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Notice of Meeting

Disability and Inclusion Forum

Councillors Angela Clark (Chair), Lisa Hughes (MS Society) (Vice-Chair), Steve Samson (Age UK), Helen Price, Catherine Del Campo, Sharon Bunce, Sharon Carrigan, Tim Clare, Peter Haley, Dominic Manley (MS Society), Robin Pemberton, Habibah Tariq and Jatinder Singh Rakhra (Leisure Focus)

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Monday 4 December 2023 11.00 am

Council Chamber, Town Hall, Maidenhead & on [RBWM YouTube](#)

Agenda

Item	Description	Page
1	Welcome and Introductions A welcome from the Chairman and introductions of all present.	-
2	Apologies for Absence To receive any apologies for absence.	-
3	Minutes From the Last Forum To agree the minutes of the last Forum held on 11 th of September as a true and accurate record.	3 - 8
4	Taxis-Hackney Carriage Livery and DBS checks on Licensed Drivers To hear a presentation from Greg Nelson on RBWM taxi's Livery and DBS checks.	9 - 12
5	Update on Broadway Car Park To hear an update on Broadway car park from officers.	Verbal Report
6	Presentation on Scams To hear a presentation delivered by Clive Dent on the most common scams and how to protect yourself from them.	13 - 22
7	Update on the Corporate plan Update delivered by Ellen McManus-Fry	23 - 24
8	Any other business To discuss any other business	-

By attending this meeting, participants are consenting to the audio & visual recording being permitted and acknowledge that this shall remain accessible in the public domain permanently.

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Agenda Item 3

DISABILITY AND INCLUSION FORUM

MONDAY 11 SEPTEMBER 2023

PRESENT: Angela Clark (Chair), Lisa Hughes (Vice-Chair), Steve Samson, Helen Price, Catherine Del Campo, Sharon Bunce, Sharon Carrigan, Dominic Manley and Robin Pemberton

Also in attendance: N/A

In Attendance Virtually: Jatinder Singh Rakhra, Peter Haley

Officers: Kirsty Hunt, Ellen McManus-Fry, Rachel Kinniburgh, Victoria Holt and Rosanna Sansom, Victoria Holt

WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

The Chair welcomed all to the Forum

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for Absence

None

MINUTES FROM THE LAST FORUM

AGREED UNANIMOUSLY: That the minutes of the meeting on Monday 12 June be a true and accurate record.

Dominic Manley noted that the style of the minutes from the previous meeting had changed, the Chair concurred.

The Chair requested that for minutes were drafted more fully to reflect the full discussion and the Forum agreed.

TACKLING ISOLATION AND LONELINESS PROJECT

Rosanna Sansom, Volunteer and Community development officer attended the meeting on behalf of Jennifer Hardy, updated the Forum on the Tackling Isolation and Loneliness Project. Rosanna Sansom emphasised to the Forum that loneliness was subjective, that there was no universal definition for loneliness.

Rosanna Sansom stated that the project aimed to fully support all residents throughout the borough.

Rosanna Sansom stated that there were outstanding issues within the Royal Borough, about how loneliness can be worded in a way that properly reflects all the needs of the residents. Suggested to the forum that this was something that needed addressing.

Rosanna Sansom moved on to the costs that isolation and loneliness inflicted onto the residents of the borough, highlighted that loneliness triggers bereavement and can lead to job loss.

Rosanna Sansom raised to the Forum that the Council had no data collection methods on how many of the residents were potentially experiencing loneliness and isolation. This lack of data was potentially caused by the difficult stigma surrounding how people discuss loneliness.

Rosanna Sansom suggested to the Forum that this could be offset by working with local NHS trusts and local schools. The project itself had surveyed 1,740 residents; asking if residents felt isolated or not. She reported that of the residents surveyed, 28% felt isolated and/or lonely. This highlighted the increased strain on public services; a varied adaptable response was needed to help.

The Project highlights how people of all ages can feel isolation or loneliness, Rosanna Sansom encouraged the Forum to look beyond stereotypes.

Chair agreed that greater coordination was needed and of the need to look beyond stereotypes.

In response to the Chair's query as to whether leafletting residents could be a solution, Rosanna Sansom was unsure due to the associated costs and highlighted other services and the need for communication with residents. Councillor Helen Price suggested using 'Around the Borough' publication.

Dominic Manley asked about how the Tackling Isolation and Loneliness Project was engaging people with disabilities.

Rosanna Sansom concurred with Dominic Manley, highlighting the link between people with disabilities and potential isolation. Highlighted need for forum to examine more closely. Chair agreed with Dominic Manley, asked about the support for people with disabilities. Rosanna Sansom in response to the chair, underlined resources that could be accessed online.

Sharon Carrigan raised to the forum, the ongoing issues of the effects of the Covid-19 Lockdown.

Rosanna Sansom stated that studies were ongoing into the effects of lockdown on residents' wellbeing. Highlighted the importance of community partners.

Chair asked for more comments highlighted the importance of continued discussion.

Chair adjourned meeting due to technical issues.

RBWM ENGAGEMENT FRAMEWORK

Ellen McManus-Fry the Equalities and Community Engagement Officer, presented to the forum a presentation on the RBWM Engagement Framework.

Aim of the Engagement Framework.

1. Improve confidence and skills in engagement/consultation across the council.
2. Greater coordination of resources and activities across the council.
3. Better, more efficient use of internal resources and insights.

Ellen McManus-Fry stated that the aim of the framework was to maximise the use of resources across the council and its services. Also, to improve coordination across the council between different teams.

How has the Framework been developed?

1. Lead by Equalities and Engagement officer in collaboration with Jesal Dhokia (Transformation and Communities), David Wiles (Communication) and Becky Hatch.
2. Additional input from other colleagues in the Engagement Officer group meetings and from Cllr Moriarty, Consultation Champion, Consultation Champion.
3. Other resources including Local Government Association engagement guide, 'New Conversations 2.0'; Kirklees Council 'Involve' toolkits.

Ellen McManus-Fry said that the framework was aimed at standardising between different departments in the council, but to also help produce better quality work across the council.

Engagement Framework

1. Covers basic concepts, principles of good engagement and examples of best practise, including RBWM case studies.
2. Engagement Toolkit
 1. Step by Step guide through designing and undertaking engagement activity.
 2. Intended to be used for range of contexts and engagement purposes.
 3. Uses questions as prompts, not prescriptive.

Ellen McManus-Fry case study used from previous engagement activity so that the council can learn from previous experience how to better engage with its residents. The framework is designed to allow people to think more creatively about how to engage with residents, while also providing a step-by-step guide. Framework is intended to be as flexible as possible for different departments across the council.

Consultation Guidance

1. To Improve consistency of public consultations
2. To ensure that public consultations are only done when they are most appropriate form of engagement.
3. Standardize the demographic questions used in surveys.
4. Strengthen the guidance and advice around analysing and publicly reporting on consultation feedback.

Ellen McManus-Fry stated that the consultation guidance was primarily for assessing when public consultations were appropriate, as well as to further standardise the consultations.

Ellen McManus-Fry further stated that public consultation will take place in the first week of October, centred around the council's corporate plan. To properly assess where residents' priorities are in relation to the plan.

Chair approved of the engagement framework, felt it added value and weight to the public consultations.

Sharon Carrigan emphasised co-production as the most important part of the engagement framework, Ellen McManus-Fry concurred while emphasising engagement with community.

Peter Haley questioned whether there would be external validation over the framework. Ellen McManus-Fry said process were in place internally to help with oversight. Peter Haley disagreed, worrying about the lack of external oversight.

Councillor Price welcomed the framework, wondered if funding could become available from an outside body. That residents do not suggest the funds are used for unrealistic plans. Ellen

McManus-Fry agreed, assured Price that measures were being taken to inform residents of what was achievable. Ellen McManus-Fry circled back to Peter Haleys comments, stating that outside overview was provided by other local authorities.

Councillor Catherine Del Campo welcomed the Framework, looked forward to working with the forum further increasing oversight.

PARALLEL WINDSOR

Vice Chair Lisa Hughes presented feedback to the forum on the Parallel Windsor event which took place on the 2nd of July in Windsor Great Park. An impact report will be produced later but was not ready at the time, to present to the forum.

The form the parallel Windsor took was various forms of physical activity, including 100 meters up to 10 kilometres. The event also has other leisure activities, giving a variety to participants. Many of the events participants did not live in Berkshire, coming outside of the Royal Borough.

Video About Parallel Windsor

Vice Chair Lisa Hughes pointed out that parallel Windsor was not the right event to promote employment opportunities for disabled residents in the borough.

Vice Chair Lisa Hughes pointed out that Parallel would like more local people, especially from local schools. Vice Chair Lisa Hughes pointed out a need for easier access to the event.

Chair thanked Lisa Hughes, asked Sharon Carrigan if details were sent to her school. Carrigan explained that there was a clash, with another event so pupils were unable to attend.

Councillor Helen Price also expressed disappointment in not being able to attend, she highlighted that it clashed with other local events. Councillor Helen Price hoped this could be avoided in future with advertising Parallel Windsor in the newsletter.

Councillor Catherine Del Campo highlighted that the event was for the whole community, not just those with disabilities. Councillor Catherine Del Campo asked what participation was like from the non-disabled community. Vice Chair Lisa Hughes had no data on the percentages of disabled people to non-disabled people.

Dominic Manley asked about the number of charity partners at the event. Vice chair Lisa Hughes stated that there were 34 charity partners at the event.

Peter Haley praised the event, highlighting its inclusivity and potential to bind the community together. Peter Haley recommended the event as a day out, stating he thoroughly enjoyed it.

Victoria Holt concurred stating that the event was hugely positive and would thoroughly recommend it to anybody.

UPDATE ON BROADWAY CAR PARK AND THE REDEVELOPMENT OF THE NICHOLSONS CENTRE

The Chair asked for an update on the Nicholson centre and the Broadway car park.

Ellen McManus-Fry stated that conversations regarding the Nicholson centre and the car park were ongoing, and that she did not have any specific updates forum. A tender for the demolition of the car park had been issued in July, process for the tender is ongoing with no updated timescale.

The Chair expressed disappointment, emphasising a quick resolution was needed to the issue of the car park.

Peter Haley stated that he would be sending out a survey to shop mobility residents, for the primary purpose to see if they had a preference of location for parking.

Councillor Del Campo stated that there was a preferred location in mind, but a few obstacles needed to be cleared. She stated that she understood the urgency of this issue and was working to clear as fast as possible.

Vice Chair Lisa Hughes expressed disappointment in the poor parking in Maidenhead for disabled residents. She highlighted how in 2018 there were 96 space spaces for disabled residents and how that had decreased to 34 in 2023. Expressed frustration over the lack of a temporary solution.

Dominic Manley concurred with vice chair Hughes; he expressed doubt that a permanent car park would be ready by the year 2030.

Councillor Del Campo thanked Dominic Manley and Lisa Hughes for the feedback, stating that it would be taken back to cabinet. Apologised for the lack of progress made.

Councillor Price asked whether an update will be delivered, Councillor Del Campo responded that any information will be delivered by the end of the month.

Peter Haley similarly expressed disappointment, he felt that better communication would alleviate some of the issues around the car park, also that a better understanding of the issues needed to be made public.

The Chair again expressed disappointment in the lack of progress, saying that the forum felt similarly.

NON-MAINSTREAM HOUSING

Vice chair Lisa Hughes stated that in line with the housing strategy of 2021 to 2026, new homes were being built with adult social care particularly in mind.

Vice chair Lisa Hughes expressed that there needs to be, better research into local needs for housing for adult social care.

Vice Chair Lisa Hughes stated that that was there was a lack of information from achieving for children in this regard.

The Vice-Chair Lisa Hughes highlighted some excerpts from RBWM Housing Strategy 2021-26

“We will... assess the need for supported accommodation, including Extra Care, and review our supported accommodation provision to ensure we are able to offer accommodation to support better health and wellbeing outcomes”

“We commit to carrying out the following actions...”

- To fully assess the housing need within the District, using a variety of data streams, to ensure we have robust plans in place to generate appropriate housing pathways
- Review the current provision and need for sheltered accommodation, taking into consideration the wider social housing requirement and need for Extra Care accommodation”

The Vice-Chair Lisa Hughes informed the forum that she had sought information about the provision of respite, supported living and extracare accommodation in the Borough and had found the following information about adult provision on Optalis’ website

Respite	Allenby Rd	4 places for adults with learning disabilities or autism
Supported	Winston Rd	8 places for adults with learning disabilities or autism
	Homeside Rd	8 places for adults with learning disabilities or autism

Victoria Holt informed the forum that there is more supported accommodation in the borough than that described by the vice-chair. She offered to provide an update on supported accommodation to the forum (Action VH to provide a full list of supported accommodation for adults in the borough)

The vice-chair advised that she was unable to find information about supported accommodation for children on the Achieving for Children website

She confirmed that the questions that will be asked of Lynn Lidster include

- What is the housing need now and what are the projections for the next ten years?
- What is the current provision and what is in the pipeline?
- What are the plans to meet the need?
- What information and guidance about respite, supported living and extracare accommodation is available for residents?
- What information and guidance is there for local homeowners, tenants and landlords about Disabled Facilities Grants?

The Chair stated that the December meeting would have a greater focus on this area. The vice-chair explained non-mainstream housing included respite care, supported living and extracare accommodation. The item will be on the DIF December 2023 agenda when it will be presented by Lynn Lidster but, to enable all forum members to contribute any comments or questions, was being introduced at the September 23 meeting.

ITEMS FOR FUTURE MEETINGS

Councillor Price expressed a need for papers in advance of the December meeting, stating that she often felt at a disadvantage when she did not have papers.

The Chair agreed, stating that papers in advance would be a great help. Chair expressed disappointment in the lack of attendance of officers at the forum in recent months.

ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Dominic Manley asked about viewing statistics on YouTube for the forum.

Kirsty Hunt service lead for electoral and democratic services stated that she did not have the statistics on her at the present time, she said she would be happy to provide the forum with these statistics.

Kirsty Hunt also stated that she would be handing over the forum, to Democratic Services Officer Will Ward.

Rosanna Sansom asked to be included on the agenda in six months' time to report.

Date of next Disability and Inclusion Forum 4th December 2023.

The meeting, which began at 11.01 am, finished at 12.37 pm

CHAIRMAN.....

DATE.....

Hackney Carriage Livery

RBWM licenced hackney carriages (taxis) are currently required to be white with a purple bonnet and boot and a large RBWM coat of arms on the side. This livery makes the vehicles instantly identifiable as RBWM licenced vehicles

The RBWM Licensing Panel of 16 October 2023 agreed that consultation should be conducted with taxi users, taxi drivers and all other interested parties as to possible changes to this livery

The consultation can consider whether any changes should be linked to a move from fossil fuelled vehicles to electric/hybrid vehicles so that electric/hybrid vehicles can be identified

DBS Checks on Licenced Drivers

RBWM Licensing are looking to introduce six monthly checks on the DBS (Disclosure and Barring Service - formerly known as the Criminal Records Office) records of all RBWM licenced hackney carriage and private hire drivers. This is a requirement of statutory standard (the Statutory Taxi & Private Hire Vehicle Standards) which the Council is obliged to implement unless there are compelling local reasons not to.

The RBWM Licensing Panel of 16 October 2023 agreed that consultation should be conducted with licenced drivers, operators all interested parties and residents to determine how this was best achieved.

The views of licenced drivers, operators all interested parties and residents are sought to see if there are any compelling reasons why these six monthly checks should not be introduced at RBWM

Please answer the following questions

Licenced Drivers

1. Are you a RBWM licenced hackney carriage or private hire driver? **YES / NO**

Hackney Carriage Livery

1. Were you aware that RBWM licenced hackney carriages (taxis) are required to be white with a purple bonnet and boot and a large RBWM coat of arms on the side (known as the vehicle livery)? **YES / NO**

2. What benefits, if any, do you think this livery provides?

3. What detriments, if any, do you think this livery causes?

4. Do you think that this livery (choose one option);
 - a. Should be kept as it is
 - b. Could be reduced in some way
 - c. Could be removed entirelyPlease give reasons for your answer

5. As and when RBWM licenced hackney carriages move from being fossil fuelled to being hybrid or electric vehicles (choose one option);
 - a. Should the livery be kept as it is now?
 - b. Could it be reduced in some way to demonstrate that the vehicle is hybrid or electric?
 - c. Could the livery be removed entirelyPlease give reasons for your answer

6. Do you have any other comments on the use of the livery on RBWM licenced hackney carriage vehicles?

DBS Checks on Licenced Drivers

1. Do you know of any compelling reasons why RBWM Licensing should not introduce six monthly checks on the DBS records (formerly known as the Criminal Records Office) of all RBWM licenced hackney carriage and private hire drivers? **YES / NO**

If you answered “YES”, please give reasons for your answer

There are two options for the process by which RBWM Licensing can conduct six monthly check on each driver’s DBS, as follows;

- a) RBWM Licensing uses the DBS’s Multiple Status Check Facility to conduct six monthly checks, or
- b) Use is made of a “DBS Update Service Status Checks” facility provided by the third party

Option (a) will be a significant administrative burden for RBWM Licensing, particularly at the start, as there are approximately 1000 licenced drivers whose details would need to be inputted

Option (b) would be at a cost of £6 + VAT per driver, per year, which would have to be paid by either the individual drivers or by RBWM Licensing. This option would,

however, be far quicker, more efficient and cheaper in the long run for both drivers and RBWM Licensing

2. Do you have a view on which option should be chosen to carry out six monthly checks;

- a. RBWM Licensing uses the DBS's Multiple Status Check Facility to conduct six monthly checks **YES / NO**
- b. Use is made of a "DBS Update Service Status Checks" facility provided by the third party **YES / NO**

3. If you chose option (b), do you think this should be paid for by

- a. RBWM Licensing **YES / NO**
- b. Licenced hackney carriage and private hire drivers **YES / NO**

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Scam Talk

DIF

04/12/2023

- Introduction to the warden service, who are we? What do we do?
- From working with partners, I identified that many of our residents were victims of scams, it was in 2016 I started the BST (The Borough Scam Team).
- PROMOTE TAKE 5 in preventing becoming a victim of a scam.
- I give an informative but entertaining talk on the main scams.
- Phone and computer scams,
- Doorstep crime, bogus traders
- How to improve your home security.

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Scam Presentation Aid Memoir

Community Wardens

- **Report in the early 1990's highlighted that the police cannot fight crime and ASB alone.**
- **Community Safety Partnerships started, police, housing associations/ local authorities came together. Community Warden scheme started. Working collectively to resolve ASB and issues affecting the community.**
- **Community Wardens seen as part of the extended policing family. High viz patrols on foot, bike, and car, deter, and detect crime, deal with ASB.**
- **Radios, BWV. Images caught on BWV will be submitted to police. Youths drinking or committing ASB can be shared with schools.**
- **CSAS delegated powers from the police. Seize alcohol, obtain names and addresses if committing ASB.**
- **We are the public face of the Royal Borough. Contact with many departments in the borough. We can advise residents on council services, support the most vulnerable. Report potholes, broken lights etc. Ensure our parks are free from incursion(travellers).**
- **Complaints. To investigate a complaint, we operate within a legal framework and every complaint must have evidence. CCTV, phone footage and/or an independent witness.**

Recent Incidents I have been involved with.

- **Youths drinking in a church, alcohol and codeine, ambulance called.**
- **Drunk 19 year old girl in park.**
- **Vulnerable resident, worked with family and GP.**
- **Youths at Maidenhead library.**
- **Resident told me about a suspected drink driver. I blocked him in, police called.**
- **Duck knocking on elderly persons door.**



Scam Talk

- Scams are fraud and fraud is a crime.
- Criminals call it HACKING THE MIND. Induce fear, confusion, need to react quickly.
- Fraud represents about a quarter of all crimes committed in the UK. Between March 2021 and March 2022 there were about 4.5 million fraud offences.
- It is all about money, your money.
- Cybercrime. Very little chance of criminals being caught because they are usually outside the UK.

The best defence against scams and crime is KNOWLEDGE

Because banks cannot be robbed anymore and as we move towards a cashless society, criminals are now stealing your data. Your data (data pack) is worth more than gold and oil. Much of your personal data is for sale and can be obtained from the dark web. Criminal gangs are linked to terrorist groups and the vilest crimes.

Where do criminals get your information/data from.

- Signing up to subscriptions that require your personal information.
- Filling in warranties with your e mail, mobile and address. Fraudulent applications sometimes request your DOB, if you are over 65, this is the ideal target range age criminals are looking for.

- Your personal information/data is sold onto direct marketing companies (explain electoral open register), quite legal but it can make its way to fraudsters and the dark web.
- Fraudsters will try and befriend a lonely and vulnerable person.

Phone Scams.

- Fraudsters will make a telephone call to a potential victim, they may know your name, address, bank/ building society.
- PROMOTE TAKE 5. Explain autodialer.
- Fraudsters will pretend to be police, bank, HMRC or authoritative figure.
- Police/ Courier Scam. Fraudsters will claim to be a police officer, bank card has been cloned, someone arrested. Do not call your bank as someone in the bank is involved, so secrecy is important as there is an ongoing investigation.
- Police, HMRC and banks will never ask you for bank account number and never for your PIN number.
- Speed is the essence, they will induce fear, confusion and scaring the victim in doing what the criminals want them to do. They may ask you to call a fictitious number, e.g. 161 which the fraudsters say goes through to your bank's fraud dept or their superior who will confirm their identity and confirm the fraud/ crime but the reality is that the victim is calling the fraudsters. The victim needs to this immediately as the fraudsters keep the phonenumber open and can do so for only 30 seconds from when the victim puts the phone down.
- As part of the bogus police investigation the fraudster will request that they collect your bank cards and will send an authorised courier to collect the victims bank cards.

- **REINFORCE TAKE 5.**
- **HMRC scam, warrant for your arrest due to outstanding tax payment/ refund. Tell them about mobile scam, download software, fraudsters taking control of the mobile phone.**
- **BT/ Microsoft scam. £200 refund for internet/broadband running slow. Or they persuade the victim to download some software to speed up your internet. The reality is that the victim is downloading software which the fraudsters will have access to all the victim's personal information stored on a computer.**
- **Dating websites scams.**
- **Fake investment/ Pension scam.**
- **PROMOTE TAKE 5. Putting you in CONTROL.**



Any communication that you are not expecting and claiming you are entitled to a refund and asks for your bank account details is a scam. If you are entitled to a refund the organisation will write to you.

Doorstep/ Rouge Traders/ Nottingham Knockers



- Take 5. Putting you in CONTROL.
- Put your door chain on.
- May show you a fake peddler's licence. Issued by police, TVP do not issue peddler's licence. Tell the 2 stories when they visited me.
- Sad story, out of prison, child on the way. Want to make their way in life.
- No cash, no problem, may have a payment machine. Tell story of £400 incident.

Doorstep crime (Rogue Traders)

- Knock on your door and will offer to: -
- Pressure wash your driveway.
- Clean your gutters.
- Repair loose roof tile.
- Price is cheap but gets expensive as they find more problems.
- Fraudster may become threatening.
- Offer to take victim to the bank. Will coach them on what to see to the bank staff.
- Explain banking protocol.

ATM

- Ensure your surroundings are clear.
- Personal space.
- Go inside bank to withdraw cash but now that banks are closing if you need cash consider getting cash back at the supermarket or go to the post office.

Distraction

- Keep your bag with you and not in the trolley.
- Do not leave doors open while in the garden.
- Lock all windows and doors.

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An Update on RBWM Corporate Plan Engagement

RBWM is currently working on developing a new Corporate Plan, that will set out refreshed priorities for the council and the place it serves. The emerging aims and priorities are being developed alongside the Budget and take into account the priorities of the new Leader and Cabinet and of individual services, as well as input from early engagement sessions with key stakeholder groups in the community.

These early engagement sessions took the form of a series of in-person discussions aimed at:

- 1) older people and people with disabilities
- 2) children and young people
- 3) the voluntary and community sector

Engagement with the business community was undertaken in the form of an online survey, and feedback could also be shared by members of the public via a survey on RBWM Together or email.

The session that focused on older people and people with a disability was held in Maidenhead Library on 9th October. 16 participants attended the session, as well as two councillors (including the Leader, Cllr Werner) and several members of the Strategy, Policy and Performance team who facilitated the session.

There was a presentation on the council's financial situation and the process of developing a Corporate Plan, followed by small group discussions of a range of topics:

- Are there enough opportunities for older and disabled people to volunteer, learn new skills or work?
- How safe and clean is your local environment?
- How easy is it to find out about and access housing options which meet your needs?
- How easy do you find it to get out and about around the borough?
- What do you think of the balance between online and in-person services?
- How easy it is to get find support for daily living and care needs?
- How effective is the council at communicating and engaging around relevant decisions and developments?

Feedback was also sought on the things the people most liked about living in the Borough, and the things they would like to see improved, and on what type of actions the council should prioritise in order to balance the budget.

A full report on all engagement feedback received will be published alongside the Budget paper presented to Cabinet in February, but some initial observations from the session held with older and disabled people are shared below:

How easy do you find it to get out and about around the borough?

There are great assets and facilities available in the Borough, such as Norden Farm, the leisure centres, Braywick Heath, and the libraries, as well as the various green spaces and historic attractions in the area. However, it was noted that it was often difficult to access these places without a car and there was dissatisfaction with the local public transport offer. Transport was highlighted as a particular priority for groups and individuals with learning disabilities. Parking was also raised as an area for

improvement, as was the safety and accessibility of pavements for residents with mobility issues and other disabilities.

Are there enough opportunities for older and disabled people to volunteer, learn new skills or work?

Something that was raised as a strength in the Borough was the number of older people with skills and experience that they could contribute to their local community, and also the willingness of those who are better off to help others who are less fortunate. However, there needed to be more done to reach out to these residents to encourage them to get involved and communicate the opportunities available. The issues for recruiting volunteers (and professionals) within certain sectors was discussed, particular around supporting those with learning disabilities and volunteering in day care centres. It was noted that individuals with learning disabilities did not have much variety of opportunities for voluntary or paid work, and that employers needed to be better informed and supported about the contribution that people with a learning disability could make to the work force and the importance of reasonable adjustments.

How effective is the council at communicating and engaging around relevant decisions and developments?

There was a desire for communication from the council to be made more accessible and inclusive, both in the availability of particular formats (e.g. easy read) and in the use of language and metrics which made sense to the community. This was raised as a particularly important point for the writing and monitoring of the Corporate Plan and its goals. There were additional suggestions around consultations and around promotion of the council's communications materials such as the Residents Newsletter and the Community Information Champions.

Discussions around the other topics covered points such as:

- A general perception of safety in the borough, with some suggestions for improving the local environment through litter picking, 'Adopt a street' initiatives and flower displays.
- The lack of affordable housing in the borough, including the impact this has on increasing numbers of older people whose families are unable to live nearby due to the cost of local housing.
- Concern about whether there was enough consideration of the needs of disabled individuals and their families when new developments were being planned.
- The barriers faced by people who need help to access online services.