

**BRIDGEND COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL**  
**REPORT TO CABINET EQUALITIES COMMITTEE**

**6 APRIL 2009**

**REPORT OF THE CORPORATE DIRECTOR - RESOURCES**

**REPORT ON ACCESS IMPROVEMENTS TO COUNCIL PROPERTIES FOR DISABLED PEOPLE**

**1. Purpose of Report.**

1.1 To present the committee with information relating to Access Improvement to council properties for disabled people.

**2. Connection to Corporate Improvement Plan / Other Corporate Priority.**

2.1 The information set out in this report identifies the action being taken to mitigate the risk of failure to meet the Council's statutory duties in respect of Disability Discrimination Act (DDA). As equalities is a cross-cutting issue this information will support the Council's corporate priorities.

**3. Background.**

3.1 Under the DD Acts 1995 and 2005 a service provider must ensure that where a physical feature makes it impossible or unreasonably difficult for disabled people to make use of services, reasonable adjustments should be made to:

- Remove the features or
- Alter it so that it no longer has the effect or
- provide a reasonable means of avoiding it or
- provide a reasonable alternative method of making the services available.

3.2 In order to ensure compliance with the legislation the Authority is carrying out a programme of DDA works.

**4. Current situation / proposal.**

4.1 A budget of £150,000 per annum was agreed for the period 2004-2011. To date 23 schemes have been completed and 1 scheme is currently underway. High profile schemes have included Bridgend Library and the Grand Pavilion, Porthcawl. Attached at Appendix 1 is the full list of properties completed to date and projects planned for the new financial year.

4.2 The Authority has set out a reasonable and realistic programme of improvements to all our public access buildings to support the Council's aim "to deliver the best local services in Wales" and our Customer Charter commitment to be accessible to the whole community.

- 4.3 An approximate guide of the total cost of all DDA works required at this point in time is in the order of £4.9m. However this figure must only be taken as a guide as it will reduce over time with the Asset Management Planning asset rationalisation process for example if buildings are sold off or demolished.
- 4.4 Further reductions in costs will be realized as DDA requirements are met as part of:
- Any improvement works or building extensions where a major refurbishment will be carried out will be designed to ensure DDA compliance without any impact on the DDA budget, e.g. Bettws Community Centre
  - Additional budget being provided by Directorates to fund building improvements, such as Bridgend Library where the relevant Directorate funded a new counter and additional lighting
  - All new builds e.g. Cwm Calon Centre, Maesteg
  - Linked grant funded schemes e.g. Sarn Community Centre.
- 4.5 The DDA programme of works forms part of the Council's Asset Management Plan which sets out schemes in its annual action plan. The works are prioritised as follows:
- High priority works  
Provision of disabled parking bays, dropped kerbs, access ramps, tactile paving, flooring, disabled toilets, appropriate door widths, automatic doors, lifts, handrails, colour contrasting works, signage, lighting and hearing enhancement systems.  
Also, improvements to any of the above which prevent access to the building or cause a significant risk of injury to a user.
  - Medium priority works  
Improvements to any of the above which severely impede access to the building or cause a minor risk of injury to the user.
  - Low priority works  
Improvements to any of the above which would improve access to the building but do not currently prevent or impede.
- 4.6 To date this process has linked in with those schemes identified by the Corporate Property Group and the Access Officer in the Property Department has involved local disabled people in this process by attending consultation events in 2006 and 2008 and by attending meetings of the Bridgend Coalition of Disabled People (BCDP). This brought forward the priority of public conveniences. These schemes are now all due for completion by the end of the next financial year 2009/10.
- 4.7 The DDA budget and allocation of resources directly determines the extent to which corporate objectives as outlined in the Corporate Improvement Plan can be delivered, particularly supporting our disadvantaged communities.
- 5. Effect upon Policy Framework & Procedure Rules.**
- 5.1 The report has no direct effect upon the policy framework or procedure rules.

## **6. Legal Implications.**

- 6.1 The Authority is required to comply with the statutory obligations contained within the Disability Discrimination Acts. This report sets out some of those statutory obligations and the actions reported as being taken by Authority accord with the requirements of the legislation.

## **7. Financial Implications.**

Failure to effectively manage equality and human rights could result in the Authority incurring unnecessary corporate costs and increase the risk of legal claims.

## **8. Recommendation.**

It is recommended that the Committee consider and notes the information presented in the Appendices.

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**16 April 2009**

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## **Background documents**

List of completed Phase 1-4 projects. Before and after photographs and plans.

This part of the report to be completed during the approval process but deleted prior to printing or publication on the web

Report Approval	Name	Date	Version Approved
Legal	Sally Hughes	20/03/09	1
Finance	Janet Smith	24/03/09	1
Chief Officer	Allan Phillips	30/03/09	1
Cabinet Member	Councillor Sage	24/03/09	1

	Name	Date	Time
Chairperson (Urgent only)			
Sent to Cabinet_Committee			