

## **Disability BackUp Forum Minutes 23 September 2014**

Facilitator: John Thornton

John welcomed everyone to the Forum and we all introduced ourselves.

### **In memoriam**

We observed a minute's silence for two friends who had sadly passed away: Ron Newman and Norris (Buzz) Johnson.

Ron was a DBU planning team member and was remembered for his relentless campaigning on disability equality and accessibility, with DBU and with the many other organisations he contributed to. In particular his work at the Olympic Park to make the 2012 Olympics the most accessible games ever.

Buzz was a regular attendee of the DBU forum and was remembered for his written and publishing work, including being the founder of Karia Press. He was also involved in many other local organisations, including Hackney Black People's Association.

## **Transport strategy**

John introduced Kevin Burke from Streetscene who was attending to discuss the council's new transport strategy. John welcomed the strategy document which would see lots of positive changes for disabled people in Hackney and heavily borrows from DBU's report 'Getting There'.

Kevin:

Current transport strategy dates from 2005. Wanted to update it and decide what want to do in next 10 years. Consulting widely on it – have already had meeting with DBU and with other groups.

Lots of aims set out in background paper, including:

- One-way streets – cause accidents?
- Poor health linked to obesity – looking at ways to get people active, such as widening footpaths
- Broken pavements
- Dangerous crossings – speed of cars a problem
- Inconsiderate cycling (Elaine will talk about next)
- Hackney has high walking and cycling rate but want to improve.

Lots of ways to respond to consultation – deadline 24 Oct.

### Comments made during discussion:

- Areas where worked planned is about gentrifying area for new comers to Hackney – not areas which really need money spent on them.
- Concern was expressed about some of the language in the strategy documents, such as ‘vulnerable groups’, ‘elderly’. Kevin confirmed this was a mistake and apologised.
- There are still stations disabled people can’t access, steps to stations which are too steep, problems with narrow pavements or being blocked with street furniture/A-boards, shop fronts which are inaccessible. Kevin asked people to send him details of lack of enforcement of A-boards.
- Needs to be divided/separate lanes for cyclists to prevent riding on footpath.
- Too many bus stops have no seats or shelter from rain and no real time info or info about diversions/temporary bus stops which make it difficult for disabled people and older people. Need audit of all bus stops. Have complained about Dalston Junction bus stop but no improvement. Kevin responded that lots of buses are outside the council’s control and run by Transport for London or Network Rail. Need groups like DBU to put complaints together and lobby on main issues. Will feed back about bus diversions/temporary bus stops if have specifics.

## Considerate cycling campaign

John warmly welcomed Elaine Beckett from Hackney Council's cycling team to discuss their new considerate cycling campaign and welcomed the council engaging with DBU on this as a stakeholder.

Elaine:

DBU's input is vital, pleased to be here. New campaign to get the message out there to make people obey the law. Beginning to work, seeing steps towards enforcement.

Hackney has always promoted alternative forms of transport and been very successful in getting people onto bikes. That comes with the issue of sharing spaces on footways and carriageways. Previous campaign 'Watch Out For Me' was aimed at motor drivers but with subliminal message for cyclists. Keen to start campaign on same lines for cyclists. Would like to hear your ideas.

Comments made during discussion:

- Cyclists are not aware they are a danger to people. Could have a poster campaign re safety/danger. Elaine confirmed she was happy to do this.
- Cyclists are often under pressure from vehicles and pre-occupied with that, forgetting pedestrians. As a blind person, I rely on crossing to get across roads and cyclists going through red lights stops me crossing. Glad police are starting to enforce law. Need some forum of cyclists, pedestrians and motorists to discuss issues. Elaine agreed on the

need for cultural/behavioural change so that we give each other space and stay safe. Just formed a group with police, fire and ambulance services to look at reducing casualties.

- Problem of cyclists passing buses on pedestrian side was discussed. Elaine confirmed cyclists are allowed to share bus lanes.
- It was suggested that leaflets should be delivered/displayed in cycle shops about Highway Code, telling cyclists not to cross red lights. Elaine confirmed this was already being planned.
- The problem of cyclists exiting cycle lanes in parks and crossing pavements to get to the road (such as in Finsbury Park) was discussed. This is a danger to people with prams as well. Need clear road markings and campaign emphasising need to dismount to cross pavements.
- Stamford Hill has a major problem with cyclists on pavements as there are no cycle lanes. Could have tax/insurance scheme like motorbikes?
- People want more facilities and cycling, but an aging population and more visually impaired people need to be taken into account. Hackney Council have produced a film promoting cycling and shows people cycling through parks, which is now allowed. We have now lost a safe area to walk. Need signs for pedestrian priority.

## **Hackney Museum**

John welcomed Anna Sexton to talk about Hackney Museum's Re:present project.

Anna:

Recruited to work on new project at museum to ensure it represents all people in Hackney. The Re:present project aims to offer creative ways to engage with Hackney Museum to become more accessible. Expect hands on workshops looking at disability in Hackney in the present and past, with the aim of influencing a more accessible Hackney in the future.

Will be running a series of workshops early 2015, invite extended to DBU members to get your ideas on how to make the museum more appealing/accessible. Details would be circulated.