

Report to St Matthews, Leamore and Birchills Local Neighbourhood Partnership

18th January, 2005

Physical Access Audits

This report provides information on improvements to buildings which are going to take place in St Matthews, Leamore and Birchills LNP to improve access for people with disabilities. These improvements have been identified as a result of detailed access audits which have taken place over recent months.

Background

Access Audits of Walsall Metropolitan Borough Council properties with public access have taken place in 2004. The purpose of the audits is to identify important actions required to meet some of the requirements of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 (DDA).

An access audit establishes how well a particular building performs in terms of access and ease of use by a wide range of potential users. This gives a “snapshot” of a building at one point in its life. As the starting point of an ongoing access plan, it is used to highlight areas of improvement.

Audits reports were sent to all schools at the beginning of September 2004. Reports for all other buildings are held by building managers and directorate representatives.

Information gained in access audits and issues identified at operational level can aid in producing plans that can ensure that access improvements are on-going and part of planned maintenance programmes. A Council-wide consistent approach will mean that access is improved in a planned and cost-effective way in all areas.

The Council has allocated capital resources over the next three years to make physical adjustments in accordance with the overall strategy for improving access to public buildings and the results of the audit has been used in planning suitable projects. The recommendations have been prioritised within each survey and do not necessarily have to be done all at once, but it is important that there is a long term plan for implementation, which would bring about the necessary improvements

to make it easier for disabled people to access the services provided in these premises.

For the year 2004/05 corporate £170,000 funding has been allocated for the high priority requirements. Work is underway in planning further improvement projects for the financial year 2005/06.

Proposals for Corporate finance allocation 2004/05

Potential projects have been prioritised using the following criteria:

The Building

- Is it offering a unique or crucial service?
- Is the building used or potentially will be used by disabled service users?
- Is it the Council's intention to continue to use it for this service?

The adjustment

- Is it audit priority 1 or 2 on the audit?
- Is it the best reasonable adjustment?

Funding

- Is it in Band C (£500 or above), except for adjustments on a Council wide basis e.g. induction loops.
- Does it support other Council initiatives?
- Is this the only funding available to do this work?

The Work

- Can the work be done in this financial year?
- Can it proceed without planning permission?

Details of the projects in this LNP are contained in the attached schedule

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Schedule

Building	Action
Chuckery Office, Tantara Street	Lower Threshold Install counter induction loop