

CABINET

8 February 2005

CORPORATE ACCESS POLICY AND PROGRAMMES

REPORT OF ACTING DIRECTOR OF DEVELOPMENT SERVICES

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RECENT REFERENCES:

None

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

The final parts of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 came into effect in October 2004. This paper outlines the steps being taken by the Council to make its services and operational buildings accessible in accordance with the requirements of the Act.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

That Cabinet:

- 1 notes the steps being taken to improve access by improving the way we deliver services to citizens.
- 2 notes that physical access to buildings will be one of the priorities under programmes for the maintenance and improvement of our operational buildings, with costs falling to relevant capital or revenue budgets.
- 3 notes that equalities and diversity training, which raises disability awareness, continue to be rolled out to all front line staff.
- 4 agrees to further consideration being given, within the existing financial envelope, to the case for appointing an Access Officer post in Building Control.
- 5 agrees that a Director and Portfolio Holder be given responsibility for disability issues, as part of current responsibilities for social inclusion.

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DETAIL:

1. Introduction

- 1.1 The Disability Discrimination Act 1995 (DDA) introduced a package of measures to give disabled people new rights of access to goods, facilities, services and places of work. The provisions of the DDA were brought into force in stages, the final stage of which was in October 2004 with the introduction of the requirement (subject to certain limitations) to make physical adaptation to buildings to ensure that disabled people can gain access to the services provided from them.
- 1.2 In broad terms the Act requires that providers of services must not refuse to serve disabled persons or provide a lower standard of service or poorer terms to disabled customers. "Reasonable adjustments" must be made to ensure discrimination does not occur. In particular, adjustments should be made to:
 - policies, practices and procedures
 - provision of auxiliary aids and services – for example, audio tapes or staff to assist disabled persons
 - physical barriers, by removing them or by providing alternative means of access
- 1.3 The Act indicates that service suppliers have an anticipatory rather than a reactive duty. In other words, they should try to anticipate what barriers there might be to disabled users rather than waiting for complaints to occur.
- 1.4 A disabled person who believes they have suffered discrimination because a service provider has not done all that is reasonably possible to provide an equal service can bring civil proceedings for damages. There is at present little case law to indicate what level of damages might be awarded. In addition to any award, the court can also issue an injunction requiring the provider to make adjustments.
- 1.5 Key to compliance with the Act is an assessment of what can be regarded as "reasonable". Adjustments that would conflict with health and safety, planning, building regulations or other legislative requirements would not be regarded as reasonable; nor would those requiring "a fundamental change in the nature of the business". However, service providers should not assume that changes would not be acceptable without consulting relevant authorities.
- 1.6 Cost is also likely to be a factor in determining what is reasonable, but will be balanced against the resources available to the organisation and the wider benefits or disruption likely to result from changes. An expensive modification which benefits a wide range of users is more likely to be regarded as "reasonable" than one which costs the same but will only benefit a few, or is very disruptive to customers or staff.

- 1.7 It is important that service providers document what they have done to comply with the Act, what advice they have received, and the decision-making processes which have led to change or lack of change. Such documentation will not only support defence of any formal claim of discrimination, but will also assist staff to explain the organisation's approach on a day-to-day basis. In practice, whilst it is not expected that all services and facilities show immediate compliance, any organisation should be able to demonstrate it has a clear programme for improving access against the criteria listed in 1.3, and that it is monitoring progress.
- 1.8 Notwithstanding our obligations under the DDA, the Council has a clear commitment to inclusion, which entails the need to consider how we can improve the delivery of services to all of our community. This paper meets a commitment in the Modernisation & Improvement Plan to consider our corporate access policy and agree our action plan.
2. Action to improve access
- 2.1 The Council sees improving access to the services from several different perspectives, designed to 'mainstream' access, rather than develop a separate programme for DDA related improvements:
- *Improving e-services.* The national e-government programme requires all Council services to be electronically accessible by December 2005: in practice through the internet and Council's website. Winchester is making good progress with our e-government programme, and we should regard it as a major tool for making services accessible to all.
 - *Improving customer care.* The *Customer Counts* programme, beginning with the opening of the Customer Service Centre in June of this year, will ensure that personal and telephone callers to the Council, as well as those contacting us by e-mail or letter, will receive a better standard of service, with a prompt response to most queries, and all others followed to ensure completion. The CSC is the beginning of a wider programme, which will consider all aspects of customer service and the accessibility of services. As with the e-government programme, to which it is closely linked, this initiative will improve both accessibility and responsiveness of the Council and its services.
 - *Improving rural access.* The Council is developing a pilot project to provide information, advice and access to services through the offices of our larger Parish Councils. This will bring an access point to local communities surrounding the district's market towns and, complementing the *Customer Counts* programme, ensure people can make contact with the Council and access a range of services without needing to travel to Winchester.
 - *Improving physical access.* The Building Control team has undertaken formal Access Audits of key operational building (those from which we provide services and so need to be accessible, ranging from the Guildhall to Meadowside Leisure Centre). These audits, summarised in appendices 1-10, identify improvements to the building infrastructure necessary to make them physically accessible to all. Each audit will inform the maintenance programme for the building in question, and the Property Maintenance team will include accessibility improvements in maintenance and upgrade programmes – the recent Council paper on improvements to River Park Leisure Centre included a programme of access

improvements, for example. Overall progress and prioritisation across all the Council estate will be monitored by the Building Control team, who will wish to see a proper programme which meets our obligations drawn together, both for individual buildings and overall.

- *Improving service delivery.* Not all access improvements require physical changes to buildings. In many cases, a different approach to service delivery can make the service more accessible to a range of people: mobile housing advice surgeries or electronic access to museum collection, for example. Service Managers and their teams need to be encouraged to think about more inclusive approaches to service delivery rather than be hidebound by the office environment. To promote thinking, the Personnel team is delivering a programme of equalities and diversity training. This has already encouraged those attending to look afresh at their services, and will continue through ongoing service reviews.

3. Access Officer

- 3.1 At present, expertise on access matters lies with specially trained members of the Building Control team. However, as access issues take a higher priority, and the legislation develops (see below), so there is a case for more specialist expertise. The appointment of a part-time Access Officer (based in the BC team) may allow for effective monitoring of progress in achieving our obligations and a business case will be developed, using existing resources. This will only be taken forward if it is the best way of securing improvement.

4. Member and Officer lead

- 4.1 Access is an issue which cuts across all services and Directorates. The Corporate Management Team recognises its importance and will receive regular updates on progress. However, commitment would also be engendered by the appointment of a Cabinet Member and Director 'champion' to maintain profile and progress, supported by the Building Control and Social Inclusion (Community Services) teams. It is suggested this role be given to those with lead responsibility for social inclusion.

5. Legislation

- 5.1 The disability, equalities and inclusion agenda remains a national priority, and the new Disability Discrimination Bill will give a leading role to local authorities. The Bill, which had its second reading in the Lords last month, aims to:
- tackle institutional discrimination through a duty to promote disability equality for the public sector (paralleling the race equality duty);
 - extend the DDA to cover most functions of public authorities (there is presently a lack of clarity, for example, relating to disabled prisoners, elections, planning and access to pavements and highways);
 - give disabled tenants and leaseholders a right to reasonable adjustments and auxiliary aids and services;
 - protect disabled councillors against discrimination for the first time.

6. OTHER CONSIDERATIONS:

6.1 CORPORATE STRATEGY (RELEVANCE TO):

The shared vision of WCC and our partners, for the District is

- *“Our vision for the Winchester District is of diverse and dynamic communities, where people work together to ensure that everyone has the opportunity to lead a fulfilling life now and in the future.”*

The Council’s role to help to achieve this vision

- *“The City Councillors want people to be able to live, work and enjoy life in the district with a real sense of belonging here. They will provide leadership for the area and the Council will work with partners to ensure that services are provided in ways that best meet the needs of the residents, both current and future generations.”*

Our aim for the District

- To build a dynamic community, which can grasp the opportunities of the 21st century.

6.2 The Council has identified social inclusion as one of its priorities for 2005 – 2008 and has prepared and endorsed a Social Inclusion Strategy. That Strategy states that the Council will promote social inclusion because it believes that:

6.3 *‘Social inclusion is the process by which we seek to ensure that all our residents have the opportunity to fulfil their personal potential and to make an active contribution to creating better communities’*

6.4 The aim of the strategy is:

‘To ensure that the Council’s policies and those of the partners it works with have the effect of increasing social inclusion and creating stronger communities.’

6.5 The improvement of access to services will promote these aims.

7. RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS:

7.1 Resources for improving access will be part of the funding of the wider programmes outlined above on e-government, customer care, joint working and training. Resources for physical improvements to buildings will be sought as part of capital and revenue maintenance programmes. The options for providing additional expertise in this area will be considered, drawing on existing budgets.

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS:

Files held by the Building Control Department

APPENDICES:

Appendices 1 - 10: access audits for operational property

Guildhall

Courtyard cafe approach

Highlight bollards using colour and tonal contrast

Rear car park

Replace bollards with bollards that are at least 1000mm

Saxon Suite

Highlight bollards using colour and tonal contrast

Replace bollards with bollards that are at least 1000mm

Taxi Rank

Liaise with the local authority to ensure that when the dropped kerb is improved, the correct tactile paving is installed.

Emergency Stairs from King Alfred Hall

Highlight step nosings using colour and tonal contrast.

Emergency egress General

Highlight step nosings using colour and tonal contrast

A safe refuge must be provided for disabled people if the lift cannot be used as an escape route in an emergency.

Develop an emergency evacuation plan for disabled visitors in the building.

Provide visual alarms in areas where people are likely to be alone, for example, toilets.

Courtyard Café Entrance

Provide a recessed floor mat that is flush with the floor surface.

Install the corduroy warning surface to the base and top of the steps.

Redevelop handrails to meet best practice guidelines.

Redevelop the manifestations on the entrance to provide colour and tonal contrast with the view when approaching and leaving the entrance.

Main Entrance Steps

Highlight step nosings using colour and tonal contrast.

Install corduroy warning surface to the base and top of the steps.

Investigate the provision of a central hand rail.

Redevelop hand rails to meet best practice guidelines.

Tourist Information Entrance

Redevelop the manifestation on the entrance to provide colour and tonal contrast when entering and leaving the building

Tourist Information Rear Entrance

Provide a handrail to the opposite side of the ramp.
Redevelop the manifestations on the entrance to provide colour and tonal contrast when approaching and leaving the entrance.

Conference Chamber

Colour contrast the edge of the stage.
Highlight step nosings using colour and tonal contrast.
Investigate the installation of handrails to each side of the steps.
Provide a handrail to the opposite side of the staircase.
Redevelop handrails to meet best practice guidelines.

Guildhall Gallery

Repair the door threshold.

King Alfred Hall

Colour contrast the edge of the stage.
Highlight step nosings using colour and tonal contrast.
Install a handrail to the opposite side of the steps.
Investigate the installation of handrails to each side of the steps.
Provide cable covers
Provide contrasting bands on structural columns.
Provide handrails to both sides of the staircase.

Mayor's Parlour

Highlight step nosings using colour and tonal contrast.
Provide handrails to both sides of the staircase.

Roof Terrace

Highlight step nosings using colour and tonal contrast within the courtyard.

Wykeham Room

Highlight step nosings using colour and tonal contrast.
Investigate a change in floor surface at the top and bottom of the steps.
Replace handrails with handrails of an easier to grip design.

Accessible Toilet, Second Floor

Install an emergency pull cord system and ensure that this is linked to a staffed area of the building.

Accessible WC and Baby Change, Ground Floor

Install an emergency pull cord system and ensure that this is linked to a staffed area of the building. Relocate the flush tank pipe away from the drop down grab rails.

Lift

Lower the emergency telephone.

Main Staircase

Block in the underside of staircase to reduce collision hazards.

Highlight step nosings using colour and tonal contrast.

Redevelop lighting to provide an even and adequate spread of light without causing glare.

Platform Lift

Ensure that the platform lift complies with BS 6440: 1990.

Ensure that the platform lift folds up when not in use.

Highlight the platform lift to contrast with the walls.

Rear Staircase

Highlight step nosings using colour and tonal contrast.

Provide a handrail to the opposite side of the staircase.

Stairs to Walton Room

Extend handrails to run the full length of the steps.

Highlight step nosings using colour and tonal contrast.

Steps on the Second Floor Leading into the Carpenter Turner Room

Extend handrails to run the full length of the steps.

Highlight step nosings using colour and tonal contrast.

Steps to King Alfred Hall Boxes (Second Floor)

Highlight step nosings using colour and tonal contrast.

Provide handrails to both sides of the staircase.

City Offices

Car parking

The closest disabled car parking spaces are situated in the Colebrook Street Car Park. The number of parking spaces provided for disabled people is inadequate. The number of spaces should be increased to at least 6% of the total number of parking spaces provided.

There are no dropped kerbs between the parking spaces provided for disabled people and the access pavement. Dropped kerbs and the correct tactile paving should be provided.

External ramps

The gradient of the ramp to the main entrance varies along its length, having gradients of between 1 in 11.25 and 1 in 18.0. Current guidance requires the gradient to be uniform throughout its length and not to exceed 1 in 15.5 (this figure will vary if the length of the ramp is altered). The total rise of the ramp is too great.

The ramp is only 975mm wide. Current guidance requires a minimum width of 1500mm.

The colour of the ramp surface does not contrast visually with the landings at the top and bottom of the ramp.

There should be a landing at the top of the ramp that is clear of the entrance door.

A handrail has been provided on one side of the ramp only. Current best practice guidance requires a handrail on both sides. The height of this handrail varies throughout the length of the ramp but in some cases is less than the minimum required of 900mm.

There is no kerb on the open side of the ramp.

The ramp is not adequately lit.

As the design and construction of the ramp is fundamentally incorrect when compared against current guidance the only feasible way to upgrade it will most likely be to renew it completely.

In the meantime the external lighting should be upgraded to provide acceptable levels.

External steps

The landing at the top of the steps is only 1120mm long. This is 80mm less than the 1200mm currently required by best practice guidance.

Visual and tactile warnings should be provided, by means of tactile paving slabs, should be provided at the top and bottom of the steps.

The undersides of the projecting nosings are not adequately chamfered to prevent people with walking disabilities from getting their toes caught as they climb the steps.

The rise of each step is excessive at 185mm. The risers are not distinguished by a contrasting strip.

There is a suitable handrail on one side of the steps only.

The steps are inadequately lit.

As these steps are being provided in addition to a ramp, the incorrect nosing profile, rise and landing length could be acceptable. Acceptable lighting, handrails and visual and tactile warnings, however, should be installed.

Entrance doors

The doors should be distinguished from the screens by high contrast strips at the top, bottom and both sides of the door.

High contrast strips should be provided on the leading edges of opening doors to prevent people from walking into them when they are open.

The manifestation on the main entrance doors is not in accordance with published guidance. The doors should have manifestation applied that accords with BS 8300:2001.

Reception areas and lobbies

The main reception area is cluttered with displays and racks of leaflets. This prevents anyone who is entering the reception area from obtaining a clear view in from the outside. It also makes the reception area very confusing for visitors. Existing internal signs and information boards, in both the Main and Housing Receptions, are inadequate for people with sight impairments and wheelchair users with lower eye levels, but the problem is compounded by the number of leaflet racks and display boards. The number of racks and display boards should be minimised and adequate visual and tactile direction and information signs provided in accordance with the guidance given in BS8300:2001.

The Main Reception is fitted with very bright spotlights. These shine in people's eyes as they enter the reception area and move about. These lights should be replaced or shielded in some way.

Due to the current proposal to revamp the Reception area and restrict Public access I have restricted the report to that area.

Avalon House

Car parking

The closest public disabled car parking spaces are situated in Chesil Car Park. These are currently unsatisfactory and have been assessed separately. There is one parking space within the car park for Avalon House that could be used by prior appointment but this is not the correct size and the ramped access to the rear entrance is not in accordance with current best practice guidance.

Reception areas and lobbies

The corner of the glass partitions that form the interview rooms is not visually contrasting with the colour scheme in the reception area. A contrasting strip should be fitted to this corner to prevent visually impaired people from walking into it.

Internal doors

The interview rooms in the reception area are constructed from frameless glass screens with matching frameless glass doors. It would be difficult for a visually impaired person to distinguish the doors from the partitions. High contrast strips should be applied to the door surrounds in the partitions and to the leading edges, the top edge and both side edges of the doors.

There is no manifestation on the interview room walls or doors. This could lead to visually impaired people walking into the walls or closed doors. Contrasting manifestation should be provided on the walls and doors as described in BS 8300:2001.

Interview room 3 has no space alongside the leading edge of the door to allow wheelchair users to open the door. Because of the construction of the partitions they could not be altered. Renewal would be the only option. However, as there is a choice of three interview rooms, staff should be trained to allocate one of the other interview rooms to wheelchair users if they are unaccompanied.

The door handles on the interview rooms are not visually contrasting with the doors. This would cause problems for visually impaired people. The handles should be replaced.

The door closers on the interview room doors are too strong for people who have limited upper body strength. The opening force of the doors should be measured and the closers should be adjusted or renewed as necessary.

Alarms

There are no visual alarms to supplement the audible fire alarms. As this is a small office, this could be overcome by the implementation of a management strategy.

Lighting

No desk lamps have been provided for users who need localised lighting. These should be provided.

6 Middle Brook Street

External ramps

There is a small ramp outside the entrance door to 6 Middle Brook Street. It is approximately 400mm long with a very shallow incline.

The joints in the block paving that form this ramp are wider than 10mm and deeply recessed. This could be a hazard to people with wheelchairs, walking sticks or high-heeled shoes.

The joints in external paving should be repointed.

Entrance

Number 6 Middle Brook Street has only one public entrance.

The entrance door is a powered door. The door and its frame are dark brown as is the associated glazed screen. Both are installed in walls of dark brickwork that would make them difficult to distinguish for anyone who is visually impaired. The door should be distinguished from the screen by high contrast strips at the top, bottom and both sides of the door. The door and associated screen should be visually distinguishable from the surrounding brickwork.

The threshold to the entrance door projects at least 18mm above the finished floor level. This could pose a tripping hazard to users. Chamfered transition units should be fixed between the threshold and the floor.

Although the entrance door is adequately glazed to allow people each side of the door to see each other, notices have been stuck on the glass that obscures the view. All notices should be removed from the door.

The push pad door controls are positioned too high above floor level and too close to the leading edge of the door to be suitable for use by standing and seated users.

People walk into the door because there is an 'Automatic door' sign on the door and they think that it will be opened by a motion sensor. This sign should be removed.

The manifestation on the entrance door is not in accordance with published guidance. The door does, however, have a distinct perimeter framing and centre stile that renders the door visible for the time being. If the door is ever renewed a different pattern should be adopted that accords with BS 8300:2001.

A reflector has been fixed on the internal door guard that could constitute a hazard to anyone who walked into it. This reflector should be replaced.

Hyde Historic Resources Centre

Car Parking

Provide designated accessible parking for disabled people (See Legislative and Best Practice Support Notes) near the main entrances to Hyde Barn and Hyde House, with appropriate level routes between the spaces and the buildings.

Provide external signage to indicate the availability of accessible parking.

External Approach Routes

Ensure a strategy is developed and implemented to ensure the paths are well maintained and kept free of tripping and slipping hazards.

Remove external loose metal grate mat

Investigate the possibility, with the appropriate conservation bodies, of applying a contrasting nosing to the door step at the main entrance to Hyde House

Provide a temporary ramp to enable independent wheelchair users to gain access to the main entrance of Hyde House

Provide appropriate manifestation panels on the glazed panels of the entrance doors to Hyde Barn

Provide appropriate accessible signage to make the bell at the entrance to Hyde House clearly visible and available to a broad range of disabled visitors to summon assistance when required.

Reception/Admission Desk

Provide an appropriate induction loop at the reception counter to assist hearing impaired users.

Hyde House/ Barn circulation

Provide handrails and contrasting nosings on the treads of the steps leading onto the raised platform and the emergency exit in the Dickinson Room.

Remove loose coir mat at the foot of the stairs in Hyde Barn and provide a mat of different fibre that can be more easily passed over by a wheelchair user, which is either firmly fixed or ideally placed in a recessed mat well.

Relocate the fire extinguisher in the ground floor corridor of Hyde House so that it does not impede circulation for wheelchair users.

Level out the junction between the coir matting and carpet at the foot of the stairs in Hyde House.

Ensure that circulation routes, particularly in office and study areas and corridors are kept free of furniture and items that impede circulation or present potential tripping hazards.

Ensure accessible office space on the ground floor and appropriate assistance are available on occasions when disabled people cannot access meetings/resources located in inaccessible areas.

Investigate the possibility of adding additional handrails and contrasting nosings on steps and stairs throughout both buildings, prioritising those areas where members of the public are most likely to need access, or where there is a particular requirement for a member of staff.

Introduce more contrast onto the nosings and handrails of the main staircase in Hyde Barn and review lighting.

Ensure members of the public visiting either building are aware of emergency escape routes and other facilities that are accessible to disabled people.

Investigate the viability of providing lift access in Hyde Barn. Although this is likely to be a medium/longer term project, records of the process must be kept in case of a future challenge under the DDA.

Investigate the possibility of providing a platform lift down into the kiln area of the Exhibition Room and keep a record of the process. If this is not possible in the short/medium term alternative means of providing access to the collection displayed here must be provided.

Apply contrasting markings to the support beams in the library/records area to ensure they are clearly visible.

Emergency egress

Provide ramps that conform to the appropriate criteria at the emergency exit from the Potshed into the yard and from the yard onto the street to enable wheelchair access. The raised sill at the Potshed exit also needs to be lowered.

Apply appropriate manifestations to the glass panels in the door at the emergency exit from the Potshed into the yard.

Ensure appropriate procedures are in place to raise the awareness of hearing impaired users in an emergency situation.

Ensure appropriate information is available for disabled visitors to assess whether they are able to use emergency escape routes.

Ensure procedures are in place to ensure the safe evacuation of disabled visitors and that staff are fully aware of them and how to provide appropriate assistance if necessary.

Apply appropriate contrasting markings to indicate obstacles and the nosings of stair treads on emergency escape routes.

Ensure strategies are in place to provide access to collections and activities in accessible areas of the building when necessary and with appropriate assistance.

Ensure that task lighting is made available in study areas on request.

Investigate the provision of an induction loop in the Dickinson Room.

Ensure that an alternative means of accessing information regarding collections displayed in the kiln area of the Exhibition Room is made available.

Ensure labels and graphics are displayed in positions that are accessible to people with visual impairments and wheelchair users and are well contrasted against the background on which they are placed.

Ensure objects displayed in table cases are inclined towards the viewer so that they are accessible to wheelchair users and children.

Publicity/Communication

Ensure more relevant information is available for disabled users on the service's website so that they can plan their visit and assess how accessible the service is to them.

Develop a strategy that enables a quick response time to requests for information in alternative media.

Develop a policy to provide large print information sheets for all exhibits and publicity information and incorporate this into a forward strategy plan.

Ensure a strategy is in place to provide all information relating to exhibitions on audiotape if requested.

Investigate the provision of an induction loop at organised talks for visitors who are hard of hearing. It is vital that an audit trail of process is kept, as this will be an invaluable resource document if challenged under the Act for lack of appropriate or delayed provision.

Explore the possibility of providing a museum service Textphone service that could provide information for all the sites operated by the service.

Training

Ensure new staff attend a 'disability awareness' training event to provide them with the necessary skills to develop good customer care practices and are aware of how to provide appropriate assistance in emergency situations.

Westgate Museum

External Signage

Explore possibility of increasing directional & identification signage to the Westgate
Include clear directions & location map on website

Car Parking

Explore possibility of provision of designated parking space/dropping off point in Tower St with the appropriate authorities.
Include clear information on website & publicity literature re details of nearest parking & toilet facilities.

External Approach

Review content of sign at foot of steps to include more relevant information regarding the nature of the building & contents

Entrance to Museum and Chamber

Explore the possibility of applying contrasting nosings to steps
Consider the options outlined on page 21 to provide alternative means of making the collections available to people who cannot access the stairs to the upper floor.

Provide more information re the nature of the building & accessibility on publicity literature and website.

Investigate provision of a clearly signed, visibly distinct bell to summon assistance

Investigate the provision of more accessible door furniture.

Reception desk and sales point

Explore installation of loop system & record process
Ensure museum staff have received appropriate customer care training & are able to recognise & respond to needs of disabled visitors

Internal Circulation

Investigate provision of a runner or non-slip floor covering

Access to Roof

Provide contrasting markings to the raised doorsill at entrance to roof area
Replace & relocate signage to provide adequate warning of hazardous roof entrance & nature of roof area

The Roof Area

Introduce contrasting markings to edge of decking on gully at edge & steps to viewing platform
Provide more colour contrast to bench & steps

Emergency Egress

Ensure there is an appropriate evacuation policy & procedures for disabled people & that staff are fully conversant with it.

Displays & Information

Review labelling & printed information & produce in accessible format

Review labelling & printed information & produce in accessible format

Raise or incline labels towards viewer wherever possible

Consider provision of information sheets in large print & advertise their availability
(Information should also be available on disk)

Investigate development of an audio tour or provision of information on audiotape

Communication

Develop a strategy to enable quick response to requests for information in alternative media

Develop policy to improve display labelling & story boards & include in forward plan

Develop a policy to provide large print information for exhibits & publicity & incorporate in forward plan

Explore provision of audio guide

Consider provision of induction loop

Explore provision of a textphone

Explore possibility of developing a virtual tour & enhancement of the website

Training

Ensure staff have participated in a disability awareness event & have skills to develop good customer care practices for disabled people

Provide training in management of disabled visitors during emergency.

City Museum

Entrance

The entrance door is a frameless glass door in a matching glass screen. The door should be clearly differentiated from the screen by high-contrast strips at the top and along both sides.

The door closer is too strong.

Manifestation to door and screens should be provided.

A reflector has been fixed on the internal door guard that could constitute a hazard to anyone who walked into it. This reflector should be replaced.

Internal doors

The opening widths of one leaf of double doors vary between 525mm and 655mm (should be 750mm min.).

All internal doors are fitted with door closers that are too strong (although held open by magnetic catches except in an emergency).

The leading edges of the doors that are held open should be visually contrasting.

The door closer on the toilet cubicle is too strong.

Internal stairs

Visual contrast required on treads and risers to distinguish nosings

Alarms

There are no visual alarms to supplement the audible fire alarms.

Way finding

There are no signs, at any level, to direct people to the lift and other parts of the building.

River Park Leisure Centre

This a summary of the main issues only.

Priority 1

Highlighting of bollards,
Highlighting of stair nosings and manifestation of glass panels on staircases
Improvements to exit widths and level access emergency exits

Priority 2

Door closers to be adjusted to 20 Newton's
Alterations to provide a low level counter in reception
Provision of centre information in different formats
Improvement of existing accessible toilet facilities to meet current standards

Priority 3

Improve general signage throughout the site, in line with the "Sign Design Guide"
Non slip finishes to staircases
Review evacuation procedures an improvement of means of escape for people
Improve entrance barrier mat
New accessible changing, showering and toilet facilities in the dry changing areas.

Meadowside Leisure Centre

Approach, routes and street furniture

The only public transport link to Meadowside is a bus stop at the roundabout by the entrance to the Centre (approximately 200 metres away). Information should be provided on public transport for visitors to the building.

Signs are needed for orientation.

Name signs on building are inadequate.

External lighting is inadequate.

Bike stands do not contrast with surrounding paving.

Car parking

The disabled car parking spaces are situated in two areas of the Leisure Centre car park with two spaces being provided in each of the two areas.

The accessible bays are not signposted from the site entrance.

The designated bays are not large enough and are marked with the incorrect sign for disabled designation.

The designated bays obstruct the dropped kerbs adjacent to the upper area of disabled parking.

The cross fall on the access route from the lower area is too great.

There is no lighting by the upper area of parking and inadequate levels on the lower area.

Only four parking spaces provided in total. BS 8300:2001 requires 1 space for each disabled employee plus 6% of the total car parking capacity.

Entrance

Meadowside has one main entrance and one rear entrance that is used by groups of children and football clubs/groups.

Main entrance

The D-handle on the door is too small and the door closer is too strong.

The weather mat is a loose mat laid internally. This is a potential trip hazard.

Reflections on glass and low levels of lighting internally mean no clear view in from outside.

Rear entrance

There is a step up into the rear entrance door and the external paving is uneven in places (paviors dislodged).

Internal doors

The first floor door between the landing and the access corridors should have a vision panel put into it.

Self-closers on doors are too strong.

Internal stairs

Width of the staircase is only 780mm at lower level and 830mm at upper level. The width should be uniform throughout and at least 1200mm wide.

Nosings are not apparent by contrasting material on the tread and riser.

There is a projecting nosing of the incorrect profile.

Rise of all steps is too great at 200mm (should be 150mm to 170mm).

Handrail is too low at 890mm (should be 900mm).

Handrail is only 43mm from the wall (should be 60mm to 75mm).

Alarms

There are no visual alarms to supplement the audible fire alarms

Egress from 1st floor

An external Means of escape has been provided on the 1st floor however the refuge area for a wheel chair user is too near the doors used as exit doors. The doors should be made at least 1/2 hour fire-resisting and self closing. Investigations should be carried out to alter the internal layout of the building to improve the means of escape provision.

Car parks

General

BS 8300 suggests that 6% of parking spaces should be designated disabled.
Parking spaces should be to size specified in guidance which includes a safe area to the rear of vehicles.
Doors should be either swing free, powered or adjusted to an opening pressure of 20 Newton's
Signage and way marking should be upgraded to current best practice standards.

Chesil Street

Entrance should be brighter lit.
Better signage required.
Entrance paving to be re-laid to provide level or ramped access without cross falls and gaps of not more than 10mm

Brooks

Outline doors to provide colour and tonal contrast with the rest of the glass panels
Remove trip hazard barriers
Door to disabled lift should be powered.
Manifestation required in glass lift.

Friarsgate

Not surveyed as part of redevelopment

Tower Street

Not yet surveyed

Toilets

The Council provide a number of disabled "RADAR" key accessed Disabled toilets across the District of the toilets visited to date not one is up to the current standard of accessibility.
Issues range from simple items e.g. no handles on the doors, lack of sufficient level landing space, to more fundamental e.g. size of cubicle.
There is a concern that there is no provision of assistance alarms in the toilets.