

Scrutiny Inquiry Panel – Accessible Southampton

Inquiry Meeting – 7 October 2021

Introduction to the inquiry, context and background

Presentations referenced below can be found here: Item 8

<https://www.southampton.gov.uk/modernGov/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=774&MId=6741&Ver=4>

Summary of information provided:

Accessible Southampton - Guy Van Dichele, Executive Director of Wellbeing (Health & Adults), Southampton City Council

- A [presentation](#) (item 8 – Presentation 1) was delivered by Guy Van Dichele, outlining the importance of the inquiry for the City Council and the City of Southampton.
- Key points raised in the presentation included the following:
 - Accessibility is the key to inclusive cities. People are excluded further if cities are planned and designed poorly.
 - The same walk through Southampton may be very different for people – someone without mobility problems will hardly notice the obstacles – By contrast a resident with disabilities may take the same journey as above but have a tortuous experience and in many cases it will become impossible to overcome.
 - Not enabling people to leave their home causes social isolation – social isolation is a killer.
 - You make cities accessible by:
 - Working with people and understanding their needs
 - Designing the city following best practice guidelines
 - Understanding what is available already
 - Recognising that not all accessibility is physical – it can be about information / digital
 - Using informed Accessible Impact Assessments when making decisions (SCC has a duty to undertake Equality Impact Assessments when developing policies or changing policies – This includes impact on Disabled People).
 - We are probably at different levels of understanding of our environment for people – this understanding is growing and needs to continue to evolve.
 - Everyone in the Council has a responsibility for accessibility at some level, Work needs to be done to create a culture of accessibility and inclusivity.
 - As a Council we need to create tools to help our workforce plan to enable improvements to accessibility.
 - Good practice exists in Southampton but more needs to be done to improve the accessibility of the built environment.
 - Investment in the infrastructure to make it accessible will deliver a financial return to the city. Spectrum CIL estimate that there are approximately 37,500 Disabled People in Southampton. This number is forecast to grow significantly over the next 20 years.
 - The developing Local Plan has the potential to have a positive impact on accessibility, including the accessibility of new housing to be built in the city.
 - Partnership and place are key, everybody has a role to play.

Accessibility and a guide to best practice – Anna Nelson, Chief Executive and David Livermore, Director of Business Development at AccessAble

- A [presentation](#) (item 8 – Presentation 2) was delivered by Anna Nelson and David Livermore providing an overview of the key features of an accessible city.
- Key points raised in the presentation included the following:
 - 14.1m Disabled People in the UK; 4.5m carers; 1 in 4 households affected by disability; 45% of people aged 65+ have a disability; Potential UK audience of 18m; £274bn estimated value of the 'purple' pound.
 - Good accessibility is also important for older people and parents
 - AccessAble have surveyed the accessibility of over 125,000 venues and work with over 350 partners, including 110 local authorities.
 - AccessAble work with the University of Southampton and NHS in Southampton, including University Hospitals Southampton. They are among the examples of good practice in Southampton with regards to the provision of accessibility information.
 - 3 key facets of accessibility - Information provision (pre-arrival), the welcome they receive (as they enter) and the physical space itself.
 - AccessAble support partners to deliver against each of these facets – from the Access Guides, enabling people to understand all the essential information they need prior to arrival – to training for staff, to ensure they are comfortable and confident about their engagement with disabled customers – through to insight reports highlighting and prioritising areas of improvement – from the wider estate, to individual buildings, to key challenges.
 - **Information provision** – *'Over ¾ of disabled people have not visited somewhere because they could not find the information they needed.'*
 - Information about accessibility has the power to make decisions – informed choice.
 - Need to have accessibility information where people expect to find it. Avoid the need to search for the information.
 - Sheffield City Council were identified as an example of good practice – 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> (this looks better on a mobile phone)
 - **The welcome** – *'57% of disabled people said they faced discrimination due to poor staff attitudes'*
 - Learning and training – Staff need to be comfortable and confident about their engagement with disabled customers. Training shaped by Disabled People.
 - **The physical space** – *'66% of disabled people have faced discrimination due to physical access issues.'*
 - A range of different solutions may be available that do not detract from the charm of a building or the public realm. Some changes can be done for little or no cost. Others may need longer term planning with a series of improvements made over time.
 - More to accessibility than Part M of building regulations – be ambitious.
 - Accessible toilets and changing rooms are a key challenge for many Disabled People.
 - Need to update information on accessibility as improvements are made.

- Key mistakes include assuming that architects will design accessible buildings – Planning has role to play in promoting accessible buildings.
- Examples of good practice include:
 - Chester – EU Access City Award winner in 2017. Innovative approach to ensuring heritage sights were inclusive and accessible. Invested in accessible transport. Employed Access Officer and worked with the disability forum. Council invested in changing places and accessibility built into new council owned buildings.
 - Blackpool – 3 year programme of physical accessibility improvements, information provision, employment and training. Co-production led by disability group.
 - Islington – Co-production in practice. Local forum chaired by the council. External experts used to identify challenges with the public realm. Forum used to prioritise challenges.
 - Southbank London – Brought key stakeholders together, investment to make Southbank more accessible.
- To make citywide changes to accessibility requires a culture of continuous improvement, leadership, welcoming the challenge, continual engagement with Disabled People in the city with a range of impairments, and, informing people about improvements. There is no silver bullet.

Overview of support for carers in Southampton – Ian Loynes, Chief Executive, Spectrum Centre for Independent Living

- A [presentation](#) (item 8 – Presentation 3) was delivered by Ian Loynes summarising the accessibility challenges experienced by people with disabilities in Southampton as a result of the physical infrastructure of the city.
- Key points raised in the presentation included the following:
 - Compared to many places, Southampton is generally a good place to work and live for many Disabled People.
 - However, significant challenges remain, particularly for less well ‘understood’ Disabled People.
 - The City Council does not ‘learn’ – people come and go within the Council who have or gain expertise with respect to access.
 - The City currently has no Accessible Information standard - adopting a basic minimum standard will ensure information is accessible to the majority.
 - Accessible venues remain an issue in Southampton.
 - Shopmobility Schemes – 2 in city centre, none in district centres.
 - Toilets – Accessible toilets in particular are in short supply in Southampton - Larger Public Places should have Changing Places provision.
 - Awareness of improving access is poor in the Planning Dept and the appetite to improve accessibility in Southampton is questionable.
 - The disability element of the Equality Impact Assessments undertaken in Southampton are often poor. They are generally not developed with Disabled People.
 - Spectrum undertook an Access Audit of the City Centre for Go! Southampton in 2020. This raised a number of issues, and potential solutions that will help inform discussion at future Panel meetings. This will be circulated to the Panel and added to the evidence log.
 - Good practice - The Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment (CABE) in Scotland has published a guide on the principles of Inclusive Design as it relates to the built environment. The key principles outlined are:

Inclusive – Responsive – Flexible – Convenient – Accommodating - Welcoming – Realistic

- Ask the Disabled People of Southampton – They have a lifetimes experience – much better than any ‘Expert’ - 37,500 Experts by Experience in Southampton.
- Think about how places are used and how they function as entities.
- We need to get more understanding of the needs and ambitions of Disabled People. Human beings at the end of the day make the difference.

Conclusions from meeting:

- Accessibility is the key to inclusive cities. People are excluded further if cities are planned and designed poorly.
- 3 key facets of accessibility - Information provision (pre-arrival), the welcome they receive (as they enter) and the physical space itself.
- Compared to many places, Southampton is generally a good place to work and live for many Disabled People. Good practice exists in Southampton but more needs to be done to improve the accessibility of the built environment.
- Significant challenges remain, particularly for less well ‘understood’ Disabled People.
- Investment in the infrastructure to make it accessible will deliver a financial return to the city.
- Ask the Disabled People of Southampton. They have a lifetimes experience - much better than any ‘Expert’ - 37,500 Experts by Experience in Southampton.
- Good practice exists elsewhere that Southampton can learn from.
- To make citywide changes to accessibility requires a culture of continuous improvement, leadership, ongoing engagement with Disabled People in the city. There is no silver bullet or short-term fix.

Inquiry Meeting – 18 November 2021

Accessibility to the built environment and public spaces

Presentations and written evidence referenced below can be found here: Item 7

<https://www.southampton.gov.uk/modernGov/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=774&MId=6742&Ver=4>

Summary of information provided:

Southampton’s built environment and public spaces - What is the experience of Disabled People? – Ian Loynes, Chief Executive, Spectrum Centre for Independent Living

- A [presentation](#) (item 7 – Presentation 1) was delivered by Ian Loynes, summarising the key issues raised at the Accessible Southampton Focus Group meeting held on 11th November 2021. Additional detail was provided as written evidence.
- Key points raised in the presentation included the following:
 - In Southampton there are plenty of examples of good access, particularly in retail areas. On balance accessibility has improved.
 - More space allowed since the pandemic: Great for access.
 - City Centre is good generally: But isn’t good in other retail areas.

- City Design - Street furniture, seating design, pavement design and condition were identified as key challenges that impacted on Disabled People's ability to get around the city.
- Challenges accessing cafes, bars, restaurants, shops and public buildings were identified.
- Audio Loops - <http://letsloopsouthampton.co.uk> have spent 3 Years trying to get audio loop systems fitted in premises. Only 4% have actually got loop systems installed. Hearing impaired people won't go into shops if no loop system - completely unable to communicate. 23,000 deaf and hard of hearing people who live in Southampton. Lets Loop Southampton even has a grant fund of £30,000, available to meet cost of installing a loop system (they cost about £200): isn't even a financial case.
- Homes - All new houses should be built to be accessible. If all homes had a basic level of accessibility built in, it would be less costly to adapt as people grow older or become Disabled. There's no real evidence that it costs more to build accessible homes when they are built at scale.
- Lack of accessible toilets and few Changing Places compared to other cities. It should be a requirement in public spaces and new buildings. Even though not many exist, they are not used simply because people don't know they exist.
- Planning & Building Control - Should be building in good access at the design phase of new builds. Perception that guidance is routinely ignored. Often no access or bad access in new buildings and access reduced when buildings are modified. Access considerations should be put in place, and planning officers should ensure access rights are preserved.
- Used to be an Access Officer Role, and there used to be a relationship with the Access Group [Group of Disabled People] to vet plans before approval.
- Car Parking at the Civic Centre should be maintained at all times. Currently, if there's an event going on they close the Civic Centre car parks. Quite annoying because it's the most accessible one.
- Solutions - All public meetings should be held in accessible premises; Accessibility Checklist - Developed by City Council & Disabled People (Event organisers expected to use accessibility checklist to follow to avoid regular access mistakes); Equality Impact Statements - Should be completed by people from different equality groups themselves, not just done by an officer; A shared commitment to full inclusion; Universal benefits – everyone benefits; A broad view of Disability and accessibility; An emphasis on communications; Innovation; A commitment to co-production; A Learning City knowledge retained when officer leaves.
- Levers to make this happen – City Centre Masterplan; Local Plan vision; City of Culture 2025 bid.

Personal experience of navigating Southampton's built environment – Jemma Brown

- The Panel viewed two videos produced by Jemma that highlighted some of the challenges she faces trying to get around the city – Link to videos: <https://youtube.com/shorts/YfyhG3VCV5w?feature=share> & <https://youtu.be/6nrtuXVdF7s>
- Connection problems prevented Jemma from outlining some of her experiences at the meeting. A written statement from Jemma has been provided and has been added to the [meeting webpage](#). Key issues raised by Jemma include:

- SCC is failing its citizens with a disability, we are left out of planning decisions and given very little thought when making decisions and planning on how the built environment impacts us. These decisions limit our choices.
- The area around the station is one example of poor planning both in terms of traffic management and the impact on disabled people. Decisions to have the road and the pavement in the same colour scheme and have tactile crossing points but not actual crossings put pedestrians at risk.
- SCC is investing in its road network but they have not considered the accessibility implications. In many cases the level of the road has been dropped and the difference in level has not been fixed when it comes to dropped curbs meaning, that in some cases, what looks like a dropped curb is actually a step. This is the case for many of the roads along Hill Lane between Atherley Bowling Club and Taunton's college.
- Sadly, there are many shops and businesses in Southampton that are not wheelchair accessible and are also not offering reasonable adjustments to accommodate disabled people meaning that there are areas that are totally no go. The design and accessibility of West Quay South is an issue that continues to cause challenges.
- SCC should be holding the designers of planned works accountable. SCC should be prioritising accessibility and where reasonable (e.g. public buildings) refusing planning applications that go against best practice.
- SCC needs to be pushing for inclusion and equality with a joined up approach
- The biggest problem is there is no easy way of reporting accessibility issues. It is really difficult to report issues.
- Gosport has an accessibility forum and disabled people can anonymously report issues and it can then be followed up by the forum. If the forum identifies a problem then the business or public body is contacted and the problem is raised. If there is a reasonable adjustment that could fix the problem the store is asked to fix it. If no action is taken the forum have the power to then raise it with the local council who will then ensure the issue is resolved.
- SCC should be employing disabled people to test accessibility features and review potential problems, this member of staff can also start an access forum for the city centre, my dream would be for this to become something city wide.
- I would like to finish by inviting you all to come on a walk with me. I propose we meet at the station and walk up Hill Lane.

Overview of best practice: Chester & Liverpool – Mark Pirnie, Scrutiny Manager, SCC

- A [presentation](#) (item 7 – Presentation 2) was delivered by the Scrutiny Manager highlighting key issues raised from Chester's 2017 EU Access Award submission and following conversations with officers from Cheshire West and Chester Council and Liverpool City Council.
- Key success factors for Chester included the following:
 - Corporate Priority for years – Accessible Chester in Council Plan
 - Political Leadership and ownership
 - Engagement with Disabled People – Corporate Disability Access Forum (CDAF) key component
 - Access Officer – Expertise, influence, corporate resource
 - Robust Equality Assessments – Engagement with Disabled People is expected.

- The Access Officer, along with CDAF, works with architects/designers to go 'above and beyond' the minimum standards
- The Access Officer investigates and responds to all access related complaints received by the Council and works with internal & external partners to implement changes to buildings, facilities and practices.
- Liverpool – City has 37 Changing Places (compared to a handful in Southampton) and all new developments must meet the highest standards for accessibility not just the minimum standards under building regulations. Liverpool's Accessible Housing Policy says new homes must be at least M4(2) - accessible & adaptable, and 10% of new homes to be wheelchair accessible.
- Moral, legal and financial rationale for the approaches applied in Chester & Liverpool - Average cost to the NHS of a trip or fall where ambulance required is £14,000. Improving accessibility of the built environment saves money. In 2015 Shopmobility customers alone spent approximately £237,000 annually in Chester.

Go! Southampton written evidence: Rebecca Handley, Deputy Executive Director and Operations Director at Go! Southampton

- Written evidence was provided by Go! Southampton, Southampton City Centre's Business Improvement District. This has been added to the [meeting webpage](#).
- Key points in the response from Go! Southampton:
 - Prompted by its members, the BID intends to feature the issue of inclusion & diversity in its second-term programme, with a new Inclusive City workstream. The BID's ambition is for Southampton to be an inclusive city that is accessible and welcoming to all.
 - Working with Kate Martin, Executive Director – Place at SCC, it was agreed that an accessible city task and finish group would be set up in partnership with GO! and SCC, with representatives from SPECTRUM CIL and other relevant parties to address the actions recommended in the report. This task and finish group has yet to be established but GO! Southampton is committed to support this group.
 - GO! Southampton is committed to working with the business community to make individual premises more accessible through interventions such as the introduction of hearing loops and providing training for businesses to become more accessible by understanding different visitor requirements, to informing store layouts and providing enhanced facilities. The BID also intends to work with Southampton City Council to tackle opportunities and barriers in the built environment and to inform future developments.
 - The key recommendation is for Southampton City Council to acknowledge the need for Southampton to become more accessible and inclusive. To commit to working with the wider community including businesses and users with accessibility requirements to implement and address the recommendations highlighted in the report. It is important to establish a vision and set clear criteria for future developments that can be incorporated into the local plan to inform future accessibility arrangements in the city.

How the Council contributes to making Southampton's Built Environment accessible to all – Place Directorate, SCC

- A [presentation](#) (item 7 – Presentation 3) was delivered by Amber Trueman – Strategic Planning Manager; Stephen Harrison – Service Manager, Development and Wade Holmes – Transport Delivery Team Leader.

- Key points raised in the presentation included the following:
 - Current planning policies date from 2006 relating to accessibility. SDP 11 Accessibility and Movement states that Planning permission will only be granted for development which contributes to an attractive network of public routes and spaces for pedestrians, cyclists and vehicles; secures adequate access for all pedestrians including people with mobility and sensory difficulties such as elderly people, disabled people, the very young and those using prams and wheelchairs.
 - For all Major development (10dwellings/1,000sq.m) and new dwellings in Conservation Areas there is a requirement to produce Design & Access Statements that set out the applicant's case.
 - Plenty of evidence that this in itself doesn't deliver inclusive development.
 - Building Regulation applications are checked against Part M standards at plan approval stage and via site inspection at completion stage prior to occupation.
 - Higher standards can be applied subject to Planning conditions / Local Plan Policy. Recognition that most developers will work to minimum accessibility standards unless required to do otherwise.
 - There is definitely scope for planning policy as it relates to accessibility to be updated and reset. SCC is currently refreshing the Local Plan. This provides an opportunity to secure higher accessibility standards for future developments which require planning permission.
 - Whilst the new Southampton City Vision Local Plan is being developed there is an opportunity to add to the existing policy to include embedding an accessibility checklist as referenced by Ian Loynes.
 - The service recognises the need to engage more effectively with Disabled People, potentially via an access forum, and would welcome the opportunity to consult an Access Officer to help inform policy and decisions.
 - Highway design is based on the Streetscape Toolkit, and relevant DfT guidelines. The Streetscape Toolkit was last updated in 2013 and a refresh is due to commence shortly.
 - An independent road safety audit is carried out on all schemes. The audit will take into consideration access for a scheme and make recommendations if the scheme is not suitable. There are also other assessment tools that are used to determine if a scheme is suitable – one of note is Healthy Streets which asks questions in relation to surface quality, crossing points and ability to walk – this tool gives a score which allows comparison of before and after.
 - Most highway schemes trigger the need for an Equality and Safety Impact Assessment to be carried out. This requires the project manager to consider how the scheme will impact on different groups of people, of which people with a disability is one such user group. When changes are made to the highway network, a Traffic Regulation Order is required to be consulted on, and there are disability representatives on the standard distribution list for consultation.
 - The Council has recently increased its funding for footway repairs. The footway budget is £1.5m until the end of 2022/23 (an increase on previous years, normally £500k p.a).
 - Accessibility for Disabled People is growing in importance and is the subject of an Active Travel funding bid in the next funding round.
 - The refresh of the Streetscape Toolkit provides an opportunity to incorporate best practice with regards to accessibility in the Council's highways design standards moving forward.

- An improved mechanism by which Disabled People are engaged and consulted on highways schemes and policies is also required.

Conclusions from meeting:

- Southampton's built environment and public spaces provide examples of good access but it is evident that accessibility has not been at the forefront of decisions on the built environment, with many barriers still in place for residents and visitors to navigate the city independently and safely.
- Southampton has the potential to learn from best practice. If you design a city with accessibility in mind, you can remove barriers and enable everyone to experience the city in a positive way and bring significant environmental, economic and social benefits.
- Cities such as Chester and Liverpool demonstrate what can be achieved by ambition, political leadership, co-production and strong engagement with Disabled People, resources such as an Access Officer, and rigorous application of policy.
- Whilst changes are evidently required to make Southampton's built environment more accessible, opportunities exist that can support the city to make the required changes. These include:
 - Refresh of the Southampton City Vision Local Plan (and embedding an accessibility checklist in to exist policy while we wait)
 - Refresh of the Streetscape Toolkit
 - The Lets Loop Southampton initiative
 - The support of Go! Southampton

Inquiry Meeting – 2 December 2021

Accessibility to public transport and related infrastructure

Presentations and written evidence referenced below can be found here: Item 7 & 8

<https://www.southampton.gov.uk/modernGov/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=774&MId=6743&Ver=4>

Summary of information provided:

What contributes to good accessibility in transport and infrastructure from Disabled People's Viewpoint? – Ian Loynes, Chief Executive, Spectrum CIL

- A [presentation](#) (item 8 – Presentation 1) was delivered by Ian Loynes, summarising the key issues raised at the Accessible Southampton Focus Group meeting.
- Key points raised in the presentation included the following:
 - On the whole things are improving with regards to the accessibility of transport in Southampton. The ability for Disabled People to be spontaneous remains a challenge.
 - **General principles to follow** - Good Access should be built in at the design phase; Ask Disabled People – Co-produce is cost effective; Public transport should include all, segregated transport is not the answer (Dial-a-Ride) - expensive & exclusionary; Consider the whole experience - Booking / tickets, getting to the public transport destination, interchanges (car-taxi-bus-train); Proper consideration of pedestrians, particularly those

who have impaired senses; It doesn't matter how good/bad provision is, if customer service is wrong.

- **Buses & Coaches** - All buses should have more than just one designated space for wheelchair users, as we need or wish to travel together with other wheelchair users.
- Creative and flexible design of bus interiors
- Importance of trained, aware and proactive drivers
- Buses should have large clear and well lit route numbering and destination signs
- Sensible seating within bus shelters and bus timetables at bus stops in an accessible position.
- **Taxi's** - Generally wheelchair users have to book in advance, spontaneity not enabled except at Southampton Central.
- All taxis should be accessible
- Some taxi drivers are reluctant to pick up wheelchair users and allow assistance dogs on board.
- **Trains** - Generally good at main stations, most rail staff tended to be happy to help.
- Lack of spontaneity compared with non-disabled people - Supposed to book at least 24hrs ahead, although better at main stations.
- Not so good when plans change
- **Car Travel / Car Parking**- difficulty finding suitable accessible parking spaces, even outside of busy times
- Some people with mental health conditions or learning difficulties also mentioned difficulties with getting 'Blue Badge' Parking Permits for people with non-mobility impairments.
- Lack of consideration of the real needs of Disabled drivers - Design & placement of parking spaces and car parks needs to reflect variety of car designs with appropriate signage to reflect usage.
- Entry/ticket barriers are not usable by many Disabled drivers, simply because they cannot reach the buttons without leaving the vehicle, even asking for help usually needs a button to be pressed - Design with Disabled People.
- Civic Centre Car Park - These are the best spaces in the City that I can use [wheelchair user](not end to end parking) - Currently, if there's an event going on, the Civic Centre car park is usually closed.
- **Shopmobility** - West Quay ShopMobility is still provided, just differently - via Customer Services desk. It is now free and bookable in advance. The City Centre ShopMobility scheme had almost 3,000 hires last year and it is estimated that over a third of customers using the scheme spend over £50 per city centre visit. Needs to be ShopMobility scheme in other shopping areas of the city.
- **Signage** – Some colours used are not good for visually impaired people. Recommend that transport providers work with local Disability groups to audit signage, both at transport hubs and on vehicles, and make improvements to ensure that signage is fully accessible to all Disabled passengers.

Key ingredients of an accessible city – Graham Garnett, Inclusive Design Officer, Liverpool City Council & former Senior Access Officer at Cheshire West & Chester

- Key points raised by Graham during his verbal presentation:

- Cheshire West and Chester and Liverpool City Council both follow the social model of disability. People are disabled due to the barriers that exist in society rather than the impairments of the individual. Our job is to remove these barriers.
- **Chester** have employed an Access Officer continuously since 1991
- Improving access has been a corporate priority since the mid 1990's and is embedded in the culture of the organisation.
- Chester employs the principle of least restrictive access approach
- Corporate Disability Access Forum set up in 2013
- EU Access City Award winner in 2017 (only ever UK winner)
- Storyhouse Cultural Centre – CDAF key role in design of building. Input led to Changing Place, gender neutral toilets (important for significant % of population), removable seating to enable people to sit together if a member of party is in a wheelchair.
- Bus interchange – 2018 Accessible Transport Project of the Year – CDAF input led to a 'map for all' being installed, Changing Place, tactile paving to enable visually impaired to navigate the bus station, bins with yellow tops that are visible for partially sighted people.
- Access guides and interpretation panels show wheelchair access points for the historic city walls.
- It is worth investing in improvements and services that encourage disabled people to visit your city. £249bn value of the 'purple pound'.
- **Liverpool** has had a strong commitment to accessibility for a long time. Liverpool City Council has an Accessible & Inclusive City Cabinet Member to ensure that these are mainstreamed across the Council.
- Liverpool has strong planning policies in relation to accessibility – Urban Design 4 – All new developments must meet the highest standards of accessibility and inclusion. The Access Officer can insist on BS 8300 standards rather than minimum standards. Hotel rooms with ceiling hoists in Liverpool are an example of this.
- H12 – Accessible Housing Policy – Most ambitious in UK. All new housing must be at least M4(2), accessible or adaptable housing with 10% M4(3) wheelchair accessible. This will increase supply of accessible and adaptable homes meaning that Disabled People can remain in their homes; reduces expensive social care packages; improves sustainability of communities.
- Liverpool has a Corporate Access Forum similar to Chester. Key role in contributing to the design of new developments. New Everton FC stadium will be the most accessible in the UK – 14 gender neutral toilets, 3 Changing Places (37 Changing Places in Liverpool with 8 more planned).
- Liverpool & Chester require all Hackney Carriages to be wheelchair accessible. The accessible fleet contributes to home to school transport and accessing day care provision.
- Accessible rail is more problematic outside main train stations. Merseyside has 40 new trains that are accessible including level access from train to platform. No need to book in advance for these services.
- Access Officer role is essential. Challenge developers and planners to improve accessibility in designs.
- Priorities for Southampton to introduce, besides an Access Officer, include high level commitment in the Corporate Plan and Planning policy (this gives you the tools to achieve what you want) & a Cabinet Member or Lead Member to champion accessibility that the Access Officer can work alongside.

- Financial, legal and moral rationale for improving accessibility. It is the right thing to do.

All Aboard Project – Emma Hurst, Project Co-ordinator, Rose Road Association

- A [presentation](#) (item 8 – Presentation 2) was delivered by Emma. Key points raised in her presentation include the following:
 - In 2019 Scope surveyed 2,000 people about how difficulties around using public transport affects their ability to lead independent, confident and connected lives. The research found that two thirds of disabled people had experienced problems using public transport in the last year & 30 percent of disabled people say that difficulties with public transport have reduced their independence.
 - For young people with severe disabilities there can be even more barriers to rail travel. In April 2020 Rose Road was awarded a grant from South Western Railway which aimed to address some of these issues and to build confidence.
 - The project has aimed to encourage young people, and their parents/carers, to travel by train by providing the following: Step by step guides using PCS (Picture Communication System) to travelling by train; Key Facts and Photo routes aimed to help young disabled people to identify local places they want to visit, understand the information available to them, and inspire confidence that their rail journey will be accessible; Helping buy tickets and book assistance; Catching the train – a visual story in film format with subtitles; Working with Ordnance Survey to produce maps which include accessibility features such as surface, incline, lighting, dropped curbs, obstacles – plan is to produce twelve maps in urban spaces around train spaces; Hampshire and Isle of Wight Accessible Travel Facebook Group where people can ask questions about accessible travel; A sensory story about a train trip.
 - The project finishes in March 2022. Information is still being collected. The feedback that we have received to date has been largely positive but the following issues still remain:
 - Attitudes of some staff and fellow passengers
 - Buses not suitable if several wheelchair users are travelling so dependent on other forms of transport to reach station
 - Worries about changes to timetable
 - South Western Railway staff have had training and are taking it seriously and improvements to the accessibility of the rolling stock would be welcomed.

How the Council contributes to making Southampton's transport and related infrastructure accessible to all – Place Directorate, SCC

- A [presentation](#) (item 8 – Presentation 3) was delivered by Pete Boustred – Divisional Head of Green City and Infrastructure; Wade Holmes – Transport Delivery Team Leader; and, Phil Bates – Licensing Manager, Southampton and Eastleigh Licensing Partnership.
- Key points raised in the presentation included the following:
 - **Buses** - 230+ buses operate in Southampton all buses can 'kneel' to meet raised kerbs at bus stops making it quicker and simpler for wheelchair and less mobile to access
 - Buses have at least 1 designated wheelchair space where wheelchair users have priority over other users

- Onboard the buses 86% have 'next stop' audio and visual bus stops – last remaining being upgraded by operators
- Local bus operators provide large format printed timetables for the visually impaired – these are available from travel shops
- Bus Stops - SCC uses the TfL guidance (over and above national guidance) and a local Basis of Design is being developed for bus stops
- Bus operators participate in a number of schemes to improve the accessibility of buses. First are signatories to the RNIB charter to assist passengers with visual impairments – stopping at bus stops if there is someone waiting and talking to passengers about the route; Bluestar run Helping Hand Scheme using a card that provides information on any assistance they may require; All buses fully compliant with The Public Service Vehicle Accessibility Regulations (PSVAR) – National Disability Strategy (p43) includes a commitment to review the PSVAR regulations, starting with research in 2022; Driver training – carry out periodical training or internal campaigns.
- Bus Service Improvement Plan - Developed jointly with bus operators and published in October 2021 - Vision that buses are inclusive & value for money
- Request for DfT funding to deliver: Upgrades to all bus stops in Southampton to meet standards; Accessibility audits to bus stops – footways, security; Work with user groups to develop assistive technologies; Continue Independent Travel Training; Innovative and capped fares.
- Next step to create an Enhanced Partnership by March 2022
- **Trains** - Of the eight stations in Southampton, one is fully accessible – Southampton Central with lifts to all platforms, hearing loops, digital displays, staff etc. The remaining are partially or not accessible.
- Future improvements being developed through updated Station Travel Plans – these include accessibility audits.
- South Western Railway are the main rail operator in Southampton. They are happy to support and engage on specific issues.
- **Ferries** - Red Funnel have plans for 2022 to improve vessels – lifts, toilets, seating and safety communications
- Customer service staff provide assistance before, during and after voyage
- **Taxis** - Hackney Carriages - the number is fixed at 283 with plates 214-283 required to be Wheelchair Accessible Vehicles (WAV). Should any plate from 001 to 213 become available as a new licence it will also have to be a WAV.
- Private Hire - 1,029 private hire vehicles licensed, 48 are WAVs.
- Taxi operators have difficulty fulfilling wheelchair work because of the lack of vehicles, particularly at school run times when the vehicles are required for pupil transport.
- The Council is in the process of organising the next unmet demand survey and can ask they look at this in more detail. The survey is likely to take place in April/May 2022.
- **Parking** - Disabled Parking widely distributed in locations across the City Centre, District Centres and Resident Parking Zones
- 143 Disabled Bays available in SCC Off Street Car Parks in City Centre and District Centres. Level access and lifts to street level and walkways are available in all Council Multi-Storey car parks; Surface car parks do not carry a charge for Blue Badge Holders
- SCC Parking Standards (a statutory Planning document) sets out minimum number of proportion for disabled parking in new developments and meet design standards

- **Active travel & Micromobility** - Social prescribing pilot, EOI stage 1 successful & awaiting outcome of stage 2 bid to progress onto feasibility - Proposal to develop a walking and cycling referral scheme targeting adults and children, who live in the some of the most deprived areas for those who have high inactivity levels including those with disabilities. A range of cycles will be offered to ensure the pilot is inclusive, including adaptable bikes, child seats and trailers.
- **Signage** – Legible Cities signage has been around for some time. Keen to see how we can improve and adapt them to make them more accessible.
- **Home to School Transport** - 1200 children receive H2ST. 1021 of those have SEND and qualify due to distance or exceptional circumstances and are transported to special schools in taxis, accessible minibuses or receive personal travel budgets.
- Independent travel training (ITT) has proven to be beneficial in enabling young students to have equality, access and independence. It has been geared towards children with special needs who currently use and are eligible for H2ST.
- Integrated transport planning is key to prevent end to end journey failures for Disabled People. The Council has a key role in setting policy and working with operators.
- As part of our funding bid to Department for Transport under the Active Travel Fund, Council has applied (amongst other items) for £100k capital funding for Accessibility Improvements. Although not established yet, if the bid is successful a governance framework will be set up to allocate the £100k which is likely to take the form of an accessibility forum with a terms of reference / membership yet to be determined. The application was for funding for the 2022/23 financial year, and Council is waiting for an announcement from the Department for Transport.
- At the moment, the Council is in the design process for two interchanges – a rail / bus one, and a bus interchange. Opportunity to reflect best practice in the design of these facilities and to engage Disabled People.

Conclusions from meeting:

- Southampton's transportation and related infrastructure provides a number of examples where action has been taken to make travel easier for Disabled People. This is demonstrated by the submissions from Red Funnel, Southampton Airport, bus operators - First Hampshire, Dorset & Berkshire and Go South Coast as well as the presentation from SCC officers and from Emma Hurst when discussing the South Western Railway funded 'All Aboard Project'.
- Challenges still exist for Disabled People to access all aspects of the transportation system in Southampton and it is unlikely that the ambition within the Government's Inclusive Transport Strategy of a transport system offering equal access for disabled people by 2030 will be achieved in the city.
- The ability to be spontaneous with regards to travel plans remains a challenge for Disabled People in comparison to non-disabled people.
- Southampton has the potential to learn from best practice. Infrastructure and provision can be designed with accessibility in mind, thereby removing barriers and enabling everyone to access the various modes of transport available.

- Chester’s award winning bus interchange, designed with Disabled People and utilising best practice, demonstrates what can be achieved when good access is built in at the design phase.
- Chester and Liverpool’s approach to increasing the availability of wheelchair accessible taxi’s underlines the role that ambition and policy can play in delivering an accessible transport system.
- Whilst improvements are required to make Southampton’s transport and related infrastructure more accessible, opportunities exist that can support the city to make the required changes. These include:
 - The opportunity to incorporate best practice design standards in the transport infrastructure that is scheduled to be built in Southampton over the next few years
 - Potential funding available, albeit limited, to support accessibility improvements
 - Proposals to engage Disabled People in the design of the new infrastructure with the potential to establish a forum to consult Disabled People about access
 - The National Disability Strategy includes a commitment to review the Public Service Vehicle Accessibility Regulations, starting with research in 2022, as well as a duty on Great British Railways to improve accessibility and to develop and implement a new accessibility strategy for the railways
 - The next unmet demand Taxi survey – Opportunity to clarify the need for more accessible vehicles and establish policies that helps to meet this need
 - Review the Legible Cities signage to see how we can improve and adapt them to make them more accessible.

Inquiry Meeting – 20 January 2022

Accessibility to information and communication

Presentations and written evidence referenced below can be found here: Item 7 & 8

<https://www.southampton.gov.uk/modernGov/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=774&MId=6743&Ver=4>

Summary of information provided:

What contributes to good accessibility in information & communication from Disabled People’s Viewpoint – Ian Loynes, Chief Executive, Spectrum CIL

- A [presentation](#) (item 8 – Presentation 1) was delivered by Ian Loynes, summarising the key issues raised at the Accessible Southampton Focus Group meeting.
- Key points raised in the presentation included the following:
 - Information and communication should be written to be understandable to the audience in question – This is not applied by all SCC services
 - If information or communication is aimed at the ‘general public’ then it needs to ensure that it will be accessible and understandable to all equality groups (including Disabled People)
 - Consider if all the intended audience will be able to access your chosen communication method
 - Use Plain English

- Make it easy for staff to get it right - Provision of accessible info should not be a cost issue
- SCC should consider having an Accessible Information Standard (Sans Serif font, minimum size 14pt)
- Ability to easily produce other formats 'on demand'
- The language of disability is important – words matter (Best practice provided by Spectrum CIL and added to the Inquiry evidence log)
- Just common decency: Don't use words that people don't like - words to describe Disabled People, that we find offensive such as 'Handicapped' or 'Bed/House Bound' are still routinely used (and often inaccurate!)
- Just as some people prefer information in non-English languages, some Disabled People need information in other formats - ie: BSL, Braille, Audio, Easy Read, Makaton
- Client information should include preference for how they would like their information provided and should be applied consistently across an organisation
- All general information should say that other formats are available on request
- Whilst its hard/dangerous to generalise, many people still do not have access to the Internet - Yet more and more the only way to gain a service or information is via the Internet
- Access to services/information must remain available in a variety of ways. Invest in schemes which provide equipment / training to encourage more to benefit from the Internet
- Internet should provide a range of accessibility controls
- Provide easy access to a human being (easy to find Phone number)
- Far too many public meetings are still inaccessible to Disabled People
- To include as part of an access statement (eg public meetings will always be held in accessible venues). Checklist to ensure meetings are accessible
- Opportunity for accessible communication standards and language to be included in staff/cllr inductions and training to improve awareness.

Communication Access Symbol – Rosie Dowty, Lead Speech & Language Therapist, at Southampton Community Learning Disability Service, Southern Health NHS Foundation Trust & Kate Dench, Learning Disability Joint Commissioning Manager at the Integrated Commissioning Unit

- Key points raised by Rosie Dowty during her [presentation](#) (Item 8 - Presentation 2):
 - 1 in 5 people have a communication support need at some point in their life
 - Communication Access UK is an initiative developed in partnership by charities and organisations that share a vision to improve the lives of people with communication difficulties
 - No over-arching symbol for communication access in the UK until now. Communication Access UK have developed the Communication Access Symbol, a new disability access symbol underpinned by a completely free training package and standards
 - Communication Access UK has been developed for both organisations and individuals. Anyone can sign up to Communication Access UK and complete the training package
 - Individuals will receive certificates confirming that they have completed the training, while organisations will receive accreditation as Communication

Accessible once they have committed to deliver the training and adhere to the standards

- Organisations will then be placed on a national directory and can then display the Communication Access Symbol. Both certificates and accreditation are valid for 12 months and will need to be renewed annually. Communication Access UK has been developed to be 100% free.
- The Communication Access Symbol has not been seen anywhere in Southampton yet
- No County/Unitary/District Council has been awarded the symbol yet – Would be good to start with SCC customer/community focussed teams
- Recognition that city wide support for the initiative would support the City of Culture ambitions as well as improving the lives of people with communication difficulties. Go! Southampton would be a key partner.

How the Council its information and communication accessible – James Marshall, Head of Customer and Communications, SCC

- A [presentation](#) (item 8 – Presentation 3) was delivered by James Marshall.
- Key points raised in the presentation included the following:
 - New Customer Access Strategy recently approved by Cabinet that sets the principles and ambitions for where the Council wants to be
 - Council accessibility standards:
 - Always start with the user/customer
 - Give people options
 - Design for the user who will find it the hardest
 - Plain English is critical
 - Keep it simple
 - Listen to feedback and review regularly
 - Use letters where appropriate to the audience
 - Guidance outlines key considerations:
 - Plain English
 - Minimum size 12 font
 - Use Ariel
 - Make accessible versions available
 - Use corporate template
 - The accessibility of the Council's website has increased significantly following the introduction of various template changes enabled by the new Content Management System – 99.2% of content now conforms with WCAG Level AA (statutory requirement)
 - Further changes to the accessibility of the website are planned
 - The Council is working to increase digital inclusion in Southampton through public access computers (see Appendix 2 – ICT provision in Southampton's libraries); training; Digital eagles; supported digital channels; working with partners (see Appendix 1 – SO:Let's Connect)
 - Translation - We have a contract in place with a translation service
 - Challenges - Big organisation with lots of systems and departments; Lots of priorities; Single view of the customer (client details known by one service but not another); Resources; Breaking bad habits
 - Improvements have been made over the past 18 months but we acknowledge this is a journey that requires ongoing effort to continuously improve
 - The Council has a Customer Experience Programme which is making improvements:

- To improve digital channels
- Set standards and redesign services with a customer focus
- Deliver customer service and related training to all council staff
- Coordinate activity to support digitally excluded customers
- Recognition that more needs to be done to engage with customers, including Disabled People at the start of a process. Open to having a reference group to act as a critical friend to support SCC information and communications.

Written evidence: SO:Let's connect

- Information was submitted on-behalf of SO:Let's Connect. This project commenced in 2020 in response to services moving on-line during the lockdown. The service loans digital devices to people in Southampton, thereby helping residents become digitally connected. The pilot project has identified how important digital access is and funding is currently being assembled to enable the project to continue.
- The initiative was welcomed by the Panel and the Head of Customer and Communications was encouraged to refer residents to the service that were not digitally connected.

Conclusions from meeting:

- The accessibility of the Council's information and communications has improved, particularly the accessibility of the website content.
- The Customer Access Strategy outlines a direction of travel that incorporates elements of best practice identified.
- Challenges still exist for Disabled People to access all aspects of the Council's information and communications.
- The lack of Accessible Information Standards leads to inconsistency in approaches across services with pockets of good and bad practice.
- The lack of a single customer recording system prevents client information, including their preference for how they would like their information provided, from being followed consistently by the Council.
- Too many public meetings are still inaccessible to Disabled People.
- Southampton has the potential to learn from best practice. Spectrum CIL has identified Accessible Information Standards that reflect good practice.
- Whilst improvements are required to make Southampton's information and communications more accessible, opportunities exist that can support the city to make the required changes. These include:
 - Developing Accessible Information Standards
 - A checklist to ensure meetings are accessible
 - Including accessible communication standards and language within the staff/cllr inductions and training to improve awareness
 - Adopting the standards underpinning the Community Access Symbol and seeking to encourage citywide take up and accreditation of the initiative. This could help to make Southampton more accessible and improve the lives of people with communication difficulties.

Inquiry Meeting – 24 February 2022

Accessibility to public facilities and services

Presentations and written evidence referenced below can be found here: Item 8
<https://www.southampton.gov.uk/modernGov/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=774&MId=6745&Ver=4>

Summary of information provided:

What contributes to good accessibility in public facilities and services from Disabled People's Viewpoint – Ian Loynes, Chief Executive, Spectrum CIL

- A [presentation](#) (item 8 – Presentation 1) was delivered by Ian Loynes, summarising the key issues raised at the Accessible Southampton Focus Group meeting.
- Key points raised in the presentation included the following:
 - Services need to be easy to get to and publicised so that the target audience is reached. Most people do not know what services there are and the Information Directories (eg SID) need to ensure up to date and accurate information is available and is user friendly.
 - Need to have a variety of transport options nearby and is well signposted.
 - Staff training & culture - Ensure properly trained staff that understand needs of Disabled People; Use appropriate language; Staff who listen, don't patronise or assume that they know best what is needed; Have undertaken Disability Equality Training.
 - Buildings need to be accessible for Disabled People (Best practice guidelines are available)
 - Information provided needs to be in accessible formats
 - Staff need to know what aids are available and how to use them
 - The Council needs to be a learning Council.

Accessible Derby – Ann Webster, Lead on Equality and Diversity at Derby City Council

- Key points raised by Ann Webster during her [presentation](#) (Item 8 - Presentation 2):
 - Ann's role is to act as facilitator and enabler to support all Derby City Council directorates on its equality and diversity journey.
 - Chief Executive has overall leadership of Equality and Diversity along with the Senior Leadership Team. The Council work to the Equality, Dignity and Respect Policy and have an Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Plan to make it real.
 - Ann receives support from Senior Managers and there is cross party support for equality and diversity – This support is essential.
 - Equality Hubs, Forums and Employee Networks make a huge difference to Derby work and deliver their services – keeps us on our toes!
 - From the early 90's Derby have adopted the social model of disability rather than the medical model. So, this means that right from the start Derby look at removing barriers for disabled people, promoting inclusion, rather than disabled people having to 'fit in' with inaccessible and sometimes hostile environments.

- The Equality Act and Public Sector Equality Duty are key drivers for equality, diversity and inclusion, but they are only as good as the people who work to these.
- A key part of the Public Sector Equality Duty is to ‘pay due regard to equality’ and so Derby still complete Equality Impact Assessments for their decisions.
- Council’s do not police the Equality Act but can use the Public Sector Equality Duty to promote equality and remove discrimination – Derby are proactive in undertaking this role.
- Derby temporarily shortened their EIA form for quick Covid related changes so we could tackle mitigation actions.
- Huge barriers for disabled people during Covid - Derby used the Public Sector Equality Duty at this time to promote equality and get rid of discrimination - including contacting shops to give them tips on how not to discriminate against disabled people when they put in Covid restrictions and challenging high street businesses about their mask policies.
- Derby has adopted an Accessible Communications Protocol so disabled people have information that’s accessible such as in a range of formats, sign video and mobile phones for Deaf people to text, BSL Videos – not being accessible can result in Court action.
- To ensure staff are aware of the Council’s policies and approaches Ann does face to face training on equality and diversity with Derby City Council employees, on-line training is provided and Ann promotes awareness at various team meetings.
- Nothing about us without us – Derby involve Equality Hubs, Forums and employee networks right from the start of projects and in EIAs... eg - Moorways Sports Village – fire evacuation lifts, wet wheelchair, lift pods for dignity into the pool; and, New Entertainment Arena – fire evacuation lifts, changing places toilets, hearing loops, accessible seating.
- Derby were one of the first cities to insist that all hackney carriages must be wheelchair accessible – they had to go to Court twice but won both times!
- Ann is proactive in ensuring public spaces are accessible - Street furniture – is matt grey not stainless steel; Street cafes are checked for accessibility (Ann is consulted on this); Derbyion Shopping Centre changed their brand new parking machine when disabled people told them it was too high.
- The Council works closely with the Business Improvement District
- What next for Derby? - More Changing Places toilets (now part of Building Regs) and accessible play equipment in our parks; Ask disabled people to check we have got things right from what they told us and if it’s not change it!; Feel proud of our City, our communities and their voices.

Accessibility to the services and facilities provided by Southampton City Council – Mark Pirnie, Scrutiny Manager, SCC

- A [presentation](#) (item 8 – Presentation 3) was delivered by Mark Pirnie.
- Key points raised in the presentation included the following:
 - The Panel have been informed at previous meetings about challenges relating to the accessibility of Southampton’s built environment, transport infrastructure, communications and information. Good practice has also been highlighted throughout the inquiry.
 - To guide the Council’s approach to accessible services SCC does have an Equalities Policy and an Equalities Action Plan – They were however drafted in 2013 and need updating.

- SCC undertakes Equality & Safety Impact Assessments (ESIAs) for all significant proposals and policies/strategies. Oversight is provided by the Strategy & Policy Team but the process could be more rigorous, including engaging with disabled people where appropriate.
- A number of connected policies exist that support accessible services including the Customer Access Strategy; SEND Action Plan (linked to Children and Young People's Strategy); Disabled Adaptation Procedure.
- A number of positive developments should improve the Council's approach to accessible services. These include the following - Appointment of Diversity & Inclusion Lead (Time limited - internally focussed role); Looking to identify more EMT and Councillor Diversity & Inclusion Champions; Training – Proposed Diversity & Inclusion e-learning package, mandatory for all employees, agency workers and councillors & Face to face training on Diversity & Inclusion topics for both new starters and refreshers for staff; Southampton Information Directory (SID) is being updated; Proposals to update the Equalities Policy.
- There is no Service Lead for Equality & Diversity that is championing the use of the Public Sector Equality Duty to promote equality and remove discrimination experienced by residents and visitors to Southampton.

Accessibility Southampton: Go! Southampton – Rebecca Handley, Deputy Executive Director/Operations Director at GO! Southampton Business Improvement District

- Go! Southampton provided written evidence that was considered at the 2nd meeting of the Inquiry Panel. Key points raised in Rebecca's verbal update to the Panel included the following:
 - The BID has an ambition for Southampton to be an accessible and inclusive city – A city designed with accessibility in mind, that listens to and understands its community. This will bring environmental, economic and social benefits to the city.
 - Go! Southampton wants to work with the City Council to deliver this.
 - Following the BID ballot in November, Go! Southampton have been developing a new 5 year business plan. Inclusion and diversity featured strongly in consultation feedback from the business community with a desire to invest resources to make Southampton a more inclusive place.
 - A new Inclusive City workstream will commence in April 2022 where business will be investing in initiatives that improve inclusivity across the city.
 - The BID is committed to working with businesses to make premises more accessible through interventions such as hearing loops and training for businesses to be more accessible and understanding of visitors requirements.
 - Go! Southampton is working with Spectrum CIL on accessible premises.
 - Go! Southampton will continue to work with SCC to tackle barriers identified in the Spectrum CIL audit. BID is passionate about decluttering the city centre to make it easier to navigate.
 - The Local Plan is key to influencing future developments – accessibility needs to be at the heart of new schemes.
 - Since the Spectrum CIL report was published officers from the City Council have been approaching Go! Southampton and Spectrum on accessibility issues and future proposals – If there was an external lead on this at SCC it would be helpful to the BID.

Conclusions from meeting:

- Challenges still exist for Disabled People to access all public services and facilities in Southampton.
- Cities such as Derby demonstrate what can be achieved when key ingredients to ensure that services and facilities are consistently accessible are in place - Including:
 - A strong and consistent strategy and policy framework that outlines expectations and ambitions as it relates to accessible services
 - Leadership from politicians and senior management to develop the corporate culture and reinforce the accessible services approach
 - An officer to act as a facilitator and enabler that takes a proactive approach to the Public Sector Equality Duty to promote equality and remove discrimination
 - Equality and diversity training for employees
 - Engagement with and oversight from disabled people.
- The plan to update the Council's Equality Policy, proposals for staff training on equality and diversity, and, the appointment of a Diversity & Inclusion Lead to focus on internal Council equality and diversity issues will help to improve the accessibility of SCC services, however, the Council does not have an officer to advocate for accessible services and to act as a facilitator and enabler.
- The approach adopted by Go! Southampton is encouraging and to be welcomed. The Council have a key partner in the journey to creating an accessible city.