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## Minutes

Agenda No:  
LTW: N/A  
Date: 22.2.07

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### Minutes of a meeting of the Disability Equality Duty Steering Group held at 6 Middle Street, London EC1 on 22 February 2007

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#### Present

John Cartledge	Chair, Deputy Chief Executive
Dolores Keane	Group Coordinator, Accessible Transport Officer
Patti Tobin	Director, Finance & Personnel
Bryan Davey	Director, Public Liaison
Paul Kasozi	Accommodation and Finance Officer
Jo deBank	Communications Officer
Greg Hargest	(Notes) Research & Development Team Support Officer

#### 1. Apologies

Tim Bellenger	Director, Research & Development
Jane Sugarman	Personnel Assistant
Gail Engert	Board member

#### 2. Updates

##### 2.1 Introduction

The Chair informed the meeting that the new Board wants to be involved in accessibility issues and that a Transport Accessibility Committee (TAC) is to be established at its next meeting. Also proposed are some permanent task forces including one on Access to Hospitals. The rôle of the DED Steering Group in the new structure would be to focus on internal operational issues, leaving transport policy issues to the (TAC). The Group would not be member-driven but the TAC Chair (likely to be Lorna Reith) would be welcome to attend and contribute.

The Group Coordinator raised the importance of proper structure and ownership of issues, with good communication between the Group and the TAC. The Chair stated that as both she and he would be attending meetings of both, this ought not to become a problem.

##### 2.2 Patti Tobin : HR, including proposed training

###### Training

There is a proposal to hold joint half-day training sessions for members and staff on the subject of equalities, with a strong emphasis on the DED, from April 2007. The facilitator will be a

specialist training provider in 'disability confidence'. (Note : the definition of 'disability confidence is *"Being able to recognise the needs of disabled people and adopting an approach to meeting those needs that, wherever possible, goes beyond simple legal compliance and focuses on best practice to the benefit of an organisation and all of its stakeholders"*).

The training programme will be designed to meet the individual needs of the organisation and will follow core themes identified at a pre-training session meeting. It is important for diversity/disability awareness to be kept high on the agenda (especially for new members and staff) so that 'disability confidence' can be embedded within the operations of the organisation.

Work is under way on the review of all HR documentation related to recruitment, response handling, employment and equal opportunities. To date, this includes proposed alterations to the Equal Opportunities policy statement and employment application form (including the addition of a short section asking applicants to explain their understanding of and commitment to equality of opportunity and valuing diversity), plus the introduction of a recruitment monitoring questionnaire (confidential) to help assess the fairness of our recruitment procedures, and cross-referencing response handling procedures.

Patti is to have some afternoons set aside to deal with the DED review in the near future.

### 2.3 Paul Kasozi : Access Audit

Paul reported that the tone of the audit report was positive. Urgent issues highlighted had been dealt with, including changes to enable ease of movement in the toilets.

There are some shared issues with the CPF to be discussed, but we have fulfilled our DED duty by informing the landlord of changes that need to be made.

The Group Coordinator mentioned a trip hazard involving electrical leads on the carpet in the meeting room. The Group was informed that the Health & Safety Officer was aware of the situation and the matter was in hand.

### 2.4 Bryan Davey : Website Audit

Bryan informed the group that the RNIB had given a broadly positive review of the website but that several shortcomings need attention :

- Alternative text was needed for images
- Text size changes were not always working
- The use of multiple windows in internet browsing.

There was some discussion of these. Changing templates and text sizes, for example, was the responsibility of Premier IT. An important issue for us is ensuring that links open correctly on the main website pages, especially the news page.

The Communications Officer mentioned that different formats of news releases were being produced for the press and for the website.

We would need to give further consideration to how best to make the accessibility changes, which may involve consulting a contact management system. Alternatively, we may commission individual changes.

It was mentioned that the links page needed updating. Bryan said that links should be transport-specific and should not attempt to cover (for example) general accessibility issues. He said that the link checking on the website just confirmed that a website exists, not whether it is still being maintained.

Regarding recruitment, Bryan said that an application form is available for downloading but it was not currently proposed to have a facility for filling in the form online.

## 2.5 Jo DeBank : Communications and the way forward

Regarding the Board's profile, the Chair mentioned that the Executive group had discussed the allegedly disproportionate prominence given to rail issues, and the current position with respect to London TravelWatch's communications strategy.

Jo considered that the way forward depended on the Executive Group's decisions.

The next big accessibility issue to be addressed may be that of people with learning difficulties, with the possible need to provide easy-read versions of our documents (see next item).

The Chair mentioned the example of the glossary of acronyms he had had to compile to accompany a report to a TfL Panel, simply in order that Board members could make sense of it. People with learning difficulties were likely to find many of the Board's papers too technical to be accessible.

Jo raised the importance of the budget issue. The Chair suggested that this be tabled as a substantive item for the next meeting, if figures could be provided.

**Action - Jo**

## 3. Group discussion on moving forward

Regarding appeals, the Group Coordinator reported caseworkers' difficulties in dealing with the issue of learning difficulties and the provision of easy-read versions of documents. The issue was to be discussed with Mencap. There would be staff training and budget implications. There would be a meeting between staff and those experienced in working in the field of learning difficulties, in order to find out from them what would be helpful. Then we could explore the DED implications to identify what reasonable steps could be taken to meet individual needs.

Regarding budget implications, the Chair will ask the Chief Executive to attend the next meeting to discuss how the cost of implementing DED requirements can be met from the London TravelWatch budget. It was mentioned that staff attending meetings with representatives of disabled groups would be assisted by knowing that funds would be available to pay for changes. The Chair pointed out that the building access and website audits had been paid for because the case for doing them had been made. An open-ended commitment could not be given that any as-yet-unknown future request would be met, but the organisation had a legal duty to make reasonable adjustments and he was confident that it would continue to act in this spirit.

It was reported that caseworkers have clients complaining about TOCs failing to meet the DDA's requirements. Training may be needed .

The issue of chairing of meetings was mentioned. This would be covered in the forthcoming training sessions.

The new questionnaire about the suitability of meeting venues was circulated. This would be issued to people attending future meetings of the board and committees.

## 4. Next meeting

The next meeting would probably be on Thursday 19 April 2007.

## 5. Any other business

The Communications Officer said she had not yet had time to produce a style guide for London TravelWatch documents. The Chair said that, in the meantime, the Committee Services team had put considerable effort into achieving greater consistency in the presentation of London TravelWatch papers, and credit was due to those concerned.

## ANNEX

### Summary of Action Points carried forward from this meeting

<b>Action Point</b>	<b>Owner</b>
1. Check availability of GLA resources for other formats for publications	JdB
2. Consider use only of venues that supply all the equipment needed	DT, AK
3. Table budget as a substantive item for next meeting (April)	DK, JC
4. Evacuation chair to be included in Fire Risk Assessment update	JS, PK, PT
5. Update fire safety procedures	AK, JS
6. Compliance of public areas of the building	PK, CPF
7. Provision of individual costings for DED implementation	Budget holders
8. Screen readers for blind people and website accessibility	BD
9. Discussion of IT and telephony	BD, PK
10. Liaison with GLA and other bodies, e.g. DfT, DPTAC, City Police, etc,	DK & PT
11. Training for relevant staff in dealing with disability issues	PT, SMT, Line Managers
12. Training for members in dealing with disability issues	PT
13. Estimation of modifications needed for fixtures and fittings	PK, SMT
14. Production of information sheets for disabled visitors	JdB, BD
15. Portable induction loop and portable PA equipment, acquisition and use	BD