



Council Meeting October 12th 2021 Update on Accessibility Strategy

1.0 Purpose of the Report

1.1 To feedback on the progress being made in delivering the Council's Accessibility Strategy and the work of the Accessibility Working Group

2.0 Background Information

2.1 The Council approved the Council's draft Accessibility Strategy and Action Plan at the meeting held in November 2020

2.2 The Accessibility Working Group consists of Councillors Mallett and Angharad who are joined by Siobhan Fennell and Russell Mason from Accessible Belper. Cllr Porter also attends the meeting and officer support is provided by Dave Barnes

2.3 Since November 2020 the working group has met a total of 15 times. All meetings have set Agendas and meeting notes which record discussions and actions. Meetings take place on Mondays and Tuesdays during the day to suit the caring needs of Accessible Belper attendees

2.4 The Action Plan which is attached as an Appendix to this report has evidenced some good progress in certain areas but there is still a lot of work to do. Officer time is a finite resource due to the many other calls on the officer's time and it was also sad to lose Councillor Rosie Hale who did some sterling work whilst she was part of the Working Group. Addition of another Councillor to replace Councillor Hale is one of the report's recommendations.

2.5 It is impossible to detail in this report every discussion which has taken place but it is possible to list down some of the progress made by the working group and highlight some key issues. In doing so Members of the Working Group wish to place on record their thanks to Siobhan Fennell and Russell Mason, for their time, expertise and drive in helping to make Belper a more Accessible Place.

Achievements

2.6 Progress has been made as set out below :

- A training session for Councillors and the encouragement of use by Councillors and Council Staff of the online training resource supplied by Accessible Belper
- A revised Grants Policy to ensure that applications take account of the needs of people with Disabling conditions
- A revised Committee Report Template which includes an Accessibility implications section to help ensure that Accessibility considerations are



taken into account as part of the Council's decision making process

- A revised events policy to ensure that events take in to account the needs of people with Disabling Conditions
- A new Accessibility Toolkit to support businesses in making improvements to their arrangements in support of people with Disabling conditions (See attached)
- Attendance by Members of the Working Group on Market Days to invite the public to complete the questionnaire on Accessibility and to hand out leaflets and badges
- Scrutiny and representations on Amber Valley Borough Council's draft Hackney Licensing Policy
- Discussions with Derbyshire Community Transport on making Bus Travel more Accessible
- Discussions with the Manager of Belper Leisure Centre on what opportunities there might be to host more activities for people with a Disabling condition and similar discussions with Derby County Community Trust
- Input on the map to be used for a visitor leaflet to ensure that information on Disability Access is properly integrated.
- Input in to the Council's review of Communications and Customer Contact
- Encouraged the public and businesses to complete questionnaires setting out how they would like Accessibility arrangements in Belper to be improved
- Liaison with the Toilets Working Group

Issues and Observations

2.7 A number of issues and observations have become apparent whilst the Group have been working on delivering the strategy, these are set out as follows :

- The Town Council is fortunate to have the involvement of Accessible Belper and the Partnership with this organization has worked very well
- Although progress has been made there is still an enormous amount of work to be done to ensure better inclusion for people with Disabling conditions
- Feedback from the survey questionnaires is helping to provide the Working Group with useful information on Accessibility issues as experienced by Members of the public. This will help the Working Group to ensure that the Action Plan focuses on the issues which matter most to local people. To date the number of completed surveys is relatively small so more work is needed to encourage people to respond.
- It is important for Belper's voice to be heard as evidenced by the Amber Valley Borough Council Hackney Carriage Licence consultation and observed capacity issue at the Amber Valley Access Group



2.8 With one Member of the group having left there are some issues with capacity in order to help move the Strategy forward. Having additional Members available to attend the meetings and share in helping to deliver some of the workload would be very beneficial. As outlined in paragraph 2.3 above the meetings have to be arranged to suit the caring needs of Accessible Belper attendees which means that they have to take place during the day.

3.0 Legislation

3.1 The core piece of relevant Equality Legislation is the Equality Act of 2010

4.0 Accessibility Implications

4.1 This report focuses exclusively on Accessibility issues.

5.0 Climate Emergency Implications - *Demonstrate any environmental consequences and how these would be addressed*

5.1 None directly

6.0 Financial Implications

6.1 None directly

7.0 Recommendation(s)

7.1 Council notes the progress being made with the Accessibility Action Plan

7.2 Council considers whether any Councillors might be available to become Members of the working group

Reasons for recommendation(s)

The Accessibility Strategy and Action Plan is almost a year old and it is important for the Council and the public to understand the progress being made and the challenges which lie ahead

Belper Town Council Accessibility Strategy Action Plan 2020 – 2022

Aim	Nos:	Action	Led by	Target Date	Progress / Comments
To ensure that the needs of people with a disabling condition are taken in to account when designing and delivering Belper Town Council services	1	Ensure that all Councillors and staff participate in the Accessibility training provided by Accessible Belper	Belper Town Council Accessibility Champion	December 2020	Training event held on February 1 st 2021. 1 existing Councillor still outstanding New Councillors have the training as part of their induction process. All staff have completed the training
	2	Approach Derbyshire County Council with a view to the Town Council Offices being registered as a "Safe Place"	Belper Town Council Accessibility Champion	December 2020	Application made November 2020, the scheme is still suspended due to COVID 19
	3a	Review the Councils printed literature and make recommendations on changes to ensure they are accessible to people with a Disabling Condition	Belper Town Council	September 2021	Being progressed by Council communications and customer contact review, due to complete in September 2021
	3b	Examine the Council's printed literature to investigate how it can be made more accessible for people with communication (eg Dyslexia, Autism) or Learning Difficulties	Belper Town Council	September 2021	Linked to action 3a above
	4	Review the Council's Grants Policy to ensure that accessibility considerations are fully taken in to account when awarding grants	Belper Town Council Cllr Porter	February / March 2021	Council on April 13 2021 referred this item to the Finance, Staff and Governance Committee
	5	Amend the Council's Committee template to include a section which requires an assessment of Accessibility implications in all reports	Belper Town Council Town Clerk	January 2021	Agreed at Council 12 th January 2021, template in use
6	Review the Council's events policy to ensure that guidance includes requirements for making events accessible for people with a disabling condition	Belper Town Council Cllr Hale	February 2021	Amended Policy at Council meeting in April 2021	

To provide guidance, advice and support to the community in taking positive action on disability	7	Review the Council's accommodation and make recommendations on improvements to make Council buildings more accessible to people with a Disabling condition	Belper Town Council	September 2021	Being progressed as part of the Council's review of communications and customer contact
	8	Review the current Accessibility Impact Assessment process and develop it into a toolkit which can be used by businesses and community groups	Accessible Belper and Belper Town Council	April 2021	New "Toolkit" and audit process completed and tested by Business Community
	9	Investigate how the Accessibility Audit programme can be re started and maintain accurate statistics on organisations which have made changes and make this information available to the Community	Accessible Belper and Belper Town Council	April 2021	Linked to Action 8 above
	10	Invite Disability organisations to make suggestions on improvements which could be made to Access for Disabled people and share this with businesses, community groups and other stakeholders	Accessible Belper and Belper Town Council	Ongoing Start April 2021	Initial discussions with Amber Valley Access Group
	11	Review the Council's grants programme to examine the possibility of specific grants to deal with Disability Access issues	Belper Town Council and Accessible Belper	October 2021	Report due to be presented to Finance Committee in October 2021
To work effectively with partners and stakeholders to support the needs of people with disabling conditions	12	Encourage more Disability Groups to become involved with Accessible Belper	Accessible Belper Belper Town Council	Ongoing	Led by Accessible Belper
	13	Liaise closely with Accessible Derbyshire to identify where joint initiatives can be undertaken	Accessible Belper Belper Town Council	Ongoing	Led by Accessible Belper
To champion the needs of people with disabling conditions	14	Identify key issues which affect people with Disabling Conditions which are not under the control of the Council and develop a lobbying strategy for the relevant issue ie Accessible Buses and Bus Stops Accessible Taxis Accessible Housing Accessible Trains	Accessible Belper Belper Town Council	Ongoing.	Work has been carried out so far on : The Accessibility of Taxis Derbyshire Community Transport re bus travel

14a	Use the Council's Planning Committee to ensure that comments are made on Housing proposals to help ensure that new Housing includes the provision of Accessible Housing for people with Disabling Conditions	Belper Town Council	Committee formed in May 2021	The Planning Committee examine Accessibility issues as part of relevant Planning Applications
15	Circulate the Accessibility Strategy to other Local Authorities in the area, as well as Disability Groups and other relevant public bodies and invite feedback	Belper Town Council Accessibility Champion	December 2020	Sent to DALC December 2020 and over 20 other organisations. Ongoing contacts with other organisations
16	Regularly publicise successful actions completed or being taken forward in this action plan	Belper Town Council Accessible Belper	Ongoing	Ongoing
17	Maintain a highly visible presence for Accessible Belper on the Council's website and social media pages	Belper Town Council	Ongoing	Review of Council website agreed by Council in February 2021
18	Publicise news stories about people with disabling conditions overcoming adversity or achieving success (eg features on local Paralympians ?)	Accessible Belper Belper Town Council	Ongoing	Discussions have taken place on whether people with Disabilities need to be singled out
19	Examine the feasibility of holding an annual conference or celebration event which focuses on people with Disabling conditions	Accessible Belper Belper Town Council	November 2021	Under discussion. The Working Group has attended on Market days to publicise the work of the group
20	Develop a set of SMART outcome measures which evidence the progress being made in achieving the aims	Accessible Belper Town Council	November 2021	Discussions have taken place on this action

Key to RAG Rating :

Blue = Completed

Green = In progress and on track

Amber = In progress but not likely to hit target date, or some concerns identified

Red = Serious delays or concerns

Blank = Not yet started but target date not due

