



Fermanagh & Omagh
District Council
Comhairle Ceantair
Fhear Manach agus na hÓmaí

Disability Advisory Group

Thursday 24 May 2018, 2 pm

Bawnacre Centre, Irvinestown

Present: Councillor Victor Warrington (Chair), Councillor Debbie Coyle, Andrew Wilson, Eileen Drumm and Gerry Maguire.

Apologies: Councillor Errol Thompson, Iain Davidson, Dermot Devlin and Joanne McDonald.

In Attendance: Margaret McMahon (Head of Policy & Strategic Services), Finbar Maguire (Policy Officer – Equality) & Matthew Nevin (Access & Inclusion Coordinator).

1. Welcome

Councillor Warrington welcomed everyone to the meeting.

2. Apologies

Apologies were accepted.

3. Review of Minutes of Thursday 29 March 2018

Members of the Group reviewed the minutes of the previous meeting held on Thursday 29 March 2018.

Proposed: Gerry Maguire

Seconded: Eileen Drumm

4. Matters Arising

Pool Pods

Margaret explained that the Pool Pods in Omagh and Enniskillen were now installed.

Shopmobility Meeting

Matthew asked Members for a date that suited to meet with Shopmobility Omagh. Councillor Warrington suggested that Shopmobility Omagh are invited to attend the next Disability Advisory Group.

Action: Matthew to arrange a meeting with Shopmobility Omagh.

‘All Party Group on Autism’ Response

Margaret passed around the Council’s response to the All-Party Group on Autism regarding the work that Fermanagh and Omagh District Council has undertaken.

5. Enniskillen Public Realm Scheme

Margaret explained that Alison McCullagh (Director of Regeneration & Planning) is leading on the Public Realm Scheme in Enniskillen. Margaret explained that a public meeting was taking place on 7 June in the Townhall and Fermanagh House. Councillor Coyle encouraged members and their friends to attend one of the sessions.

Margaret informed the groups that the Consultant would like to meet specifically with Members of the Advisory Groups to receive feedback regarding access. Gerry M. added that there was a need for smaller groups, like the Disability Advisory Group, to highlight issues that may be overlooked by larger groups.

Gerry K. queried whether the meeting would be in June, as he would be unavailable and would need to get someone to represent the Omagh Access Advisory Group. Margaret explained that a meeting would probably take place provisionally on the 5 or 12 June.

Councillor Warrington asked for a special meeting of the Disability Advisory Group to take place regarding the Public Realm Scheme.

Action: Margaret to liaise with Alison McCullagh to organise a date for the consultation.

6. Proposals: Meetings with local Disability Groups

Finbar presented a report suggesting possible ways which members could meet with local disability groups. The three suggestions included:

- a. Further letters/emails
- b. Call-In sessions in local areas
- c. Public Meeting – allowing groups to attend a meeting of the Disability Advisory Group.

Gerry K expressed his opinion that going out to rural areas was a good option due to the size of the District. Eileen agreed, however highlighted that at one of the Access Information Events in Irvinestown less people attended.

Councillor Coyle highlighted the need for Disability Advisory Group Members to go out to Call-In Sessions in the rural areas of the District, in order to break down barriers to access, including those posed by reductions in rural transport.

Members agreed to hold a public meeting and attend Call-In Sessions.

Action: Finbar & Matthew to organise a public meeting before the Disability Advisory Group Meeting in September.

Action: Finbar & Matthew to organise and publicise Call-In Sessions.

7. Draft Action Plans for Access Advisory Group

Andrew introduced the draft Action Plan for the Advisory Groups and invited the Councillors to the next Fermanagh Access Advisory Group Meeting.

Andrew asked Matthew to give an overview of the actions on his behalf. All agreed that the actions cover a broad range of disabilities and will help improve accessibility in the district.

Councillor Coyle noted the action to improve access to Arts Venues and expressed concern at the availability of accessible seating in the Ardhowen Theatre. Eileen agreed and expressed her disappointment that a tourism town isn't offering a better service for people with disabilities.

Councillor Warrington queried whether the Strule Arts Centre offered more accessible seating. Matthew confirmed that the Centre provides a row of 10 accessible seats. Gerry K added that the numbers in the Strule Arts Centre reflected the regulations at the time of construction.

Margaret informed the Group that the minutes of the meeting would be brought to the next Policy & Resources Committee.

Action: Margaret to bring minutes of meeting to the next P&R Committee.

Eileen asked if the possibility to explore a ramp to the additional seating area could also be investigated. It was agreed that the next Disability Advisory group meeting would be held in the Ardhowen Theatre, with an opportunity for members to discuss concerns with Officers.

Gerry K discussed his problem with Street Furniture in Omagh. Gerry added that signs have been placed on streets, which could be a hazard for people with visual

impairments. Gerry M agreed and highlighted the problems with signs in Enniskillen being placed in the way of dropped kerbs. All agreed.

Victor informed members that Street Furniture is regulated by legislation. Margaret added that Café Furniture is governed under the Licencing of Pavement Café's Act 2014 and signs are governed under the Clean Neighbourhood & Environment Act (NI) 2011. Margaret added that members should feedback any of these problems into the Public Realm Consultation.

Members agreed to invite the Director of Environment & Place, Head of Waste & Recycling, Head of Parks & Open Places and Head of Building Control & Licencing to the next meeting.

Action: Margaret to send invite to the next meeting to Director of Environment & Place, Head of Waste & Recycling, Head of Parks & Open Places and Head of Building Control & Licencing to the next meeting.

8. Awareness Training 18/19

Finbar presented a report on the proposed training for staff during the 18/19 financial year. Finbar explained that the following 3 areas have been researched:

- Sign Language
- Makaton
- Learning Disability Awareness

Gerry K welcomed the training for front-facing staff and informed members that it might be cheaper to get staff to attend the South West College Sign Language Evening Course. Finbar explained that the course was 32 weeks long and that officers would consider this as an option.

All members welcome the training proposals.

Action: Finbar and Matthew to proceed with arrangements for the roll-out of Sign Language & Learning Disability Awareness Training.

9. Draft Action Plan from Public Health Agency

Matthew presented the draft actions that had been discussed with the Public Health Agency regarding Access & Inclusion, including:

- Funding Stream of £500.00 grants
- Access to Events
- Mystery Shopper Visits
- Black Moon/ Island Disco
- Circus Aurora
- Artsland
- Rural Hubs
- Creative Stars
- Pilot Summer Scheme
- Week of Access
- Art Therapy
- Poetry Project
- Celebration Events

All members welcomed the draft actions.

10. Volunteer Opportunities

Matthew discussed the current Council Volunteer Opportunities open at the moment and encouraged members to advertise these to friends and family.

Matthew explained the Autism & Dementia Friend roles that had been developed to help the Council with it's aim to become Autism/ Dementia Friendly. Gerry M welcomed the positions and expressed that he could see how these opportunities would benefit visitors to the area.

Councillor Warrington expressed how important volunteering is and discussed his own role as a MS Volunteer.

Action: All Members to promote volunteer opportunities as widely as possible.

11. Any Other Business

Gerry M informed members that his and his neighbours Caddys had not been collected for over a week. Councillor Warrington asked if he had contacted the Council. Gerry responded that he had contacted Finbar and emailed the Council.

Councillor Warrington highlighted that this was a regular issue for all constituents and that it could be mentioned to the Director of Environment & Place at the next meeting. All agreed.

Finbar informed members that he had passed on Gerry's concern to the Waste Manager. Gerry M thanked Finbar for his assistance with the matter.

Eileen discussed the idea of getting Councillors into mobility scooters / wheelchairs to highlight the problems people with disabilities face when using the footpaths in Enniskillen. Councillor Warrington & Councillor Coyle welcomed this idea.

Councillor Coyle highlighted the need to hold the event before the Public Realm Scheme, if possible, and prior to a Council or Committee Meeting. Members agreed that Councillors would go along Wellington Road, Regal Place, Townhall Street to the Diamond and return to the Shopmobility Offices using the same route.

Gerry M asked Councillors to switch between mobility scooters and wheelchairs for the return leg of their journey. All agreed.

Action: Eileen to organise the availability of scooters and wheelchairs with Shopmobility Enniskillen.

12. Date of Next Meeting

The date of the next meeting will take place on Thursday 19 July 2018 at 2 pm.