

MINUTES OF ACCESS FOR PEOPLE WITH A DISABILITY TASK GROUP

20 FEBRUARY 2019

PRESENT:

Members of the Task Group: Councillors Mrs A'Barrow (Chair), Bearne, Mrs Bragg, Douglas, Mrs Garcia and Leigh Hunt

Officers: Chris Worman (Parks and Grounds Manager), William Winter (Asset Maintenance Team Leader) and Veronika Beckova (Democratic Services Officer)

In Attendance: Councillor Sandison (Chair of Whittle Overview and Scrutiny Committee)

11. MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 24 January 2019 were approved and signed by the Chair.

12. APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence from the meeting were received from Councillors

13. OVERVIEW OF THE CAPITAL PROGRAMME, SURVEYS AND ASSESSMENTS AND CONSIDERATION OF FEEDBACK AND EVIDENCE RECEIVED

As previously agreed by the task group, the focus for the meeting was on the overview of the capital programme, surveys and assessments and consideration of feedback and evidence received for the following areas:

- (i) Town Hall and The Benn Hall
- (ii) Other council owned or run buildings including the Queen's Diamond Jubilee Centre
- (iii) Parks and open spaces
- (iv) Car parks

The following briefing papers were circulated at the meeting and copies attached to the minutes:

- Annex 1** Consultation responses received and officers' comments
- Annex 2** Concerns raised at the last meeting of the task group on 24 January and officers' comments
- Annex 3** Supplementary concerns raised via email by Bernard Purdy, Rugby Sports for the Disabled Association
- Annex 4** An overview of:
- the disability surveys and proposed new surveys;
 - the corporate capital programme; and
 - the capital budget requirements for 2019/20

All responses received as part of the public consultation and concerns raised/comments made at the meeting of the task group on 24 January by external consultees were discussed in detail at the meeting.

The Parks and Grounds Manager and the Asset Maintenance Team Leader attended the meeting to answer questions.

During the discussion, the following main points were made:

Parking adjacent to the council's independent housing

It was highlighted that the council's independent living coordinators with their access to the council's independent housing were a valuable consultee that could provide an insight into what parking provision was available at our sites and highlight any issues.

Queen's Diamond Jubilee Centre

The task group noted the positive comments received at the meeting with external consultees on 24 January and the responses provided by GLL's Partnership Manager present at the meeting. The task group felt that the Partnership Manager was engaged with the group and took on board the issues raised.

Review of Parking at the Queen's Diamond Jubilee Centre

The Chair of Whittle Overview and Scrutiny Committee attended the meeting to provide an update as the review had now been completed. The key findings and evidence from the review were due to be considered by Whittle Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 11 March.

The new Brownsover Surgery

A lengthy discussion took place at the meeting with regards to the concerns raised by Mr Purdy, Rugby Sports for the Disabled Association via email.

The task group was seeking clarification on the process undertaken upon the completion of works at the site and whether the site was signed off by an inspector. The property was owned by NHS.

The task group was informed that the road was owned by Rugby Borough Council and that plans were in place to join up the footpath with the road and to resurface the road as soon as a budget was allocated.

A-boards in the Town Centre

A member of the task group raised a concern with regards to a-boards (shop advertising signs) in the town centre. Many were not secured and/or caused an obstruction.

The task group was informed that in 2013/14, the Guide Dogs for the Blind Association launched a campaign on street clutter to highlight problems experienced by people with sight loss.

A member of the task group commented that it was important to maintain a balance between businesses being able to promote themselves and clear streets for all. Shops should consider positioning and security of a-boards.

The task group was seeking clarification on:

- risk assessments carried out at venues used as polling stations
- guidelines in place for consultations for different reviews
- improvement plans for the Council Chamber
- the number of independent living coordinators employed by the council
- whose responsibility was it to deal with any poorly positioned and/or unsecured a-boards

Responses to the above would be provided to members of the task group via email.

14. DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS

The task group agreed that no further meeting was required.

The Chair would meet with officers to agree the draft review report on the task group's findings and develop recommendations. Following the chair's meeting, the draft review report would be circulated to members of the task group for comments.

The draft review report would be considered by Brooke Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 11 April and presented by the Chair of the Task Group who was also a member of the committee.

Following the approval of the review report by Brooke Overview and Scrutiny Committee, a formal letter would be sent out on behalf of the task group to the various stakeholders highlighted during the review. The letter would inform the stakeholders of the concerns raised by external consultees and via the public consultation that were under their jurisdiction.

15. MOTION TO EXCLUDE THE PUBLIC UNDER SECTION 100(A)(4) OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972

RESOLVED THAT –

“under Section 100(A)(4) of the Local Government Act 1972 the public be excluded from the meeting for the following items on the ground that they involve the likely disclosure of information defined in paragraphs 3 of Schedule 12A of the Act.”

16. 2019 DDA ASSESSMENT OF GREEN SPACES

The Parks and Grounds Manager presented the audit findings of the latest DDA assessment of green spaces.

CHAIR

Access for People with a Disability Task Group

Wednesday 20 February 2019

Consultation Responses

Response 1

"I was delighted to see your article in the Advertiser and know that you are trying to improve accessibility around Rugby.

I am not entirely sure what is under your jurisdiction; but as a wheelchair user, who is pushed by young healthy people, the main problem I have is with drop curbs not being level to the road and it is hard to get the chair up them despite appearances. When I do not have the strength to hold on I have been tipped out onto the floor before. I can provide a list of roads I have had this problem on if you would like. *WCC Highways if adopted. If in a new housing development, may not have been adopted and to raise with the developer.*

Often buildings that appear to have a helpful ramp also have this problem where the bottom of the door frame is raised so that it is hard to get a wheelchair over it. The best way to test is simply by pushing a wheelchair, with an adult in, into buildings to find out. I am more than happy to lend the three wheelchairs I have access to for you to do this. *Depends on the ownership of the building.*

Please let me know if you wish for more specific information."

Response 2

"Accessing the QDJ centre (Ken Marriot) via the path to St Cross hospital is unpredictable due to a short section of unfinished path - the mud can make it very difficult for a chair, and for traction for sticks." *RBC land has solid pathways between the leisure centre area and St Cross (unless referring to the desireline shortcut across the grass area off Trevor White Drive) so would appear to be on land not owned by RBC. Map of the area attached.*

Response 3

"Rugby public transport. The Leicester road is nearly impossible to cross near Tesco roundabout. The slip road to Tesco is badly buckled and very difficult to walk on, as is the pavement, there. Roads and pavements poorly maintained, no bus stop shelter on Leicester road, dangerous crossings." *Matter for WCC and Tesco*

Response 4

"Only when disabled parking spaces are full.

Many times, as with such across the country, I find disabled parking spaces are used by someone who does not have a blue badge or need of one and feel that he need to just pop into the bank or to get a packet of cigarettes etc gives them permission to use them.

Lack of enforcement for disabled parking across the town." *Depends on which spaces. On street – WCC. Asda and Rugby Centre – private. QDJC – GLL. If our car parks, we are not finding this to be an issue. More information needed.*

Response 5

A video submitted by a wheelchair user. *Matter for WCC*

Response 6

Rugby District Trades Union Council

FORMED IN 1892

CHAIR MARTIN EVERSFIELD

General Secretary: George S Farthing
57 Jackson Road
RUGBY CV21 4LS

Telephone: 01788 561560

Me VERONIKA BECKOVA
DEMOCRATIC SERVICES OFFICER
RUGBY BOROUGH COUNCIL
TOWN HALL
EVREUX WAY
RUGBY
WARWICKSHIRE
CV21 2RR

Dear Ms. Beckova

15th February 2019

Review of Access for People with a Disability

Thank for the details about the Review.

Enclosed are the Trades Union Council's observations on this matter. We are an equal opportunities organisation

We welcome consultation on matters concerning the Rugby Borough Council as and when they arise.

If you need to contact us on this particular consultation please let me know, George Farthing our Secretary would welcome any information on other issues to discuss with our members.

Yours Sincerely Martin Eversfield (M F EVERSFIELD)

Access for people with a disability: Rugby Borough Council Consultation Annex 1

Reception / transfer of phone-calls to town hall

Sometimes the switchboard receptionists are not kept fully informed of consultation events / committees

Examples include items considered by the Whittle Overview and Scrutiny Committee, especially the pedestrianised area consultation

This can be off-putting to the caller especially if the caller has mental health disabilities

The music played during transfer of phone-calls has a loud percussion section. This can upset the hearing of people with hearing difficulties / tinnitus and makes it difficult to hear people when the call is transferred to a department. I am led to believe that the council staff in some instances have also made reference about how it affects them

Three phone-calls to the Town Hall about lighting in Rounds Gardens have brought about some action. However the phone-receptionists on initial contact were not aware that this was a Borough Council responsibility. Street lighting is a priority for some disabled people especially when crossing the road, walking along footpaths in dark areas or in icy conditions

Town-hall reception area

Some people are unable to stand in a queue for any length of time and could miss their turn. Is there any provision for these people?

Pedestrian Area Consultation / cycling etc.

The text of the consultation document did not tally with the plan. There were errors and omissions

The consultation period was too short and people had

insufficient time to speak with their members.

Polling station access for disabled people

The Borough Council acted to provide mobility scooter access to the polling station at the scout hut on Admirals Estate playing field. This is much appreciated.

Bilton Bowling Club (Bawnmore Road) has poor access for mobility scooter users wishing to cast their vote.

The side ramp/passageway borrows light from the tennis courts if they are lit and is usually obstructed by brooms etc; there are no means of communicating the presence of a voter except by knocking on the door in front of the scooter. This matter has been referred to the Town Hall twice and also to the people inside the Club hall who should have entered this matter in a log-book.

It is understood that a consultation concerning access to polling stations is to be held; the sooner the better.

External meetings organised by Rugby Borough Council

A consultation evening was held at Bilton Methodist Church (Lawford Lane / Main Street Bilton). The venue was too small and therefore overcrowded. The consultation was about residential development and land allocation between Alwyn Road and the A45.

It was impossible for scooter users to have a say and difficult for people with walking difficulties or having to stand for long periods.

Consideration should be given to the choice of venue / accessibility when public consultations are held either by the Council or by prospective developers.

Equally this should apply to event organisers sub-contracted by the Borough Council and venues checked out

Town Centre pedestrianised area

There are many A-boards outside retail premises in this area. If the Borough Council has responsibility for this area then A-boards should be checked to ensure that they are stable and secure and do not create an obstruction to access especially for mobility scooter users, people with sight difficulties and people with walking difficulties.

About this survey/consultation.

The period of time set for this consultation is far too short (2 weeks, even less considering it appeared in the Rugby Advertiser on Thursday of the first week). Many organisations meet on a monthly basis and a 2-week period could fall between meetings.

Wherever possible the original Compact period should be given use, although it is understood that the requirements of the Compact are not adhered to and are not mandatory.

Consideration should be given to holding meetings earlier in the day as not all people are car-users and the bus services in the early evening are infrequent.

We support the observation raised by external consultees. Our three priorities are Access, Information/full & adequate consultation, Implementation.

M. J. Eversfield
(M F EVERSFIELD)

CHAR, RUGBY DISTRICT TRADES UNION COUNCIL

Responses received via the Review of Parking at the Queen's Diamond Jubilee Centre carried out by Whittle Overview and Scrutiny Committee:

Response 7

"I just wanted to give some feedback on a ceasing the sports centre with my autistic children our biggest issue is around noise. Firstly, having music on during public swimming sessions and secondly the times they choose to use the pressure washers in the changing rooms when there are still a lot of children around.

Both of these have caused my children to become very upset and has made what should be an enjoyable activity distressing.

Other than that, I have no other concerns." [Matter for GLL](#)

Response 8

"I am registered as severely sight impaired/blind and am a regular user of the QDJC. I am told that you are the contact point for information about access to the centre and I would like to share my experiences with you.

I attend the centre on foot two or three times a week. My approach is from Hillmorton Road via the footpath on the eastern side of Whitehall Rec, crossing the car park entrance to the bowls club then taking the pavement which crosses the car park twice before arriving at the front doors to the centre.

Firstly, Whitehall Rec: I felt very intimidated when there were travellers on the Rec and also when the fair was there. I was very worried by the general behaviour of both groups that I might be attacked. I have been attacked by travelling folk in Coventry only a couple of years ago whilst walking and it was not a pleasant experience. I found myself taking a much longer route to access the centre as a result. [Gypsy and Traveller encampments are illegal and we take and have taken both legal and physical measures to move them on and prevent future encampments. Any illegal activities including assault should be reported to the police.](#)

Secondly: crossing the entrance to the Bowls Club car park. There are a number of posts and surface impediments to a visually impaired person in this area and I have stumbled due to the surface and collided with the security posts on more than one occasion. [The drop-down bollards are to prevent unauthorised vehicle access to the site such as the Gypsy and Traveller encampments. There are stretches of pathway in poor condition which are planned for resurfacing as part of the phased improvements works to the park.](#)

Thirdly: the path through the car park. This path presents a number of hazards:

1: There are a couple of puddles which form at the end of the path closest to the Rec. In recent weeks one puddle in particular has been icing over and I slipped and fell first time through. Fortunately, I was not injured.

2: Cyclists tend to use this path accessing Whitehall Rec. Though I have not yet met a reckless or inconsiderate cyclist though they do rather come upon me in an instant causing me to be startled even now when I am conditioned to expect them. It would be better if the paths were clearly signed for pedestrians only and regular and visible cycle symbols were painted on the actual road surface. [There are no rules preventing cyclists using the paths within Whitehall Recreation Ground or other RBC open spaces, nor any intentions to do so. If literally means road/pavement than a matter for WCC but if means pathways within Whitehall Recreation Ground than as above no plans to ban cyclists form RBC open spaces.](#)

3: Where the path crosses the 'road' twice I find that many drivers are not paying attention nor indicating. I can also make out due to their illuminated faces that mobile phone use whilst driving in the car park is prevalent. I wonder if one of the two crossing points might be blocked off as it is easy to drive one's car a few more metres to access parking places. **This sounds like they are referring to within the car park at QDJC – this is a matter for GLL re crossings and the Police if driving using a mobile and/or driving without due care or attention.**

Perhaps the one closest to the entrance of the QDJC? It would also seem sensible to me to place further undercover cycle storage at this point to encourage users to cycle rather than drive to the QDJC. The uncovered racks close to the entrance which are also on the pavement only encourages cyclists to use the pavement.” **Matter for GLL re the bike racks. The path is within Whitehall Recreation Ground. Drainage measures have been installed on one side of the path prior to Christmas solving most of the issue and further drainage on the other side has been requested to resolve the smaller puddling issue occurring after heavy rainfall.**

Response 9

“As a disabled user of the centre I have a few issues with access, some of which I experience personally, and others which have come to light as a result of discussions with other disabled users.

The accessible parking is OK, but:

- To get to/from the centre you have to cross a road, which is unnecessary.
- The path to the centre is poorly lit.
- The path to the centre is not consistent, it slopes in various directions.

As someone with serious balance issues all of the above make it much harder than it needs to be to get from the car to the centre (and particularly back). **These issues are all a matter for GLL.**

I will also note (from other people's experience) that there is very limited checking of blue badge usage. I've been told that on occasions the spaces have all been full, with only two or three vehicles displaying a badge. **If QDJC, matter for GLL. Currently under review by Whittle Overview and Scrutiny Committee.**

Non-car access to the facility is also not great. Cycling from the north is completely unprotected, and access from the south/west is dubious. **Not clear what meant by 'unprotected' or 'dubious' or where referring to and therefore who is responsible but likely to be WCC.**

There is an excellent path from the back of the hospital to the centre, which could/should be connected to the Sow Brook shared use path, running all the way to Buchanan road, as well as linking up the Hillside and Rokeby estates. That path really needs to be made a proper access path to enable access without a car - It's 2 miles, including the gyratory system to drive to the centre, or less than 1 mile on a pedal cycle to get to the centre - it's really no contest. **This network would cross numerous different land ownership including RBC at times (where we do already have paths) but would really be for WCC Transport to lead on for new cycle/pedestrian networks as none on RBC land to link to the existing network.**

One other easy addition that would make cycling more attractive is to have the cycle parking (which is good quality Sheffield stands, although they are marginally too close to each other) under solid CCTV coverage and signed as such. **Matter for GLL**

I'm disabled, that doesn't mean I'm unable - additionally improving non-motorised access to the facility improves it for all (if nothing else it reduces the pressure on car parking). By preference I would access by cycle from St Cross (and do, ceding absolute priority to pedestrians on the short path between St Cross and Trevor White Drive).”

Additional comments:

Comment 1

Rugby Sports for the Disabled Associations

“Wheelchair Access

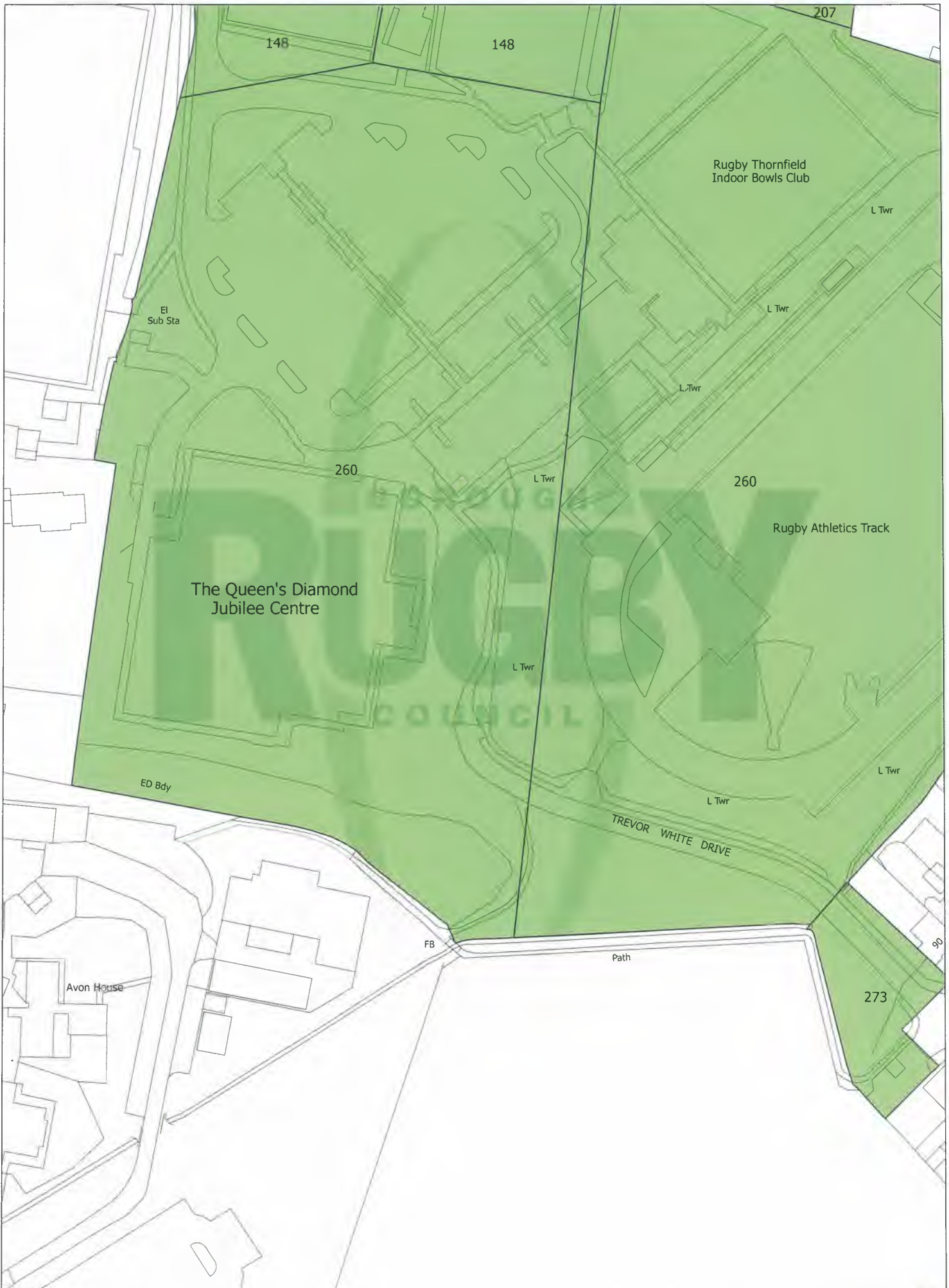
The Queen's Diamond Jubilee Centre (QDJC) has excellent access and well thought out facilities for those in wheelchairs, with generous provision of disabled parking spaces. Add in some equipment provided by Rugby Sport for the Disabled Association and it makes our activities wheelchair friendly and easily accessible.

We have a lot of special equipment and friendly helpers to aid wheelchair users who want to go swimming and all our activities in the sports hall can be enjoyed from a wheelchair.”

Comment 2

Rugby Disability Forum

“Painting of silver stripes on posts would aid partially sighted residents.”



TQDJLC



Date

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Outdoor Bowls Club

Rugby Thornfield Indoor Bowls Club

L Twr

El Sub Sta

L Twr

L Twr

L Twr

Rugby Athletics Track

The Queen's Diamond Jubilee Centre

L Twr

L Twr

ED Bdy

L Twr

TREVOR WHITE DRIVE

FB

Path

Avon House

TQDJLC



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Review of Access for People with a Disability

Officers' responses to concerns raised on 24 January 2019

Concern 1: Lack of wireless microphones available at council-owned venues (the Council Chamber and the Benn Hall) for speakers to use

The Council Chamber not known to use microphones. The Benn Hall has two wireless microphones. To suit their requirements, additional equipment may be hired.

RBC IT section is currently carrying out feasibility appraisal to provide audio and visual upgrade of the Council Chamber which will consider a new integral induction hearing loop as well. There is currently no budget for this.

Concern 2: Lack of signage at the Town Hall informing the public of a hearing loop system in place and lack of public understanding of the purpose of a hearing loop system

We believe that there is adequate signage in Town Hall reception area. There are signs for portable induction hearing loop available for use in interview rooms, meeting rooms, etc.



Concern 3: Crumbling tarmac on dropped kerbs

This is a Warwickshire County Council Highways issue.

Concern 4: Gas Street Car Park – lack of accessible parking spaces for people with a disability due to the poor state of the car park and lack of markings

The future use of the car park is currently under review. Once concluded, a decision will be made about the repair and marking of the car park.

Supplementary question from the Chair: Cabinet papers mention the site for potential homes. Can we have an update? Would remedial work be reasonable if the site is being developed?

The Rugby Town Centre project has been awarded £165k under the Governments One Public Estate programme.

A newly appointed project manager will be joining RBC in April and will be picking up the town centre project. This work will consider the strategy for all our property assets in the town centre including the Town Hall complex, Gas Street re-development and include any equalities act (DDA) requirements.

Concern 5: Position of the speed bump by the entrance to the car park at the front of the Town Hall/opposite the entrance gate to the Caldecott Park

it is unclear why this is a problem. The speed hump is designed to slow drivers at the main crossing from North Street/Evreux Way into Caldecott Park. If the issue is cars driving over causing discomfort to people with disabilities driving into or out of the car park, we can look into it. If it is mobility scooters driving over it, they should not as they would be on a road. Instead there is a dropped kerb from the disabled car parking spaces onto the path, and they can then go round to go into town or to the dropped kerbs for going into Caldecott Park.

Concern 6: Lack of consultation with RDF with regards to new housing developments in the Borough – members were made aware that RDF was consulted in the past. Following the departure of a council officer, the group's inclusion ceased. The group has been involved directly by the housing developer at Houlton.

The Rugby Disability Forum (RDF) are not a statutory consultee and my understanding is that the requirements of the Equality Act 2010 regarding suitable access to private new residential properties is covered by separate legislation under Building Regulations. However, I am aware we have consulted them on some planning applications in the past, but we have never received a reply. For example:

- R13/2102 – Outline Planning Application for up to 860 dwellings on Ashlawn Road in 2014 and the subsequent appeal in 2017;
- R16/2569 – Outline Planning Application for employment on Coventry Road, Dunchurch (DB Symmetry – part of the Rugby South West development) on 6 December 2017; and
- R17/0971 – Full Planning Application for a McDonalds building on Evreux Way opposite the Town Hall on 31 January 2018.

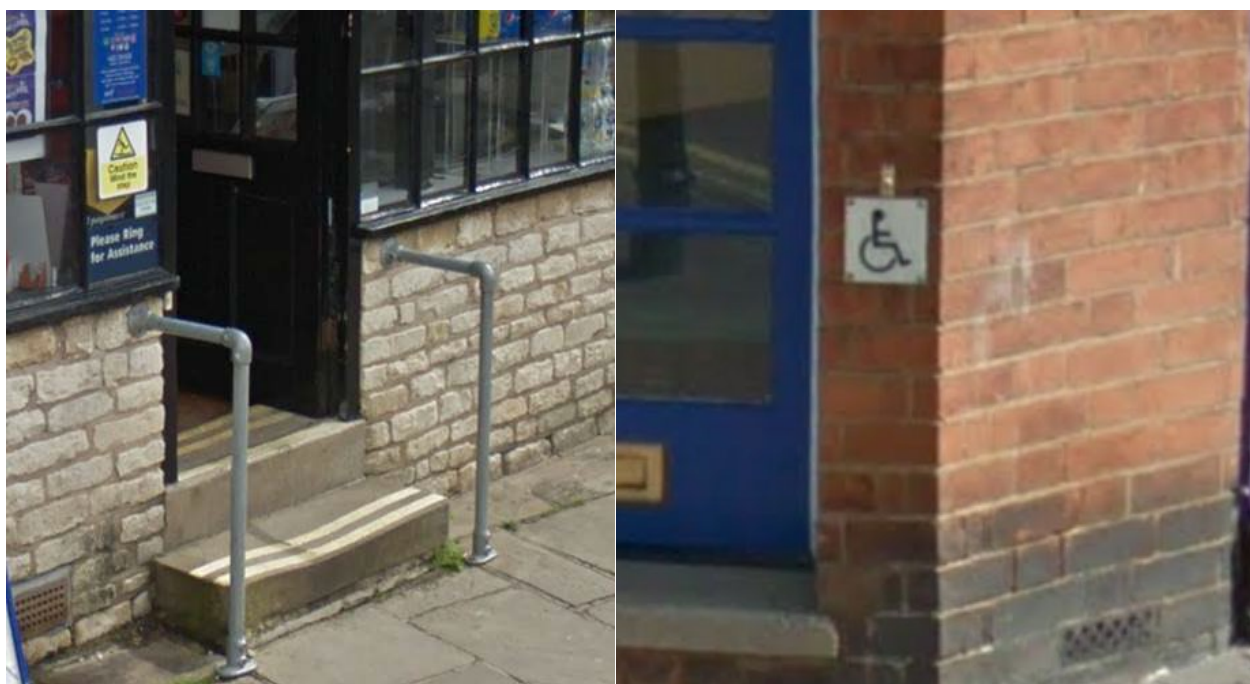
It is worth noting that some residential developments currently being built in Rugby Borough relate back to the original outline planning permissions. For instance, with regards to the Rugby Gateway Site off Leicester Road the original outline planning application dates back to 2010.

However, we have previously advised RDF that they can view the weekly list of planning applications on the Council's website to see if there are any schemes they wish to comment on as this is what several consultees do and then respond accordingly to the relevant planning officer within the consultation time frame. I strongly advise they continue to do this via <http://www.planningportal.rugby.gov.uk/weeklylistapp.asp>

Concern 7: Alterations to existing shopfronts that limit access for people with a disability and therefore do not comply with the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) – advice will be sought from the relevant council officer as this may be a planning policy issue.

If the owner of a shop wanted to change their shop front to potentially include a ramped/level access this is likely to need planning permission. If the building is of some historical merit or it lies within a historic area certain works may not be supported by the Local Planning Authority but my understanding was as long as the owner of the building had made reasonable adjustment to facilitate access to the premises this was acceptable.

For example, the images below show how those with limited access abilities can ring a bell for assistance:



I am also aware that some shops/community premises put up signs that advise on using an alternative access at the rear of the premises for disabled access eg:

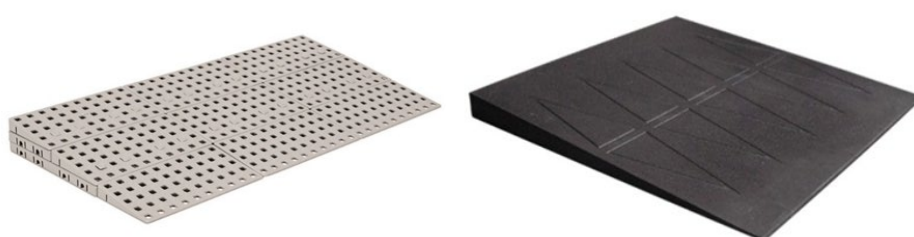


Historic England have produced guidance on Easy Access to Historic Buildings about making reasonable adjustments in practice in the light of the Equality Act which supersedes the DDA:

<https://content.historicengland.org.uk/images-books/publications/easy-access-to-historic-buildings/heaq010-easy-access-to-historic-buildings.pdf/>

Concern 8: Independent living properties where tenants have to step over a raised door sill to enter/leave their home (Stretton Court, Brownsver was highlighted)

With regards independent living properties and the thresholds where new composite doors have been installed – the council have identified a solution where required, to alleviate the difficulties in getting over them with wheelchairs. A company called GKG Solutions can provide simple threshold ramps, to suit differing heights. We are trialling these at one of our bungalows in Newbold, with delivery before the end of February 2019.



Concern 9: Access for people with a disability to The Memorial Gates, Hillmorton Road

The Rugby Memorial Gates were relocated in 1987 from their original position to allow for an access road through to the sports centre and were set a raised block paving platform.

It has been clear for some years that the setting of the Memorial Gates is inappropriate for anyone with mobility issues to lay a wreath at the memorial gates. However, the re-setting of the gates to ensure they are DDA friending will require the whole memorial to be removed and then reinstalled. This will be a very costly exercise and is being looked at in phase 2 of the Whitehall Recreation Ground Improvements. This will be funded from 106 contributions from the Ashlawn Road developments.

Concern 10: Parking adjacent to the council's independent living housing and the need for a full review to establish whether the current provision is fit for purpose or changes are to be made to accommodate needs such as wider bays for vehicles used by tenants with a disability (may form a recommendation of the task group)

A similar issue was highlighted about two years ago where it was being looked at to penalty charge people for parking in council housing “spaces”. It wasn’t about enlarging spaces but freeing them up so residents actually could park.

Concern 11: Access for people with a disability to Great Central Walk between Abbey Street and St Peter's Road

Great Central Walk follows the route of the old Great Central railway line through Rugby and access varies depending of the levels. As an old railway line there are some deep cuttings with the Abbey Street/St Peter's Road being the least steep area which could be improved to make a better access point for people with mobility issues. However initial costing suggest this would still be over 100K to make it compliant.

Concerns raised by Bernard Purdy, Rugby Sports for Disabled Association via email on Tuesday 19 February:

Bus stop on Leicester Road

I hope that this bus stop is only temporary but I am surprised that it was allowed even on that basis. It is used by no 4 buses now that they no longer divert down to Tesco. I do not know which other buses use it. The buses discharge onto a grass slope, which then leads onto a footpath that slopes in the opposite direction. I know that people with wheeled shopping baskets find it dangerous and I have been with a lady in an electric wheelchair that has got stuck on several occasions and will now no longer go to Tesco.

The main problem with the wheelchairs is that many of them are driven by the centre pair of wheels and these wheels are nearly off the ground because of the hollow. They then get no grip on the mud. Pushing them is then the only way to move them, but this is risky as they then only have a short distance in which to stop or turn when the wheels suddenly grip.



The crossing at the mouth of the Tesco drive

This is the only suitable crossing point for people in wheelchairs as the ones further down lead to dead ends. Crossing from the Tesco side involves having your back to the traffic which is coming at speed from two different directions. Vision is obstructed by hedging and the roundabout. People in wheelchairs are particularly vulnerable because of their lack of manoeuvrability, difficulty in looking over their shoulders and the fact that they are low down and therefore less visible to drivers.



The new Brownsover Surgery

There is a pharmacy just a few metres away but getting to it in a wheelchair is a nightmare. There are no adjacent dropped kerbs, so the journey involves a detour through a car park to what is supposed to be a dropped kerb but is not actually dropped enough.



Access for People with a Disability Task Group

Wednesday 20 February 2019

Corporate Estate

An overview of disability surveys and proposed new surveys assessments

Summary of previous survey information and works completed were reported at last meeting.

Previous surveys identified upgrade of town hall lift, access to chamber, and general door upgrades but these have been on hold due to the overall Town Hall complex strategy and large costs involved.

We currently continue to use temporary ramp access into council chamber. Additional handrails to council chamber viewing gallery and increased height balustrade to town hall foyer landing to be fitted in April/May as part of Health and Safety upgrade.

We are currently considering a full Equalities Act (DDA) surveys, assessment and report on all corporate buildings to identify any works and costs associated with any upgrades required and help obtain capital budgets for the coming years.

An overview of the corporate capital programme

Capital scheme for the council chamber audio and visual upgrade is to be considered for this year (2019) and we are awaiting final costs.

Capital Budget Requirements for 2019/20

Bathrooms – budget is £350k for the next five years. This will allow around 130 bathrooms to be done. The fitting of over bath showers allows easier access to bathing for those people who cannot easily get down and back up from the bath.

Secondly, where identified and obvious, the council will proactively not fit the bath and install a walk-in shower, should the building structure allow this. If the disability is not obvious, the resident will be signposted to an Occupational Therapist who can carry out an assessment and offer recommendations. Year 2018/2019 saw this scenario happen on 18 occasions.

This financial year coming, we have the Albert Square complex due for bathrooms. These have in have past been refused for level access showers due to the nature of the construction being beam and block. This means that drainage outlets would be higher than the plug holes. Residents were asked to use the one communal shower room in the complex, which does not appeal to modern living. However, a trial is being completed now whereby a pump is being fitted, to drive the waste water to a higher outlet than the plug hole. This means that many of the residents will now benefit from easier bathing within their own flats.

Adaptations – a budget of approximately £200k for 2019/2020 is available to carry out recommendations from OTs for adaptations to council owned housing properties.

This spend is mainly led by OT requests, however minor adaptations such as lever taps, grab rails, half steps and second stair rails are carried out without the need of a referral.

So far this year, we have carried out the following:

- Installed galvanised, plastic or timber rails were installed to bathrooms, stairs and external paths to approximately 58 households, which will provide tenants with better stability and ease of access to their homes
- Installed 3 external concrete ramps to provide easier entry to both the front and back doors including access for wheelchairs
- Installed 24 level access showers, plus another 18 while carrying out planned bathroom refurbishments.
- Installed 7 stairlifts, of which 4 were recycled from other properties, saving around £4k is supplied new ones.

Kitchens – there are no plans to carry out widespread kitchen upgrades within this financial year.

Gas Heating Systems – there are plans to carry out around 300 boiler or complete system renewals during 2019/2020, but this does not have any implications for the Disability Task Group

Fire Risk Work – there is a budget of approximately £60k for fire risk works but this is not earmarked for anything specific for the Task Group

Main Entrance Doors to Communal Blocks – the council will start a programme of replacement external communal doors to its blocks, during 2019/2020, with approximately £300k per year required. Where necessary, the council will consider the installation of automatic opening doors should a situation arise. However, a cost benefit analysis will need to be completed of the current occupancy of the block. The doors will have compliant DDA thresholds and will be easy to open, due to the full-length hinge taking the weight of the door. Door will be fobbed accessed so there will be no need to use codes or keys to gain access. Security into the block will be vastly increased.

Electrical Upgrades of Distribution Boards for Community Rooms/Complexes – this will have no impact on the Task Group

Commercial Boilers at Tanser Court – the council plans to replace the commercial boilers that heat the Tanser Court complex. This will have no impact on the Task Group