

To: Renfrewshire Forum For Empowering Communities

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Report by:

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TITLE:

Renfrewshire Access Panel: Update On Current Issues

1. Summary

- 1.1 Renfrewshire Access Panel is a key member of Renfrewshire Forum For Empowering Communities and has been successful in progressing a number of issues through Renfrewshire Community Planning Partnership to the benefit of disabled people and the wider community in Renfrewshire. The purpose of this paper is to update the Forum on some of the work initiated by the Access Panel, which demonstrates the opportunity for the Forum to engage community planning partners in Renfrewshire on issues important to the third sector.
- 1.2 In particular, Renfrewshire Access Panel has influenced service development on a number of key issues including involvement in the design of new public buildings such as the proposed new Paisley Museum, provision of work experience for children with disabilities and learning disabilities, engagement in improving streets and public spaces and the development of changing places toilets.
- 1.3 In addition to these service improvements, the Access Panel has also been a key member of Diversity Equality Alliance Renfrewshire, which has developed the equalities agenda across Renfrewshire, has supported accessibility improvements at public meetings and facilitated work by a film group of disabled people in Renfrewshire to record the work of community groups.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 It is recommended that Renfrewshire Forum For Empowering Communities notes the progress being made by Renfrewshire Access Panel in working with community planning partners to improve services for people with disabilities.

3. **Background**

- 3.1 Renfrewshire Forum For Empowering Communities acts as a vehicle to enable the third sector to raise issues for response by public sector partners within Renfrewshire Community Planning Partnership.
- 3.2 By connecting with appropriate managers within public services through the community planning structures, both through Forum meetings and directly with services, Renfrewshire Access Panel has been successful in influencing policy and service design. This has benefited disabled people, the wider Renfrewshire community and also the service providers themselves by enabling them to respond to equality duties in a positive manner.
- 3.3 A summary of some of the key activities that the Access Panel has progressed include the following:

Involvement In Design Of Proposed New Paisley Museum And Exhibitions

Renfrewshire Access Panel raised with Renfrewshire Council and Renfrewshire Leisure Limited feedback from disabled members of the public regarding accessibility of previous exhibitions held in museums, in the context of the design stage of the proposed new Paisley Museum.

The Access Panel was invited to discuss accessibility issues with the appropriate Head of Service in Renfrewshire Leisure Limited. Following this initial meeting, Renfrewshire Access Panel have been engaged with the architect developing the new museum design to provide advice on accessibility issues to influence the final project design.

Work Experience For Disabled and Learning Disabled Children

The Access Panel raised at a meeting of the Forum an issue regarding opportunities to improve the quality of work experience for disabled and learning disabled pupils approaching school leaving age. Through engagement with the Renfrewshire Tackling Poverty Programme, funding was secured to enable the Access Panel to work with special schools, the pupils themselves, Engage Renfrewshire and third sector organisations in the area to improve the quality of work experience provided.

This involved identifying third sector organisations willing to host work experience placements through the Volunteer Manager in Engage Renfrewshire. The Access Panel then worked with these organisations to provide advice and raise their awareness and capability of working with disabled and learning disabled children, with Tackling Poverty resource funding any physical adaptations necessary.

The Access Panel worked with the pupils themselves in order to identify interests and tailor the work experience to suit. Placements were identified initially with Renfrewshire Access Panel and the Environmental Training Team. Additional third sectors have become involved in providing placements in subsequent intakes.

Feedback from the pupils, their teachers and the host organisations on the quality of the experience and the impact on the pupils has been very positive. This has both enhanced the employability skills of the pupils and also raised the awareness of schools of the potential of the third sector as providers of work experience and ultimately employment.

Improving Streets and Public Spaces

Renfrewshire Access Panel has proposed a number of initiatives to improve the quality of the public realm and streetscape environment in Renfrewshire in partnership with public services. This has involved provision of street audits and engagement with University of the West of Scotland students providing research on street materials. The initial work is now being expanded into a collaboration with other third sector organisations working on the falls prevention agenda in Renfrewshire.

Development Of Changing Places Toilets

The Access Panel has campaigned for the provision of Changing Places Toilets in Renfrewshire. Renfrewshire Council responded to this by making a commitment to a programme of development of Changing Places Toilets beginning in 2018/19.

Renfrewshire Access Panel has met with Heads of Service in Renfrewshire Council and Renfrewshire Leisure Limited in order to provide advice and guidance on facilities required within the toilets and also the most appropriate locations for Changing Places Toilets to provide the maximum benefit to people with disabilities.

Diversity Equality Alliance Renfrewshire

Renfrewshire Access Panel is a key member of Diversity Equality Alliance Renfrewshire (DEAR Group), which brings together organisations working in Renfrewshire towards equality outcomes. The DEAR Group has developed an Action Plan which is owned by the third sector organisations in the group, with significant contribution from the Access Panel. The DEAR Group is aligned with Renfrewshire Forum For Empowering Communities, strengthening the engagement of equalities groups with public services through the community planning structures.

The Access Panel has worked with Renfrewshire Disability Resource Centre to identify a resource available to Renfrewshire Community Planning Partnership to film community and third sector organisations. This has the potential to further raise the profile and understanding of community and third sector organisations by other community planning partners within Renfrewshire.

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