

Suffolk Coastal Disability Forum

**Minutes of the Meeting held in the
Council Chamber, Suffolk Coastal District Council Offices, Woodbridge,
on Tuesday 6th October 2015 at 1pm**

SCC: Suffolk County Council; SCDC – Suffolk Coastal District Council

Present:

Linda Hoggarth	Suffolk Consortium of User Led Organisations & Individual Disabled People (Chair)
Cllr Mark Amoss	Suffolk Coastal District Council
Moira Bevilacqua	Resident / East Suffolk Disability Advice Service
Michael Friend	Carer and Hollesley Parish Councillor
Karen Hubbard	Active Communities Team, Suffolk Coastal & Waveney District Councils
Sylvia Izzard	Resident – Woodbridge
Paul Kelly	Resident
Liz Mark	Resident and Bawdsey Parish Council
Maureen Mee	Resident
Margaret Morris	Resident
Kerry Overton	Community Development Officer, Healthwatch Suffolk
Bernadette Smith	Volunteer, Healthwatch Suffolk
Graham Walker	Avenues East

Guests

Nick Hulme	Chief Executive, Ipswich Hospital NHS Trust
Dominic Mundy	Patient Experience Manager, Ipswich Hospital NHS Trust
Peter Revell	Programme Director, SCDC Accommodation Programme
Sara Armitage	Project Manager, SCDC Accommodation Programme
Sue Keeble	Operations Manager Community Services, Suffolk Coastal Norse
Kevin May	Suffolk Coastal Norse – Car Parking
Louise Plummer	Customer Service Manager, Tesco Martlesham

Apologies:

Gillian Benjamin	Active Communities Officer, Suffolk Coastal & Waveney District Councils
Simon Daws	Resident
Stephen Fountain	Staff Manager, First Bus
Brenda Joyce	Suffolk Coalition of Disabled People

Linda Layton Resident / Family Carer
Sheryl Southernwood Level2 Felixstowe

1. Welcome

Linda welcomed everyone to the meeting and introductions were made.

2. Apologies

The above apologies were received and noted.

3. Ipswich Hospital NHS Trust

3.1 Members were pleased to welcome Nick Hulme, Chief Executive, and Dominic Mundy, Patient Experience Manager of the Ipswich Hospital NHS Trust.

3.2 Mr Hulme introduced himself as the longest serving Chief Executive of an NHS Trust in the East of England! He explained that the Care Quality Commission in January 2015 gave Ipswich a 'good' rating, putting it in the top 25% of NHS hospitals. He noted that, while there has been no reduction in funding over the last 3 years, people are living longer and so demand is increasing as people often have a complexity of conditions. There are, therefore, financial pressures. He believes in an investment in staff to provide better care for patients. Going forward, he is aiming to provide a different way of working where people are only in hospital if there is a clinical need. So functions will be reviewed to work with partners to provide care in the community. Ipswich Hospital now also runs community hospitals in Felixstowe, Aldeburgh and Bluebird Lodge, Ipswich. Whilst Ipswich Hospital is doing well, he is not complacent and it is recognised that not everything can be fixed. The aim is to treat people in the community and at home whenever possible.

3.3 Members were concerned about transport to and from hospital as a major issue for them. It was noted that:

- Not all buses go into the grounds of Ipswich Hospital so for some people there is a long walk from Woodbridge Road. The Forum has been told that only two buses can be accommodated at the stops close to the A&E entrance. One suggestion from Forum members was the introduction of a buddying system where patients with mobility difficulties can be met from the bus stop and helped to the hospital. A buddying system for visually impaired people has been introduced within the hospital.

- First Bus says they are unable to re-route buses from Kesgrave or the Coastal areas to go into the hospital grounds because the hospital site cannot accommodate any more buses. Those responsible for the Park and Ride buses say it would add 7 minutes to their journey time and was therefore not reasonable.

Response: Nick Hulme agreed to find out more about bus services that are unable to access the Hospital grounds and to report back.

3.4 With regard to getting to appointments, it was noted that patients should not be turned away if they are late for appointments particularly if this is because of transport difficulties.

3.5 Members reported that sometimes, people find that their appointment has been cancelled at short notice and after they have actually left home to get to the hospital. It can sometimes take 3 hours to get to the hospital by bus and being given an early appointment is therefore impossible. Members asked if those making appointments for patients, or indeed cancelling appointments, could show more understanding of the transport requirements of patients.

Response: Nick Hulme said that 4 or 5% of appointments are missed, the national average being 9 or 10%. He noted the difficulties that late cancellation can cause.

3.6 People do not object to the automatic reminders, but the system can cause worries for people with visual impairments or early onset dementia. When appointment letters are sent out, it would help if people are advised that they will be reminded via an automated system.

3.7 It was noted that the Healthwatch survey on 'Non-Emergency Patient Transport' found that 1 in 4 people with disabilities had appointments changed at short notice and 1 in 4 people with disabilities had missed a hospital or GP appointment due to a lack of transport.

Response: Nick Hulme recognised that transport is a real issue for patients. He agreed to look at alternative methods of transport and he recognised that the NHS needs to be more aware of transport needs. He commented that the Health and Wellbeing Board had not yet discussed Transport. He recognised that Community Transport could be reduced with the possible changes to SCC funding arrangements. He wondered if the implementation of more care in the community would mean less transport would be needed since consultations would be carried out nearer to home. Some consultations could even be carried out via the telephone. He explained that the Hospital would be

working on a Travel Plan and the points that have been made could be taken into consideration.

3.8 If a patient requires a number of tests, would it be possible for these to be arranged on the same day to avoid too many trips to the hospital.

Response: In principle, this should be possible but it did depend on the nature of the tests, the equipment and staff required.

3.9 A member said that dementia care is very good at Ipswich Hospital where visitors can visit at any time.

Response: Nick Hulme said they are exploring this for all patients. He suggested people should talk to the Ward Sister if there are problems with transport for visiting times. They are looking at volunteers to help with feeding, including using non-clinical staffing particularly during the winter when demand is high.

3.10 Signage for the lifts on the Washbrook corridor is poor. It was suggested that at the foot of each flight of stairs there should be a sign with directions to the nearest lift.

3.11 A member asked if there are an appropriate number of cycle racks.

Response: It is thought that there are sufficient but they are not always located in obvious places.

3.12 It is not always possible to find a blue badge parking space, especially near the Oncology, Radiotherapy and Orthopaedic Departments. The location of spaces needs to be under constant review.

Response: There should be enough spaces but they may not always be in the right places.

3.13 The requirement to provide a 'changing places' suitable toilet for severely disabled people and the limitations of current accessible toilets in Outpatients was noted.

Response: It was intended to rectify this as and when funds allow.

3.14 Nick Hulme and Dominic Mundy were warmly thanked for attending and for listening to members' concerns and for promising to investigate the concerns raised.

3.15 Kerry said that copies of the Healthwatch survey on 'Non-Emergency Patient Transport' were available on request.

4. Suffolk Coastal District Council's New Offices

4.1 Peter Revell, Programme Director, and Sara Armitage, Project Manager, Suffolk Coastal District Council's Accommodation Programme, were welcomed to the meeting and invited to explain the plans for the new offices at Riduna Park.

4.2 Peter described the process as:

- a. Closing down and selling the current site;
- b. New building at Riduna Park;
- c. Public access to services

4.3 There are groups looking at different aspects of the project.

4.4 Public access services will be relocated in Woodbridge Library. The Revenue and Benefit sections are moving soon. In addition, there will be access to Plans and the opportunity to make an appointment with a Planning Officer. It was noted that people will have to pay for parking.

4.5 SCDC will be preparing a full Transport Plan, which will include consideration of people with disabilities. Concerns were expressed about this as to whether it will properly take account of the difficulties faced by disabled people.

4.6 The move of services to the Library should be completed by March 2016 and the new Council building fully in use by next September or October 2016.

4.7 There are 135 parking spaces on the Riduna site. Site roads and services will continue to be owned by Riduna. The number of Blue badge spaces provided is likely to follow the national guidelines of the Department of Transport thought to be 5% of the total spaces available plus a space for each disabled employee.

4.8 The lift in the new offices is not fire proof and, as the largest meeting room is on the first floor, evacuation procedures will need to be

in place – probably using Evac-chairs to carry people down the stairs. There will be accessible toilets on all floors.

4.9 Members were concerned about access to the Library. The car park has an awkward slope. It is not clear if an Equality Impact Assessment has been completed in respect of the relocation of public services. This will be queried with the Active Communities Manager.

Action: Margaret Morris

4.10 A number of concerns were raised relating to the fixtures and fittings of the new building but it was too early for Peter to be able to respond in detail to these.

4.11 Cllr Amoss will enquire about the Green issues in the building.

4.12 Peter and Sara were thanked for their contribution to the meeting. Peter will forward his presentation slides for inclusion with the minutes of the meeting and he will return to a meeting in the Spring of 2016 to update members.

Action: Peter Revell

5. Minutes of the Meeting held on 6th July, 2015

The Minutes of the meeting held on the 6th July, 2015 were accepted as a correct record.

6. Matters Arising from the Minutes

6.1 Item 3 Disability Action Day in Woodbridge: There had been some contact with Lady Caroline Blois in respect of the organisation of this day but no firm plans appear to have been made. The Planning Group will attempt to progress this.

Action: Planning Group

6.2 Item 5.3 Framfield House: Cliff Cocker reported that there is now a buzzer in place on the right hand side between the doors with a notice 'Please ring for help'. Cliff also reports that there are now plans to make the inner doors automatic.

6.3 Item 6.4.2 Car Parking Leaflet: Sue and Kevin were thanked for producing the draft leaflet. Given the time constraints at this meeting, it was agreed that members would take away a copy, read it carefully and

comment on it. Comments were requested by mid-November to Linda (linda.hoggarth@avenuesgroup.org.uk) so that she can send these to Sue early in December. The leaflet will then be discussed again at the January meeting with an aim to have the leaflet available to residents and visitors by the Spring of 2016. It was noted that SCDC enforces the car parking charges.

Action: All

6.4 Item 6.4.3 Publicity Leaflet: Gillian has produced a draft for a publicity leaflet and it will be considered at the next meeting of the Planning Group.

Action: Planning Group

6.5 Planning Applications to Suffolk Coastal District Council:

There are plans for more decisions to be devolved to Officers. The Head of Planning had been invited to the July Meeting but was not able to be present. He was not able to be at this meeting and notice that a Planning Officer was available was made too late to be accommodated within the agenda. This item will therefore be carried forward.

7. Terms of Reference

The revised Terms of Reference were agreed.

8. Updates on specific issues

8.1 Disability Focus 2015: This will take place on Tuesday, 27th October, 2015, at One (formerly Suffolk One), Scrivener Drive, Ipswich. Several members indicated they will be attending. Lunch will be provided.

8.2 Healthwatch Suffolk: Kerry noted that she is now back from maternity leave and will be attending meetings in future. The report on Non-Emergency Patient Transport is available on the Healthwatch website. The Healthwatch Annual General Meeting takes place on the 16th October, 2015, at Kesgrave Community Centre.

8.3 Report from Planning Group: Covered in other agenda items.

9. Information Round / Any Other Business

9.1 Avenues East: Graham reported that Avenues East provides support for people with disabilities in a variety of ways. A Friends of

Avenues East has been established to support the work of Avenues East. A leaflet was distributed giving further information.

9.2 Warm Front Discount Scheme: Moyra made reference to this scheme to help those eligible for assistance with their heating costs.

9.3 Grants: Karen reported that Dr Wil Gibson is providing consultancy support to Suffolk Coastal District Council to coordinate their Enabling Communities Strategy. Grants of up to £5000 are available to make village halls more accessible. Linda asked that information to be emailed to SCDF for circulation.

Action: Karen Hubbard

9.4 Deben Estuary Partnership Access Group: Linda reported that she had attended a meeting of the Deben Estuary Partnership Access Group, particularly to talk about the requirements of disabled people when accessing the countryside and coastal paths. It had been a very positive discussion and there was interest in developing some short walks at Bawdsey and Felixstowe Ferry to enable people to enjoy the coastal views. However, Forum members were unclear as to what this would involve and Linda would seek more information. Additionally, this would be discussed by the Planning Group.

Action: Planning Group

9.5 Future Meeting: The Planning Group will invite Councillor Colin Noble, Leader of Suffolk County Council, to a future meeting to discuss issues relating to people with disabilities in respect of services provided by the County Council.

Action: Planning Group

10. Date of Next Meeting

The next Meeting will take place on Tuesday, 5th or 12th January, 2016, in the Council Chamber, Suffolk Coastal District Council Offices, Melton Hill, Woodbridge, from 12.45pm, for a 1pm to 3pm meeting.