

## **SLOUGH BOROUGH COUNCIL**

**REPORT TO:** Slough Wellbeing Board **DATE:** Wednesday 8 May 2019

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**WARDS:** All

### **PART I** **FOR COMMENT & CONSIDERATION**

#### **DISABILITY TASK AND FINISH GROUP - REPORT AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

1. **Purpose of Report**

For the Slough Wellbeing Board to comment on the work and recommendations of the Disability Task and Finish Group.

2. **Recommendation(s)/Proposed Action**

That the Slough Wellbeing Board notes the Task and Finish Group's recommendations and considers the Group's request for the Board to co-ordinate a new campaign to raise awareness of the challenges faced by disabled residents.

3. **The Slough Joint Wellbeing Strategy, the JSNA and the Five Year Plan**

3a. **Slough Joint Wellbeing Strategy Priorities**

The work of the Task and Finish group supports the Joint Wellbeing Strategy's second priority:

2. Increasing life expectancy by focusing on inequalities

3b. **Five Year Plan Outcomes**

The Task and Finish Group's recommendations, if adopted, will help the council to deliver the following outcomes of the Five Year Plan:

- Our people will be healthier and manage their own care needs
- Slough will be an attractive place where people choose to live, work and stay
- Our residents will live in good quality homes

4. **Other Implications**

(a) **Financial**

The work undertaken by the Task & Finish Group was covered within existing staff budgets.

Officers are currently preparing an implementation plan to take to the Health Scrutiny Panel. The majority of these recommendations can be implemented within existing budgets.

The proposal to collate guidance for people with disabilities on available services will require the establishment of a project team, who will need to produce an assessment on the cost of doing so. This will need to follow the existing asset mapping work being undertaken by SBC and the outcome of the Transformation Programme - which is looking at opportunities for making it easier for residents to self-serve.

The proposal to put in place a programme to ensure that progress is made on making more bus stops DDA compliant would require additional funding. Officers will contact the Task and Finish Group to see if there are alternative avenues for improving the accessibility of bus stops within existing budgets.

(b) Risk Management

A risk assessment will be included alongside the implementation plan being taken to the Health Scrutiny Panel.

(c) Human Rights Act and Other Legal Implications

Some of the Task and Finish Group's proposals relate to Slough Borough Council's obligations under the Disability Discrimination Act 1995.

(d) Equalities Impact Assessment

Should the implementation of the recommendations necessitate such an exercise, it will be carried out as required.

(e) Workforce

The implementation of the Task and Finish Group's recommendations will require officer time and commitment, as well as agreement from line managers.

5. **Supporting information**

5.1 Background to the Task and Finish Group

The Task and Finish Group was formed in response to the fact that, across a wide range of agenda items, the issue of disability access was continually emerging in discussions.

The group's intended aim was to help Slough become a 'disability friendly town', encompassing a wide range of matters such as building access, transport and leisure options.

A report was taken by Health Scrutiny Panel on 28<sup>th</sup> June 2018 which outlined some key questions for the Group to consider; these were then formalised in the Terms of Reference included at the start of the report.

## 5.2 Meetings

The Task and Finish Group has held meetings with the following SBC teams:

- Transport
- Taxi Licensing
- Leisure
- Planning
- Highways and Parking

In addition, there were further meetings with:

- AccessAble (providers of the Online Disability Access Guide)
- Slough Borough Council & Partner Employees with Disabilities Forum
- Healthwatch Slough

It was originally hoped that the group would be also be able to meet with representatives from Slough Youth Parliament, but this was not possible due to the timing of SYP's elections. However, should the recommendations be approved as council policy, the Task and Finish Group will seek SYPs feedback, and their support in making Slough a disability friendly town.

## 5.3 Recommendations

The group concluded that the ultimate objective for Slough should be to create a town with full accessibility for all its residents and to provide a safe environment. Based on its investigations, the group have identified seven key areas which it would recommend form the basis of Slough Borough Council and partner's approach to making Slough a disability friendly town.

- 1) Residents with disabilities should be provided with clear information on services available, and the wider public should be made aware of the challenges faced by them.
- 2) The council should review how its customers might best be able to report concerns around accessibility as part of its ongoing Transformation Programme.
- 3) The council should seek to improve the accessibility and safety of public transportation and taxis in the borough.
- 4) The council should raise awareness of the high quality leisure services available for disabled residents, and facilitate their use.
- 5) Full accessibility should be the default position for all future SBC buildings, and the council should utilise the opportunities presented by regeneration to embed accessibility in our town.
- 6) Further action should be taken to prevent the obstruction of pathways and the council should consider further locations where disabled parking may be appropriate.
- 7) GP surgeries should examine opportunities for implementing 'quick fixes' for improving access, and accessibility should be factored into all future designs as standard.

Within these areas, the Task and Finish Group would also wish to propose a number of specific actions it feels will be most effective in helping SBC and partners to achieve these objectives:

### ***Information & awareness***

- Collating available guidance for people with disabilities on available services, and presenting this in a range of accessible formats.
- Requesting Slough Wellbeing Board bring together different workstreams - including the Safe Place Scheme, Dementia and Autism Awareness campaigns and the 'enabling environment agenda' developed by Slough Mental Health services. This could co-ordinate a new campaign to raise awareness of the challenges faced by disabled residents, with the potential involvement of different stakeholder groups including Slough Youth Parliament.

### ***Transport***

- Putting in place a programme to ensure that progress is made on making more bus stops DDA compliant.
- Reviewing the feasibility of expanding the remit of the Local Access Forum to include disability access to transport.
- Submitting freedom of information requests to establish the level of complaints bus companies are receiving from disabled customers in Slough.
- Commissioning a survey of disabled bus users, with the results to be reported back to the Health Scrutiny Panel.
- Ensuring that all SBC regulated taxis have ramps with raised edges.
- Undertaking mandatory checks to ensure that taxi drivers were using wheelchair anchoring facilities.
- Displaying notices in taxis as to the rights of disabled service users not to be charged differently.
- Using mystery shopping of both taxi and bus services to check compliance with standards.

### ***Leisure***

- Increasing the publicity of Slough's Leisure Offer for disabled residents and their entitlements.
- Reviewing the accessibility of pathways to Slough's new green gyms.

### ***Buildings & planning***

- Seeking to incorporate separate baby nappy changing facilities and disabled toilets in all new SBC buildings, and installing Changing Places toilets where possible.
- Ensuring disabled residents are consulted in the planning stages for the new town centre, to make Slough an exemplary area for those with disabilities.
- The Health Scrutiny Panel reviewing the impact of the Outcome 4 group's ambitions regarding Category 3 accessible housing in five years time.

### ***Parking, highways & footpaths***

- Investigating opportunities for establishing further disabled parking bays across the borough, in consultation with disabled residents, and with a particular focus on improving access to shops and local services.
- Reviewing recently installed crossing points to consider where double-yellow lines might be effective.

- Including information on the importance of keeping pathways clear in the aforementioned campaign, as well as the impact obstruction can have upon disabled residents.
- As the council regenerates Slough, ensuring that all new or re-designed pathways are DDA compliant.

### ***GP surgery accessibility***

- Sharing Healthwatch Slough's findings on accessibility in GP surgeries with the CCG and Slough's two primary care networks - Slough Health Alliance Provider Enterprise (SHAPE Network) and Slough Practices Alliance (SPA network) - with the Health Scrutiny Panel examining what progress has been made in two years time.
- Factoring in these recommendations into the design, or redesign, of GP surgeries going forward - with full accessibility being the default position.

## **6. Comments of Other Committees**

6.1 The recommendations of the Task and Finish Group were approved in principal at a meeting of the Health Scrutiny Panel on 25<sup>th</sup> March.

## **7. Next steps**

7.1 The Health Scrutiny Panel have requested that officers prepare an implementation plan for the Group's recommendations, to be discussed in the first meeting of the 2019/20 municipal year.

7.2 If this plan is approved, it will be taken on to Cabinet for approval as council policy.

7.3 It will be for the Wellbeing Board to decide whether it wishes to agree to Group's request that it co-ordinates a new campaign to raise awareness of the challenges faced by disabled residents and highlight the issues raised in the Group's report. It was hoped that this could be similar to the Board's previous campaigning work on #BeRealistic, #ReachOut and #NotAlone.

7.4 Such a campaign would have to be sensitively planned to avoid the risk of seeming to be patronising to disabled residents. Potential messages include raising awareness of the fact that not all disabilities are visible to others, the importance of keeping pathways free of obstructions and how local employers can best ensure their buildings are accessible for all.

7.5 It is also worth noting that there are further areas of council policy which will have a major impact on disabled residents' quality of life that did not fall within the terms of reference of this report, such as access to quality employment, education or training. The Board may wish to consider whether it wishes any further research or analysis to be conducted on this topic going forward.

## **8. Conclusion**

8.1 This report is intended to provide the Wellbeing Board with the findings of the Disability Task and Finish Group.

9. **Appendices Attached**

A - Disability Task and Finish Group Final Report

B - *Slough: A town that is accessible and inclusive for all*, Healthwatch Slough, September 2018 (appendices have been removed)

C - Disabled Rights Survey Evaluation, Healthwatch Slough, December 2018

10. **Background Papers**

1. Agenda papers and minutes of the Health Scrutiny Panel, 26<sup>th</sup> March 2018.

2. Agenda papers and minutes of Cabinet, 16<sup>th</sup> April 2018.

3. Agenda papers and minutes of the Health Scrutiny Panel, 28<sup>th</sup> June 2018.

4. Agenda papers and minutes of the Health Scrutiny Panel, 11<sup>th</sup> September 2018.