

Bradford on Avon Area Board - 9 March 2016

Disability Friendly Bradford on Avon: next steps

Bradford on Avon's challenges:

1. Historic architecture, listed properties
 - many buildings have steps up to entrance
 - narrow entrances
2. Condition of pedestrian routes
 - narrow pavements - proximity of traffic, wing mirrors
 - uneven pavements
 - lack of safe crossing points
 - poorly maintained road surfaces, especially at optimal crossing points
 - pinch points and obstacles
3. Train station
 - tortuous route to move from one platform to the other for anyone unable to manage steps. Important as the return journey puts people on the opposite platform.
4. Lack of information, even places with disabled facilities are not promoting them
5. Limited availability of poor signage to disabled toilet facilities

Solutions and ideas

A. Low cost, easy to implement:

- Awareness raising
 - For businesses - an audit of what they have in place and any ideas for improvement to their own space or around the town might be a good (and engaging) start
- Stickers - ensure all businesses that offer some disabled service use the existing identification options such as window stickers
- Staff training – to instil confidence when serving people who need a little extra and specialist help
- Interior layouts – for establishments that are already accessible
- Information
 - Use existing Council web sites to promote accessibility around the town, and improvements as they happen. Links to other useful sites.
 - articles in The Gudgeon and other publications
- Develop working relationships with groups meeting similar challenges – Disability groups, Seniors, young mums

B. Medium cost, needing a little more research, some investment:

- Intercoms or external press button request for assistance
- Click and collect shopping
- Mobile ramp/s and lockable storage
- Group buying discounts
 - equipment possibly 0% VAT
- Develop a map of accessibility

C. Higher cost, needs research, possibly negotiation, investment

- Dedicated web site
- Moving around the town:
 - level pavements
 - dropped curbs
 - road surfaces
 - crossings
 - traffic flow
 - Lifts at station
- Other solutions, e.g. that take up less space than ramps when giving access to buildings
- An App identifying safe routes, facilities etc – possibly work with another developing similar e.g. Town Council, history group

Delivery and Budget

It will be important that the Area Board and the Town Council allocate public resources in 2016/17 to move this initiative forward (and probably in 2017/18 too).

If BoA Business is seen to be supporting its implementation this should act as an incentive to local businesses and potential sponsors to invest in the project.

Sources of external grants, such as LEADER and charitable trusts, should also be investigated.

Links with parallel projects and budgets for dementia awareness infrastructure, tourism signage, safe crossings, pavement improvements, toilet refurbishments etc. should be made.

In Year 1 a small number of “demonstrator projects” should be identified with willing business owners. Some low-cost actions should be investigated such as a wi-fi bells, a sticker scheme and “click and collect” service. A publicity campaign will be important.

Should sufficient pooled resources be identified, a co-ordinator has been identified with the expertise to help take this work forward.

Report by Sue Thomson and Peter Dunford