Essex Access Forum (EAF)

Minutes of meeting held on June 9th 2015

Present: Rowena Macaulay, Angela Jones, Kevan Wilding, Jan Cooper, John Stevens, Karen Bush, Francisco Sepulveda, Mary Pelowski, Ian Hack, Mark Vintner, Bryn Morris, David Sanders, Darren Baker.

1. **Apologies:** John Crust, Alexandra Seabrook

2. **Welcome to Disability Champions** Bryn Morris and David Sanders

3. **Minutes from previous meeting (26th March 2015)**

4. **Matters arising**

   - **Lift access to teaching/research spaces for disabled staff/students** during servicing remains problematic. Francisco Sepulveda continues to be adversely affected. It was agreed that the potential for addressing in part via CTO/room bookings (i.e. the allocation of lecture rooms with at least two access points, for those teaching staff dependent on lifts) as a reasonable adjustment should be explored.
     
     **Action:** Bryn Morris to follow up with CTO; RM & MV to meet with FS to discuss other scenarios and policy responses, and drafting of policy doc on this issue.

   - **EAF admin support** it was noted that E&D are recruiting a Frontrunner and part of their function will be to provide some admin support to the EAF Chair.

5. **Terms of Reference**

   - TOR updated, but still requires agreement on how accessibility perspective will be better factored into refurbishments, and how EAF input will be assured in this respect.
     
     **Action:** it was agreed that a meeting with Simon Neale and Keith Miller should be sought to further these issues. Also that a member of the Capital team would be invited to sit on the Forum.

6. **BUILDINGS and ESTATE:**

   i. **Report from Current EMS Project Steering Groups (Standing item)**
      
      KB gave an update on current EMS projects and questioned the usefulness of her attendance at the project steering group meetings. BM strongly in support of this continuing to ensure access issues considered.
      
      **Action** to be discussed further at meeting with SN & KM.

   ii. **STEM building: Update on progress**
      
      JS gave an update, AS and JS to remain involved as project very fast moving.

   iii. **Update on Library extension, and future project planning**
      
      MP reported on progress. Serious concern expressed by the meeting that the new lift is situated in a staff-only area behind closed doors, as a result of which the new extension has missed the opportunity it presented to resolve the issue of access to upper floors for disabled users. The library now has two small, principally 'staff-only' lifts and the Paternoster.
**Action:** MP and MV to report back to confirm this info, and clarify measurements and current arrangements.

iv. **Silberrad building**

**Issues of concern:**
- The use of very small paving slabs for the accessible, chair users’ route is problematic. Path is already lifting in several places.
- The very steep approach route from the car parks is problematic, as designed without thought to inclusion, or to how disabled users are likely to use it in any event, even if expected to use alternative Ivor Crewe route. IC building also not always open, so arrangements needed for that scenario, together with signage.
- The absence of any barrier, visual or other, between the edge of the Silberrad forecourt and the lake potentially dangerous to visually impaired users.

**Action:**
- Issues to feed into meeting with SN & KM
- AJ to look at forecourt boundary options and feedback back to EMS.

v. **Health Centre and Greenwood House (entrance doors)**

RM reported that it has been agreed to use EAF-guided Estates funding of £6k to install accessible entrance doors at both venues.

7. **Hexagon update** – Interactive tour of the Something Fierce exhibition by Ambient Light

- Following discussion with CER, RM reported that EAF and CER will split costs of this project, anticipated to be approx. £1500. EAF already have £1k set aside for this purpose, but were seeking partner funders from other relevant University bodies.

8. **Dates for Diaries**

- DisabledGo demonstration of new App ‘AccessAble’ & feedback on Essex DisabledGo user stats Tuesday 7th July 2-3pm 5A.118

9. **AOB**

- Disabled staff less satisfied on staff survey  
  **Action:** KB to review

- Dual access rooms – could these be reserved primarily for disabled lecturers where necessary; CTO to identify.  
  **Action:** BM will follow up with CTO.

- Accessible toilets requiring modification to bring up to standard  
  **Action:** DB to investigate.

10. **Date of autumn term EAF meeting**

- To be confirmed.