

Southampton Accessibility Forum

Minutes from 25th January 2023 (Inaugural Meeting)

Attending:

- Councillor Eamonn Keogh – Forum Chair, Cabinet Member for Transport at Southampton City Council
- Wade Holmes - Service Manager for Intergrated Transport, Southampton City Council
- Ruth Magennis - Project Lead for Communities, Sustainable Transport, Southampton City Council
- Dale Hardstaff - Transport Planner, Transport, Southampton City Council
- Martina Olley - Project Manager for Transforming Cities and Integrated Transport, Southampton City Council
- Councillor Jeremy Moulton - elected representative for Millbrook and shadow spokesperson for Transport
- Alex Iles – Representing Mencap, supporting people with learning disabilities and their carers
- Alistair Chaplin - Southampton Street Space, campaign group share street space more equally not just cars
- Andy Scorer - carer and part of the Carers Partnership Board, Integrated Commissioning Board
- Barbara Hancock - Harefield Bus Campaign
- Iain Loynes – Chief Executive of SPECTRUM, helping disabled people who live independently
- David Livermore - campaigning for better access in countryside and city as part of Spectrum. Full time wheelchair user and has a wheelchair accessible vehicle.
- David McKeigue - Chair of Open Sight Hampshire
- Jackie Powers - Chief Exec of Southampton Sight
- Jane Freeland - member of Carers Partnership Board and Carers Steering Group. Been involved with the council on developing and implementing the carers strategy
- Jemma Brown - not representing a group but brings awareness to disability access in the city through social media. Is sight impaired, uses a wheelchair at times and is autistic, so has varying mobility. Declaring also that she is an officer for the Women's Equality Party.
- Joe Jenness - Project Lead for SOLinked - concerned about the lack of transport options which stops people from taking part in activities.
- John Sanders - Southampton Heritage Federation – interested to see how accessibility can be improved without affecting heritage. Both he and wife are mobility impaired and want to see accessible toilets to help facilitate trips out.
- Lyn Brayshaw - Chair of Southampton Cycling Campaign.
- Natalie Martin - representing Sustrans, the charity making it easier for people to walk and wheel.
- Patricia Moody – Voiceability and facilitates for Busy People, representing people with learning difficulties / disability.
- Joanna Sparks – Rehabilitation Vision Specialist for Southampton City Council and Solent NHS
- Stephen Manion - Chief Exec of Go! Southampton
- Hannah Coombs - formerly an elected member for Southampton City Council
- Chris Kerrison - Gosport Access Group, Hampshire County Councillor, Governor for disability on the hospital trust.

Terms of Reference:

- Recommendation from Southampton City Council Scrutiny Inquiry to set up a Disability Access Forum – this forum is to part fulfil this recommendation and to move forward the transport access concerns raised through the Inquiry.
- Initial idea for the forum is that the Integrated Transport Team have planners and urban designers and they design to set standards. They walk and wheel but do not have the disability insights. This group is great with lots of expertise on it.
- People to represent their area, what they know best. We want to tap into that experience.
- We have upped our public consultation. We are listening.
- We want to make our transport as inclusive as possible.
- Team will prepare plans and reach out before starting or progressing scheme designs
- Forum to point out issues we are not aware of.

Minor works requests:

- There will be budget from accessibility funding
- Requests sent through can be determined by the forum to formulate a top 10 / 20 priority list per fiscal year.
- Website and reporting not yet set up – **Action:** Ruth to email once it is ready
- Can report issues round city such as dropped kerbs missing or lack of disabled parking
- Jemma highlighted that Southampton City Council need to look at processes and platforms used for consultation. Need to look at how it is presented. Needs text-based explanation of every image within every consultation!
- David said that on-street parking spaces are designed for hatchbacks, but not for unloading wheelchairs. Most disabled spaces are truncated by kerbs or clutter, having to wheelchair along the road to find nearest dropped kerb which is dangerous.
- **Response from Wade Holmes:** Southampton City Council reached out to Spectrum on the Bedford Place scheme, to improve disabled car parking in particular.
Action: Wade Holmes to confirm who the transport team reached out to.
Response on Bedford Place parking and dropped kerbs: Scheme has provided an additional on-street disabled parking bay (8m in length). While this does not fully address concerns the group have about parking parallel to the kerb, all available carriageway space has been allocated to it. It is also protected by kerb buildouts either end, so there is no interface with other parked vehicles.
- Barbara said that no bus user group exists city-wide, contrary to cycle group. Manager of Bluestar met with her group, informed them about their drivers' disability awareness group.
Response from Councillor Keogh: there will be a bus forum going forward. There will be a place for user groups.
Response from Wade Holmes: Park of the BSIP (Bus Service Improvement Plan) is to properly consult with users, so there is a cross over between bus and accessibility forums here.
- Jon Sanders raised concern that there are lots of people that are not involved in groups or who struggle to use computers/IT.
Response from Wade Holmes: raise in this forum if we do not reach groups.
- David highlighted that Bluestar promotional materials about the bus accessibility show a mum who used up the disabled space, and this sends wrong message as disabled users have priority.

Micro-mobility (Brock Rogers presenting)

- Brock Rogers is the Micromobility Manager for the Future Transport Zone works, taking care of both the Voi e-scooter rental scheme and the Beryl Bike rental scheme across Southampton, Portsmouth and the Isle of Wight.
- Brock progressed without slides – noted for future meetings to make sure all speakers share slides in advance.
- E-scooter trial in place until May 2024. Beryl bike scheme with e-bike provision will be rolled out further in the spring to cover wider geographical area.
- Plans for a Solent-wide micro-mobility forum to address accessibility challenges - first meeting scheduled for March 2023 and occurring quarterly after this.
- Beryl has a commitment to introduce some adapted bikes.
- It was also expressed by group that the height of e-scooters: should be lower to make them more accessible.
- Brock also confirmed that geo-location technology can be used to report badly parked scooters or pavement riding by reporting the location of the incident and the time – link here: [Voi Scooters - Report a Voi](#)
- **Question from Cllr Keogh:** Future Mobility Conference had one session on Leicester and their signage. Can we follow up on any learning from their best practice? **Ruth and Brock to action.**

Next Steps and Actions:

- Meet every 3 months – suggestion from the proposed terms of reference.
- Jon Sanders asked if every 3 months enough frequency?
- **Response from Cllr Keogh:** can look at frequency, see how we go. Established forum that will go forward.
- David suggested monthly meetings, to progress issues, lower kerbs should be the biggest priority.

- Suggestion from the council is that the quarterly meetings are more an opportunity to report progress, and officers can meet with representatives in between forum meetings.
- Wade suggested that bus issues are covered in the next forum meeting – will be inviting officers who can speak about the Bus Improvement Plan and the Bus Partnership to be established with bus providers.

AOB:

- David and Ian from Spectrum find evening meetings very difficult.
- Need to understand the most critical areas such as delivery vans using disabled spaces.
- Ian pointed out that accessibility inquiry already identified lots of issues. One of the biggest issues is access to buildings. Can this be covered?
- **Response from Councillor Keogh:** this is currently outside the remit of this forum. Local Plan consultation does cover this.
- **Action:** Councillor Keogh to message the relevant cabinet member.
- **Response from Ruth Magennis:** it was felt to bring forward the work done by Southampton City Council officers to make transport schemes and public realm schemes more accessible now, with other issues being addressed by other departments as the forum becomes more established – this is needed to fully realise the recommendations of the Accessibility Inquiry
- Jemma asked if we could audit how many disabled people are represented on this forum? Feels strongly this forum should be led by disabled people. Jemma added a daytime meeting time would exclude working disabled people.
- However, response from others such as Mencap is that there is also representation here from organisations who speak for people who are unable to speak.
- David added that there is an access group that is run by Spectrum, and this would be an additional venue for consultation and to speak to disabled people, although meeting in person has been affected by COVID. Called for others to join this group. Spectrum run a Facebook group, also illustrative of the problems in the city.