

# Disabled People's Forum

on Tuesday, 4 January 2011 at 5:30 pm until not later than 8.30pm  
in Court Room, the Guildhall,

## Agenda

1. Welcome and Introductions
2. Apologies  
Please contact Emma Garratt on 01604 837089 or  
egarratt@northampton.gov.uk when submitting apologies for absence.
3. Minutes and Matters Arising  
(copy attached)
4. Disabled Facilities Grant and Adaptations
  - Update by the Housing Solutions Manager
5. Northants County Council Assisted Transport Consultation  
Copy herewith
6. Community Information Exchange
7. Items for Next and Future Meetings
8. Date of Next Meeting

Map and directions at: [www.northampton.gov.uk/guildhall](http://www.northampton.gov.uk/guildhall))

For more information about this meeting please contact:  
Lindsey Ambrose, Community Engagement and Equalities Officer:

 [lambrose@northampton.gov.uk](mailto:lambrose@northampton.gov.uk)

 Tel/Text: 0779 53 33 687 (including evenings and weekends)

 Tel: (voicemail available) 01604 837566

 More information about the Forum generally is at: [www.northampton.gov.uk/forums](http://www.northampton.gov.uk/forums)



Please note that this Forum is supported and funded by Northampton Borough Council. The Forum may work in partnership and collaboration with other community groups, councils and local services from time to time. The views expressed and decisions taken by the Forum are not necessarily those of Northampton Borough Council.

# Agenda Item 3

## NORTHAMPTON BOROUGH COUNCIL

### DISABLED PEOPLE'S FORUM

Tuesday, 9 November 2010

<b>PRESENT:</b>	Councillor Pam Varnsvery	NBC
	Lindsey Ambrose	NBC
	Councillor Perkins	Portfolio Holder for Finance
	Noor Homayoun,	Individual
	Larry Barber,	Individual
	Barbara Barber,	Individual
	Connie Mulliner,	Individual
	John Wright	Pensioners Voice
	Norman Adams	Individual
	Chris Swinn,	Individual
	Ewart Smith	Individual
	Martin de Rosario,	Individual
	Beverely Mennell,	Individual
	Rashmi Shah,	Individual
	John Wood,	Individual
	Sue Campling,	NHS Northampton
	Tom Welsh,	Individual
	Anne Timson,	Individual
	Madeline Boys	Individual

#### 1. WELCOME

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting

#### 2. APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Chris Grethe

#### 3. UPDATES FROM LAST MEETING

##### Railway Related Issues

T Welsh confirmed that the proposed redevelopment of the railway station was being drawn up. It was reported that the development outlined a 3-storey building with the toilets located on the top floor. It was suggested that a more thorough consultation should have been conducted with regards to the involvement of disabled people, as it would be unreasonable for disabled people, the elderly and those with young children to be expected to go up several flights of stairs to get to the toilets.

##### Disability Facility Grants (DFG)

N Adams suggested that there were differences between those who were entitled to the DFG in private housing and social housing and expressed concern that there

were people who were unaware of entitlements that could assist them in living independently.

B Mennell concurred with N Adams and requested feedback be given from Occupational Health with regards to the Disability Grants. She also reported that many people did not know where to go or where the first port of call was.

It was agreed that the Housing Solution Manager be invited to the next Disabled People's Forum to address members on the DFG developments.

### **Northampton General Hospital and GPs**

S Campling from Northampton General Hospital informed the Forum that 20 percent of hospital attendees had some sort of disability and that Risk Assessments were carried out. It was reported that 'Disabled Go' had carried out an audit on the hospital and that the hospital now had an action plan, which would be implemented in order to improve problems.

S Campling informed the group that she would invite the Head of Estates from Northampton General Hospital to a future forum meeting to explain the plans for the future.

R Shah suggested that more information should be issued to ensure that there is accessibility for all and that patients should be listened to.

The Chair commented that she knew of someone who had been in the Northampton General Hospital and that when discharged there was no aftercare, an experience of which was also had by M Boys.

M Boys shared her experience of her stay in hospital for 21 days and voiced her concerns that people were not doing their jobs properly. She had no after care or physiotherapy follow up appointment and that the help that she did receive was from Age Concern.

S Campling apologised for the experiences had by some people and notified the group that there was a discharge team whom she would report back to.

C Swinn questioned what the effects would be on GP's taking over from Primary Care Trusts and if this would impact on community nursing. L Ambrose reported that the information was still filtering through from Central Government with regards to the white paper and the affects of this would not yet be known.

### **Equality Act 2010**

It was noted that most of the Equality Act 2010 had been implemented in order to replace the existing antidiscrimination laws with a single Act. It would simplify the law, removing inconsistencies and make it easier for people to understand and comply with. It would also strengthen the law in important ways to help tackle discrimination and inequalities.

### **Byelaw Consultation**

It was reported that Cabinet had identified £250k of capital to be spent on a Skate Park facility in the Northampton area – the location of which had yet been identified. It was noted that some young people with disabilities were among those who wanted the skate park.

#### **4. FINANCIAL CHANGE IN NORTHAMPTON BOROUGH COUNCIL**

Cllr Perkins (Portfolio for Finance) presented a report on behalf of the Leader of the Council. The Government had announced the Comprehensive Spending Review on the 20<sup>th</sup> October 2010, which included an indication that finances to Local Government would be reduced by 28% over the next four years. Cllr Perkins informed the group that this was only part of the picture and that the full impact of the spending review was not yet known.

It was reported that the accepted level of government debt was 40 percent of the national income but that in 2008 there had been a very large increase. It was explained that 2031 would be the expected date that the debt would level at 40 percent. It was noted that there had been an expectation that this would happen and that it was not a problem locally but nationally and that there were expectations to provide the same level of services, but without an increase in Council Tax. Therefore, with limited resources it would be necessary for NBC to prioritise what services it provides and where cutbacks could be made.

A distinction was made between statutory and non-statutory services that the Council provided. R Shah questioned what the effects would be on the Disabled Facility Grants (DFG) and whether or not it would be ring fenced. Cllr Perkins responded by explaining that the DFG would not be ring fenced but noted that the Council had a statutory obligation to commit to the provision of it. R Shah also asked if the Council's recent asset disposal was considered value for money. Cllr Perkins explained that there were 2 issues that were considered: identifying assets to get rid of and the timing of the sales.

B Mennell asked if there would be a decrease in parking charges, which would attract more people to Northampton especially on weekends and public holidays. Cllr Perkins understood the concept of such an arrangement but stated that £4 million of gross income came from car parks and that a reduction in that would result in an increase in cost elsewhere and emphasised the necessity to balance the needs of the people with balancing the resources available. B Mennell congratulated the Council on the DFG and spoke of her knowledge of people who have successfully been awarded a grant.

Cllr Perkins notified the forum that further information about the topic could be downloaded from the Treasury's Comprehensive Spending Review and insisted that there was a need not to commit to unrealistic promises and deal with the spending review with honesty and confidence.

N Adams expressed his belief that Northampton Borough Council had squandered the money from the receipts of the right to buy sales and that they had not put the money back into housing. Cllr Perkins insisted that this was not true and informed the forum that all receipts were accounted for with 25% of the receipts being put back into housing and the other 75% going to central Government.

As a way of increasing spending within the area, J Wood suggested that with the announcement of the performance of Elton John, was there a way in which Northampton could promote itself on the back of the event. T Welsh agreed with the idea and that this would allow the town to boost its image and develop an appreciation of the town's heritage.

## **5. COMMUNITY INFORMATION EXCHANGE**

It was explained that the Central Area Action Plan (CAAP) was the plan, which would ensure that the any future development opportunities arising within the Central Area would be used in a way that meet the visions of the future. The Council had based the Action Plan on a vast amount of evidence, which ranged from technical studies through to the outcome of public consultation exercises. It was noted that the views and input of residents and businesses would be highly valued in shaping the policies of the Action plan.

T Welsh reported that he had been on a 'walkabout' within the town centre looking specifically at issues affecting people with a disability. He further went on to voice his concerns that the issue of disability access would be deferred until after the planning stage and be considered more as an after thought rather than being placed at the apex of the planning consultation.

Particular concerns were aired about the reliance on pedestrian crossings and that accessibility issues were being pushed too far into the future. She explained that it was currently as a plan and had not yet been submitted to Government. J Wood requested that in future, consultation be undertaken at an early stage with organisations such as the Northamptonshire Association for the Blind (NAB).

B Mennell informed the group that she was concerned about the water meters that had been secured in the ground could pose problems for disabled people as some appeared to be at an angle and had not been fitted flush to the pavement. In response, Cllr Varnsberry said that she would contact Anglian Water and Northampton County Council about the issue.

It was agreed that the next items to be discussed at the next Disabled People's Forum, to be held on the 4 January 2011 would include:

- Disabled Facilities Grant and Adaptations
- Northamptonshire County Council Assisted Transport Consultation

## **6. DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

The date of the next meeting was confirmed as being the 4<sup>th</sup> January 2011.

The meeting concluded at 8.22



## What happens when you make a complaint?

### By telephone

If you, or someone acting on your behalf, telephone us we will try to resolve your complaint there and then. If this is not possible, we will take your details, give you a contact name and investigate your complaint before calling you back. In some cases we may need to make an appointment to visit you before we can resolve your problem. We promise to keep you regularly informed of progress in resolving your complaint.

### By letter, fax or email

If you, or someone acting on your behalf, write or email us, we will provide a response within 10 working days of receipt. If your complaint cannot be answered without investigation we will write and tell you who is dealing with your complaint. As stipulated by the terms of the statutory Guaranteed Standards Scheme if we fail to do this we will credit £20 to your account or you may request a direct payment. You are entitled to a direct payment unless you are in debt to us and your debt has been outstanding for more than six weeks. Payments will be made within 10 working days. If we fail to make payment within this time you are entitled to claim a penalty payment of £10. You must claim the penalty payment within three months. For further details of the Guaranteed Standards Scheme visit Ofwat's website at [www.ofwat.gov.uk](http://www.ofwat.gov.uk).

### Managing your complaint

We keep a record of all complaints and learn lessons from them. This helps us to improve our service in the future. Reports on complaints are updated and reviewed by our directors on a monthly basis. These records are monitored and audited independently.

If you, or someone acting on your behalf, telephone us we will try to resolve your complaint there and then.

## What if I'm not satisfied with your response?

### Internal review

If you're not happy with our response and want to discuss the matter further, please contact us on **08457 91 91 55**. We're confident that we will be able to resolve the matter quickly, or clarify any queries you may have.

However, if you continue to be dissatisfied with the way we are dealing with the matter, please contact our Customer Relations Team at the address below, who will arrange a fresh investigation into the case and respond within 10 working days.

### Anglian Water

Customer Services  
PO Box 10642  
Harlow  
CM20 9HA

### Independent review

If you remain unhappy with our response to your complaint you can contact the **Consumer Council for Water – Central and Eastern Region**. This is an independent body set up to look after the interest of water customers. One of its key roles is to investigate complaints against the water companies. It can be contacted at:

Ground Floor  
Carlyle House  
Carlyle Road,  
Cambridge  
CB4 3DN  
Website: [www.ccwater.org.uk](http://www.ccwater.org.uk)  
Telephone: 08457 95 93 69 or 01223 323889

You have the right to refer certain disputes to **Ofwat**, the economic regulator for the water and sewerage companies in England and Wales, for a decision. A list of the disputes, which you can refer to, is given overleaf.



**Email Received from Anglian Water re meter covers**

-----Original Message-----

From: Anglian Water Customer Services

[\[mailto:CustService@anglianwater.co.uk\]](mailto:CustService@anglianwater.co.uk)

Sent: 23 November 2010 08:57

To: Pam Varnserry (Cllr)

Subject: JP/901256776

Dear Councillor Varnserry

I'm sorry to hear that there are some dangerous meter covers in your area causing trip hazards to pedestrians.

As I'm sure you'll appreciate, it would be impossible for us to check every meter cover in your area. We rely on hazards being reported to us and we deal with all such hazards as a matter of urgency. If you can supply full location details of any hazards that have been reported to you, we will investigate further. For your information, our meter readers will also report dangerous covers. You may like to advise members of the forum that the number below can be used to report any hazards and this line is open 24 hours a day, 365 days of the year.

If there's anything else we can do for you, please contact us at the address above or by phone on 08457 145 145. We'll be happy to help.

Yours sincerely

Judith Parkinson  
Customer Services



Health and Adult Social Services

## ASSISTED TRANSPORT POLICY CONSULTATION DOCUMENT



Northamptonshire  
County Council

## **Introduction**

This draft policy has been developed using feedback from the Fairer Charging consultation this year and with help from our customers. We need your help to tell us if we have missed anything and the potential impact it may have on your circumstances.

## **AIMS**

The aims of this draft Policy are as follows:

- Support and funding to enable lifelong mobility and independent living
- Educational campaigns to promote maximum independent mobility, developing of social capital and safety for older people and people living with disabilities.

In achieving these aims, HASS will:

- Promote and encourage the use of commonly available transport options such as public transport, walking or mobilising the use of aids either independently or with a support, people using their own vehicle, utilizing transport assistance costs and concessionary travel.
- Ensure that locally based services are available and responsive to the needs of local people. It is no longer appropriate to arrange a service outside of a person's local area, unless it is not possible to meet their assessed need in that area.
- Commission transport needs from responsible agencies for a person who is eligible for funding;

## **SCOPE**

This policy only allows the direct provision of the following transport arrangements:

- Internal car fleets organised by the County Council
- Internal minibus fleets organised by the County Council
- Taxi services organised and arranged through the County Council's transport team.

The above transport arrangements will only apply in the following three circumstances:

- Day opportunities
- Respite centres
- One-off exceptional arrangements

If customers are assessed with eligible needs and assisted transport is their only transportation method, the cost of the transport will form part of their overall service package and will be assessed under the Fairer Contributions Guidance.

Customers who choose to purchase transport as part of their personal budgets will be charged against their eligible needs under the Fairer Contributions Guidance.

## **POLICY STATEMENT**

*“Health and Adult Social Services is committed to supporting and enabling the lifelong mobility of its customers to lead safe and independent lives”.*

### **Health and Adult Social Services Commitments for Assisted Transport**

The following general guidance is to be used when identifying the need for assisted transport:

- Where a person is able to walk, use assisted mobility (motorised scooter, wheelchair/aids) either independently or with support from family, friends or support worker, volunteer etc to get to a **local** community service including college and it is reasonable for them to do so, transport will not normally be provided;
- Where a person can use public transport, voluntary transport or Dial a Ride either independently or with support (family, friend, carer, support worker etc) to get to and from community activities including college, transport will not normally be provided.
- Part of the person’s assessment and review will identify their potential to learn road safety and orientation skills so that they can travel independently to and from community activities, including college. Where it is reasonable for them to do so, transport will not normally be provided.
- Where a person cannot attend their nearest community activity including college because there is no suitable placement available then the provision of transport will be considered.
- If there is no local services to meet a person’s assessed needs then transport to the nearest appropriate service will be considered.
- Where a person chooses to attend community activities or college outside of their identified locality and a local service is available to meet their assessed need, then the individual will become responsible for meeting the whole cost of the transport required;

- Where a person receives a benefit to facilitate their mobility needs (e.g. Disability Living Allowance where this includes a mobility element), this should be fully utilised to support their transport needs to and from community activities including college. Consideration will be given to supporting transport for a person where they can justify why this benefit cannot be used.
- Where people live in settings where their care is funded by HASS (e.g. residential care, supported living schemes), the cost of the placement will meet their full range of support needs to include transport to community activities and college;
- Where people contribute towards the provision of a shared community vehicle, there is an expectation that this would be used to transport them to community activities including college;
- Where it is identified in a carer's assessment that not providing transport would place unreasonable responsibility on a carer then assisted transport will be considered.
- Where a person has a private or motability car, it will be expected that this vehicle will be used to access community activities including college. Where a person uses their own vehicle or motability car no petrol costs or other expenses will be met by the County Council.
- Where a person has no access to transport and cannot walk, use assisted mobility (wheelchair/aids) or use public transport, either independently or with support to access a support arrangement/service that meets an assessed need, then assisted transport will be considered.
- In all other circumstances, provided all transport options have been considered, and have been evidenced and recorded, assisted transport will be considered.
- All current and future transport arrangements will be subject to a minimum of an annual review and if a person's needs change then a re-assessment will be undertaken.
- HASS accepts that exceptional circumstances can arise which would merit HASS funding exceptional assisted transport, and in these circumstances, any assisted transport would have to be authorised by the appropriate budget holder.
- The County Council Complaints Procedure outlines access to the Complaints and Commendations process, and explains the process for complaining about decisions made by the County Council.
- Where there is a reference to college, this refers to a college placement that is linked to day activities. Full-time education remains the responsibility of Children's Services;

## **HOW WILL WE ASSESS ASSISTED TRANSPORT NEEDS?**

The following steps will be considered and recorded in assessing assisted transport needs:

- Can the person travel independently (own transport, public transport, walk or other independent means)?
- Is the person able to access transport provided by other means (family, friends, paid, support worker)? If so, is this a reasonable distance to travel to the service?
- Time to travel – is this reasonable?
- Is the person accessing the nearest service that meets their needs?
- Is the service on a direct bus route?
- Could a volunteer support the person with their travel requirements?
- Would the person be able to travel independently after travel training?
- Is there a medical reason why the person could not travel independently?
- Does the person have a sensory impairment that has an impact on them travelling independently?
- Is there a physical reason that can have an impact on the person travelling independently?
- Reasons for a person being unable to travel independently must be identified as part of a risk assessment
- Is the person in receipt of Mobility Allowance (a component of Disability Living Allowance) and if not do they need assistance to apply?
- Does the person or family have a Motability vehicle and if not do they need assistance to apply for one?
- Does the person have a concessionary bus pass, if not do they need assistance to apply for one?
- Ensure people have been supported to apply for appropriate benefits.

The principle is that whenever possible people should be encouraged to make their own transport arrangements, with staff from HASS acting as facilitators in indicating appropriate transport options.

Sensitivity will need to be applied to those situations where transport is currently provided and the review/re-assessment identifies that transport will no longer be provided. A time limited transition period will need to be agreed so that alternative arrangements can be made.





2. Should every customer contribute the same rate regardless of their ability to pay? Please tick (✓) **one box**

Strongly agree	<input type="checkbox"/>
Agree	<input type="checkbox"/>
Neither agree nor disagree	<input type="checkbox"/>
Disagree	<input type="checkbox"/>
Strongly disagree	<input type="checkbox"/>
Don't know	<input type="checkbox"/>

3. Should every customer be assessed to see how much NCC can contribute towards their eligible assisted transport needs? Please tick (✓) **one box**

Strongly agree	<input type="checkbox"/>
Agree	<input type="checkbox"/>
Neither agree nor disagree	<input type="checkbox"/>
Disagree	<input type="checkbox"/>
Strongly disagree	<input type="checkbox"/>
Don't know	<input type="checkbox"/>

4. Some customers choose to access services outside of their local area even when a local service is available. Should these customers be charged an additional amount to cover the increased cost of travel arrangements? Please tick (✓) **one box**

Should be charged at the same cost	<input type="checkbox"/>
Should be charged an additional cost	<input type="checkbox"/>
Don't know	<input type="checkbox"/>

5. If a customer meets the eligible needs for assisted transport should they have the option to use NCC's contribution to arrange their own transport to suit their needs? Please tick (✓) **one box**

Strongly agree	<input type="checkbox"/>
Agree	<input type="checkbox"/>
Neither agree nor disagree	<input type="checkbox"/>
Disagree	<input type="checkbox"/>
Strongly disagree	<input type="checkbox"/>
Don't know	<input type="checkbox"/>



6. We recognise that the changes to the assisted transport policy may change how assisted transport is assessed and delivered in the future. We would like to understand the affect this may have on unpaid carers.

What affect do you feel this policy will have on informal carers?

Comments:

7. If you have any comments on any of the above questions or any part of the assisted transport policy please tell us these comments in the box below:

Comments:

**CLOSING DATE FOR ALL RESPONSES: FRIDAY 31<sup>st</sup> JANUARY 2011**

Thank you for helping us by filling in this questionnaire.

If you require more detailed information about how we charge for our services, please telephone 01604 237977 or e-mail:  
[HASSpublicengagement@northamptonshire.gov.uk](mailto:HASSpublicengagement@northamptonshire.gov.uk)

Please post it back to us in the envelope provided.  
You don't need to put a stamp on the envelope.





**1) What gender are you?** (Please tick the appropriate box)

Male  Female

**2) How old are you?** (Please tick the appropriate box)

0 to 7  8 to 17  18 to 30  31 to 50   
51 to 64  65 to 74  75+

**3) Do you have a disability?** (Please tick the appropriate box)

Yes  No

**3a) If Yes, please tick the appropriate boxes which best describes your disability?**

Mental Health  Physical Disability  Hearing   
Learning Disability  Eyesight  Other

**4) What is your religion?** (Please tick the appropriate box)

Christian  Buddhist  Hindu  Jewish   
Muslim  Sikh  Non Stated  None   
Any other religion (please write in)

**5) How would you describe your ethnic origin?**

Tick **one** category within the option which best describes your background

**White**

English  Welsh   
Scottish  Northern Irish   
Irish  Gypsy or Traveller   
Other White Background

**Asian or Asian British**

Indian  Pakistani   
Bangladeshi  Chinese   
Other Asian Background

**Mixed / Multiple ethnic Background**

White & Black  White & Black   
Caribbean  African   
White & Asian  Other mixed / multiple background

**Black or Black British**

Caribbean  African   
Other Black Background

Other Ethnic group (please state)

**6) If you are 16 or over which of the following options best describes how you think of yourself?** (Please tick the appropriate box)

Bisexual  Gay Man  Gay Woman/ Lesbian  Transgender   
Heterosexual / Straight  Prefer not to say  Other