

**Report to:** Environmental Services Scrutiny  
Committee

**Date:** 11th February 2009

**Report of:** Director of Environmental Services

**Report No:** ESSC/43/09

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**Report Title:** Disability Discrimination Act Initiative

**Non Confidential**

This report does **not** contain information which warrants its consideration in the absence of the press or members of the public.

**Recommendations:**

Members to note the contents of the report.

**Decision:**

**Background Doc(s):**

ESPDG/9/06 and EMES/20/06 Highway project for disabled people and older people - Programme of Works

ESPDG/10/06 and EMES/20/06 Highway project for disabled people and older people - A Draft Code of Practice

**Signed:**

\_\_\_\_\_  
Leader / Executive Member

\_\_\_\_\_  
Monitoring Officer

**Date:**

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**Summary:**

This Council led initiative is now in the fourth year of delivering physical works to support the Disability Discrimination Act. A Project Board comprising Adult Services, GMPTE and Highways and Engineering, plans investment in pedestrian crossing facilities, improvements to footways along priority routes and around specific locations or premises, and supports physical works delivered by the Public Rights of Way Team in developing health walks and improving accessibility.

## **1. Introduction**

The Council has allocated £850,000 from the Single Capital Pot to be expended over the last four year period to enable works to be carried out to meet its obligations under the Disability Discrimination Act and ensure that disabled people are not disadvantaged in using the highway network.

## **2. Purpose of report**

The purpose of this report is to inform Members of the original plans and proposals for the DDA investment, to update Members as to progress to date and to inform Members of future planned investment and future direction in terms of policy.

## **3. Background**

This Council led initiative is now in the fourth year of delivering physical works to support the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA). A Project Board comprising Adult Services, GMPTE and Highways and Engineering, plans investment in pedestrian crossing facilities, improvements to footways along priority routes and around specific locations or premises, and supports physical works delivered by the Public Rights of Way Team in developing health walks and improving accessibility.

In February 2006 a report was approved by the Executive Member for Environmental Services, which detailed the Council's strategy for addressing the issue of DDA compliance on the highway and identified three specific work areas to be targeted and proposals to utilise the capital funding;

- i. Specific Locations – includes works to improve access to premises, facilities or locations including town and district centres, many of which are identified by public request or through organisations.
- ii. Priority Routes – this is a corridor approach to highway improvements, specifically pedestrian crossing upgrades and improving pedestrian facilities. The first route proposed was the A666 (Egerton to Kearsley) trial route.
- iii. Access Guide and Travel Training – this is intended to be a partnership approach to the provision of information about safe travel and accessible routes. The proposals made reference to identifying a method or appropriate technology to enable effective use to be made of the highway network, and assist travelling and link to an Access Guide.

## **4. Improvements delivered to date**

Under the Specific Locations work area, many improvements have been made to improve access to and around premises and facilities. Work has been identified mainly through Adult Services, user groups, via public request, Bolton's Fairness Team, BADGE (Bolton Active Disability Group for Everyone) and from the GMPTE Access and Mobility Officer. Detailed expenditure is listed later in the report but examples of facilities and locations targeted for access improvement include;

Horwich Leisure Centre – improvements to footways to Victoria Road and Church Street and pedestrian crossing facilities to improve access to a bus stop on Church Street.

Jubilee Centre – improvements to footways and dropped crossing facilities on pedestrian routes to nearby bus stops.

Chorley New Road (near Greenmount Lane) Pedestrian Refuge and dropped kerbs. Trinity Street Rail Station – designated Ring and Ride bay close to main door and ticket office with dropped kerb to rear for unloading.

A programme of dropped kerbs and minor footway improvements at public request across the Borough.

For the Priority Routes work area the first route proposed was the A666 (Egerton to Kearsley) trial route and works were to include:

- Improving pedestrian access along the route, including routes from car parks.
- Extending the current Shopmobility boundary so that people using this facility can travel more freely and extensively within Bolton Town Centre.
- Promoting a “Countryside and Township” route by improving accessibility from the urban areas to the rural areas on the Borough boundary.
- Addressing local hotspot problems at public request thereby enabling independent living.

Along the length of the route and side routes, crossing facilities have been upgraded and kerbs dropped. Shopmobility is not available specifically on the route, this is concentrated in the town centre and it is proposed to extend shopmobility hire points to the proposed new multi storey car parks. Town centre improvements are currently being developed for delivery in 2009/10. The route has not yet been fully audited to establish effectiveness but feedback from disabled people via Adult Services has been positive. Further priority routes are currently being identified. Local hotspot problems have been targeted under the borough wide Specific Locations work area.

As part of the Access Guide and Travel Training work area, links have been made with the Greater Manchester Walking Strategy and Walking Group and the Council has committed to investing in a joint project which will provide internet based information on pedestrian routes across Greater Manchester. The provider, Walkit.com, features several major cities to date and can provide pedestrian routes which avoid heavily congested streets. An additional feature, soon to be made available, is information on inclines.

## **5. Facilities for disabled at traffic signals (former BVPI 165)**

This programme of work is funded three ways from the Transport Infrastructure Fund (Bolton and Wigan), Highways Capital Programme Minor Works and the DDAI Programme.

	<b>2006/7</b>	<b>2007/8</b>	<b>2008/9</b>
<b>Transport Infrastructure Fund</b>	81k	139k	85k
<b>Minor Works</b>	34k	85k	85k
<b>DDAI Programme</b>	80k	80k	80k

The Best Value Performance Indicator (BVPI 165) no longer exists as a nationally measured target. In the final year of the BVPI Bolton was required to submit future three year targets and the decision was made locally to adopt the 2008/09 target, being 69% of all traffic signals to have facilities for the disabled. Improvements delivered to date have ensured that Bolton has met this target. For future years this target is at the Services discretion and continues to be included in the Capital Programme. Traffic signals improved to date (2008/09 programme) include;

**Pelicans / Puffins** - Longcauseway / Alexandra Street, Farnworth.

**Signals** - Folds Road / Turton Street, Bolton, Blackburn Road / Watersmeeting Road (north junction), Bolton and Albert Road / Brackley Street, Farnworth.

Works due to complete in the remainder of 2008/09 include;

**Pelicans / Puffins** - Topp Way / Bath Street, Bolton, Wigan Road / Ryde Street, Bolton.

**Signals** - Blackburn Road / Moss Bank Way, Bolton, Blackburn Road / Watersmeeting Road (south junction), Bolton.

## **6. Code of Practice**

In February 2006 the Executive Member for Environmental Services approved the Pedestrian Access and Mobility Draft Code of Practice for Bolton. All new capital schemes and maintenance schemes are built in compliance with the Code. The Code is a local interpretation of national guidelines and provides a useful design guide. A further policy note will be developed during 2008/09 to establish the incorporation of DDA into Highways and Engineering Development and Delivery Services mainstream work and as an exit strategy for the programme.

## **7. DDAI Programme expenditure**

### **2005/06 & 2006/07**

Approved Allocation £500k

Actual Spend 2005/06 £159k

Actual Spend 2006/07 £289k

Carry Forward £52k

### **Expenditure profile 2005/06 & 2006/07**

- Trial priority route A666 Egerton to Kearsley £150k, improvements include dropped kerbs and improvements to pedestrian crossing facilities.
- Borough wide special provisions £75k, improvements at specific locations, access to premises and public requests for dropped kerbs.
- Facilities for disabled at traffic signals (BVPI 165) £80,000, contribution referred to in paragraph 5.
- Trial priority route A666 Egerton to Kearsley side roads £62k.
- Staffing costs £74k.
- Consultation Workshops and Staff Training £2k, consultation events held with local disability groups.
- Pedestrian Refuge at Chorley New Road / Greenmount Lane Junction £5k, part funded by developer contribution and built at public request.

## **2007/08**

Approved Allocation £250k & Carry Forward £52k (total £302k)

Actual Spend £190k

Carry Forward £112k

### **Expenditure profile 2007/08**

- Priority Routes £44k, footpath improvements and dropped kerbs at Sefton Lane, Westthoughton and Victoria Road, Horwich and Hall Lee Bank Park Health Walk, Westthoughton (in conjunction with the PCT).
- Specific Locations £16k, footpath improvements and dropped kerbs around the Jubilee Centre, Halliwell, in conjunction with Adult Services.
- Facilities for disabled at traffic signals (BVPI 165) £80k, referred to in paragraph 5, including junction upgrades at Albert Road / Brackley Street, Farnworth and Blackburn Road / Watersmeeting Road (Northern Junction).
- Locations identified by public request £30k.
- Staffing costs £5k.
- Footway maintenance and improvements at specific locations and premises delivered by Highways & Engineering Services £15k.

## **2008/09**

Approved Allocation £200k & Carry Forward £112k (total £312k)

### **Approved expenditure profile 2008/09**

- Specific Locations £68k, includes pedestrian improvements at Bradshaw Brow / Turton Road junction improvement scheme.
- Facilities for disabled at traffic signals £80k, referred to in paragraph 5, including pedestrian upgrades at Blackburn Road / Moss Bank Way and Blackburn Road / Watersmeeting Road (Southern Junction).
- Minor outstanding work on trial priority route A666 £15k.
- Locations identified by public request £30k.
- Joint BMBC / GMPTE initiatives £10k, dropped kerbs and designated Ring and Ride drop off bay at Trinity Street Train Station and feasibility study / survey work into Pedestrian Crossing Facility at Chorley Old Road / Church Street (access to Horwich Leisure Centre).
- Staffing Costs £6k.
- Footway maintenance and improvements at specific locations and premises delivered by Highways & Engineering Services £30k.
- Public Rights of Way and Health Walks £73k, includes completion of Hall Lee Bank Park Health Walk and improvements to access other walks including paths at Smithills, Highfield, Sharples and Bromley Cross.

## **8. Future programme**

For the 2009/10 programme, initial discussions with the Project Board indicate a need to invest in Town Centre accessibility to complement the Town Centre Transport Strategy, especially in pedestrian routes from the planned new multi storey car parks which will have provision for shopmobility and disability parking and through routes across the town centre.

Research is currently being undertaken to provide guidance for the use of materials in the town centre public realm for people with physical and visual disabilities, with the intention of producing appropriate policy notes. It is anticipated that this work will provide a useful steer in planning future town centre DDA improvements and will provide an up to date Policy Note for the Service Area to accompany the current DDA Code of Practice.

Further priority route work will be identified during 2009/10 using similar principles as the trial A666 route, subject to funds being available. Details of this programme will form part of a future report.

The current Code of Practice document will be updated and revised to form the future DDA Strategy.

## **9. Previous reports**

ESPDG/9/06 and EMES/20/06 Highway project for disabled people and older people - Programme of Works.

ESPDG/10/06 and EMES/20/06 Highway project for disabled people and older people - A Draft Code of Practice.

22nd January 2009