p>
<p><b>9.</b></p>	<p><b><u>ANY OTHER BUSINESS</u></b></p> <p><b><u>(i) Forthcoming Structural Changes in the Provision of Health and Social Services</u></b></p> <p>Councillor Mrs Allen made reference to the forthcoming structural changes with regard to provision of health and social services and suggested that Members of the Forum may wish to consider inviting a representative to attend a future meeting to explain the changes.</p> <p>Following a discussion, Councillor Chenery of Horsburgh undertook to make enquiries to establish the most appropriate person.</p>	<p><b>MC</b></p>

(ii) Cyclists on Footpaths

Concerns were raised by several Members of the Forum about the problems caused by cyclists on footpaths. Councillor Langwade commented that these problems were well known, but could not be policed 100% of the time. He suggested that where there were particular problems, these should be raised at the Safer Neighbourhood Area Partnership (SNAP) meeting for the relevant area.

**ALL**

(iii) Disabled Parking Blue Badge Scheme

Sylvia Pomeroy reported that she did not have access to a computer and had experienced difficulty in contacting Norfolk County Council using the telephone number provided at the previous meeting. She had written to the County Council more than 8 weeks previously, but had received no response to date.

Allison Bingham suggested that Mrs Pomeroy use one of the public computers which were available at the Council Offices to make an online application.

(iv) Involve

Councillor Bubb made reference to the Opportunity Award which had been presented to Involve. He advised that the organisation would be willing to attend a meeting of the Panel to advise on its work.

Allison Bingham suggested that the AGM could be a suitable event.

**AB**

(v) West Norfolk Disability Forum Reporting

Allison Bingham advised that the Disability Forum previously reported to the Healthy Communities and Older People Forum. As this body no longer existed, an alternative reporting body was currently under consideration. It had been suggested that the Regeneration, Environment and Community Panel would now be the appropriate body to receive any reports.

It was noted that Councillor Allen, Bubb and Langwade were members of the Disability Forum and were also members of the



		<b>ACTION</b>
<b>10.</b>	<p><b><u>DATE OF NEXT MEETING</u></b></p> <p>The next meeting will be held on Thursday 29 November 2012 at 2.30 pm in Meeting Rooms 1, 2 and 3, King's Court.</p>	

Regeneration, Environment and Community Panel and these members indicated they would be willing to report to the Panel as necessary.

(vi) King's Lynn Guide Dogs

Genevieve Henshaw advised that representatives from King's Lynn Guide Dogs would be in the town centre on Tuesday 9<sup>th</sup> October from 10 am to 1 pm. This would involve trainers with young dogs and representatives from the regional office. There would be an opportunity for members of the public to take part in a blindfold demonstration.

**The meeting closed at 4.18 pm.**

## **West Norfolk Disability Forum**

### **Constitution and Aims and Terms of Reference**

#### **1. Introduction**

- 1.1 The Forum was initially established by the Borough Council of King's Lynn and West Norfolk.

#### **2. Membership**

- 2.1 The Forum will consist of:

- Representatives of people with disabilities or people concerned with disabilities in the Borough.
- Individuals with disabilities.
- Seven Borough Councillors, appointed bi-annually by full Council (who can send substitutes to meetings if they are unable to attend).
- Statutory organisations such as: Borough Council; Norfolk County Council; Health Authorities; Disability Employment Services; Education Services; Any other relevant organisations.

- 2.2 The Chair of the Forum will be elected at the Annual General Meeting and will be elected to stand annually from the seven Borough Councillors. The Vice-Chair will be a representative of people with disabilities, or a person concerned with disabilities in the Borough and will be elected to stand annually.

#### **3. Operation**

- 3.1 The Forum will receive administrative support from the Secretary who shall be an officer of the Borough Council and advice and support from the Council's NRAC Auditor

- 3.2.1 The Forum will provide reports and make recommendations if necessary to any of the relevant Borough Council Panel's and Committees.

- 3.3 The Forum's Constitution and Aims and Terms of Reference shall only be changed with the formal agreement of the West Norfolk Disability Forum.

- 3.4 The Forum can appoint working groups comprising of Councillors and other members which shall be authorised to meet between meetings of the Forum for the purpose of providing, the Forum, the Borough Council and its Committees with advice on matters.

#### **4. Meetings**

- 4.1 Meetings of the Forum shall be held in public unless the Forum resolve otherwise.
- 4.2 The Forum will hold not less than five meetings a year in addition to its annual general meeting in accommodation provided by the Borough Council.
- 4.3 The Forum will hold its annual general meeting in July. The schedule of future meetings and the Forum's Annual report will be presented to the Annual General Meeting.
- 4.4 Agendas for the meetings will be published on the Borough Council's website five clear days in advance of the meeting.

## **5. Objectives**

- 5.1 To promote equality for disabled people
- 5.2 To provide a meeting place at which disabled people and other representatives can meet with and discuss with representatives of other organisations matters of interest or concern.
- 5.3 To identify the needs and requirements of disabled people in the Borough and bring these to the notice of the Borough Council and other organisations.
- 5.4 To determine measures by which the Forum might address those needs.
- 5.5 To communicate its views and findings to relevant bodies and agencies.
- 5.6 To raise disability awareness.
- 5.7 To seek improved access in the Borough.
- 5.8 To support and promote the West Norfolk Disability Forum's Opportunity Awards Scheme.
- 5.9 To support, promote and develop the Borough Council's online access guide.