

## Statement to Cabinet 11 Feb 2015

Robin Moss, chair, economic & community development scrutiny & policy development panel

- Economic & Community Development scrutiny & policy development panel ('panel') has been petitioned by residents of Keynsham concerning the difficulty of disability access to swimming pool in the Leisure Centre on a number of occasions over the last 3 years. While it is not within the remit of panel to be involved in decision making, the obligation to provide accessible services is a shared corporate responsibility.
- Specifically the issue is not one of access within the 'front door' of the leisure centre, but is about people being able to park within a reasonable & accessible distance of the entrance.
- Panel is aware that the general redevelopment of that part of the centre of Keynsham, as well as the potential redevelopment of the leisure centre specifically, has made the management of the leisure centre problematic as well as making short term planning difficult. Panel is also aware of the financial constraints on local government. However panel is also acutely aware of B&NES's duty under Equalities legislation to ensure that services are accessible to people with a disability.
- There has been a history of correspondence & meetings over the last few years, with various outcomes, agreements & disagreements. However, as the development of the central area & associated parking has progressed & the physical setting has changed, opportunities to resolve this issue have arisen but have been missed.
- Panel visited Keynsham in order to see for themselves how the situation appeared 'on the ground'. The conclusion drawn was that while there were clearly difficulties & challenges for Leisure centre management, these appeared to be far from insurmountable or unaffordable, particularly an option to access the reception level of the Leisure centre via the recently refurbished & reconfigured car park to the rear.
- Panel feels it has been disappointing that the focus appears to have been on what problems exist as barriers to our corporate obligation to access rather than the more proactive approach of problem solving.
- Panel wishes to emphasise the shared responsibility to ensure disability access to Cabinet. Panel also believes this is more than simply a legal obligation.

This is NOT an insoluble problem. It is disappointing that some appear to view it as such.