

Community Organisation, Leisure & Culture Scrutiny & Performance Panel

Strategic Review of Disability Working Group Report

Spring 2005

CHAIRMAN'S FOREWORD

Those of us unaffected by a disability can only imagine how it impacts on their lives. With the introduction of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995, which introduced measures aimed at ending the discrimination which many disabled people face, in October 2004, the Community Organisation Leisure and Culture Scrutiny and Performance panel made it one of its key scrutiny issues in the 2004-5 scrutiny year. So much so, that a five member scrutiny working group was formed to look, in depth, at how Walsall MBC is dealing with the requirements of the new act.

We are pleased to present the final report of the Strategic Review of Disability working group.

We would like to thank everyone who contributed to the scrutiny and in particular, the disabled people or groups of disabled people and specialist advisors for their voluntary attendance and input into the work of the group. We feel that there have been mutual benefits for all involved and a deeper understanding gained of the issues relating to disability.

Finally, we are grateful to the members of the Scrutiny Panel Working Group, lead officers and the Scrutiny Support Team for their commitment and hard work during this exercise.

Councillor Chris Towe



Chairman of Community Organisation Leisure and Culture scrutiny and performance panel

LEAD MEMBERS COMMENTS

All Members of this work group have participated in meetings with disabled groups, employees, managers and service advisors and have taken part in a number of visits to really establish how disabled people in the community perceive the Council approach to disability, to find out if the Council approach is working and to encourage participation from service users.

Members were keen to scrutinise the implementation and see action plans for the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) by the Council and to ensure that all council services are accessible or work planned to make them accessible to everyone in our community as soon as possible. The members wanted to see and ensure that concrete actions were being taken by Walsall council to meet DDA requirements.

Members have listened to what the service users want, to make the strategy and the services provision better and to meet the needs of all service users and to bring the priorities set out in the Council vision into reality.

We feel that a better understanding of disability issues has been gained and a relationship has been made between members and service user groups, which has brought contentious issues to the attention of officers. Furthermore, communication between council and disability groups has improved due to visiting and meeting groups working in the disability arena.

On behalf of the working group I would like to thank the following organisations for their participation and their honesty during this review:

Disabled Employees Network
Walsall Disability Forum
Physical and Sensory impairment Board
Job Centre Plus Disability Advisors

Councillor Mohammed Arif



**Lead member
Strategic Review of Disability work group**

MEMBERS OF THE COMMUNITY ORGANISATION, LEISURE AND CULTURE SCRUTINY AND PERFORMANCE PANEL

Councillor Chris Towe (Chair)
Councillor Kath Phillips (Vice-Chair)
Councillor Mohammed Arif
Councillor Clive Ault
Councillor Leslie Beeley
Councillor Joan Beilby
Councillor Paul Bott
Councillor Rose Burley
Councillor Val Woodruff

MEMBERS OF THE STRATEGIC REVIEW OF DISABILITY WORKING GROUP

The members of the Strategic Review of Disability working group consist of selected members from the Community Organisation, Leisure and Culture Scrutiny and Performance Panel.

Councillor K Phillips
Councillor J Cook
Councillor M Arif
Councillor P Bott
Councillor L Beeley

Contact Officers

Champion:

Karen Adderley
01922 652058
adderleyk@walsall.gov.uk
Head of Corporate Support

Lead Officers:

Lisa Koc
01922 653505
kocl@walsall.gov.uk
Employment Matters

Sue Fox
01922 652010
foxs@walsall.gov.uk
Access/Service Delivery
Matters

Scrutiny Support:

Deb Breedon
01922 652074
breedond@walsall.gov.uk
Scrutiny Officer

Katherine Morris
01922 652080
morriska@walsall.gov.uk
Scrutiny Support Officer



Contents

1	INTRODUCTION - BACKGROUND	5
2	LEGAL REQUIREMENTS	6
3	REMIT OF WORKING GROUP	8
4	BACKGROUND	10
5	RESEARCH BACKGROUND INFORMATION	11
6	WORK UNDERTAKEN	12
7	EVIDENCE CONSIDERED	13
8	FINDINGS	14
9	RECOMMENDATIONS	17
	APPENDIX 1: TABLE OF EVIDENCE	19
	APPENDIX 2: LIST OF DOCUMENTS AND INFORMATION CONSIDERED BY THE STRATEGIC REVIEW OF DISABILITY WORKING GROUP	21
	APPENDIX 3: SCHEDULE OF WORKING GROUP ACTIVITY	22

1 Introduction - Background

1.1 Disability is a consequence of environmental, social and attitudinal barriers that prevent many people from maximum participation in society.

There are about 10 million adults in Britain who have a disability:

- Some people have more than one disability
- Some people have disabilities that cannot be seen
- The popular perception that people with disabilities always use wheelchairs is inaccurate

The Disability Rights Commission's vision and our aim as Walsall Council is:

“A society where all disabled people can participate fully as equal citizens”

1.2 The whole range of Council services are important for disabled people. From October 2004, when Part 3 of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 came fully into force, all local authorities had to consider making "reasonable adjustments" to ensure disabled people have equal access to services.

1.3 At the start of the municipal year 2004-5, April 2004, members of the scrutiny panel were keen to review a range of disability issues as part of the scrutiny work programme for the year and agreed to establish a work group to carry out a strategic review of disability

2 Legal Requirements

2.1 The main legislative provisions of the Local Government Act 2000 in relation to scrutiny empowers overview and scrutiny panels and their members to review and/or scrutinise decisions made by cabinet and council officers in relation to key decisions, actions carried out within the remit of the council and the performance of the council in relation to targets and policy objectives.

2.2 Walsall MBC commits to a vision which is unique and special to Walsall because it is based on the views, wishes and needs of local people. It is shared and supported by our partners, our staff and our members and is underpinned by targeted actions to provide a firm foundation for the future – for the borough and for the council. The vision:

- Focuses the efforts of all the employees of the council on the issues that matter to citizens
- Ensures we put resources firmly behind their priorities
- Strengthens our joint working with our partners to deliver the overall community strategy for the borough
- Enables local people and our partners to judge how well we are doing and whether we are achieving our objectives.

The vision priorities are:-

- 1 Ensure a clean and green borough
- 2 Make it easier for people to get around
- 3 Ensure all people are safe and secure
- 4 Make our schools great
- 5 Make Walsall a healthy and caring place
- 6 Encourage everyone to feel proud of Walsall
- 7 Make it easier to access local services
- 8 Strengthen the local economy
- 9 Listen to what local people want
- 10 Transform Walsall into an excellent local authority

2.3 The Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) was passed in 1995 to end the discrimination that many disabled people face. It protects disabled people in:

- employment
- access to goods, facilities and services
- the management, buying or renting of land or property

A crucial part of the DDA is that it is unlawful for employers to discriminate against current or prospective employees with disabilities. Council is required to act in a fair and common sense way. This could mean that we have to make “reasonable adjustments” so that a disabled person is not put at a substantial disadvantage because of their disability.

- 2.4 The whole range of Council services is important for disabled people. From October 2004, when Part 3 of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 came fully into force, all local authorities had to consider making "reasonable adjustments to physical barriers" to ensure disabled people have equal access to services.
- 2.5 Issues highlighted in report to the Community Organisation Leisure and Culture Scrutiny and Performance Panel were identified by members as issues that impacted on the vision priorities, particularly, making Walsall a healthy and caring place and of making it easier to access local services, and members agreed that it should be scrutinised as part of the work programme for 2004-5.
- 2.6 This scrutiny has been carried out in accordance with the rules of procedure arrangements detailed in part 4 of the constitution of Walsall Metropolitan Borough Council (amended September 2003).

3 Remit of Working Group

3.1 The key areas of focus were identified as:

1. Disability in Employment – through the evaluation of the council's current performance and the scrutinisation of council recruitment practices
2. Disability and Communications – Initial discussions identified some provision was being made in respect of providing alternative formats or additional technology to enable effective communication / consultation with people with disabilities.
3. Physical Access to Services – to be undertaken through the review of the Physical Access Audit (which has been commissioned by the Council) through focusing upon a sample of establishments, in respect of progress made since the audit.

The draft work programme was agreed by panel members several exercises were undertaken to review disability issues within the Borough of Walsall.

3.2 At the first meeting of the working group members further considered the issues relating to disability and agreed desired outcomes, identifying primary and secondary objectives:

Primary Objective:

1. Physical Access to Services – to identify that the Council and its borough providers are effectively responding to the law in terms of meeting DDA Legislation on Physical Access, and that the level of progress made (in terms of effective action planning) is appropriate and meaningful.
2. Disability in Employment – to ascertain why the council's performance in recruiting employees with a disability, is recorded at less than 1%, and to identify what barriers or challenges potential and existing employees are faced with.

Secondary Objective:

Linked to Primary Objective 1 – Members voiced concerns regarding the issue of 'dropped kerbs'. It was unclear as to what the council's policy was in respect of this provision and its impact upon people with disabilities within the borough. It was proposed that 'dropped kerbs' be considered as supplementary to any establishment/facility reviews.

The review will also cover the council's responsibilities as an employer as well as a provider of services.

4 Background

- 4.1 Issues highlighted in report to the Community Organisation Leisure and Culture Scrutiny and Performance Panel were identified by members as issues that impacted on the vision priorities, particularly, making Walsall a healthy and caring place and of making it easier to access local services, and members agreed that it should be scrutinised as part of the work programme for 2004-5. Accordingly a work group was set up and the work programme set.
- 4.2 In addition to the Councils own duties set out in legislation, Councils play a significant role in determining whether other service providers can carry out their duties; such as regulating areas like ramps encroaching on pavements and the positioning of dropped kerbs. Service providers often look to local authorities for advice and leadership. The Councils access officer is the main point of contact for advice and leadership and she also represents the Council at meetings with partner organisations and disabled people's groups.
- 4.3 The Councils Human Resource section also has a large part to play in ensuring that legislative requirements are met. They ensure that job adverts are placed in the widest possible range of publications and centres where disabled people are likely to access them. In addition they ensure that vacancy bulletins are available in and applications can be made in a variety of different formats. The Councils Redeployment Officer also ensures as far as is reasonably practicable that disabled people maintain their employment if their condition worsens or they acquire a disability.
- 4.4 At the start of the review 0.8% of staff employed at Walsall MBC declared that they had a disability. As a result of a questionnaire being circulated to all staff asking them to update their personal details, 1.7% of staff had declared they had a disability, exceeding the previous target of 1.5%.
- 4.5 In relation to appointments for the financial year 03/04; it was noted that whilst disabled people had a similar chance as non-disabled people of being short listed, they had a significantly lower chance of being appointed.
- 4.6 In 2004/5 the percentage of the top 5% of earners that have declared a disability is 2.3%. This includes anyone above a salary of £33,009. This figure is calculated in FTE's (full time equivalents and not bodies).

5 Research Background Information

- 5.1 The Act of Parliament which introduced and provided a means of enforcing rights preventing discrimination against disabled people: - [The Disability Discrimination Act 1995](#).
- 5.2 Many of Government's policies and programmes are designed specifically for disabled people. You can find more information on [New Deal for Disabled People](#).
- 5.3 The [Jobcentre Plus](#) website has special sections devoted to disabled people. There you can find out more about Government assistance for disabled people in employment including the [Access to Work](#) scheme.
- 5.4 Unemployed disabled people may need special help to learn new skills. For some people it's better to do this away from home. Consult this list to make contact with [residential training colleges](#) across the UK.
- 5.5 The [Special Educational Needs and Disability Act 2001](#) improved the standard of education for children with Special Educational Needs and bring's access to education within the remit of the Disability Discrimination Act making it unlawful for education providers to discriminate against disabled pupils, students and adult learners. In addition, local education authorities and schools will be under a duty to plan to increase progressively the accessibility of schools to disabled pupils. The Disability Provisions of this act came into force in September 2002.

6 Work Undertaken

- 6.1 As detailed in the draft work programme, panel members have received information from officers at panel and the work group have received additional information at working group meetings and fed back to the panel. Members of the work group have carried out several exercises to review disability issues within the Borough of Walsall and spoken to a number of service users to establish their perception of current and future service provision.
- 6.2 The working group met a total of 3 times on the following dates; 14 October 2004, 1 December 2004 and 19 January 2005, in addition to which the work group members individually carried out research, visits to sites and attended meetings both as observers and as participant's. The work group activities are set out below:-
- i) The members of the panel attended meetings of the Disability Employees Network (DEN).
 - ii) The members of the panel invited DEN members to undertake a mystery shopper exercise where they would try to obtain several pieces of information in a variety of formats from various council departments. Two responses have been received to date.
 - iii) The members of the panel requested a survey of text phones, to scrutinise their availability and effectiveness. Councillor C Ault (panel member) volunteered his son, Mr Michael Ault to carry out the survey on behalf of the panel as he has a hearing impairment (appendix c).
 - iv) As identified on the work programme for the panel, members wished to conduct visits to a sample of public facilities in the borough to establish whether the council and its borough providers are effectively responding to the law in terms of the DDA legislation on physical access.

The sites identified were:

1. The Council House
2. The Gala Baths
3. Willenhall Market Traders Toilets
4. Blue Coat CE Performing Arts Specialist College
5. Rough Hay Primary School
6. The Citizens Advice Bureau.

For the sites that responded to the members' requests, visits were arranged and members were provided with copies of the audit inspections as background information.

7 Evidence Considered

7.1 This Working Group has taken evidence from the following:

- Strategic Review of Disability Issues Report presented to members on 16 September 2004
- Presentation from Lisa Koc, Human Resources, on Disability and Employment.
- Presentation from Sue Fox, Access Officer, on findings of the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) access audit report.
- Disabled Employee Network (DEN) members, mystery shopping exercise
- Member visits to several local authorities sites in respect of the access audit reports
- Text Phone exercise
- Good practices from other authorities
- Evidence from media articles in the local press.

7.2 Appendix 1 summarises the evidence considered by the working group, appendix 2 lists the documents and information considered by the working group and appendix 3 details the schedule of the working group activity.

8 Findings

8.1 Disability in Employment:

- a) It is suspected that not all disabled employees and job applicants declare their disability. This makes it hard to ensure they receive all the assistance they need to compete effectively for jobs and undertake their job to the best of their ability. This could also be extended to accessing information.
- b) Disability groups welcomed the consultation which has taken place and the interaction with the Council. It gave them the opportunity to be open and honest and assist the Council to improve services for disabled people.
- c) A report to the Executive Management Team led to the creation of the post of Assistant Recruitment Officer. This dedicated resource and need for a positive action scheme was identified. At least six supernumerary posts will be filled at any one time. Human resources have appointed a scheme leader and are working with Jobcentre Plus on issues such as an appropriate referral system, accessing job introduction monies and access to work funding.
- d) Benefits may be a barrier to moving into employment.
- e) Welfare to Work programme. A new post of Co-ordinator has been established to develop a WTW strategy for the Council including working across the council and the borough improving the employment chances of people who have a disability.
- f) Disability scheme is a statutory requirement and will ensure reporting annually making it visible and accountable.
- g) Walsall Council has the 'two tick' scheme which guarantees interviews for disabled people if they meet the minimum requirements for a job. All managers need to understand what this means in practice i.e., what their responsibilities are.
- h) There is difficulty in attracting new staff with disabilities and there is work to be done to find out what the underlying issues are.
- i) Retention of staff with disabilities in the workplace is good i.e., facilitating the redeployment of people who become disabled whilst in employment.

- j) Managers training has taken place and information made available, but it was felt that the training needs to be extended and ongoing because putting the schemes into action and the success of the schemes is down to individual managers.
- k) Changes and improvements have taken place to the way in which we support disabled job seekers/employees but sadly the statistics are not yet reflecting the improvements which is disappointing.

8.2 Disability and Communications:

Throughout the review members have recognised that there are many factors affecting a persons ability to communicate, depending on the level and type of disability and that there is a real need to ensure effective alternative formats are available for all members of the community and workforce. Members felt the best way to find out what we do was by going out and trying what is available through mystery shopping.


Members summarised the findings from the mystery shopping exercises which focused on communication:

- a) Text Phones - the mystery shopping exercise identified a poor response to text phones calls made to a range of Council service areas. The need for training of one or more people responsible for each textphone, was identified as an immediate action. Other issues were accessibility; awareness; alternative formats; TextBox computer technology and linking to community alarms.
- b) Different Formats- The exercise was carried out by members of Disabled Employee Network (DEN) and recognised that the responses for information in different formats were carried out in different ways. They did identify inconsistencies in the responses to the requests for information and that the fact that there was no central point to contact, no quality control and a lack of funding may account for the variety of responses.

8.3 Physical Access to Services:

Members made visits to Council premises and highlighted a number of issues and concerns from the visits and subsequent information to the work group:-

- a) The action plans identified major and minor works in the buildings visited. Quick fixes that could be carried out at



little or no additional cost and major adjustments which would require additional funding and planning permission. Members raised concerns that it was not clear where the responsibility for carry out the actions lay and that the building managers did not seem to be taking responsibility for the action plan.

- b) Members were pleased with the Gala baths level of care and facilities for guide dogs for the blind.
- c) Concerns were made about the lack of applications for funding to carry out the requirements of access audits from the corporate budget for that purpose.


9 Recommendations

9.1 Disability in Employment:

1. The supernumerary scheme be re-launched by the HR Department. Funding be sought to increase the number of places on the scheme in the financial year 2006/7.
2. Training for managers be expanded and ongoing to further increase managers awareness of disability issues in order to increase the number of disabled employees employed by the authority.
3. A joint working group be established to include organisations such as WMBC, WHG, Serco, Manor Hospital and the Police to share best practice and to further increase the opportunities for disabled people in the borough.
4. That at the Job Shop live event on 23 July 2005 officers seek to establish the public's perception and particularly the perception of disabled people of barriers against accessing employment with the Council.
5. Approach the Local Strategic Partnership to seek funding to invite a professional into the LNP's disability focus group meetings to facilitate a discussion in order to obtain a true picture of the public's perception of barriers that exist in accessing employment.

9.2 Disability and Communications:

6. Reminder guidance be distributed to all textphone services within the Council, ensuring staff are able to use the systems. Introduction of TexBox as a superior system.
7. That Cabinet be requested to agree that officers actively consider the use of video phone technology to link the council services and service users in the borough and in doing so request that officers explore government funding opportunity and how other authorities use video phone technology.
8. To recommend that the scrutiny panel receive an overview of the findings of the report re: Interpretation and Translation service prior to it being presented to Cabinet to ensure the recommendations provide a consistent quality of provision and sufficient information.

- 
9. A voluntary based database be created to capture disabled employees' requirements relating to the format of information passed to them, working with the Disabled Employees Network.

9.3 Physical Access to Services:

10. That all Physical Access work books be submitted to officers in September 2005 and a report detailing the progress made be submitted to Community Organisation panel at its meeting 8 December 2005.
11. That a facilities manager be identified for each of the authority's buildings.
12. That Cabinet note the need for more urgent action to ensure the allocation of the funding that had been made available and request an explanation and the reasons why the funds were not applied for originally be identified and addressed.
13. Confirmation that the matter of Facilities Management is appropriately addressed by the Putting the Citizen First Partnership.
14. A physical access audit summary report including details of the process for monitoring schools access plans be requested from Education Walsall and that a copy be provided to the Chairman of the Children's Services and Lifelong Learning Scrutiny and Performance Panel.
15. That a monitoring and tracking system be created to monitor the outcomes of the audit and that action is being taken on these outcomes.

Appendix 1: Table of Evidence

Summary of evidence considered

Theme	Evidence	Context
Disability in Employment	Presentation	Lisa Koc gave a presentation to the Community Organisation Leisure and Culture Scrutiny and Performance Panel outlining the current policies and performance of the Council in relation to employment of disabled staff.
Disability in Employment	Consultation	Members attended the Disabled Employee Network (DEN) on four occasions. Appendix 4 details minutes of these meetings.
Disability in Employment	Consultation	Service Managers and representatives from JCP Plus attended a meeting of the working group on 1 st Dec 2004 to discuss issues facing disabled employees
Disability and Communications	Mystery Shopper exercise	Members of DEN carried out five mystery shopper exercises. This did not include any front line services
Disability and Communications	Text phone exercise	Twenty separate telephone numbers were dialled in the exercise by one person during one afternoon.

Disability and Communications	Consultation	Select members from the working group attended the Disability Forum on 8 th March and 17 th May 2005 to discuss WMBC as a service provider for disabled people.
Disability and Communications	Consultation	Select members from the working group attended the Physical and Sensory Impairment Board on 22 nd March 2005 to discuss WMBC as a service provider for disabled people.
Physical Access to Services	Presentation	Sue Fox gave a presentation to the Community Organisation Leisure and Culture Scrutiny and Performance Panel detailing an overview of the findings of a recent Physical access audit.
Physical Access to Services	Site visits	Members carried out site visits to; The Gala Baths The Citizens Advice Bureau Rough Hay Primary School

Appendix 2: List of Documents and Information Considered by the Strategic Review of Disability Working Group

(available on request)

Documents

1. Audit Summary report for Willenhall Market Traders Toilets
2. Audit Summary report for Rough Hay Primary School
3. Audit Summary report for Citizens Advice Bureau
4. Audit Summary report for Walsall Gala Baths
5. Minutes of the Strategic Review of Disability Working Group from 14 October 2004.
6. Minutes of the Strategic Review of Disability Working Group from 1 December 2004.
7. Minutes of the Strategic Review of Disability Working Group from 19 January 2005.
8. Proforma of the Strategic Review of Disability Working Group from 14 October 2004.
9. 'Text Phone Exercise' documentation.
10. 'Mystery Shopper Exercise' documentation.
11. Minutes from Disabled Employee Network meetings attended by the Scrutiny members on 8 December 2004, 19 January 2005, 2 March 2005, 13 April 2005.
12. Analysis of disabled employees by ethnicity by directorate, provided by Lisa Koc, Human Resources.
13. Presentation, Disability and Employment : An Overview, by Lisa Koc, Human Resources
14. The Disability Discrimination Act 1995, Line Managers RS Guide November 2004.

Appendix 3: Schedule of Working Group Activity

16 September 2004 – Scrutiny & Performance Panel

At the meeting of the Community Organisation, Leisure and Culture Scrutiny and Performance Panel members received a report detailing the background and suggested options for conducting a strategic review of disability issues within the council. Members also agreed the remit of the review and resolved to set up a working group called the 'Strategic Review of Disability Working Group'.

14 October 2004 – Working Group

The working group produced a pro-forma scoping the work of the group.

27 October 2004 - Scrutiny & Performance Panel

The panel received a presentation from Lisa Koc, Human Resources, who outlined the current policies and performance on the council in relation to employment of disabled staff.

1 December 2004 – Working Group

Members of the group met with Service Managers from the Authority and disability advisors from job centre plus to discuss the needs of disabled employees and opportunities of partner working and funding to support disabled employees

9 December 2004 - Scrutiny & Performance Panel

The panel heard an update on the work of the Strategic Review of Disability Working Group from Councillor Kath Phillips. The panel were advised that members were attending and participating in meetings of the Disabled Employee Network (DEN).

19 January 2005 –Working Group (Disability & Communication Evidence)

DEN members attended the working group meeting to join discussions from an employee point of view.

19 January 2005 – DEN Meeting, *following the work group* (Disability & Communication Evidence and Disability in Employment Evidence)

DEN members agreed to undertake a mystery shopper exercise on behalf of the work group to check out the availability of council information available to the public in a variety of formats.

21 January 2005 – Disability & Communication Evidence

A mystery shopping exercise was undertaken, a text phone exercise on behalf of the working group to evaluate the response. The evidence gathering was based on the work of an individual and is a sample of his experience.

27 January 2005 - Scrutiny & Performance Panel

The panel received a presentation from Sue Fox, Access Officer, giving an overview of the findings of the recent Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) access audit findings. As a result of which it was agreed it was necessary to select a range of sites to visit and see for themselves what actions were being taken in response to the audit.

8 February - 21 February 2005 – Physical Access to Services Evidence

Members undertook site visits to local council buildings.

23 February 2005 - Scrutiny & Performance Panel

The panel received an update from Councillor Mohammed Arif on the progress of the working group and the concerns raised at recent meetings with service users.

8 March 2005 - Disability & Communication Evidence

Members of the working group attended the Disability Forum meeting to ask for feedback on Walsall MBC as a supplier of services to disabled people.

22 March 2005 - Disability & Communication Evidence

Members of the working group attended the Physical and Sensory Impairment Board to discuss Walsall MBC as an employer of disabled people.

17 May 2005 - Disability forum meeting. Working group members were in attendance. A number of key issues were raised especially relating to car parking in the town centre and members of the work group fed this back.

5th July 2005 – Working Group

The working group met to discuss their findings and began collating information for the final report.

**Community Organisation, Leisure & Culture Scrutiny & Performance Panel - Strategic Review of Disability Working Group
Report - Spring 2005**

Ref no	<u>Recommendations</u>	Action By	Date
	Disability in Employment:		
1	The supernumerary scheme be re-launched by the HR Department. Funding be sought to increase the number of places on the scheme in the financial year 2006/7	Lisa Koc Lisa Koc	Oct. 05 Dec 05
2	Training for managers be expanded and ongoing to further increase managers awareness of disability issues in order to increase the number of disabled employees employed by the authority.	Lisa Koc/ OD Team	Ongoing
3	A joint working group be established to include organisations such as WMBC, WHG, Serco, Manor Hospital and the Police to share best practice and to further increase the opportunities for disabled people in the borough.	Welfare to Work Manager	Dec 05
4	That at the Job Shop live event on 23 July 2005 officers seek to establish the public's perception and particularly the perception of disabled people of barriers against accessing employment with the Council.	Lisa Koc	Results by end Aug, 05
5	Approach the Local Strategic Partnership to seek funding to invite a professional into the LNP's disability focus group meetings to facilitate a discussion in order to obtain a true picture of the public's perception of barriers that exist in accessing employment.	Sue Fox / Neighbourhood Partnership Team	Dec 05

	Disability and Communications:		
6	Reminder guidance be distributed to all textphone services within the Council, ensuring staff are able to use the systems. Introduction of TexBox as a superior system.	Equality & Diversity	Sep 05
7	That Cabinet be requested to agree that officers actively consider the use of video phone technology to link the council services and service users in the borough and in doing so request that officers explore government funding opportunity and how other authorities use video phone technology	EGov	On-going
8	To recommend that the scrutiny panel receive an overview of the findings of the report re: Interpretation and Translation service prior to it being presented to Cabinet to ensure the recommendations provide a consistent quality of provision and sufficient information	Equality & Diversity	Sep 05
9	A voluntary based database be created to capture disabled employees' requirements relating to the format of information passed to them, working with the Disabled Employees Network.	HR / Equality & Diversity	Oct 05

	Physical Access to Services:		
10	That all Physical Access work books be submitted to officers in September 2005 and a report detailing the progress made be submitted to Community Organisation panel at its meeting 8 December 2005.	Corporate Property Group	Dec 05
11	That a facilities manager be identified for each of the authority's buildings	Establishments	On-going
12	That Cabinet note the need for more urgent action to ensure the allocation of the funding that had been made available and request an explanation and the reasons why the funds were not applied for originally be identified and addressed.	Corporate Property Group	Dec 05
13	Confirmation that the matter of Facilities Management is appropriately addressed by the Putting the Citizen First Partnership.	Corporate Property Group	Dec 05
14	A physical access audit summary report including details of the process for monitoring schools access plans be requested from Education Walsall and that a copy be provided to the Chairman of the Children's Services and Lifelong Learning Scrutiny and Performance Panel.	Education Walsall	Oct 05
15	That a monitoring and tracking system be created to monitor the outcomes of the audit and that action is being taken on these outcomes.	Corporate Property Group	Sep 05