

**FERMANAGH & OMAGH DISTRICT
COUNCIL**

**COMHAIRLE CEANTAIR FHEAR
MANACH AGUS NA HÓMAÍ**

DISABILITY ADVISORY GROUP

Minutes of the meeting of the Disability Advisory Group held on Thursday 28 July 2016 at 2.00 pm in the Bawnacre Centre, Irvinestown.

PRESENT: Councillor Victor Warrington (Chair), Councillor Errol Thompson, Councillor Debbie Coyle, Dermot Devlin, Eileen Drumm (BEM), Gerry Knight, Gerry Maguire and Andrew Wilson.

APOLOGY: Councillor Patricia Rogers.

IN ATTENDANCE: Robert Gibson, Ian Davidson, Matthew Nevin, Margaret McMahon, Finbar Maguire, Thelma Browne and Liz Nolan (Secretary).

21/16 Welcome & Apologies

The Chair welcomed Members especially Andrew Wilson who was attending for the first time representing Mencap and apologies were accepted.

The Chair congratulated Eileen Drumm on achieving a British Empire Medal for her contribution to volunteer work.

Dermot Devlin was also congratulated on his successful campaign in attaining the approved drug Vimizin for use by people diagnosed with Morquio in Northern Ireland.

22/16 Review of previous minutes

Members considered the minutes of the previous meeting held on Thursday 26 May 2016 for accuracy. The minutes were then adopted without any amendments.

Proposed: Gerry Maguire

Seconded: Dermot Devlin

23/16 Matters Arising

Disability Action Plan 2015-2017

The Head of Policy and Strategic Services informed Members that the Disability Action Plan 2015-2017 had not been circulated prior to July's Council meeting due to time constraints. A copy was now tabled for information.

Service Update: Leisure, Recreation and Sport

Members were informed that a sign is now in place at both the Lakeland Forum and Omagh Leisure Complex for those customers with a hearing impairment in the event of a pool emergency evacuation.

24/16 **Service Update: Human Resources & Organisational Development**

The Head of Human Resources & Organisational Development delivered a power point presentation on job opportunities within the Council for those people with disabilities. Members were advised that Council support is provided by means of specific office supplies and any other recommendations by the Occupational Therapist. Gerry Maguire congratulated Thelma Browne on her presentation and requested that advertisements in future should include a welcoming note for those with disabilities.

Actions:

(i) Thelma to investigate this option under Equality legislation.

(ii) Liz Nolan to email the presentation to the Group.

A Member raised concern on the cost implications of advertising in four papers and was advised that the Council had a legal obligation to advertise in local papers.

Following a query in relation to work experience Members were informed that the Council is currently delivering the ASPIRE Project in partnership with the Western Health and Social Care Trust (WHSCT), the Education Authority for the Western Region and Fermanagh Rural Community Initiative. Members were informed that the Council provides seasonal employment at both the Marble Arch Caves and Fermanagh Visitor Information Centre. Students studying Hospitality and/or Tourism at South West College are also afforded the opportunity of work placement with the Council.

A Member updated the group on the benefits of the Government Scheme 'Access to Work' in encouraging people with disabilities back to work.

The Head of Policy and Strategic Services advised Members that a baseline audit on Equality Monitoring Forms to identify any change in circumstances of staff employed was currently being undertaken in conjunction with the Human Resources department.

Discussion ensued on different forms of disability and the work required to encourage and change awareness. It was noted that Fermanagh & Omagh District Council was the first of the eleven Councils to have a Disability Advisory Group. The Director of Community, Health and Leisure informed Members that the Council's objective through this group is to establish short, medium and long term goals to be delivered over time in partnership with other statutory agencies.

25/16 **Access Information Events**

The Head of Policy and Strategic Services referred to the hand out tabled. Members were informed that the Council had written to Transport NI in relation to the use of car parking for blue badge holders.

Discussion took place on the difficulties encountered by disability users in the district by having dropped kerb access blocked by vehicles and it was proposed by Councillor Coyle and seconded by Eileen Drumm:-

Action: That the Director of Regeneration and Planning is requested to address the issue of vehicles blocking dropped kerb access in the delivery of the Enniskillen Masterplan.

26/16 PHA Additional Funding

The Access and Inclusion Co-ordinator referred to the handout tabled and outlined how the additional £15,000 secured from the Public Health Agency is going to be used in programme delivery during 2016/2017. Gerry Maguire complimented Matthew on the publicity gained through twitter.

27/16 Any Other Business

A Member asked that the Council consider a change to its current funding policy in relation to paying a percentage of grant up front to increase uptake from smaller community groups. Members were informed that a review of the funding policy is due to be held in September 2016.

A Member expressed concern that Shopmobility was not permitted to display a sign in Erneside Shopping Centre, Enniskillen. Discussion took place on the best way to resolve the issue and it was proposed by Councillor Thompson and unanimously agreed by Members that:

Action: Council Officers arrange a meeting with the Manager of Erneside Shopping Centre and Stefan Dunbar from Shopmobility.

Dermot Devlin, Chair of the Omagh Access Forum informed Members that following a meeting of the Forum last month, the Group identified three issues:-

1. What is the plan of action regarding the DSNI report into Omagh Leisure Centre?
2. Is FODC going to go ahead with implementing the accreditation scheme set out by DSNI?
3. How soon will FODC set up an Advisory Committee, similar to that of the Strule Arts Centre?

Dermot on behalf of the Strule Arts and Disability Advisory Group had agreed to evaluate the Strule Arts Centre as a mystery shopper when attending the "Jason Byrne" event on 27 June 2016. A full and detailed report of his evaluation was circulated and read out.

The issue of illegal parking at the rear of the Strule Arts Centre has now been resolved.

The issue of a cobbled surface on Bridge Street, Omagh and its unsuitability for wheelchair users was discussed.

Members were informed that tourists visiting Omagh had suggested that a weekly programme of events for the Strule Arts Centre is displayed outside of the facility.

Actions: The Head of Arts & Heritage to investigate

(i) Advertising options for the display of the Strule Arts Centre's weekly programme of events outside of the facility.

(ii) Design options for the entrance to the Strule Arts Centre with Strule Arts & Disability Advisory Group before bringing a report to Council.

The Director of Community, Health and Leisure referred to a request from DisabledGo in relation to the production of an Access Guide proposal. This request was considered at the Council's Policy & Resources Committee meeting held on 11 May 2016 and it was recommended that the Council defers consideration of the Access Guide proposal pending the delivery of the Workplan commissioned by the Disability Advisory Group.

Action: It was proposed by Gerry Knight and seconded by Gerry Maguire that the request by DisabledGo is deferred.

28/16 **Date of next meeting**

Thursday 29 September 2016 at 2.00 pm in the Bawnacre Centre, Irvinestown.

Please note the meeting will be held at the earlier time of 10.00 am

All Members were present at the commencement of the meeting except Councillor Debbie Coyle who arrived at 2.32 pm.

All Members remained for the duration of the meeting.