



RYDE

TOWN COUNCIL

Paper To: Sensory Impairment Working Party, Friday 3rd May 2019

Paper From: Grace Morris, Administration Assistant

SENSORY IMPAIRMENT NEXT STEPS REPORT

1. Overview

Ryde Town Council are aiming to help make their meetings more inclusive for residents and Councillors through the Sensory Impairment Working Party. Currently, Ryde Town Council ensures all meetings have accessibility through hearing loops at meetings, accessible venues, a PA system provided at the Garfield Road Methodist Church and the Town Council can offer agenda papers in large print.

2. Terms of Reference

The Terms of Reference for the Working Party were agreed at Full Council on Monday 5th November 2018 and are as follows:

- The Ryde Town Council establish a working party to seek realistic, affordable and achievable solutions for the sensory Impaired to access Full Council meetings
- That Councillors Karen Lucioni, Sue Lyons, Ian Stephens and Tim Wakeley be appointed to the working party.
- That any recommendations from the working party return to a future Full Council meeting for consideration.

It was noted that at this point the Town Council will also need to:

- Consider any proposal going forward as a result of the above as part of the budget setting process
- Consider the Town Council's Contract Standing Orders in relation to procurement in any process going forward.

Since these Terms of Reference were agreed, the Working Party has also been asked to consider the viability of Ryde Town Council live streaming council meetings.

3. Legislation

The Town Council is subject to the following legislative requirements in respect of equality.

Equality Act 2010 Section 20 - Duty to make adjustments

- (1) Where this Act imposes a duty to make reasonable adjustments on a person, this section, sections 21 and 22 and the applicable Schedule apply; and for those purposes, a person on whom the duty is imposed is referred to as A.
- (2) The duty comprises the following three requirements.
- (3) The first requirement is a requirement, where a provision, criterion or practice of A's puts a disabled person at a substantial disadvantage in relation to a relevant matter in comparison with persons who are not disabled, to take such steps as it is reasonable to have to take to avoid the disadvantage.
- (4) The second requirement is a requirement, where a physical feature puts a disabled person at a substantial disadvantage in relation to a relevant matter in comparison with persons who are not disabled, to take such steps as it is reasonable to have to take to avoid the disadvantage.
- (5) The third requirement is a requirement, where a disabled person would, but for the provision of an auxiliary aid, be put at a substantial disadvantage in relation to a relevant matter in comparison with persons who are not disabled, to take such steps as it is reasonable to have to take to provide the auxiliary aid.

Equality Act 2010 Section 58 – Official Business of Members

- (6) A duty to make reasonable adjustments applies to a local authority.

The Town Council is subject to the following legislative requirements in respect of allowing members of the public to record the meeting.

The Openness of Local Government Regulations 2014

The Openness of Local Government Regulations 2014 have made it easier for members of the public (including the press) attending a meeting to record the proceedings. Recording may take the form of photography, filming and audio-recording. There is no right to record proceedings at meetings from which members of the public are excluded, although the council or committee may permit this. It is also permissible for a person (including a councillor or committee member) to tweet or blog meetings via social media. The Ryde Town Council Standing Order 53 (b) sets out these requirements.

4. Reasonable Adjustments

It has been determined that the reasonable adjustments mentioned in legislation are mostly aimed at employers adjusting the work place to suit employees with disability. After contacting IWALC for advice, they suggested that reasonable adjustments for members of the public attending meetings would include hearing loops, ramps and large

print. Offering braille and BSL interpreters would be considered to be substantial adjustments.

Reasonable adjustments on the www.gov.uk website states:

Reasonable adjustments include:

- changing the recruitment process so a candidate can be considered for a job
- doing things another way, such as allowing someone with social anxiety disorder to have their own desk instead of hot-desking
- making physical changes to the workplace, like installing a ramp for a wheelchair user or an audio-visual fire alarm for a deaf person
- letting a disabled person work somewhere else, such as on the ground floor for a wheelchair user
- changing their equipment, for instance providing a special keyboard if they have arthritis
- allowing employees who become disabled to make a phased return to work, including flexible hours or part-time working
- offering employees training opportunities, recreation and refreshment facilities

Source: <https://www.gov.uk/reasonable-adjustments-for-disabled-workers>

5. Evidence and Research

Staff have undertaken research to collate as much information as possible to provide the Working Party with options going forward which can be found below. The following research has been conducted:

- Contact with the Isle of Wight Council with regard to:
 - Live streaming and policies / legislation queries surrounding this
 - Their supplier for braille documents
 - If they have a suggested BSL interpreter company
 - Their PA systems at their meeting venues
- Site visit to Garfield Road Methodist Church with a representative from PC Consultants to review facilities available
- Meeting with PC Consultants to discuss options available for all of the aims below
- Research on the .gov.uk website into legislation
- Research in the 'Local Council Administration' book to review legislation
- Request put into the Information Commissioner's Office with regard to consent from staff and councillors for live streaming
- Seeking and revising relevant NALC Topic Notes (LTN's 5 and 78)
- Contacting organisations such as RNIB and Action on Hearing Loss for advice

- Reviewing other Council's policies and accessibility statements (IWC – Accessibility For All Guide)
- Researching what provisions other Parish and Town Council's have in place
- Identifying requirements for PA systems
- Contacting local Universities
- Requests for information to the ICO

6. Next Steps

The Working Party has looked at a range of initiatives aimed at improving access to meetings. Appendix A sets out the 4 key areas of work that have been reviewed along with some information about the issues to consider and then suggests possible options going forward.

Aim	Use	Issues to consider	Options going forward
Improving accessibility to meetings for all and ensuring the Town Council looks professional	To improve accessibility of meetings in conjunction with the hearing loops	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - No Wi-Fi required, will work via Bluetooth - Quotes procurement process will need to be followed - Needs to be mobile for use at other meetings - Improved access for all attendees - Venue used for RTC meetings already has hearing loop - RTC's meeting room 1 has a hearing loop installed 	To start a procurement process for the purchase of a mobile wireless PA system
Improving access to meetings for sensory impaired	To ensure that residents with sensory impairments can access RTC paperwork and attend meetings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Noting on agendas the availability of the hearing loop and agenda in large print is currently underway - We would be expected to make provision to allow a signer should a Councillor or member of the public bring one with them - Possibility of RTC BSL signer, agenda's in braille or speech to text app: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • May require 2 signers to assist with discussions or would need to consider that they only signed resolutions / decisions rather than discussion • App would require everyone using a device with the app installed, which would require WIFI password or use of personal data • App may not accurately reflect speech if multiple people are talking either quietly or in a discussion • Member of public would need app installed to access transcript or screens would need to be used, which are not currently large enough to display transcript that would be readable by audience - Further investigation on Braille required with regard to turn around times - Further investigation on BSL translator required with regard to cost and locality 	<p>To note on all committee and full council agendas the availability of hearing loops, accessible venues and agendas in large print.</p> <p>To note on agendas and the website that we will make provision for any councillor or member of the public should they bring their own signer.</p> <p>To continue investigating the feasibility of purchasing RTC provided signers and producing agendas in braille (awaiting advice from IWC).</p> <p>That no further work be undertaken on research of a speech to text app as this will not work effectively at meetings held in public</p>
Live Streaming of meetings	To improve residents access to meetings if they	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The Town Council's Standing Order's allow for press and public to take photographs, film and audio record and report the proceedings at all public meetings. 	To await ICO advice on GDPR implications and report back to the working party if required

	cannot attend in person	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The introduction of GDPR regulations 2018 have made it unclear how the Council would manage the data arising from any self-produced filming or live streaming and whether consent would be needed from Councillors and RTC staff. We are currently awaiting ICO advice on this. - Once this advice has been received, the Council may be able to consider live streaming or recording, however we need to be aware of the following issues: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Church would charge for additional use of Wi-Fi • Wi-Fi connection may not support as advised by PCC • Extra staff member would be required at Council meetings to facilitate streaming along with tripod and iPad • iPad may need to be positioned not to show any member of the public • RTC would need to agree on a suitable platform and any ongoing storage of data - The Isle of Wight Council has also been asked how they live stream. They advised that they stream via YouTube and that they currently keep data indefinitely. Members of the public are warned prior to the meeting that it is being recorded. 	
Making the RTC website compliant	To comply with Public Sector Bodies Accessibility Regulations 2018	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Compliance needs to be met by September 2020 - PCC are assisting with this 	To continue with amendments to the RTC website to ensure compliance with the Public Sector Bodies Accessibility Regulations 2018