

RBWM Planning and the Access Advisory Forum

Background

In December 2016 a member of the Access Advisory Forum began checking through the weekly planning lists created by RBWM planning and scrutinising planning applications that relate to educational establishments, commercial, retail, amenities and housing developments.

The purpose of the scrutiny is to ensure accessibility for people with disabilities has been properly considered and included in each of the planning applications. Questions, concerns or objections arising from this scrutiny are emailed to RBWM planning, specific councillors and the AAF Chair.

By the time of the June 2017 AAF meeting no acknowledgement or response had been received from RBWM planning. Consequently, on the advice of Cllr D Wilson, the individual planning officer for each scrutinised application was identified and named in the email sent to RBWM planning and others as above.

Since the June 2017 Access Advisory Forum meeting 203 planning applications have been reviewed in detail and 36 questions, concerns or objections raised.

There still has been no acknowledgement or response from RBWM planning.

Equalities – Protected Characteristics Statements.

This is a document on the RBWM website. The section on Disability states that “we will... give active and full consideration to issues of accessibility in all our Planning decisions.”

Moving Forward

- We wish to establish a dialogue and agreed ways of working with RBWM Planning to help the council fulfil the above pledge.
 - How can this be achieved ?
- We would like to develop positioning statements*, relating to accessibility, for Planning and others in the council to use in initial pre-planning enquiries and other discussions.
 - This would enable some initial advice to be given to potential developers and increase the likelihood of inclusive design and provision being built into plans rather than needing to request changes to settled designs at later consultation stages.
- We would like the councillors who are members of the AAF and on panels or committees which scrutinise and approve developments and planning applications to actively monitor the concerns, objections or questions about specific planning applications raised by the AAF.

*Positioning statements, relating to public rights of way and access improvements, were developed by the Local Access Forum in Sep / Oct 2017 and have been provided to RBWM planning.