

DECISION-MAKER:	SCRUTINY INQUIRY PANEL
SUBJECT:	ACCESSIBLE SOUTHAMPTON – ACCESSIBILITY TO INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION
DATE OF DECISION:	20 JANUARY 2022
REPORT OF:	SERVICE DIRECTOR – LEGAL AND BUSINESS OPERATIONS

<u>CONTACT DETAILS</u>			
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STATEMENT OF CONFIDENTIALITY

None

BRIEF SUMMARY

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

- Accessibility to information and communication

RECOMMENDATIONS:

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

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| 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. |
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ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED AND REJECTED

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| 2. | None. |
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DETAIL (Including consultation carried out)

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| 3. | For the fourth meeting of the inquiry the Panel will be considering accessibility to information and communication. For reference the EU Accessible City Award Criteria includes the following issues under this heading - measures related to access to the city authorities' official information. For instance: accessibility of promotional multimedia information of the municipality, advice and citizen feedback procedures on the accessibility of the website, online information provision in arts, culture, entertainment, sport facilities, signage and guidance in public places, outdoor or indoor, tourist/visitor information, accessibility of the public information kiosks, provision of assistive technology and inclusive ICT resources for the whole community in public libraries and online centres. |
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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 12 th January 2022 to consider accessibility to information and communication in Southampton.
5.	Following the feedback from the meeting of the Accessible Southampton Focus Group, Rosie Dowty - Lead Speech and Language Therapist at Southampton Community Learning Disability Service, Southern Health NHS Foundation Trust, aided by Kate Dench, Learning Disability Joint Commissioning Manager at the Integrated Commissioning Unit, will be delivering a presentation outlining what accessible communication is and informing the Panel about the Communication Access Symbol, a new disability access symbol developed in partnership by charities and organisations that share a vision to improve the lives of people with communication difficulties.
6.	To provide an overview of Southampton City Council's approach to enabling accessible information and communication, a presentation will be delivered by Senior Officers from within the City Council's Customer and Communications Division. The presentation will consider issues such as the accessibility of the Council's website and accessible information standards the Council applies.
Accessible information – Access guides	
7.	As the Panel will recall, at the inaugural meeting of the Inquiry a presentation was delivered by representatives from AccessAble. The presentation (link below) identified information provision as one of the 3 key facets of accessibility, alongside the welcome and the physical space itself. Information about accessibility has the power to make decisions – <i>'over ¾ of disabled people have not visited somewhere because they could not find the information they needed.'</i> The AccessAble presentation outlined the need to have accessibility information where people expect to find it, avoiding the need to search for the information. https://www.southampton.gov.uk/modernGov/documents/s53192/AccessAble%20Southampton%207%20October%202021.pdf
8.	AccessAble identified Sheffield City Council as an example of good practice with regards to providing information. 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. This is available via the Council's website. https://www.sheffield.gov.uk/home/your-city-council/access-disabled-people.html
9.	In Southampton both the University of Southampton and University Hospital Southampton (UHS) have published access guides in partnership with AccessAble. UHS launched their new site on 3rd December 2021: https://www.accessable.co.uk/university-hospital-southampton-nhs-foundation-trust/access-guides/centre-block-southampton-general-hospital
ICT Provision	
10.	The EU Access City Award criteria for accessible information and communication also includes inclusive ICT resources. To provide context to the discussion, attached as Appendix 1 is information relating to SO:Let's Connect. A recent initiative launched in Southampton during the initial Covid lockdown in response

	to a number of services only becoming accessible via on-line channels. SO:Let's Connect aims to increasing digital connectivity helping improve access to information and reducing isolation.
11.	The Panel will also be provided with information relating to the ICT resources and assistive technology available within Southampton's public libraries.
12.	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.

RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

Capital/Revenue/Property/Other

13. None

LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

Statutory power to undertake proposals in the report:

14. The duty to undertake overview and scrutiny is set out in Part 1A Section 9 of the Local Government Act 2000.

Other Legal Implications:

15. None

RISK MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS

16. None

POLICY FRAMEWORK IMPLICATIONS

17. None

KEY DECISION?

No

WARDS/COMMUNITIES AFFECTED:

None

SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION

Appendices

1. SO:Let's Connect

Documents In Members' Rooms

1. None

Equality Impact Assessment

Do the implications/subject of the report require an Equality and Safety Impact Assessment (ESIA) to be carried out?

No

Data Protection Impact Assessment

Do the implications/subject of the report require a Data Protection Impact Assessment (DPIA) to be carried out?

No

Other Background documents available for inspection at:

Title of Background Paper

Relevant Paragraph of the Access to Information Procedure Rules / Schedule 12A allowing document to be Exempt/Confidential (if applicable)

1. None