

# Scrutiny Inquiry Panel - Accessible Southampton

Thursday, 18th November, 2021  
at 5.30 pm

## **PLEASE NOTE TIME OF MEETING**

Virtual Meetings - Virtual meeting

This meeting is open to the public

### **Members**

Councillor Coombs  
Councillor Guest  
Councillor Rayment  
Councillor Streets  
Councillor Vaughan

### **Contact**

Scrutiny Manager  
Mark Pirnie  
Tel: 023 8083 3886  
Email: [mark.pirnie@southampton.gov.uk](mailto:mark.pirnie@southampton.gov.uk)

Democratic Support Officer  
Maria McKay  
Email: [maria.mckay@southampton.gov.uk](mailto:maria.mckay@southampton.gov.uk)

# PUBLIC INFORMATION

## **Role of Scrutiny Panel Inquiry – Tackling Accessible Southampton**

The Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee have instructed the Scrutiny Panel to undertake an inquiry.

**Purpose:** To identify whether the physical infrastructure of the city creates barriers for people with disabilities to access all that Southampton has to offer, and, if so, to determine what we can do as a city to address this.

**Use of Social Media:-** The Council supports the video or audio recording of meetings open to the public, for either live or subsequent broadcast. However, if, in the Chair's opinion, a person filming or recording a meeting or taking photographs is interrupting proceedings or causing a disturbance, under the Council's Standing Orders the person can be ordered to stop their activity, or to leave the meeting.

By entering the meeting room you are consenting to being recorded and to the use of those images and recordings for broadcasting and or/training purposes. The meeting may be recorded by the press or members of the public.

Any person or organisation filming, recording or broadcasting any meeting of the Council is responsible for any claims or other liability resulting from them doing so.

Details of the Council's Guidance on the recording of meetings is available on the Council's website.

## **Southampton: Corporate Plan 2020-2025**

sets out the four key outcomes:

- Communities, culture & homes - Celebrating the diversity of cultures within Southampton; enhancing our cultural and historical offer and using these to help transform our communities.
- Green City - Providing a sustainable, clean, healthy and safe environment for everyone. Nurturing green spaces and embracing our waterfront.
- Place shaping - Delivering a city for future generations. Using data, insight and vision to meet the current and future needs of the city.
- Wellbeing - Start well, live well, age well, die well; working with other partners and other services to make sure that customers get the right help at the right time

## **Public Representations**

At the discretion of the Chair, members of the public may address the meeting about any report on the agenda for the meeting in which they have a relevant interest.

**Smoking policy** – the Council operates a no-smoking policy in all civic buildings.

**Mobile Telephones** – please turn off your mobile telephone whilst in the meeting.

**Fire Procedure** – in the event of a fire or other emergency a continuous alarm will sound and you will be advised by Council officers what action to take.

**Access** – access is available for the disabled. Please contact the Democratic Support Officer who will help to make any necessary arrangements.

## **Dates of Meetings: Municipal Year 2021/2022**

7 October 2021
18 November 2021
2 December 2021
20 January 2022
24 February 2022
21 April 2022

## CONDUCT OF MEETING

### **TERMS OF REFERENCE**

The general role and terms of reference of the Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee, together with those for all Scrutiny Panels, are set out in Part 2 (Article 6) of the Council's Constitution, and their particular roles are set out in Part 4 (Overview and Scrutiny Procedure Rules – paragraph 5) of the Constitution.

### **BUSINESS TO BE DISCUSSED**

Only those items listed on the attached agenda may be considered at this meeting.

### **RULES OF PROCEDURE**

The meeting is governed by the Council Procedure Rules and the Overview and Scrutiny Procedure Rules as set out in Part 4 of the Constitution.

### **QUORUM**

The minimum number of appointed Members required to be in attendance to hold the meeting is 3.

## **DISCLOSURE OF INTERESTS**

Members are required to disclose, in accordance with the Members' Code of Conduct, **both** the existence **and** nature of any "Disclosable Pecuniary Interest" or "Other Interest" they may have in relation to matters for consideration on this Agenda.

### **DISCLOSABLE PECUNIARY INTERESTS**

A Member must regard himself or herself as having a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest in any matter that they or their spouse, partner, a person they are living with as husband or wife, or a person with whom they are living as if they were a civil partner in relation to:

- (i) Any employment, office, trade, profession or vocation carried on for profit or gain.
- (ii) Sponsorship:

Any payment or provision of any other financial benefit (other than from Southampton City Council) made or provided within the relevant period in respect of any expense incurred by you in carrying out duties as a member, or towards your election expenses. This includes any payment or financial benefit from a trade union within the meaning of the Trade Union and Labour Relations (Consolidation) Act 1992.

(iii) Any contract which is made between you / your spouse etc (or a body in which the you / your spouse etc has a beneficial interest) and Southampton City Council under which goods or services are to be provided or works are to be executed, and which has not been fully discharged.

(iv) Any beneficial interest in land which is within the area of Southampton.

(v) Any license (held alone or jointly with others) to occupy land in the area of Southampton for a month or longer.

(vi) Any tenancy where (to your knowledge) the landlord is Southampton City Council and the tenant is a body in which you / your spouse etc has a beneficial interests.

(vii) Any beneficial interest in securities of a body where that body (to your knowledge) has a place of business or land in the area of Southampton, and either:

- a) the total nominal value for the securities exceeds £25,000 or one hundredth of the total issued share capital of that body, or
- b) if the share capital of that body is of more than one class, the total nominal value of the shares of any one class in which you / your spouse etc has a beneficial interest that exceeds one hundredth of the total issued share capital of that class.

### **Other Interests**

A Member must regard himself or herself as having an 'Other Interest' in any membership of, or occupation of a position of general control or management in:

Any body to which they have been appointed or nominated by Southampton City Council

Any public authority or body exercising functions of a public nature

Any body directed to charitable purposes

Any body whose principal purpose includes the influence of public opinion or policy

### **Principles of Decision Making**

All decisions of the Council will be made in accordance with the following principles:-

- proportionality (i.e. the action must be proportionate to the desired outcome);
- due consultation and the taking of professional advice from officers;
- respect for human rights;
- a presumption in favour of openness, accountability and transparency;
- setting out what options have been considered;
- setting out reasons for the decision; and
- clarity of aims and desired outcomes.

In exercising discretion, the decision maker must:

- understand the law that regulates the decision making power and gives effect to it. The decision-maker must direct itself properly in law;
- take into account all relevant matters (those matters which the law requires the authority as a matter of legal obligation to take into account);
- leave out of account irrelevant considerations;
- act for a proper purpose, exercising its powers for the public good;
- not reach a decision which no authority acting reasonably could reach, (also known as the "rationality" or "taking leave of your senses" principle);
- comply with the rule that local government finance is to be conducted on an annual basis. Save to the extent authorised by Parliament, 'live now, pay later' and forward funding are unlawful; and
- act with procedural propriety in accordance with the rules of fairness.

## AGENDA

### **1 APOLOGIES AND CHANGES IN PANEL MEMBERSHIP (IF ANY)**

To note any changes in membership of the Panel made in accordance with Council Procedure Rule 4.3.

### **2 DISCLOSURE OF PERSONAL AND PECUNIARY INTERESTS**

In accordance with the Localism Act 2011, and the Council's Code of Conduct, Members to disclose any personal or pecuniary interests in any matter included on the agenda for this meeting.

### **3 DECLARATIONS OF SCRUTINY INTEREST**

### **4 DECLARATION OF PARTY POLITICAL WHIP**

Members are invited to declare the application of any party political whip on any matter on the agenda and being scrutinised at this meeting.

### **5 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING (INCLUDING MATTERS ARISING)** (Pages 1 - 4)

To approve and sign as a correct record the Minutes of the meetings held on 7 October 2021 and to deal with any matters arising.

### **6 STATEMENT FROM THE CHAIR**

### **7 ACCESSIBLE SOUTHAMPTON - ACCESS TO THE BUILT ENVIRONMENT AND PUBLIC SPACES** (Pages 5 - 52)

Friday, 12 November 2021

Service Director – Legal and Business Operations

This page is intentionally left blank

# Public Document Pack Agenda Item 5

---

## SCRUTINY INQUIRY PANEL - ACCESSIBLE SOUTHAMPTON MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 7 OCTOBER 2021

---

Present: Councillors Guest, McEwing, Rayment, Streets and Vaughan

Apologies: Councillor Coombs

1. **APOLOGIES AND CHANGES IN MEMBERSHIP (IF ANY)**

The apologies of Councillor Coombs were noted. Councillor McEwing was noted as the substitute for Councillor Coombs for the purposes of the meeting.

2. **ELECTION OF CHAIR AND VICE CHAIR**

**RESOLVED** that Councillor Vaughan be elected as Chair for the purposes of the Inquiry and Councillor Rayment be elected as Vice Chair.

3. **INQUIRY TERMS OF REFERENCE**

**RESOLVED** that the Inquiry Panel approved the Terms of Reference, and the final version of the outline inquiry project plan, as presented in the Report of the Director of Legal and Business Operations.

4. **ACCESSIBLE SOUTHAMPTON - INTRODUCTION, CONTEXT AND BACKGROUND**

The panel considered the report of the Director of Legal and Business Operations requesting that the Panel consider the comments made by the invited guests and use the information provided as evidence in the review.

**Summary of information provided:**

**Accessible Southampton - Guy Van Dichele, Executive Director of Wellbeing (Health & Adults), Southampton City Council**

- A presentation was delivered by Guy Van Dichele, outlining the importance of the inquiry for the City Council and the City of Southampton.
- Key points raised in the presentation included the following:
  - Accessibility is the key to inclusive cities. People are excluded further if cities are planned and designed poorly.
  - The same walk through Southampton may be very different for people – someone without mobility problems will hardly notice the obstacles – By contrast a resident with disabilities may take the same journey as above but have a tortuous experience, and in many cases, it will become impossible to overcome.
  - Not enabling people to leave their home causes social isolation – social isolation is a killer.
  - You make cities accessible by:
    - Working with people and understanding their needs
    - Designing the city following best practice guidelines
    - Understanding what is available already

- Recognising that not all accessibility is physical – it can be about information / digital
- Using informed Accessible Impact Assessments when making decisions (SCC has a duty to undertake Equality Impact Assessments when developing policies or changing policies – This includes impact on Disabled People).
- We are probably at different levels of understanding of our environment for people – this understanding is growing and needs to continue to evolve.
- Everyone in the Council has a responsibility for accessibility at some level, Work needs to be done to create a culture of accessibility and inclusivity.
- As a Council we need to create tools to help our workforce plan to enable improvements to accessibility.
- Good practice exists in Southampton but more needs to be done to improve the accessibility of the built environment.
- Investment in the infrastructure to make it accessible will deliver a financial return to the city. Spectrum CIL estimate that there are approximately 37,500 Disabled People in Southampton. This number is forecast to grow significantly over the next 20 years.
- The developing Local Plan has the potential to have a positive impact on accessibility, including the accessibility of new housing to be built in the city.
- Partnership and place are key, everybody has a role to play.

### **Accessibility and a guide to best practice – Anna Nelson, Chief Executive and David Livermore, Director of Business Development at AccessAble**

- A presentation was delivered by Anna Nelson and David Livermore providing an overview of the key features of an accessible city.
- Key points raised in the presentation included the following:
  - 14.1m Disabled People in the UK; 4.5m carers; 1 in 4 households affected by disability; 45% of people aged 65+ have a disability; Potential UK audience of 18m; £274bn estimated value of the ‘purple’ pound.
  - Good accessibility is also important for older people and parents
  - AccessAble have surveyed the accessibility of over 125,000 venues and work with over 350 partners, including 110 local authorities.
  - AccessAble work with the University of Southampton and NHS in Southampton, including University Hospitals Southampton. They are among the examples of good practice in Southampton with regards to the provision of accessibility information.
  - 3 key facets of accessibility - Information provision (pre-arrival), the welcome they receive (as they enter) and the physical space itself.
  - AccessAble support partners to deliver against each of these facets – from the Access Guides, enabling people to understand all the essential information they need prior to arrival – to training for staff, to ensure they are comfortable and confident about their engagement with disabled customers – through to insight reports highlighting and prioritising areas of improvement – from the wider estate, to individual buildings, to key challenges.
  - **Information provision** – *‘Over ¾ of disabled people have not visited somewhere because they could not find the information they needed.’*



- Information about accessibility has the power to make decisions – informed choice.
- Need to have accessibility information where people expect to find it. Avoid the need to search for the information.
- Sheffield City Council were identified as an example of good practice – Through the Accessible Sheffield project they are working on a citywide scale with AccessAble, Disability Sheffield and Nimbus Disability to support the ambitions of Sheffield to become an accessible and fairer city for all. Access Guides from AccessAble have detailed access information for over 2,000 venues in Sheffield.
- **The welcome** – *‘57% of disabled people said they faced discrimination due to poor staff attitudes’*
- Learning and training – Staff need to be comfortable and confident about their engagement with disabled customers. Training shaped by Disabled People.
- **The physical space** – *‘66% of disabled people have faced discrimination due to physical access issues.’*
- A range of different solutions may be available that do not detract from the charm of a building or the public realm. Some changes can be done for little or no cost. Others may need longer term planning with a series of improvements made over time.
- More to accessibility than Part M of building regulations – be ambitious.
- Accessible toilets and changing rooms are a key challenge for many Disabled People.
- Need to update information on accessibility as improvements are made.
- Key mistakes include assuming that architects will design accessible buildings – Planning has role to play in promoting accessible buildings.
- Examples of good practice include:
  - Chester – EU Access City Award winner in 2017. Innovative approach to ensuring heritage sights were inclusive and accessible. Invested in accessible transport. Employed Access Officer and worked with the disability forum. Council invested in changing places and accessibility built into new council owned buildings.
  - Blackpool – 3-year programme of physical accessibility improvements, information provision, employment and training. Co-production led by disability group.
  - Islington – Co-production in practice. Local forum chaired by the council. External experts used to identify challenges with the public realm. Forum used to prioritise challenges.
  - Southbank London – Brought key stakeholders together, investment to make Southbank more accessible.
- To make citywide changes to accessibility requires a culture of continuous improvement, leadership, welcoming the challenge, continual engagement with Disabled People in the city with a range of impairments, and informing people about improvements. There is no silver bullet.

## Overview of support for carers in Southampton – Ian Loynes, Chief Executive, Spectrum Centre for Independent Living

- A presentation was delivered by Ian Loynes summarising the accessibility challenges experienced by people with disabilities in Southampton as a result of the physical infrastructure of the city.
- Key points raised in the presentation included the following:
  - Compared to many places, Southampton is generally a good place to work and live for many Disabled People.
  - However, significant challenges remain, particularly for less well 'understood' Disabled People.
  - The City Council does not 'learn' – people come and go within the Council who have or gain expertise with respect to access.
  - The City currently has no Accessible Information standard - adopting a basic minimum standard will ensure information is accessible to the majority.
  - Accessible venues remain an issue in Southampton.
  - Shopmobility Schemes – 2 in city centre, none in district centres.
  - Toilets – Accessible toilets in particular are in short supply in Southampton - Larger Public Places should have Changing Places provision.
  - Awareness of improving access is poor in the Planning Dept and the appetite to improve accessibility in Southampton is questionable.
  - The disability element of the Equality Impact Assessments undertaken in Southampton are often poor. They are generally not developed with Disabled People.
  - Spectrum undertook an Access Audit of the City Centre for Go! Southampton in 2020. This raised a number of issues, and potential solutions that will help inform discussion at future Panel meetings. This will be circulated to the Panel and added to the evidence log.
  - Good practice - The Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment (CABE) in Scotland has published a guide on the principles of Inclusive Design as it relates to the built environment. The key principles outlined are:  
Inclusive – Responsive – Flexible – Convenient – Accommodating - Welcoming – Realistic
  - Ask the Disabled People of Southampton – They have a lifetimes experience – much better than any 'Expert' - 37,500 Experts by Experience in Southampton.
  - Think about how places are used and how they function as entities.
  - We need to get more understanding of the needs and ambitions of Disabled People. Human beings at the end of the day make the difference.

**RESOLVED** that the comments and presentations made by Guy Van Dichele, Executive Director of Wellbeing (Health & Adults), Southampton City Council; Anna Nelson, Chief Executive and David Livermore, Director of Business Development at Accessible; and, Ian Loynes, Chief Executive, Spectrum Centre for Independent Living be noted and used as evidence in the review.

<b>DECISION-MAKER:</b>	SCRUTINY INQUIRY PANEL
<b>SUBJECT:</b>	ACCESSIBLE SOUTHAMPTON – ACCESSIBILITY TO THE BUILT ENVIRONMENT AND PUBLIC SPACES
<b>DATE OF DECISION:</b>	18 NOVEMBER 2021
<b>REPORT OF:</b>	SERVICE DIRECTOR – LEGAL AND BUSINESS OPERATIONS

<b><u>CONTACT DETAILS</u></b>			
<b>Executive Director</b>	<b>Title</b>	<b>Deputy Chief Executive</b>	
	<b>Name:</b>	<b>Mike Harris</b>	<b>Tel: 023 8083 2882</b>
	<b>E-mail</b>	<b>Mike.harris@southampton.gov.uk</b>	
<b>Author:</b>	<b>Title</b>	<b>Scrutiny Manager</b>	
	<b>Name:</b>	<b>Mark Pirnie</b>	<b>Tel: 023 8083 3886</b>
	<b>E-mail</b>	<b>Mark.pirnie@southampton.gov.uk</b>	

<b>STATEMENT OF CONFIDENTIALITY</b>
-------------------------------------

None

<b>BRIEF SUMMARY</b>
----------------------

In accordance with the inquiry plan, for the second meeting of the 'Accessible Southampton Inquiry' the Panel will be considering the following issues:

- Accessibility to the built environment and public spaces

<b>RECOMMENDATIONS:</b>
-------------------------

- |  |     |  |
|--|-----|--|
|  | (i) | The Panel is recommended to consider the comments made by the invited guests and use the information provided as evidence in the review. |
|--|-----|--|

<b>REASONS FOR REPORT RECOMMENDATIONS</b>
---

- |    |  |
|----|--|
| 1. | To enable the Panel to compile a file of evidence in order to formulate findings and recommendations at the end of the review process. |
|----|--|

<b>ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED AND REJECTED</b>
--

- |    |       |
|----|-------|
| 2. | None. |
|----|-------|

<b>DETAIL (Including consultation carried out)</b>
--

- |    |  |
|----|--|
| 3. | For the second meeting of the inquiry the Panel will be considering accessibility to the built environment and public spaces. For reference the EU Accessible City Award Criteria includes the following issues under this heading - City centre design, streets and pavements, parks, squares, monuments and open spaces, work environments, markets, festivals and other outdoor events. |
|----|--|

- |    |  |
|----|--|
| 4. | To ensure that the views of Disabled People are represented, at the start of the meeting the Panel will receive feedback on the key issues raised at the |
|----|--|

	Spectrum CIL convened Accessible Southampton Focus Group meeting. The focus group is scheduled to meet on 11 <sup>th</sup> November and thereafter in advance of each meeting of the Inquiry Panel. The focus group theme for 11 <sup>th</sup> November is 'What contributes to good accessibility to the built environment and public spaces?'
5.	Following the feedback from the meeting of the Accessible Southampton Focus Group, Jemma Brown, a resident of Southampton who is visually impaired and uses a wheelchair, has been invited to inform the Panel of her experiences navigating Southampton's built environment.
6.	To help inform the discussion, attached as Appendix 1 is the winning submission from the City of Chester for the 2017 EU Access City Award. Attached as Appendix 2 are the terms of reference for Cheshire West and Chester's Corporate Disability Access Forum. Graham Garnett, the author of the submission has now moved to Liverpool City Council and will be attending the 2 December meeting of the Inquiry Panel to provide insight on the approaches employed at both Liverpool City Council and Cheshire West and Cheshire Council. The Scrutiny Manager has spoken to representatives from Chester and will outline for the Panel key details provided that develops the information contained within Appendix 1.
7.	To provide an overview of Southampton City Council's approach to the accessibility of the built environment and public spaces, a presentation will be delivered by Senior Officers from within the City Council's Place Directorate. The presentation will outline how the Council's relevant policies, initiatives and practice contribute to making Southampton's Built Environment accessible. This will include Strategic Planning, Development Management, Building Control and Highways and Infrastructure. For reference, a link to the City Council's Streetscape Manual is provided: <a href="https://www.southampton.gov.uk/planning/planning-policy/supplementary-planning/streetscape-manual-spg/">https://www.southampton.gov.uk/planning/planning-policy/supplementary-planning/streetscape-manual-spg/</a>
8.	Representatives from Go! Southampton, the Business Improvement District for Southampton City Centre, have been invited to attend the meeting to provide a business perspective. Unfortunately, the meeting coincides with a major event for Go! Southampton, the switching on of the Christmas lights. A request has been made for them to provide written evidence in advance of the meeting.
9.	At the inaugural meeting of the Inquiry, Ian Loynes, Chief Executive of Spectrum CIL, referenced in his presentation to the Panel the Access Audit that they had undertaken on behalf of Go! Southampton in 2020, and the principles of inclusive design promoted by the Inclusive Design Hub in Scotland. Attached as Appendix 3 is the Access Audit and attached as Appendix 4 is information on the Inclusive Design Hub. <a href="http://inclusivedesign.scot/what-is-inclusive-design/#about-inc">http://inclusivedesign.scot/what-is-inclusive-design/#about-inc</a>
10.	The invited guests will take questions from the Panel relating to the evidence provided. Copies of any presentations will be made available to the Panel.
<b>RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS</b>	
<b><u>Capital/Revenue/Property/Other</u></b>	
11.	None

<b>LEGAL IMPLICATIONS</b>	
<b><u>Statutory power to undertake proposals in the report:</u></b>	
12.	The duty to undertake overview and scrutiny is set out in Part 1A Section 9 of the Local Government Act 2000.
<b><u>Other Legal Implications:</u></b>	
13.	None
<b>RISK MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS</b>	
14.	None
<b>POLICY FRAMEWORK IMPLICATIONS</b>	
15.	None
<b>KEY DECISION?</b>	No
<b>WARDS/COMMUNITIES AFFECTED:</b>	None
<b><u>SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION</u></b>	
<b>Appendices</b>	
1.	Chester – Access City Award submission
2.	Cheshire West and Chester – Corporate Disability Access Forum Terms of Reference
3.	Access in Southampton – Final report for Go! Southampton
4.	Inclusive Design Hub
<b>Documents In Members' Rooms</b>	
1.	None
<b>Equality Impact Assessment</b>	
Do the implications/subject of the report require an Equality and Safety Impact Assessment (ESIA) to be carried out?	No
<b>Data Protection Impact Assessment</b>	
Do the implications/subject of the report require a Data Protection Impact Assessment (DPIA) to be carried out?	No
<b>Other Background documents available for inspection at:</b>	
<b>Title of Background Paper(s)</b>	<b>Relevant Paragraph of the Access to Information Procedure Rules / Schedule 12A allowing document to be Exempt/Confidential (if applicable)</b>
1.	SCC Streetscape Manual: <a href="https://www.southampton.gov.uk/planning/planning-policy/supplementary-planning/streetscape-manual-spg/">https://www.southampton.gov.uk/planning/planning-policy/supplementary-planning/streetscape-manual-spg/</a>

This page is intentionally left blank



## CITY IDENTITY

### City name

Chester

### Country

UK

### City size: (number of inhabitants)

95100

### Short description of city

Chester is an historic city which is famous for its Roman heritage, the Rows (unique, elevated walkways above the main four streets), its distinctive architecture including its famous black and white buildings, but is perhaps most famous for its City Walls, which are the most complete circuit of Roman, Saxon and Medieval walls in the UK. The city is located in the North West region of England, in the county of Cheshire, close to the border with Wales. Chester is the largest and most populated city within the unitary authority area of Cheshire West and Chester (CWaC) which has a total population 329,000. 18% of the total population of CWaC have a disability. 21% (69,000) are age 65+.

## SCOPE OF THE INITIATIVES

### Accessibility to the built environment and public spaces

The City Walls are a Scheduled Ancient Monument. The majority of the 3km circuit was made accessible via ramps and level access routes at 11 locations throughout the 20th century. Where full access is not possible due to heritage/financial constraints, the Council's recent approach (since 2008) has been to follow the principal of 'least restrictive access', making the walls as accessible as possible for people ambulant disabled and people with sight loss. E.g. new handrails & tactile paving. All sections of the famous Rows are accessible via combination of ramps, level access routes, lift and an escalator. Access points are advertised on city centre panels, 'DisabledGo' guide, and in the city centre access leaflet. Since 2010, 4 Changing Places facilities have been provided to enable people with multiple and profound disabilities (with their family/friends/carers) to visit the city for longer periods. At 12sqm, they are larger than standard accessible toilets (3.3sqm) and include specialist equipment - ceiling hoist, adjustable height changing bed, wash basin & shower. There is no statutory requirement to provide these facilities - the council is aiming to ensure that the most severely disabled people can visit and enjoy the city's leisure, heritage and culture facilities.

### Accessibility to transportation and related infrastructures

Council policy requires that all of the city's 192 licensed 'hackney' taxis (which can be accessed from 20 ranks, pre-booked or hailed on-street) are wheelchair accessible. These taxis also have other 'accessibility' features e.g. hearing loops & contrasting grab rails. Frodsham Street car park provides 63 spaces reserved for blue badge holders. 170 designated accessible parking bays available within council operated car parks. Shopmobility scheme enables older & disabled people to access shops and facilities 7 days a week. 'Ability Angels' provide shopping companions to assist people. 3000 bookings per year. 45 wheelchairs/scooters available. Passport scheme enables 650+ members use of Chester scheme and in 3

other towns in borough. Bus Transport – 100% of 129 public transport buses operating within Chester are fully accessible. Council commissions the PlusBus dial-a-ride scheme which provides 'door-to-door' transport for people unable to use conventional public transport. The scheme operates 8 wheelchair-accessible vehicles which make 27,500 trips each year. Park & Ride Scheme (in 4 locations at the edge of the city) provides bus transport every ten minutes to and from the city centre. 100% of the buses are wheelchair accessible and with audio/visual information.

### Accessibility to information and communication, including information and communication technologies

Council's website aims to comply with World Wide Web Consortium (W3C) Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) Version 2.0 'Double A' standard, as a minimum. Vast majority of pages meet this standard. Website has ProReader which allows users to listen to the text. Local Offer Online Directory of Services has provided information to people in West Cheshire since 2016, including details on accessibility, public transport and car parking. DisabledGo have been commissioned since 2011 to produce & maintain an online access guide providing access information to over 1000 venues. Information within the guide enables disabled people/carers to make informed decisions whether to visit a venue. 'Deep links' directing people to the DisabledGo Access Guide are provided within the Council/partner's websites to ensure that people have easy access to this information. The award-winning iTravelSmart app is the official award-winning journey-planning app for Cheshire West and Chester. With up to date travel information, interactive maps and transport timetables, it assists people with/without disabilities to find new job opportunities and make existing journeys easier to access. 88,000 downloads in 15-16. All council written information is available in alternative formats on request.

### Accessibility to public facilities and services

The Equality Act Public Sector Equality Duty requires all public authorities, when developing or implementing policy, to have due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination and advance equality of opportunity between different groups, inc. people with&without disabilities. New public facilities & services are all designed to be fully inclusive. The vast majority of existing public buildings have been adapted over many years. E.g. Grosvenor Museum has platform lifts at entrances, accessible WC, hearing loop system in lecture theatre. The city's Forum Customer Service Centre offers a 'one stop shop' for all enquiries relating Council services, inc. social care, planning, education, leisure & culture etc. The centre's entrance has powered doors, low-level counters & equipped with hearing loop. iConnect video kiosks have been installed at 12 Libraries across the borough enabling people to speak face-to-face to Council customer service staff. BSL interpreters can be booked in advance to support customers with accessing Council services and all information is also available on request in alternative formats including Audio, Braille and large print. Adult Social Care Survey (2014) - 90% of people said that Council services helped them to have a better quality of life.

## OWNERSHIP / LEVEL OF COMMITMENT

### Please describe your overall approach and global strategy to improve accessibility in your city and how the policy is implemented.

The Council Plan 2016-2020 - 'Helping the borough THRIVE' outlines the priorities for the Council. Three of the priorities relate to accessibility: P3: Older people and vulnerable adults compassionately supported to lead fulfilled and independent lives; P6: A well-connected and accessible borough; P10: Vibrant and healthy communities with inclusive leisure, heritage and culture. The Council has a dedicated Access Officer who works across the Council & with its partners in public & private sector to improve access for disabled people, in keeping with the TEAMWORK value in the plan. The CDAF has demonstrated INNOVATION in the way it has involved disabled people and their representative orgs in the design of new buildings and facilities. The Chester 'One City Plan' (2012) is a single co-ordinated strategy that sets out



the direction we want the city to move in over the next 15 years. It contains a number of aims established to guide the city in achieving its vision. One of the aims is to 'Be accessible, easy to travel around and welcoming – encouraging and promoting sustainable travel and meeting the needs of less mobile people'. The Council has one, overarching E&D priority: 'To maintain the requirements of the Excellent level of the Equality Framework for Local Government'.

## **IMPACT**

### **How has the city's policy improved equal access and the quality of life of people with disabilities?**

It is difficult to fully assess the extent to which city's policies have improved equal access & quality of life for disabled people. Many initiatives are still in their infancy, while others are still in the planning stages or under construction. However, there is (and has been for many years) a long term commitment by the Council to improve the accessibility of the city's services and facilities for everyone, regardless of disability. 100% of respondents of the Shopmobility Customer Satisfaction Survey said that the service has a 'very positive' impact on their ability to stay independent and avoid isolation. 100% of respondents said the service had a 'positive' (6%) or 'very positive' (94%) impact on their health and wellbeing. Recent surveys carried out by the Council indicate Council services are having a positive impact on people. E.g. 90% of respondents in the Adult Social Care Survey (2015) said that council services helped them to have a better quality of life.

### **How do these initiatives benefit, beyond persons with disabilities, also wider parts of the population?**

The UK's 11.9 million disabled people are said to have a disposable income collectively worth £80bn. The Council recognises the value of the 'purple pound' at a local level and is keen to ensure that city is able encourage people to visit and spend time in the city. The recent (2015) Shopmobility Customer Satisfaction Survey identified that the average amount spent in Chester by Shopmobility customers is £79 per visit, demonstrating the positive impact that disabled people have on the local economy. Based on the Shopmobility usage data, it is estimated that Shopmobility customers alone spend approximately £237,000 annually. The amount spent in the city by disabled people who are not Shopmobility users is likely to be much greater. The Council's various initiatives to improve accessibility are having a positive impact on carers. Feedback from groups e.g VIVO Care Choices and Profound Intellectual and Multiple Disabilities Group (professionals and carers) indicated that prior to the new CP facilities being provided, carers of disabled people with profound disabilities were previously travelling out of Chester to access retail and leisure facilities. The provision of CP facilities means that carers (and the people they care for) are now able to visit Chester for longer periods.

## **QUALITY AND SUSTAINABILITY OF RESULTS**

### **How do you ensure the quality and sustainability of accessibility measures?**

Chester Growth Partnership will deliver a programme of improvements in Chester as part of the One City Plan, the 15 year strategy which guides the future regeneration of Chester. The aim of the plan is to create a reinvigorated city centre, making it a distinctive and desirable place in which to live and visit. The Corporate Disability Access Forum ensures that disabled people and their representative organisations have a strong voice in ensuring that these new developments meet the varying needs and expectations of disabled people. The Council's Development Control Team ensures that new developments comply with local/national legislation (e.g. Equality Act/DDA) and with national design standards (e.g. Building Regulation Part M). The Council has employed a dedicated Access Officer (since 1991) with a corporate responsibility for improving accessibility and independence for disabled people. The AO, along with CDAF, works with architects/designers to go 'above and beyond' the minimum standards and comply with national & local 'best practice' e.g. British Standard 8300(2009). The Access Officer investigates and responds to all access related complaints received by the Council and works with internal & external

partners to implement changes to buildings, facilities and practices.

### What are your plans and initiatives to continue these efforts in the future?

The Council Plan 2016-2020 clearly demonstrates the Council's aim to continue its efforts to make the city more accessible for disabled people, carers and the wider population. Due to be completed in January 2017, Storyhouse is the new Cultural Centre for Chester. It will be a venue of national importance and is unique in providing an inclusive theatre (800 seats), studio, cinema, library, food and beverage facilities, all under one-roof in heart of the city centre. A Changing Places facility will be available. The Chester Northgate Scheme is a £400m mixed-use development of retail, leisure and cultural facilities and is expected to be completed in 2020. Accessibility is at the forefront of the design, and will include two Changing Places and the city's (and region's) first hotel with rooms with ceiling track hoists. The scheme will have significant impact on the overall accessibility of the city. The new Bus Interchange will be completed early 2017 and will provide improved access to the city centre & bus network. Internal facilities include a Changing Places. Frodsham Street will be resurfaced in 2016 to provide a well-designed 'shared space' to access into the city centre. CDAF has been and will continue to be involved in all of these schemes at the appropriate stages.

## INVOLVEMENT OF PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES AND RELEVANT PARTNERS

### Please describe the involvement of persons with disabilities, their representative organisations and accessibility experts in both the planning, implementation and maintenance of city's policies and initiatives aimed at increased accessibility.

The Council has employed a full-time Access Officer since 1991. The current post holder has been in post since 2005 and has developed strong links with the disability community. The Access Officer has a specific role to improve access for disabled people through provision of specialist advice & design guidance (e.g. in relation to major projects) and via the commissioning of access-related services (e.g. Shopmobility Scheme, DisabledGo Access Guide). The Access Officer co-ordinates the Corporate Disability Access Forum, a pan-disability group comprising 16+ local disability orgs & access groups. CDAF was established in 2013 in response to requests from local disabled people and their representative organisations to have greater involvement in the design of major new developments. The Chair and Vice-Chair of CDAF are elected members on the Council which has proven to be effective in 'championing' the needs and aspirations of disabled people and adding strength when negotiating access provision in new schemes. This innovative approach to engagement has proven to be an effective method of involving disabled people and their representative organisations in the design of major public facilities and was recognised by Government in the Accessible Britain Challenge Awards 2015.

### Do you carry out awareness raising or information activities around accessibility? Do you exchange and share experience and good practices with other cities at local, regional, national and/or European level?

The Council's Access Officer is a full member of the UK Access Association - a network of access professionals - passionate about improving access, inclusive design & knowledge sharing. Membership is funded by the Local Authority. In 2015, the Council's CDAF was the winner of the Accessible Britain Challenge Award (Improved Mobility category). The Awards Ceremony took place at Houses of Parliament and had national profile. In recent years the Council has developed strong links with other Councils e.g. Liverpool City Council. Reciprocal learning visits have taken place involving the respective Access Forums and local authority officers to assess completed schemes and to discuss ideas/options for future schemes. The Council has invested heavily in accessibility in recent times and we are proud of these achievements, many of which have been delivered during a prolonged period of national austerity and reductions in local government funding. Apart from the chance to be recognised by the European Commission for our efforts

in relation to accessibility, another key reason for this application is the chance to share our experiences and good practices with our European colleagues and to develop stronger links and learning opportunities with other cities in relation to accessibility.

## **WHY DOES YOUR CITY DESERVE THE AWARD?**

Please provide a short presentation of your overall accessibility policy and actions. Please explain why your results and your city's accessibility policy are extraordinary and why you believe to deserve the Award.

The Council Plan 2016-2020 sets out the Council's vision which includes specific priorities around making the borough accessible, the provision of inclusive leisure, heritage and culture, and supporting people to lead fulfilled and independent lives. We are proud of all of our efforts and achievements in making our historic city accessible for people with a range of disabilities, particularly since 2013, when disabled people and their representative organisations were given greater input into the design of major new facilities through the establishment of the Corporate Disability Access Forum. However, we are especially proud of our efforts to ensure that people with multiple and most profound disabilities - and their family and friends - are able to visit our historic city, and for longer periods, due to the provision of four Changing Places facilities. These facilities, which are four times larger than standard accessible toilets, include specialist equipment such as ceiling track hoist & adjustable-height adult changing bed. Without Changing Places facilities, the alternative is to restrict the length of any visit, or not visit at all. A further two CPs will open in 2017, and two more by 2020, further enhancing Chester's ambition and growing reputation as an accessible city.

## **SUPPORTING MATERIAL**

- (1) Job Description - Senior Access Officer (2010) - explains the role and main responsibilities of the post holder.
- (2) Chester City Centre Access - a guide for disabled people leaflet (2012) - designed by the council and available from Shopmobility, DIAL House and the Visitor Information Centre. Also available online on the Council's website.
- (3) Council Plan - Helping the Borough Thrive 2016-2020 - outlines the council's vision and priorities for next 5 years, including three priorities around accessibility, inclusivity, and supporting people to lead fulfilled and independent lives.
- (4) Equality Framework for Local Government Narrative Report (2014) - includes disability/access related examples of how the Council achieved its 'Excellent' rating - the highest possible rating.
- (5) Equality Peer Challenge - 'Excellent' Level Report (2014).
- (6) Feedback from Chester Visitor Centre - email regarding access in Chester and access guide leaflet (2013).
- (7) Report by the Profound Intellectual and Multiple Disabilities (PIMD) sub group of the Learning Disabilities Partnership Board (2014). Report highlighting the main aspirations of people with profound disabilities and their carers. The need for more changing places facilities was highlighted in this report.
- (8) Chester Shopmobility Customer Satisfaction Questionnaire Report (2015) - shows satisfaction levels among service users. Shopmobility is a key accessibility service which enables people to access city centre shops and facilities by hiring wheelchairs and mobility scooters.
- (9) Visitor Feedback from E.Rhodes (2009). A Shopmobility service user who used the city centre access guide leaflet during a two day visit to the city.
- (10) Access City Award 2017 - Chester UK - Power Point Presentation - Provides an overview of the city's strengths from an accessibility perspective and a selection of images

Chester city centre access guide leaflet.pdf  
Council Plan - Helping the Borough THRIVE 2016-2020.pdf  
Equality Framework for Local Government Narrative Report.pdf  
Equality Peer Challenge Excellent Level Report.pdf  
Feedback from Chester Visitor Centre.htm  
PIMD Report May 2014.pdf  
Shopmobility West Cheshire Customer Satisfaction Questionnaire Report CHESTER - COMPLETE.doc  
Visitor Feedback from E.Rhodes.htm  
[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dZx33V2bD\\_Q](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dZx33V2bD_Q)  
20160823-AccessCityAwardChesterUK-V01.ppt

## **CONTACT PERSON, WEB LINKS AND POSTAL ADDRESS**

### **Name**

Mr. Graham Garnett

### **Position / Function**

Senior Access Officer, Cheshire West and Chester Council

### **Telephone number (e.g. +322987654)**

(+44) 01244 972609

### **E-mail**

Graham.Garnett@cheshirewestandchester.gov.uk

### **Postal address**

Cheshire West and Chester Council, HQ, 58 Nicholas Street, Chester, Cheshire, CH1 2NP

### **Official city website**

<http://www.cheshirewestandchester.gov.uk>

### **Organisational webpages devoted to accessibility**

DisabledGo Online Access Guide: <http://www.disabledgo.com/organisations/cheshire-west-and-chester/main-2>

Accessible Britain Challenge: <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/groups-honoured-for-life-changing-work-at-house-of-commons-ceremony>

Changing Places Consortium (Chester search results):

<http://changingplaces.uktoiletmap.org/find?toiletLocation=chester>

Local Offer Online Directory:

<http://www.westcheshirelocaloffer.co.uk/kb5/cheshirewestandchester/directory/home.page>

Chester One City Plan: <http://chester.westcheshiregrowth.co.uk/one-city-plan/>

iTravel Smart website: <http://itravelmart.co.uk/>

Chester Shopmobility: <http://www.dialhousechester.org.uk/Shopmobility.html>

Chester Park and Ride Service: <http://www.cheshirewestandchester.gov.uk/default.aspx?page=309>

PlusBus (accessible community transport): <http://ectcharity.co.uk/services/areas/cheshire/plusbus#view>

Corporate Disability Access Forum: <http://www.cheshirewestandchester.gov.uk/default.aspx?page=17491>

# Corporate Disability Access Forum

## Terms of Reference

**Version:** 7.0

**Approved by:** The Corporate Disability Access Forum

**Date approved:** March 2017

**Author:** Graham Garnett, Senior Access Officer

**Responsible Directorate:** Strategic Commissioning

**Review Date:** March 2018

## **1.0 Background**

- 1.1 Established in 2013, the Corporate Disability Access Forum (CDAF) is a partnership of disability organisations, charities, access groups, interested individuals, and Cheshire West and Chester Council ('the council').

## **2.0 Role of the CDAF**

- 2.1 The CDAF is a two-way information channel for the council and local and regional access and disability organisations.
- 2.2 The CDAF's priority is to encourage accessibility for disabled and other people. By this we mean inclusive built environments and transport systems that are easy to reach, use and understand by all, in safety and comfort.
- 2.3 The CDAF will promote the adoption of inclusive design and management to create environments which are universally designed and usable by everyone.
- 2.4 The CDAF will promote and encourage greater access to information and in accessible formats, and more positive attitudes towards disabled people when providing services.
- 2.5 The CDAF will ensure that local issues are addressed from an informed and representative consumer viewpoint and that the group is made up of people who are either disabled themselves or others who represent disabled people.
- 2.6 The CDAF cannot amend Council policy or procedural matters, but should be consulted with in order to influence the decision-making process.

## **3.0 Membership of the Corporate Disability Access Forum**

- 3.1 Membership is open to all access and disability organisations in Cheshire West and Chester by sending an email to the clerk of the CDAF to request more details.
- 3.2 Any Individuals who live or work within the borough with an interest in; improving access to the built environment; improving the quality of services delivered to disabled people; providing better information and communication with disabled people, are also eligible to be part of the CDAF. Membership numbers will not be restricted.
- 3.4 The CDAF will be balanced to avoid dominance by any single interest group, and represent a cross-section of interests in the area

- 3.5 Relevant Council Officers, Developers, Project Managers will be invited to attend CDAF meetings to advise and provide updates on major development projects and initiatives within the borough.

#### **4.0 Structure and Frequency of Meetings**

- 4.1 Meetings will be held approximately every 2 months and will be organised by the council.
- 4.2 The venues for each meeting will alternate between the 'West' (Chester or Ellesmere Port) and 'Central' (Hartford, Northwich, or Winsford)
- 4.3 Venues will be generally accessible (with car parking, level access, accessible toilet etc).
- 4.4 Dates and times for meetings for the year ahead will be set annually. Meetings will generally be held on the last Tuesday every other month. No meetings will be held during August.
- 4.5 Any sub-groups or working groups may set their own meeting arrangements. Sub-groups to provide updates at CDAF meetings.
- 4.6 Any apologies should be sent to the meeting organiser/clerk.
- 4.7 If members are unable to attend a CDAF meeting (or sub-group), a deputy should attend, wherever possible.
- 4.8 Agenda items will be prepared in advance and will be distributed the week before each meeting. Topics for discussion can include any access related issues associated with the council and private developments, and how these might impact upon the community as a whole. Agenda items will be added at the Chair's discretion.
- 4.9 Meeting notes will be taken at each meeting and distributed prior to the next meeting.

#### **5.0 Communication**

- 5.1 Communication regarding meetings and distribution of documents will generally be by email, unless another means is requested. Information is available in other formats (e.g. Braille, large print, audio) on request.
- 5.2 New information and communication technologies will be provided, if possible, to aid communication if members are unable to physically attend meetings.

## **6.0 Chairing of Meetings**

- 6.1** Meetings will be chaired by a CWaC councillor appointed annually at the first CDAF meeting in the municipal year (or as soon as possible thereafter) until the end of each municipal year.
- 6.2** Vice Chair – to be appointed annually at the first CDAF meeting in the municipal year (as soon as possible thereafter) until the end of each municipal year. The role of Vice Chair is open to all CDAF members.

## **7.0 Governance**

- 7.1** Each organisation/ group is responsible for its own governance and ensuring that this complies with all relevant legal and regulatory requirements.

## **8.0 Conflict Resolution**

- 8.1** Members of the CDAF shall be expected to maintain appropriate professional standards including those necessary to avoid any real or apparent impropriety or to prevent any action or situations, which could result in conflict with the interests of other CDAF members.
- 8.2** In the event of any disputes, the CDAF members will follow the conflict resolution procedures as follows:
1. The affected CDAF members should discuss the dispute to resolution
  2. If resolution is not reached, raise any issues at the CDAF meetings
  3. If resolution is not reached at the CDAF meetings, the dispute should be referred to a sub-group for consideration.
  4. If no resolution is reached by stage 3, an independent arbitrator will be appointed (by the Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care & Health).
- 8.3** Members of the CDAF are responsible for dealing with complaints about their own organisation. However, where Comments, Compliments, Complaints are about the CDAF as a whole, these should be forwarded to the Clerk of the CDAF, and where appropriate, a sub-group will be set up and will investigate and respond.

## **9.0 Refreshments**

- 9.1** All meetings will be either AM or PM. Light refreshments will be provided at all meetings and will be funded by the council. If a full-day meeting is required, the council will investigate arrangements for lunch.



## **10.0 Travel Expenses**

- 10.1 Travel expenses (including mileage and public transport) cannot be reimbursed. Meeting venues will alternate between 'the west' (Chester/Ellesmere Port) and 'central' (Northwich/Winsford) in order to minimise the distances travelled throughout the course of the year.

## **11.0 Confidentiality**

Members will ensure that any matters or materials coming before them at CDAF meetings which are marked or otherwise directed as being confidential, are fully respected in confidence and handled with due care in order to maintain confidentiality.

## **Appendix A – CDAF Membership** *(Updated 07.03.2017)*

The following groups/ organisations are current members of the CDAF:

- Chester Adult PHAB
- Cheshire Centre for Independent Living
- Cheshire Older Peoples Network
- Cheshire West and Chester Council
- Dementia Friends
- Deafness Support Network
- DIAL West Cheshire
- Healthwatch Cheshire
- Learning Disability Partnership Board
- Motor Neurone Disease Association
- Muscular Dystrophy Campaign North West Muscle Group
- Neuromuscular Support Centre
- Profound Intellectual Multiple Disabilities (Sub-Group of LD Partnership Board)
- Vale Royal Disability Services
- West Cheshire Access Group
- Vision Support
- Vivo Care Choices



This page is intentionally left blank

# **Access in Southampton**

## **Final Report for Go! Southampton**

April 2020



Centre for  
Independent  
Living CIC

# Contents

Introduction and overview	2
Summary of findings from local focus groups	2
Lessons from accessible cities around the world	7
Local context	10
Recommendations	14
Recommendations for Go! Southampton	14
Recommendations for Southampton City Council	16
Recommendations for Southampton Clinical Commissioning Group	18
Recommendations for local public transport providers	18
Recommendations for local businesses	19
Appendix 1 - Resources on Inclusive Design	22

## **Introduction and overview**

Go! Southampton have commissioned SPECTRUM Centre for Independent Living to carry out research on access for Older and Disabled People in the City of Southampton (focusing primarily on the City centre), and to make recommendations on actions to improve accessibility, for the benefit of both residents and visitors and the local business community.

This work has been carried out in three parts.

First, we produced a Scoping Report outlining the key issues that need to be considered in any plans on improving accessibility in city environments - e.g. transport links; physical access; infrastructure and environmental factors; business awareness of disability issues etc - and summarising some of the specific issues and opportunities in the local context of the areas of Southampton covered by the Go! Southampton BID. The Scoping Report also detailed findings from our background desk research on accessibility initiatives undertaken in other Cities around the world (e.g. Cities that have won the European Commission Access City Award).

Second, we carried out two focus groups, where participants were asked to discuss 7 topics covering: travel in and around the city by public transport and by car; parking; getting around the city either on foot or in a wheelchair; access when using shops, cafes and bars, restaurants, leisure facilities, libraries etc in the city; customer experience; and, attitudes and behaviour. The findings from the focus groups are summarised below.

Third, after further local research and consultation, we have produced this final report which summarises the key findings of our research and the lessons that can be applied in the local context, together with a set of recommendations for Go! Southampton and other local partners.

## **Summary of findings from local focus groups**

A total of 35 people took part in two focus group sessions. The findings from the focus groups are summarised below.

- **Travel to and from the city centre**

## Buses and coaches

Participants mostly felt that using public transport in and around Southampton is very difficult for wheelchair users (especially buses). This is typically because of over-crowding and not being able to use wheelchair spaces on buses due to prams, standing passengers or luggage blocking the spaces.

Several participants suggested that these problems could be mitigated by more creative and flexible design of bus interiors - such as wider aisles and greater use of flip up seats to make more space when needed.

Some participants raised various issues about the lack of assistance from bus drivers. For example, it was noted that bus drivers do not tend to be pro-active in helping to clear space for Disabled passengers, so people felt that all of onus was on them to either do this themselves, or wait for another bus.

Availability of public transport in some parts of the city was also an issue for some, who felt that reduced services on some bus routes greatly reduced their ability to travel in and around the city.

## Taxis

A few participants mentioned problems with taxis - particularly a shortage of accessible taxis and taxi drivers often refusing to pick up wheelchair users.

## Trains

Experiences of using trains to get into the city centre were a little better. Although some participants had experienced problems with prams, buggies or luggage blocking wheelchair spaces, rail staff tended to be more likely to help, compared with bus drivers.

Access for people with sensory impairments was less good however. For example, signage and timetabling displays are inaccessible for people with multiple sensory ipairments.

## Car travel



Many participants reported problems with in getting around the city by car - mainly due to difficulty finding Disabled Parking spaces, even outside of busy times.

The siting and layout of some Disabled Parking spaces was also felt to be problematic as a result, for example, of bollards being placed adjacent to parking bays, the absence of dropped kerbs nearby, or parking bays being too narrow.

Lack of consideration of the needs of Disabled drivers was a recurring theme throughout the discussions.

Off-street parking was also felt to be problematic, mainly due to space restrictions which made parking for people who need to exit at the rear of their vehicles difficult and also caused problems for people with wheelchair accessible vans, which are typically longer than available parking spaces, while some are unable to use ticket machines.

Some people with Mental Health conditions or Learning Difficulties also mentioned difficulties with getting 'Blue Badge' Parking Permits for people with non-mobility impairments.

- **Getting around the city**

Numerous access problems were reported when participants were asked about getting around the city on foot or in a wheelchair.

The most common issue was hazards posed by a wide variety of street furniture, such as billboards and other displays outside shops, inconveniently placed bollards or rubbish bins, and cafe/restaurant pavement tables. While such hazards cause difficulties for most Disabled People, they can be particularly dangerous for people with visual impairments.

Some participants suggested that there could be guidance given to businesses about how much space should be left for pedestrians when placing tables or other street furniture outside their premises, and/or having the boundary for such items clearly marked on the pavement to make it clear what space should be left.

Almost as many participants mentioned problems with pavements causing obstruction or danger. For example, sudden changes in width or height of the pavement, shortage of dropped kerbs - resulting in people

having to go onto the road - or cracked/broken paving, creating a tripping hazard.

Participants also highlighted specific challenges faced by particular groups of Disabled People - those with Mental Health Conditions or Autism, as well as people who use Assistance Dogs. A busy and crowded city centre can be a very disorientating, or even hostile, environment for many people in these groups - to the extent that they will often be reluctant to go to the city centre at all.

Some participants also talked about the specific access barriers faced by people with hearing impairments in places like the West Quay shopping centre, where the ambient noise of thousands of people can make life very difficult.

Other issues raised included:

- cyclists and skateboarders creating hazards for Disabled pedestrians;
- overcrowding and severe congestion in the city centre during summer months when cruise ships arrive;
- Lack of accessible signposting around the city for people with visual impairments;
- poorly phased traffic and pedestrian crossing.

- **Using buildings and spaces**

#### Cafes, bars and restaurants

Various access issues were noted in relation to cafes, bars and restaurants in the city centre. For example, internal steps put in for purely aesthetic reasons - thereby creating an unnecessary access barrier - and the current fashion for high tables and stools in many pubs, which are also inaccessible.  
stable height tables.

Participants also expressed surprise and disappointment that access barriers - such as lack of accessible toilets or hearing loop systems - remained in some leisure and retail premises even after recent refurbishments. They queried why the planning process does not

prevent this happening and suggested that there needs to be much greater awareness of the Equality Act and Building Regulation Access Standards.

Some participants pointed out that even some council owned leisure facilities do not have full access for Disabled People.

### Shops

The most common problems with shops highlighted by participants in the Focus Groups included:

- stepped access at shop entrances;
- narrow and cluttered aisles making moving around shops very difficult for wheelchair users and other people with sensory and mobility impairments;
- poorly sited or designed displays;
- shortage of accessible lifts in buildings with stairs;
- poor lighting for people with visual impairments;
- lack of accessible changing cubicles in clothes shops and department stores;
- lack of working hearing loop systems;
- narrow queuing lanes in department stores;
- lack of, or poorly sited, accessible toilets.

### Public toilets

Many of the participants raised problems with finding accessible public toilets when out and about in the city centre.

It was felt that, since the City Council have closed many of the public toilets in the city centre, Disabled People have to try to find toilets in shops - but these are often inaccessible and/or poorly maintained.

- **Dealing with people**

One of the most common issues raised was staff in leisure and retail businesses being intolerant and/or impatient with Disabled customers who might need a bit more time than others to complete their transactions.

Participants felt that staff behaviour and attitudes are highly variable. Marks and Spencer staff and staff in some Banks, for example, were felt to be providing a good service to Disabled customers, but staff in many other businesses appear to have had no training in dealing with Disabled customers at all - with several being positively hostile towards them.

Some participants reported that businesses they have spoken to about access problems often respond by saying that they have no need to make any changes as they do not have any Disabled customers - apparently completely failing to understand why.

## **Lessons from accessible cities around the world**

As part of this work we have produced a Scoping Report, which includes details of a number of best practice examples of accessible cities around the world. These cities provide examples of particularly innovative access solutions ranging from the use of digital technology, to repurposing existing infrastructure to improve access while, at the same time, maintaining the integrity of historical heritage sites.

None could, or would, claim to be completely accessible. But, they all share a number of common features that can help to inform and guide plans for improving accessibility in Southampton.

- **A shared commitment to full inclusion**

First, all of the cities highlighted share a commitment to full inclusion and a long-term approach to making their cities accessible to all, with timeframes for implementing plans and strategies ranging from 5 to 15 years (with an average of 8.5 years).

- **Universal benefits**

Second, plans are based on the belief that improving accessibility has benefits for all residents and visitors (not just older and Disabled People), as well as for businesses and public bodies.

- **A broad view of Disability and accessibility**

Third, they all take a broad view of Disability and consider the access needs of people with a wide range of impairments and health conditions. This includes things like: physical adaptations to city centres to improve ease of navigation and safety for people with sensory impairments; design features to avoid or reduce sensory overload for people on the autistic spectrum; and, flexible seating in cafes, restaurants and public spaces to accommodate people with different needs.

- **Fully accessible transport systems**

Fourth, all of the highlighted cities have - or plan to have - fully accessible public transport systems in their local areas. This covers physical access as well as travel information and disability awareness training for staff. Some also require all licensed taxis to be accessible.

- **An emphasis on communications**

Fifth, nearly all placed considerable emphasis on communications and the role of accessible information to help residents and visitors navigate around the cities. For some this was via websites with information provided in a range of formats (including Sign Language and Easy Read), while others had worked with other partners to produce innovative apps for use on smart devices.

- **Innovation**

Sixth, older cities have all found innovative and creative ways to overcome historical and topographical challenges and the need to maintain the integrity of heritage sites, such as repurposing traditional building materials or installing lifts to allow access to places with steep inclines.

- **A commitment to co-production**

Finally, all of the cities that are noted as exemplars of accessibility take a co-production approach to access, with Disabled People and their organisations fully involved in design, planning, awareness raising and evaluation and monitoring. This is seen as essential both for providing

expert advice and guidance, but also ensuring accountability and constructive challenge to architects, planners and business.

## **Evaluating accessibility in cities**

When analyzing the accessibility level of cities there are several factors to consider. For example, the annual European Commission Access City Award takes into account the following areas of action:

- The built environment and public spaces
- Transport and related infrastructure
- Information and communication, including new technologies
- Public facilities and services

Social inclusion is another key factor. It is important to note that a city does not become accessible only by adapting its structures to all kinds of people. Social inclusion is also key in providing equal conditions for its inhabitants (e.g. the ease with which Disabled People can access jobs or health services).

Accessibility is the key to inclusive cities. An inclusive city is a place where everyone can access everything and feel empowered to do so.

If cities are built with accessibility in mind Disabled People will feel included socially. Having more Disabled People involved helps planners think about the different types of exclusions and barriers that people face in their everyday lives. Disabled People are excluded further if cities are planned and designed poorly. This exclusion means fewer opportunities for education, employment and involvement in community life.

## **Principles for designing accessible cities**

Based on the best practice from the most accessible cities around the world, the key design principles can be summarised as follows:

- Design cities with all users in mind – all ages and abilities
- Allow people to move around how they want e.g. walking, biking, and wheelchairs

- Reduce the use of cars and promote public transport wherever possible (while planning for car use for people unable to use public transport)
- Provide houses close to every day destinations e.g. shops, schools, and work places
- Provide a range of housing including accessible housing
- Provide public spaces and facilities that are safe and accessible to users of all ages and abilities e.g. libraries and sports centres

Further resources on innovations in Inclusive Design can be found in Appendix 1.

## **Local context**

There are a number of local initiatives and developments offering scope to improve accessibility in Southampton. These are outlined below and have also been taken into account when framing the recommendations in this report.

### **City Centre Action Plan**

The City Centre Action Plan, adopted in 2015, has updated the statutory planning framework for the city centre and outlined a vision for how Southampton could change over the 15 years and beyond.

The planning system has an important role in shaping the city centre and how it is accessed and used. Two of the cross-cutting themes contained in the Plan are particularly relevant to Disabled People. Namely, that the city centre will be:

- A great place to visit
- Easy to get about

The Plan envisaged a network of well-signed, attractive routes which are accessible for all people including those with reduced mobility, which will encourage people to spend more time in the city centre.

This should help to improve access for Disabled People, as will the proposed new parking standards, which state that there is a need to:

- Link new city centre car parking standards with the overall approach to car parking (park and ride, disabled on-street, new developments, public off street parking)

The Local Plan has considerable potential for improving accessibility, although it is of some concern that - other than the points noted above - there is little mention of the specific needs of Disabled People. It will be essential therefore to make sure that more detailed consideration is given to this issue as the plan is rolled out so that Disabled People are able to share the benefits of the planned improvements on an equal basis. It is also vitally important that Older and Disabled People are fully included in the process.

### **Southampton Local Plan Vision**

A group of 12 local community organisations who support people who experience barriers to access in multiple forms, led by Southampton Voluntary Services, have been working to influence inclusion of the principle of accessibility in the development of the Local Plan, with the aim of making Southampton becoming the UKs most accessible city by 2050.

As noted above, the Local Plan presents a real opportunity for the city to enshrine within its development principles an overarching commitment to make accessibility and inclusion central to future development. The group believes that it also provides an opportunity for the city to adopt the simple but strong statement that Southampton aims to be the UKs most accessible city by 2050.

This should include a commitment to all forms of accessibility from physical access including integrated accessible transport and Shopmobility services, visual and auditory access as well as built environment and spatial planning, which is aware of and friendly to people with mental health conditions, dementia, people on the autism spectrum, and people with Learning Difficulties.

There are both sound economic as well as social grounds for adopting this aim. We have an aging population in a city which we need to future proof to sustain independent living and reduce loneliness and social



isolation as much as possible but also it is a positive offer to the huge number of visitors and inward investors to the city too.

Southampton as the most accessible UK city would send a powerful message that everyone is welcome and included in all our city has to offer – in its culture and heritage, retail and leisure offers, educational establishments, transport and connectivity, homes, housing and workplaces.

Southampton CCG have indicated they are supportive of this long term aim for the city and are keen to include this within in the estates programme that they are developing to support the city's new 5-year health and care strategy. The initiative is also supported by the Chair of Southampton Connect. Discussions with SCC are ongoing.

### **Hearing Loop grants**

The partnership between GO! Southampton, Southampton City Council, NHS Southampton City Clinical Commissioning Group (SCCCG), Southampton Healthwatch and Lets Loop Southampton to provide free hearing loop systems for small businesses and GP surgeries across the city is a very welcome development. The ambition to make Southampton the first city in the UK to have a hearing loop system in every public building is an extremely positive statement of intent.

It is estimated that around 33,500 Southampton residents are affected by hearing loss, yet an audit in 2017 revealed that just 13 percent of businesses had hearing loops installed. The hearing loop grants have the potential for an additional 200 premises to have the systems installed, which would obviously be a significant improvement.

### **Shopmobility**

The City Shopmobility scheme enables people with mobility impairments to access Southampton city centre shops and services through the hire of mobility scooters and wheelchairs. Almost 3,000 hires were made last year and it is estimated that over a third of customers using the scheme spend over £50 per city centre visit.

The future of the scheme is currently being considered as part of a strategic review of community transport in Southampton and has the potential to form part of a sustainable response to address issues of reduced mobility and access for Disabled People in Southampton.

## **Commercial development**

The major developments currently underway at WestQuay Watermark and the Cultural Quarter, as well as the planned developments such as Bargate, East Street and the Mayflower Quarter provide scope to design access for Disabled People in from the start, with the potential to make them exemplars of universal accessibility. These are positive opportunities, but only if access is given sufficient priority in the planning process.

## **Go! Southampton**

Some of Go! Southampton's own Business Plan priorities are also relevant to the issue of accessibility and have the potential to focus on the specific needs of Disabled People.

For example, under the priority for 'Stronger Business', the planned work with the Marketing Group to create a interactive online business directory could include information of accessibility. This would not only provide useful information for Disabled People but also encourage businesses themselves to give more thought to accessibility.

Similarly, under 'Developing and Retaining Skills', plans to provide training to customer-facing staff and volunteers in the city centre could encompass advice and support on meeting the needs of Disabled customers - which would make a significant contribution to improving accessibility.

Finally, under the 'Experience' priority there are two strands of particular relevance to the issue of accessibility, namely:

- Reviewing key access points to the city centre and implementing action plans to improve the user experience.
- Beginning a streetscape audit programme aimed at spotting sub-standard paving/planting/street furniture.

The second of these is especially important as poorly designed pavements and inconsiderately placed street furniture often create significant access barriers for Disabled People.

## **Future High Street Fund**

Southampton City Council and Go! Southampton are preparing a bid to the Future High Street Fund, which has been set up to help local areas to prepare long-term strategies for their high streets and town centres. Funding will be available for a range of activities including investment in physical infrastructure (improving public and other transport access; improving flow and circulation; and, other investment in physical infrastructure needed to support new housing and workspace development and the regeneration of heritage high streets) as well as investment in land assembly.

Obviously, accessibility can be built in to all of these kinds of activities so should be reflected in the bid which, if successful, would provide a significant boost to improving accessibility in the City.

## **Recommendations**

Based on our background research on best practice accessible cities around the world as well as discussions with Go! Southampton and other stakeholders we have drawn up a set of recommendations on actions that could be taken to help improve accessibility in the City. These recommendations also take account of suggestions made in the Focus Groups.

### **Recommendations for Go! Southampton**

- Extending the Hearing Loop grants scheme

While there is still work to do in order to increase take-up, the Southampton Hearing Loop grants scheme is a very positive initiative. Go! Southampton could consider a similar scheme for portable ramps, which could make a significant contribution to improving access in smaller premises in the retail and leisure sectors. Like The Hearing Loop scheme, this would be relatively low cost.

In the meantime Go! Southampton should continue to promote the availability of grants for hearing loop systems and emphasise how quick and easy the process is. It would also be helpful to make businesses aware of the advice and assistance available from Let's Loop Southampton. (For example, some local shops have loop systems

installed but not working as staff did not know how to use them. Let's Loop Southampton would be able to rectify this quite easily.

- Developing digital resources

We suggest that Go! Southampton seeks partners in the Technology and University sectors to work on production of navigation apps and other digital information resources to aid access across the city.

- Awareness raising

Go! Southampton should consider instigating an annual Access Awareness week coupled with annual awards for best accessibility initiatives.

Both the City Council and Go! Southampton have an important role to play in education and awareness raising for local businesses. There is no shortage of advice and good practice material on how to improve accessibility, but this needs to be effectively disseminated. Go! Southampton should also encourage take up of Disability Equality or Awareness Training for staff in leisure and retail businesses and consider recruiting 'Disability Champions' from the local business community to help influence their peers and spread awareness of good practice.

- Access auditing

Go! Southampton should work with local Disability organisations to carry out access surveys or audits of the city centre and/or develop toolkits to enable local businesses to self-audit. This could also be used to develop a local directory of accessible leisure and retail premises, with an endorsement scheme backed by Go! Southampton (e.g. with stickers to display on shop fronts).

- Action planning and monitoring

Go! Southampton should draw up an action plan based on the recommendations above and undertake follow-up work to check that these have been/are being implemented.

## **Recommendations for Southampton City Council**

- Set up an access co-production group

Work with Go! Southampton, transport partners and local Disability organisations to set-up and facilitate a cross-sector Access Forum or Accessibility Working Group to help share experiences and ideas with planners, designers and architects locally to help improve access across the city and involve this group on a co-production basis to advise on and evaluate all planning and building work to ensure full accessibility. The Forum could also have an important role to play in designing and planning future developments as well as monitoring access across the city through spot checks and access audits.

- Encourage access reporting

SCC should set up a reporting 'Hotline' for members of the public to report any access issues they come across when out and about in Southampton, either by telephone or online. Where reported problems are the responsibility of private sector organisations the Council could play a vital role in informing the local businesses concerned about their responsibilities and, where necessary, advising them on steps to take to address the issues. Where they are in public environments (e.g. problems with pavements), ideally this would be coupled with a 'rapid response' service to ensure reported problems are addressed as quickly as possible.

- Awareness raising

SCC should work with local partners - including local Disability Organisations - to raise awareness of access issues by producing accessibility checklists for local businesses and more detailed guidance on access standards and accessible design requirements for architects and construction organisations, covering both new buildings and refurbishments. Similar measures could be taken for entertainment and leisure providers and event organisers.

We also suggest that SCC should use Business Forum meetings to help with raising awareness of Disability and access issues. It has previously been suggested that local Disability Groups could be invited along to give short talks, but, apparently, there has not been space on the agendas to take up this opportunity.

- Access monitoring

SCC should proactively monitor access problems and enforce remedial action where this is a legal requirement, particularly through the local planning process to ensure compliance with the Equality Act and Building Regulation Access Standards.

We also recommend that the Council produce an annual accessibility report on actions to improve accessibility, including a breakdown of the numbers of planned and completed projects, and evaluating the extent to which Disabled People have been involved in delivery.

- Improve Disabled Parking Spaces

SCC should take steps to improve access to Disabled Parking spaces in the city centre - both in terms of increasing numbers and also improvements to siting and layout.

- Building and licensing regulations

We recommend that SCC should use the considerable leverage provided by regulations and licensing to promote greater accessibility in the City. For example, the Council could require shops and restaurants to display a notice at their premises indicating a Council defined access rating (with possible mitigations, for example, if a ramp is available to get up steps from the pavement) and whether help is available). Similarly, the Council could require new developments to include a disability access action plan.

- Access Officers

We recommend that SCC consider reinstating Access Officer posts in the Council when finances allow. Access Officers have, in the past, been a valuable source of practical and expert knowledge on a wide range of access issues and, with such a resource in place, some of the access problems Disabled People experience in the city could be reduced, or even eliminated.

## Recommendations for Southampton Clinical Commissioning Group

- Awareness raising

We recommend that SCCG should do more to promote the issue of hearing loop systems as many GP surgeries in the city do not have them.

## Recommendations for local public transport providers

- Staff training

Some of the problems with public transport reported by Disabled People could be mitigated through staff training to raise awareness of access issues and to equip them to provide assistance in a common sense and practical way - which was often felt to be lacking currently. We therefore recommend that local transport providers ensure that all customer-facing staff receive suitable training in disability and access awareness.

- Signage

We recommend that transport providers work with local Disability groups to audit signage, both at transport hubs and on vehicles, and make improvements to ensure that signage is fully accessible to all Disabled passengers.

- Improvements to design of bus fleets

We recommend that, when commissioning new vehicle fleets, transport providers should take the opportunity to consider some changes to bus design. Some of the problems reported by Disabled passengers could be mitigated by more creative and flexible design of bus interiors - such as wider aisles and greater use of flip up seats to make more space when needed.

- Future planning

All of the above will greatly improve accessibility of public transport in the local area. In terms of future planning, we recommend that the aim should be to provide a public transport system comprising the following elements:

- **Holistic** - door to door travel with interchanging supported

- **Consistency** - across all modes of travel and in different parts of the city
- **Confidence** - in the support being there for both planned and spontaneous travel
- **Prioritising demand** - allowing speedy resolution of competing demands for time, space, journeys etc
- **Monitoring** - customer feedback used to inform future provision
- **Continuous improvement** - accessibility solutions offered based best practice available and an ethos of continuous improvement that draws upon ongoing user involvement

### **Recommendations for local businesses**

A variety of access problems can often make city centres can feel like no-go areas for Disabled People. Research from the Department for Work and Pensions has shown Disabled People find shopping the most difficult experience for accessibility, followed by going to the cinema, theatre and concerts. Drinking and eating out at pubs and restaurants was third on the list.

Many face difficulties when trying to spend their disposable income due to factors such as lack of accessibility and poor customer service. Nearly two thirds (60 per cent) of disabled shoppers in the UK have struggled to make a purchase at some point, with most of these people coming up against obstacles on more than one occasion.

The disability charity Purple surveyed more than 500 people who identified as disabled about their experiences shopping. Four fifths (80 per cent) of respondents said businesses could do more to be accessible to encourage them to spend their money with them. And more than half (56 per cent) said that improving staff understanding about different disabilities would encourage them to spend their disposable income.

Similarly, a 2015 report by the Business Disability Forum (BDF) found that 3.6 million Disabled People are leaving restaurants, pubs and clubs because of a lack of understanding of their needs. The BDFs survey asked 2,500 Disabled People about their experiences of customer facing businesses in the hospitality sector. Half of those surveyed said that they had left a restaurant, pub or club because of poor understanding or, or attitudes to, disability. Over 40% also reported that their friends and



families hadn't returned to a business as a result of the negative experience they had witnessed.

This is bad news for Disabled People but equally detrimental to businesses as Disabled People represent 20% of the potential customer base, and the “purple pound” is worth well over £2bn a year.

- Making Reasonable Adjustments to services and premises

There are many ways to make cities more accessible and welcoming for all. Most adjustments that a business may need to make are pretty straightforward and small changes can make a big difference to the customer experience. Businesses are required by law to make reasonable adjustments for Disabled People and there are many easy and low-cost ways to improve accessibility including:

- clearing clutter from corridors and aisles;
- printing menus, leaflets and brochures in at least 14 point font, and being prepared to provide larger print if requested;
- training staff so they are confident in offering assistance when requested, for example, reading a menu out loud or writing down a price;
- provide parking for Disabled customers or make sure staff know where the nearest parking is located.

- Disability Equality and Awareness Training

How businesses respond to, and interact with, Disabled People will have a huge impact on accessibility. Staff management and policies and attitudes towards serving Disabled customers are just as important as physical access. A positive approach will always pay dividends. One of the things that Disabled People rate most highly is businesses simply having friendly and helpful staff. Access is of course very important but many people are surprisingly forgiving about access being less than perfect as long as staff do their best to help by, for example, trying to find some other way to get around a problem.

We recommend that local businesses should ensure that all customer-facing staff receive appropriate Disability Equality and Awareness Training to ensure they are confident in dealing with Disabled customers in a positive and effective way.

- Become Disability Confident

We also recommend that local businesses consider signing up to the Government's Disability Confident scheme (<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/disability-confident-campaign>), which encourages employers to think differently about disability and take action to improve how they recruit, retain and develop Disabled People. The scheme can also help to attract greater numbers of Disabled customers to a business. It is easily accessible, particularly for smaller businesses and help with achieving the required standard is available for local Disability Organisations.

- Marketing and promotion

We recommend that local businesses review their marketing and promotion content and strategies to ensure they are effectively targeting Disabled customers. There are a number of simple steps that can be taken to make retail and other businesses more attractive to Disabled People. For example:

- In all marketing, use inclusive language and positive imagery (using images of real Disabled People as opposed to actors or models pretending to be disabled)
- Be clear that your aim is to make your offer as accessible as possible to as many Disabled People as possible.
- Use positive statements “We do” or “We will”, rather than “We don’t” or “We won’t”.
- Avoid disablist language – e.g. accessible toilets, not disabled toilets

# APPENDIX 1: Resources on Inclusive Design

## [Helen Hamlyn Centre for Design](#)

A research institute at the Royal College of Art dedicated to projects that improve people's lives. The institute has a number of research and development strands on inclusive design, including:

- [Ability & Diversity](#)

This research strand involves people with a range of abilities, working across the physical, sensory and cognitive ranges. The projects aim to build on people's capabilities, addressing individual needs and aspirations. Understanding neuro-diversity is an emerging area that is increasingly important within this theme.

- [Everyday Living](#)

Projects in this strand focus on everyday activities, looking at how design can create better choice, increased independence and a more engaging experience with the products, systems and services that surround us. The work addresses people of all ages and abilities, involving them in the design process as active participants in creating new ideas to improve quality of life.

- [People & Technology](#)

Digital technologies are increasingly present in almost every area of our lives, yet many barriers still exist to selecting, learning and using software, hardware, devices and services. This research strand takes a people-centred approach to understanding user behaviour, digital interactions and communication needs for a range of individuals and community networks.

## [Responsive Street Furniture](#)

The Responsive Street Furniture project by designers Atkin and Scott uses digital technology to detect pedestrians with different impairments and help make their journeys easier and safer by making public infrastructure, such as street lights, crossings and bollards, automatically respond to the specific needs of pedestrians with different impairments.

Developed in partnership with commercial landscaping specialists [Marshalls](#), the project "shows how transformative technology could be for people with disabilities". The designers describe the technology as "basically an operating system for the city". The idea is that users with sensory impairments select the services they would benefit from via a website. Bluetooth sensors in their smartphones, tablets or a low-cost fob tell sensors in the street furniture to activate their selected functions when they pass by.

### [Sight Line](#)

Another project by the same designers comprises a series of changes to the design and use of roadworks – specifically the signing and guarding equipment set out for pedestrians – in order to make them easier to navigate for people with sight loss (which was also one of the issues raised in the Focus Groups carried out for Go! Southampton). This involves adding simple tactile and high-contrast visual information to roadworks equipment – changes that are designed to be as small as possible in order to minimise the cost of implementation.

In addition to these physical changes, the project also includes an app that provides digital information about any temporary changes to the street environment via audio descriptions.

Sight Line has been deployed in five UK towns and cities by seven utilities and construction companies.

### [The Wellcome Collection inclusive exhibition design toolkit](#)

Commissioned by the Wellcome Collection – a public museum and library that aims to challenge how we think and feel about health – this year-long project looked in detail at Wellcome Collection's process of planning and making exhibitions in order to develop a toolkit for inclusive exhibition design.

Researchers worked alongside the London institution to understand how the visitor journey can be made more accessible for all by removing barriers to accessing exhibition content, ultimately making the time spent at Wellcome Collection significantly more enjoyable.

### [Sensory Trust Guidance on Inclusive Design](#)

The Sensory Trust has set out a practical approach to Inclusive Design that avoids overemphasis on technology and aims to challenge designers to think more creatively, to incorporate ideas they would not otherwise have entertained, and to consider a richer mix of ways of engaging people, not just through the visual. Their guidance covers:

- Integration, not segregation
- Equality of experience
- Working with people
- Flexibility and right to choose
- Building on good practice

### [Design Council](#)

The Design Council has produced a guide explaining the five key principles of Inclusive Design, with examples in real life situations.

### [Inclusive Design Hub](#)

The Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment (CABE) in Scotland has published a guide on the principles of Inclusive Design as it relates to the built environment. The key principles outlined are:

- **Inclusive** – so everyone can use it safely, easily and with dignity
- **Responsive** – taking account of what people say they need and want
- **Flexible** – so different people can use it in different ways
- **Convenient** – so everyone can use it without too much effort or separation
- **Accommodating** for all people, regardless of their age, gender, mobility, ethnicity or circumstances
- **Welcoming** – with no disabling barriers that might exclude some people
- **Realistic** – offering more than one solution to help balance everyone's needs and recognising that one solution may not work for all

This page is intentionally left blank



## 1. About Inclusive Design

### Definition

Inclusive Design is the design of an environment so that it can be accessed and used by as many people as possible, regardless of age, gender and disability. An environment that is designed inclusively is not just relevant to buildings; it also applies to surrounding open spaces, wherever people go about everyday activities. This includes shops, offices, hospitals, leisure facilities, parks and streets. Inclusive design keeps the diversity and uniqueness of each individual in mind. To do this, built environment professionals should involve potential users at all stages of the design process; from the design brief and detailed design through to construction and completion. Where possible, it is important to involve disabled people in the design process.

### The Principles of Inclusive Design

The Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment (CABE) published and promoted the principles of inclusive design as it relates to the built environment:

- **Inclusive** – so everyone can use it safely, easily and with dignity
- **Responsive** – taking account of what people say they need and want
- **Flexible** – so different people can use it in different ways
- **Convenient** – so everyone can use it without too much effort or separation
- **Accommodating** for all people, regardless of their age, gender, mobility, ethnicity or circumstances
- **Welcoming** – with no disabling barriers that might exclude some people
- **Realistic** – offering more than one solution to help balance everyone's needs and recognising that one solution may not work for all

## 2. Scottish Legislation & British Standard

This section provides of an overview of current legislation and policy related to inclusive design in Scotland.

There are legal obligations for employers and service providers to make reasonable adjustments to improve access for disabled people. These legal requirements can be found in the Equality Act 2010.

The Equality Act came into force on 1 October 2010. The Equality Act brings together over 116 separate pieces of legislation into one single Act. Combined, they make up an Act that provides a legal framework to protect the rights of individuals and advance equality of opportunity for all.

The Act simplifies, strengthens and harmonises legislation to provide Britain with a discrimination law which protects individuals from unfair treatment and promotes a fair and more equal society.

The nine main pieces of legislation that have merged are:

- the Equal Pay Act 1970
- the Sex Discrimination Act 1975
- the Race Relations Act 1976
- the Disability Discrimination Act 1995
- the Employment Equality (Religion or Belief) Regulations 2003
- the Employment Equality (Sexual Orientation) Regulations 2003
- the Employment Equality (Age) Regulations 2006
- the Equality Act 2006, Part 2
- the Equality Act (Sexual Orientation) Regulations 2007

#### Building Regulations – Technical Handbooks

In Scotland, access requirements are also integrated in the Building Regulations. The Technical Handbooks provide guidance on achieving the standards set in the Building (Scotland) Regulations 2004 and are available in two volumes, Domestic buildings and Non-domestic buildings. Each handbook covers seven sections; Structure, Fire, Environment, Safety, Noise, Energy, Sustainability.

[Download the Technical Handbooks.](#)

#### British Standard 8300

BS 8300: 2009+A1:2010 looks at the design of buildings and their ability to meet the requirements of disabled people. By offering best-practice recommendations, this standard explains how architectural design and the built environment can help disabled people to make the most of their surroundings. BS 8300: 2009+A1: 2010 looks at how some facilities, such as corridors, car parks and entrances, can be designed to provide aids for disabled people. It also demonstrates how additional features, including ramps, signs, lifts and guard rails, can be installed.

How does it work?

The requirements set out within BS 8300, covers a range of disabilities and the use of public buildings by disabled people who are residents, visitors, spectators or employees. This standard's recommendations include parking areas, setting-down points and garaging, access routes to and around all buildings, as well as entrances



and interiors. It also covers the relevant routes to all the facilities that are associated with these buildings.

[Purchase BS 8300: 2009+A1:2010.](#)

### **3. Benefits of Inclusive Design**

There are a number of benefits that can be achieved from designing environments to be inclusive in Scotland. These benefits can have a positive impact on individuals, businesses and society as a whole.

#### Independent Living

Inclusive Design ensures that disabled people are not forced out of their community and are encouraged to live an independent life. The Scottish Government is committed to enabling independent living for disabled people by ensuring the right housing and support is in place. This includes the ability to adapt houses to make them suitable for those with reduced mobility and other needs. [Housing Adaptations](#) and [Housing Support Services](#) can reduce the risk of accidents at home and also reduce need for home care or long-term admission to a care home.

#### Aging Population

The National Records of Scotland (NRS) estimate that the population of Scotland will rise from 5.35 million to 5.70 million by 2039. During this period the population will age significantly, with the number of people aged 75 and over increasing by 85%. It is also estimated that the age of householders over 65 will increase by almost 54%. With people living longer this means that there is an increase in the number of disabled people in Scotland. By designing environments to be inclusive this can ensure that older generations can stay as active members of their communities.

#### Businesses – ‘The Purple Pound’

The Government state that nearly one in five people in Scotland have a disability. Labelled ‘The Purple Pound’, the combined spending power of disabled people in the UK is estimated at £249 Billion each year. It is therefore extremely beneficial for businesses in Scotland to adopt an inclusive approach to design as it increases the number of potential customers. The benefits of inclusive design for businesses are not just financial; it can also improve public relations and enhance customer satisfaction.

Under the Equality Act 2010 businesses are required by law to make a reasonable adjustment for disabled people. There are a number of measures that businesses can introduce to make a public environment more inclusive:

- Doorways wide enough for wheelchairs, mobility scooters and walking frames
- Removing clutter from corridors and aisles
- A lowered accessible counter
- Printing menus, leaflets and brochures in at least 14 point

- Clear signage
- High visibility contrasting coloured material corners, steps, and edges

#### Social Inclusion – Everyone Benefits

The benefits of inclusive design are wide-ranging and can lead to greater social inclusion in Scotland. Social inclusion enables disabled people to fully participate in society. An environment that is designed to be inclusive promotes equality and makes life easier and safer for everyone.

#### **Disability Equality Scotland**

The website is hosted by [Disability Equality Scotland](#). We are a membership-led charity working to make life more accessible, equal and inclusive for disabled people in Scotland.