

## **Disability Advisory Group**

Thursday 29 March 2018, 2 pm

Bawnacre Centre, Irvinestown

**Present:** Councillor Victor Warrington (Chair), Councillor Errol Thompson, Andrew Wilson, Eileen Drumm, Joanne McDonald and Gerry Maguire.

**Apologies:** Councillor Patricia Rogers, Finbar Maguire, Iain Davidson, Dermot Devlin and Gerry Knight.

**In Attendance:** Margaret McMahon (Head of Policy & Strategic Services), Matthew Nevin (Access & Inclusion Coordinator) and Shona (Support Worker, Mencap).

### **1. Welcome**

Councillor Warrington welcomed everyone to the meeting.

### **2. Apologies**

Apologies were accepted.

### **3. Review of Minutes of Thursday 1 February 2018**

Members of the Group reviewed the minutes of the previous meeting held on Thursday 1 February 2018.

Proposed: Gerry Maguire

Seconded: Councillor Thompson

### **4. Matters Arising**

#### **Pool Pods**

Margaret explained that the Pool Pod in Omagh Leisure Complex had been installed and that the one in Fermanagh Lakeland Forum would be installed by the end of the week. Margaret added that staff were being trained in how to use the equipment.

## 5. Meeting with Local Groups

Matthew informed Members that Shopmobility Omagh had responded to the Group's email and wished to meet with Members.

**Action:** Matthew to arrange a meeting with Shopmobility Omagh.

Councillor Warrington asked if a further invite could be sent to Groups. Eileen added that the Groups may respond better after the end of the financial year and before the Summer period. Gerry agreed.

Councillor Thompson suggested that the next invite stated that 'Members were still keen to meet with Groups' and for staff to provide a reply slip for Group's to return. All agreed.

**Action:** Matthew & Finbar to re-send emails and letters to Groups.

## 6. PHA Underspend

Matthew presented an update on the goods/services that had been purchased with additional money from the Public Health Agency. The discussion included the following areas:

- Autism Engagement Event
- Autism Emergency Packs
- Video Guides for Leisure Centres
- Hearing Loop Systems
- Rural Hub Packs
- £500.00 Grant to 3 Disability Groups
- Sign Language Interpreters at St. Patrick's Day
- Circus Aurora Workshops
- Chairing & Communication training.

Councillor Warrington commented that the Training Day was beneficial and that the trainer delivered it very well.

All members welcomed the additional spend.

## 7. Outcome of Autism Engagement Event

Matthew presented a report that Finbar had prepared on the Engagement Event.

Councillor Warrington expressed his disappointment at the turn-out, but highlighted that the information received from those who attended was very useful. Councillor Warrington added that the information helped highlight Autism as a hidden disability and the problems that children and parents have to deal with.

Councillor Thompson agreed and explained how one family had to wait 8 years for a diagnosis. Councillor Thompson added how the Child's Mother initially noticed problems when her daughter returned from school.

Gerry commented that it was good to see greater understanding of Autism, compared to years ago when people couldn't leave their house. All agreed.

Margaret informed Members that the Council had received queries from the Fermanagh Herald and All Party Group on Autism regarding the Council's work on Autism. Margaret added that the response would be brought to the next meeting.

**Action:** Margaret to share response at the next meeting.

Councillor Warrington explained that the attendees at the event felt that awareness training was very important for staff. Councillor Thompson added that it would be useful to have a talk from people with autism and their parents during any future training. All agreed.

Councillor Warrington finished the discussion by expressing his wish for the Disability Advisory Group to help spread the awareness of Autism. All agreed.

## **8. Update from Access Advisory Groups**

Andrew provided an update on the Enniskillen Access Advisory Group. Andrew explained that the Meeting had gone well and that some new members had attended. Andrew added that the Chief Executive, Brendan Hegarty, was present for the full meeting and received an update on what the Group had achieved so far.

Andrew explained that the Group had discussed potential actions for Members to work on over the next year. Matthew presented the actions aims on Andrew's behalf, including:

- Increase representation of Disability Groups not currently members of the Advisory Groups.
- Provide feedback on the Enniskillen Public Realm Scheme.
- Improve promotion of Accessible services and activities.
- Assist with rolling out the 'Visit-Ability' Project.
- Help to improve services for children with disabilities.
- Help to improve services for people who are deaf or hard of hearing.
- Assist in developing an access guide for the District.

Councillor Warrington informed the Group that he was delighted to see an action to help assist people who are deaf. Councillor Warrington highlighted the problems people face communicating and the need for every public body to train all front-facing staff in basic sign language. All agreed

Joanne agreed and highlighted the need for training on Maketon for people with a learning disability. All agreed.

**Action:** Finbar to research Maketon and look at possible training options.

At the end of the discussion, Andrew invited the Councillors to the next Enniskillen Advisory Group Meeting.

**Action:** Andrew to invite Councillors to the next Enniskillen Meeting.

Matthew presented the minutes of the Omagh Meeting on Gerry Knight's behalf. Matthew highlighted that the majority of the meeting was a discussion regarding the changes to the Advisory Group and the concerns that members had. Matthew added that the Members' questions seemed to have been answered and that members now recognise the change as an improvement.

Margaret highlighted a member's request to rename the Disability Advisory Group to 'Ability Advisory Group'.

Councillor Thompson expressed his view that the Group's name should not be changed as it would take away from its purpose. Eileen added that the Group is now widely known by its name and that a change could cause confusion. Gerry agreed.

Joanne explained that she could see the reason to both change it and keep it.

Gerry added that all the members were confident people with disabilities and that he would be disappointed if the name was changed. Eileen and Andrew agreed.

Councillor Warrington expressed to the Group that he felt the Group's purpose was 'to focus on people with disabilities to help give them the ability to access services'.

All agreed that the name would remain as the 'Disability Advisory Group'.

## **9. Feedback from Membership Training**

Councillor Warrington informed the Group that the training was enjoyable and worthwhile.

Andrew added that he found the workshop helpful and would be using the facilitator's tips when chairing the next Enniskillen Group.

## **10. Any Other Business**

### **Councillor Patricia Rogers**

Margaret read out an email from Councillor Rogers giving her apologies for the meeting and wishing the Group a very successful future.

Councillor Warrington told the Group that Councillor Rogers would be sadly missed and added that she got things done in a quiet and successful way. Councillor Thompson agreed and expressed his best wishes to Councillor Rogers for the future.

Eileen informed members that Councillor Rogers was caring and dedicated. Eileen explained that Councillor Rogers once drove to Belfast out of her own time and money to collect a replacement mobility scooter for her.

Councillor Warrington asked Officers to send an email thanking her for her support and dedication to the Group.

**Action:** Officers to send an email to Councillor Patricia Rogers.

### **Omagh Leisure Complex**

Matthew read out Dermot Devlin's email regarding 3 queries:

1. What stage is the Pool Pod installation at?
2. It has come to my attention that Omagh Leisure Complex is getting racing wheelchairs. When will they be arriving?
3. What is happening with additional disabled changing rooms nearer the pool side?

Margaret informed members that the Pool Pod in Omagh had been installed and staff are being trained in how to use it. Margaret added that an update on the racing wheelchairs and changing rooms will be send to Dermot.

**Action:** Matthew to email an update to Dermot.

### **11. Date of Next Meeting**

The date of the next meeting will take place on Thursday 24 May 2018 at 2 pm.