

Northampton Borough Council

Northampton Disabled People's Forum

Wednesday, 5 October 2011

Members:	Councillors Phil Larratt and Beverley Mennell
Public Members:	Barbara Barber, Larry Barber, Madeline Boys, Rashmi Shah, Martin de Rosario, Sue Campling, Malcolm Rogers Grace Okusanya
Officers at Meeting	Thomas Hall Ian Swift
Apologies	Lindsey Ambrose Chris Woodams

1. WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting and asked for everyone to introduce themselves. It was noted that the Community Engagement and Equalities Officer was unable to attend the meeting due to a prior engagement and was being substituted by Thomas Hall - Head of Policy and Community Engagement.

The Chair reported Mr Martin de Rosario was the new Co-chair and welcomed him to the meeting and congratulated him on his newfound position.

Mr Martin de Rosario thanked members of the forum and stated that he would work hard with officers and forum members in his new capacity.

3. MINUTES AND MATTERS ARISING

The minutes of the meeting held on the 22nd June 2011 were agreed and signed by the Chair.

In response to a question asked by a Forum member, the Housing Solutions Manager explained that there were a number of delays with regards to Solar Panels in both public and private sector housing. He reported that it had been an issue for all Councils and that progress was slow as there were a number of complex issues and that work with energy providers was continuing. A number of survey had been carried out that had to be completed by law. He commented that any progress made could be reported back at a future meeting to ensure forum members would be fully updated.

Sue Campling – Northants General Hospital NHS Trust circulated the Non Emergency Patient Transport (NEPTS) Eligibility Criteria, which outlined what patients were eligible for and what criteria they would need to meet in order to get Patient Transfer. She reported that £2 million was being spent on non-emergency transport and non-eligible transfers and necessary efforts were being made to reduce the expenditure. In response to a question asked by a forum member, it was

explained that Northampton General were establishing a diversity group, which would help them examine ways of making the system more dynamic and accessible to patients with various needs.

Councillor Mennell reported that she had attended an NHS event and was updated about the numerous ways the NHS was moving forward especially during the time of economic hardship.

4. TOUR OF ONE STOP SHOP - 5.45PM

The forum members attended a tour of the One Stop Shop.

Angela Lawrence, the Customer Liaison Officer responded to questions asked by forum members. Some members of the forum suggested that there were not enough hard copies of information and leaflets provided in the One-Stop Shop and suggested that more should be done to assist people who were not comfortable using IT systems to access information. Angela explained that all information was available to people on line and that it had been noted that too many leaflets left out, led to information been harder to find and distinguish. She also commented that 'floor-walkers' were present in the One-Stop shop who were knowledgeable and well trained to the needs of people with disabilities. It was also noted that by reducing the amount of paperwork, significant cost cutting measures could be applied. The Head of Policy and Community Engagement commented that they were attempting to find a balance between displaying hard copies and electronic copies of material but that the floor walkers could assist in a number of circumstances, for example print out large print material for those with visual impairments.

5. DISABLED FACILITIES GRANTS UPDATE

Ian Swift – The Housing Solutions Manager explained that 80 percent of the adaptations made to peoples homes was for walk in showers and stairlifts. £1.5 million was allocated for the Grant of which £1.3 million had been spent within the first 6 months. It was noted that the customers with urgent or emergency needs had their work completed first. The Housing Solutions Manager further explained that the Disabled Facilities Grant had great financial implications on the Council, as the amount of money received from National Government was £475,000 – the Council having to provide £1.3 million.

In response to a question asked by a forum member, it was explained that the Occupational Therapy service had recently undergone changes and that Housing Assessments were now being carried out to establish if a transfer was necessary or if an adaptation would be suitable. It was noted that there had been a significant decrease in the amount of time that people had to wait to be referred; previously it had been up to 6 months, which was been decreased to 11 weeks. It was further explained that transfers were sometimes being offered as they had less financial implications due to the cost of extensive adaptations.

One customer raised the delay in undertaking repair work to a customer's property. Councillor Larrett chair of the forum suggested that a representative be invited to the

next meeting from Landlord Services to explain the work of the service.

6. COMMUNITY INFORMATION EXCHANGE

- Event to be held on the 13th October 2011 – ‘Meet your local Ambulance Service’ at the Saints ground.
- Youth Forum interested in hearing the views of other Forum members, including the Disabled Peoples Forum – as part of the ‘Stamp out Hate Crime’ campaign.
- Youth Forum and Northampton Museum working together to create I-pad tours.
- Future meeting to be held in the One - Stop Shop as the preferred location due to the improved acoustics.

7. ITEMS FOR NEXT AND FUTURE MEETINGS

- A representative from the Housing Directorate is invited to talk about the County Council's Prevention agenda consultation outcome, and it was suggested that Tim Ansell, undertakes this presentation at the November 2011 meeting.

8. DATE OF THE NEXT MEETING

The date of the next meeting is to be the 8th November 2011.

The meeting concluded at 19.10