



MINUTES OF DISABILITY FORUM

Tuesday 21st January 2026 11am – 1pm, Benn Hall

Present: Karen Sugrue, Elissa Vale, Neil Sandison, Robert Franklin, Tricia Trimble, Martyn Parker (online), Angela Thompson, Gina Dallison, Annelies Schonk, Leanne Gardener, Emma Robert-Davies, Hugh Trimble, Chetna Mistry, Paul

In Attendance: Junaid Hussain (EQUIP), Ahmed Ghumra (EQUIP), Jai Mistry (EQUIP), Rebecca Ewers (RBC), Rob Foster (RBC - Online), Daniel Perkins (Highways), Angie Gavin (Warwickshire Police), Priya Tek-Kalsi (WCC)

Apologies: Bill Lewis, Sue Eversfield

1. Welcome, Introductions and Apologies

The Chair (JH) welcomed attendees. Introductions were made and apologies were noted from those unable to attend.

2. Minutes of the Previous Meeting

The minutes of the previous meeting, held on 20th October 2025 were reviewed, highlighting feedback from a survey on the appetite for re-establishing the Disability Forum.

The survey results indicated strong interest in re-establishing the forum, and key themes for future meetings were identified, including accessibility to hospitals, town centres, parks and highways.

The importance of signposting people to advice and services and the need for a collective voice to ensure residents' needs are met, were emphasised.

The terms of reference for the forum were discussed, including the need for a collective voice, the sharing of best practices and the lack of organisations related to mental health.

An error in the spelling of Elissa's name was identified.

Action: Previous minutes to be amended to correct the spelling error.



Action Items

- Send the finalised terms of reference to all forum members and ask for feedback by email, and update the document based on responses before the next meeting
- Include links for reporting highway issues and a contact list for county council highways in the meeting minutes and circulate the minutes to attendees
- Set up a specific focus group on tactile crossing and footway accessibility issues, and arrange follow-up meetings to prioritise actions
- Coordinate a user-led audit of problematic crossings/paths: collect photos and user notes, identify the top three priority sites, and prepare a submission to highways/county councillors
- Invite occupational therapy / adaptations services (county/NHS contacts) to attend the next forum meeting to explain assessment and funding routes for home adaptations
- Re-invite Rob Foster (property repairs) to the next forum meeting to present in person or via a clearer remote setup
- Share Rob Foster's written notes about the repair service responsibilities, reasonable adjustments, and contact processes in the minutes and make them available to forum members

3. Terms of Reference

The Chair outlined the Forum's Terms of Reference, including its advisory and consultative role in relation to disability access, inclusion and prioritisation of issues affecting disabled residents.

No amendments were agreed at the meeting.

4. Highways Update – Warwickshire County Council

A representative from Warwickshire County Council Highways provided an overview of highways accessibility matters, including tactile crossings.

4.1 Inspections and Maintenance

- Highway inspections are undertaken on a monthly or annual basis, depending on road classification.
- Works are prioritised in accordance with the Highways Code of Practice and a risk matrix.



- Safety-related defects are addressed within prescribed timescales, subject to risk assessment.

See the link below to the highway service standards page on their website. There is a link to the safety inspection manual at the very bottom of the page:

<https://www.warwickshire.gov.uk/highwayservicestandards>

4.2 Tactile Crossings and Funding

- There is currently no ring-fenced funding for new tactile crossings.
- Approximately £35,000 per annum is allocated per Warwickshire County Councillor for accessibility. Related requests can be submitted via the Rugby Disability Forum.
- The estimated cost of a pair of tactile crossings is approximately £5,000.
- Temporary repairs may be used prior to full resurfacing under programmed works.

For tactile crossing requests, if forum members would like new crossings considered at specific locations, please contact EQUIP, who will collate these requests and send them to Daniel, who will then liaise with the appropriate County Cllr for their consideration. The elected member areas are also shown on the WCC website (link below). These can then be picked up during the Cllrs' monthly meetings with the local Highway Area Surveyor, and who can establish whether the request can be supported (and if it's feasible):

<https://democracy.warwickshire.gov.uk/mgMemberIndex.aspx?VW=TABLE&PIC=1&FN=&bcr=1>

4.3 Capital Programme

Capital highway schemes remain the responsibility of Warwickshire County Council.

Action: Highways to provide links to inspection regimes and relevant capital programme information for inclusion in the next set of minutes.

5. Accessibility Issues Raised by Members

Members raised a number of accessibility concerns, including:

- Difficulties for mobility scooter users at crossing points
- Accessibility challenges for guide dog users, including around Rugby School



- Issues with road and pavement surfaces, barriers, overgrown vegetation, and narrowing of pavements
- The need for clearer, safer and more accessible routes into the town centre

Questions were raised regarding maintenance oversight, accountability and how accessibility is assessed in practice.

6. Lived Experience and Engagement

Members emphasised the importance of lived experience informing decision-making.

Suggestions included:

- Officers and elected members walking routes with disabled residents
- Practical exercises to improve understanding of accessibility barriers

Action: Officers to explore the feasibility of an accessibility walkabout with elected members and senior staff.

7. Highway Repairs

Concerns were raised regarding repeated temporary pothole repairs rather than permanent solutions.

Highways confirmed that defects meeting safety criteria should be addressed within the required timescales.

8. Data Collection and Audits

The Forum discussed the importance of evidence-led prioritisation, including:

- Mapping of accessibility issues
- Use of surveys, data, and photographic evidence to support planning and funding decisions

9. Property Repairs and Occupational Therapy

Property repair issues affecting disabled residents were noted.

Occupational Therapy contact details were shared:

- Warwickshire County Council Occupational Therapy Service: **01926 410410**

10. Council Assets and Public Facilities

- Accessibility of council buildings, including Town Hall toilet facilities were discussed.



- The importance of Changing Places toilets for people with complex needs and carers was highlighted.

11. Welfare, Policing and Community Safety

Members raised concerns regarding:

- The length and structure of the PIP application process
- Perceived emphasis on physical impairment over mental and emotional needs
- Policing focus within the town centre and reduced attention in residential areas
- Reports of criminal damage affecting elderly residents in residential locations

12. Communications and Governance

- Use of social media to improve engagement and awareness was discussed.
- The establishment of themed working groups (e.g. highways, safety, welfare, built environment) was proposed.

Action: Members to identify priority themes and confirm participation in working groups.

13. Any Other Business

No additional items were raised.

14. Date of Next Meeting

To be confirmed.