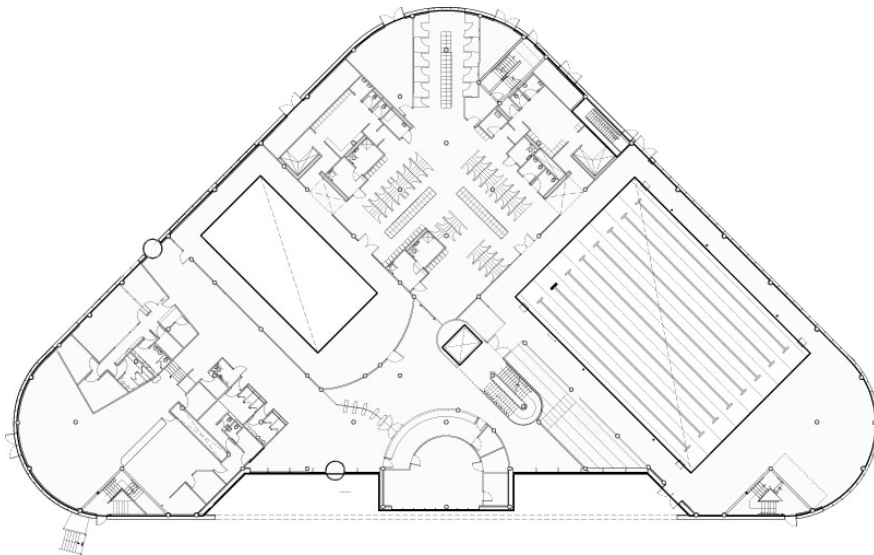


Appendix D Access Statement

Wolverhampton City Council

Bilston Leisure Centre Access Statement: Planning



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1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 PURPOSE OF ACCESS STATEMENT

The purpose of this statement is intended to outline the measures that have been considered to develop a building of inclusivity for all users. It is the responsibility of the client to ensure the management of the facility is a complimentary factor in the accessibility of the goods and services on offer. It is hoped this will ultimately address the obligations of the service provider under the requirements of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 Part III (DDA).

It is the responsibility of Wolverhampton City Council to ensure the management of the facility is a complimentary factor in the accessibility of the goods and services on offer, and in this instance many of the barriers to using the facility will be overcome with the implementation of management procedures. It is hoped this will ultimately address the obligations of Wolverhampton City Council under the requirements of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 and 2005 (hereafter referred to as "DDA") Parts II and III.

This is a "live" document that will be developed from initiation of the design scheme, through to maintenance and operation of the premises on a daily basis.

1.2 PROJECT BACKGROUND

In 2001 Wolverhampton City Council drew up the Bilston Town Centre Regeneration Strategy to tackle the decline within the centre.

In March 2006; outline planning permission was granted for the £176 million Bilston Urban Village. The plan is to transform around 100 acres of land south of the town centre into a thriving urban community. A community of 1000 new homes and facilities including a public leisure centre and health clinic, local shops, offices and light industrial buildings and a new sports field and neighbourhood park.

The existing Bilston Leisure Centre located off Prouds Lane currently has a limited life span due to problems with the ventilation systems and the roof structure. Whilst there has been no need to close the existing leisure centre immediately, it has been necessary to bring forward proposals for a replacement leisure centre for Bilston.

A previous 'Access Inspection Report' undertaken on behalf of the council identified numerous non-compliances in terms of current building regulation guidelines for Part M (Access to and use of buildings).

Further detailed information concerning the overall scheme, site and its history are included within the planning application prepared by Jacobs.

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2 RELATED LEGISLATION AND STANDARDS

2.1 Legislation

2.1.1 Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) 1995

The Act makes "...it unlawful to discriminate against disabled persons in connection with employment, the provision of goods, facilities and services or the disposal or management of premises; to make provision about the employment of disabled persons;"

2.1.2 Disability Discrimination Act 2005

In addition to the DDA 1995 the amendments in 2005 were designed to extend rights and provisions for disabled people as well as; clarifying the existing responsibilities, the definition of disability, and gives protection against discrimination for people in public service, such as councillors.

2.2 Scope for Legal Challenge

An employee or visitor who may feel that they have been discriminated against on the grounds of their disability can challenge this treatment through civil proceedings in the County Court. They can seek damages for injury to feelings.

2.3 SOURCES OF GUIDANCE

Throughout the design stage, to create a leisure centre of inclusive design the following guidance was referred to:

- BS8300: 2001 Design of Buildings and their approaches to meet the needs of disabled people
- BS9999:2008 Fire Safety in the design, management and use of buildings Code of Practice."
- Approved document Part M of the Building Regulations 2004

Associated with the DDA, are a number of guidance notes and standards that illustrate good practice in terms of meeting the needs of disabled people. Listed below are the more onerous documents that have been utilised throughout the design stage.

- JMU Access Partnership & Sign Design Society – Sign Design Guide- A Guide to Inclusive Signage (2004)
- DDA 1995 Code of Practice 'Rights of Access to Goods, Facilities, Services and Premises' 2004
- Disability Discrimination Act 1995 and 2005, HMSO
- The Access Manual, by Anne Sawyer and Keith Bright, Blackwell, 2003
- Sport England Access for Disabled People 2001

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2.4 GLOSSARY OF ABBREVIATIONS

Used within the access statement are the following abbreviations:

| | |
|---------------|--|
| DDA | Disability Discrimination Act 1995. |
| BS8300 | British Standard BS8300: 2001 -Design of Buildings and their approaches to meet the need of disabled people. |
| AD M | Building Regulations Approved Document M – Access to and Use of Buildings. |
| FFL | Finished floor level. |
| WCC | Wolverhampton City Council |

2.5 Areas of conflict

Throughout the design stage, an element of common sense has been applied; for example the provision of sound buffering in order to minimise background noise for hearing impaired employees. Health & safety and security issues take precedence over the DDA in all cases.

Certain further discrepancies have been established but with minimal impact due to the prescriptive nature of the guidance notes specific to the DDA requirements. The previous conflicting issues between the superseded Approved Document Part M and BS8300 were resolved with the revision in 2004.

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3 SPECIFIC ACCESS ISSUES

3.1 External Environment and Approach Routes

The designers have taken into account inclusivity for all when devising the exteriors and approach routes.

Accessible routes for users of all abilities are to be provided to access the new leisure centre from the newly created footpaths on approach. All of the external surfaces are to be of even and durable materials such as concrete blocks or concrete paving (which are to be flush and with no up stands); this will ensure a firm, slip resistant surface suitable for all users. Consideration has already been given to have paving differing in colour, tone and pattern to help all users distinguish between: the pedestrian path section and the surrounding paved areas. This will be a durable, aesthetically pleasing approach which also prevents potential trip hazards.

Whilst signage has not yet been completely devised, it is most likely to follow the corporate branding for WCC, clear and defining signage will be provided to all external routes. This includes directional signage and location signage at entrances.

At this stage; location and positioning of external furniture such as bollards and seating are indicative. Bollards will be positioned at least 900mm apart to allow unimpeded wheelchair access. Bollards will be at least 1000mm high and not linked with chains to avoid being hazardous to users with visual impairments. The designers are reviewing the potentiality of installing lights fitted with louvers (to direct the light downward to prevent glare) when placed in areas which are dark at night.

All items of external furniture in the vicinity of circulation routes will contrast adequately in colour and luminance with the surroundings. Any bench seating to be specified at a later date will be provided with well contrasted armrests and backrests. The benches are logically positioned as not to protrude into routes of pedestrian traffic.

3.2 Car Parking

The scheme consists of one large car park to the south of the leisure centre. 7no. accessible parking bays are proposed for disabled motorists. A further 5no. bays are proposed for motorists with children.

All accessible bays will be specifically marked out in accordance to BS8300 with sufficient transfer zones and signs to the front. Further signage will be made available on entry to the car park indicating the location of the bays.

3.3 Entrance

The two main entrances leading to the reception area will permit level access for wheelchair users directly off the external circulation routes from car park and pedestrian footpath. Doors will offer a clear

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opening of at least 1000mm via the double automatic sliding doors. The doors will be clearly distinguishable from the rest of the front façade.

Adequate visually contrasting manifestation will be provided to all glazing. This will enable people with vision impairments to determine the position of the glass and avoid collisions. The appearance of the manifestations will take into account effectiveness during daylight and at night.

Large-scale signage directing users to the entrance position will be provided at suitable locations. A clear, well-contrast overhead sign to the main entrance itself will be duplicated at low-level with tactile definition.

External features such as barriers and benches will be positioned to indicate the best route to the entrance and not restrict circulation.

3.4 Reception

The entrances lead directly into the reception area allowing visitors a clear view into the building. On entry, the unfamiliar visitor can be assisted by the present staff members and there will be clear, well-contrast directory board to indicate the location of facilities within the building. The signage will be consistent with the signage throughout the building and feature pictorial, text and tactile/Braille signage.

The reception desk will be clearly distinguishable by the use of different coloured flooring to the approach. The desk shall be staffed during opening hours by customer-facing staff. The appropriate training of staff will assist in providing an accessible service, in terms of understanding the needs of disabled people and how to interact.

The counter will be split-level at heights of 760mm with sufficient knee recess, to accommodate wheelchair users and 1100mm for people who are standing from both sides of the pay-barrier. An induction loop will be provided to assist hearing aid users with signage to promote the facility.

There are five payment gates, one of which will accommodate wheelchair users or people with mobility difficulties and is operated remotely by the reception staff. Additionally sufficient clearance will be provided for wheelchair users to access the staff side of the reception desk hence increasing employment opportunities for disabled people.

3.5 Horizontal Circulation

All key internal routes are at least 1800mm wide to allow two-way traffic. There will be no unnecessary projections into circulation routes. Any fixed appliances or furniture will be located to permit a circulation space of at least 1200mm to all areas.

The structural support columns positioned throughout contrast against the background on which they are seen to prevent collision by visitors with vision impairments.

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3.6 Vertical Circulation

3.6.1 Lift

There is one passenger lift providing access to all floors. The lift will be specified with inclusivity in mind. I.e. audible and vision announcements, support rails, Braille/tactile buttons, mirror to the back wall and induction loop coupler.

There is a 1.5x1.5m waiting area clear of the staircase route on each landing to the front of the lift. This area is clearly defined by a contrasting floor surface. Due to the large capacity and frequency of lift availability, a fold-down rest-chair has not been provided.

3.6.2 Stairs

The steps will be fully compliant with BS8300 guidance; with appropriate well contrasted handrails and definition to the nosings to aid people with impaired vision. Handrails will terminate by a return to the wall and continue around all intermediate landings for continuous support.

The dimensions of the treads and risers are in accordance with all relevant standards. The designers have considered adding tactile definitions to the underside of the handrails to aid people with vision impairments however this was not deemed required. This feature can easily be added at a later date should feedback indicate a requirement for it.

3.7 Internal Doors

The design team have aimed to keep the scheme as open plan as possible to increase manoeuvrability for wheelchair users.

The clear openings of all doors will provide a minimum of 800mm with 300mm to the leading edge of the door where appropriate. Doors en-route to the sports hall and associated changing area have an effective clear width of at least 1000mm to ensure passage by users of sports wheelchairs. The opening force of all doors will be no more than 20N, with delayed action closers installed. Single axis hinges will conform to the requirements of BS 7352. Fixing positions of hinges will conform to the requirements of BS 4787-1.

The ironmongery schedule for the premises will be produced with users with impairments in mind, incorporating the use of lever type and 'D' handles throughout. All door furniture will contrast in colour and luminance, to aid people with visual impairments. Finger-guards will be present to all public area doors without restricting the clear opening. Enlarged kick plates will protect from daily wear whilst not introducing a level of glare.

Vision panels will be provided to doors (where appropriate). The minimum zone of visibility will be between 500 and 1500mm from the floor.

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Door entry systems (if specified at a later date to restrict access) will be located on the latch side of the door with the activation pad positioned within 200mm of the door and at a height of between 750mm and 1000mm from the finished floor level.

3.8 Finishes

To assist vision impaired users, an appropriate colour scheme will be employed to differentiate adjacent surfaces. The doors will be a consistent colour throughout that clearly contrasts against the walls and floor coverings.

Sound reverberation within the premises will be addressed by use of sound-absorptive ceiling finishes, augmented with additional baffles as required.

3.9 Lighting

As part of the lighting rationale, the designers will ensure that the lighting scheme assists in way-finding and orientation through a strategy of balanced lighting. The eventual lighting scheme will be designed to ensure that it will not pose problems for people with vision impairments i.e. – appropriate levels over 100LUX, no pools of shadow, no up lighters etc.

The designers have taken care to ensure the use of natural lighting within key areas, i.e. the reception area, will not produce a glare or direct sunlight which can hinder people who lip read.

3.10 Facilities

3.10.1 Accessible WC/ Changing Facilities

Within the scheme accessible WCs and changing rooms are proposed on all floors i.e. the ground floor, mezzanine level and on the first floor. The designers have taken great care in choosing their positioning to ensure that disabled people do not have to travel further than non-disabled people to use welfare facilities.

The designers have not only referred to AD M and BS8300 for the suggested layout of an accessible changing room but have incorporated guidance from Sport England. Entrances to the accessible WCs will be a minimum of 1000mm and open outwards.

Coat pegs/hooks will be positioned at 1050mm and 1400mm from floor level. Additionally will contrast against the background upon which they are seen. Mirrors provided will be at least 600mm off the floor level and at least 1200mm long to allow wheelchair users to view with ease.

All fittings and fixtures will contrast in colour and contrast. Specifying white tiles and fittings will be avoided, which results in a lack of contrast. All accessible facilities will be equipped with a cord alarm system linked to the main reception and site maintenance.

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3.10.2 Single-Sex WC

Grab rails will be provided to one urinal within the Male WCs. These will be positioned to both sides with the centre being positioned at no more than 1100mm. Wash basins to be installed in all WCs will contrast in colour and luminance with the walls and surfaces around them so that they can be easily distinguished by visually impaired people. Contrast and finger guards will be provided to all of the cubical doors.

Taps will be of mixer style with an up and down action to control water flow or individual hot and cold lever operated taps with not more than a quarter turn from off to full flow.

Automatic hand dryers will be provided in addition to paper towel dispensers, this will aid people who have weakness in the arms

3.11 General Changing Areas

A selection of lockers provided will be suitable for use by wheelchair users - be at least 300mm wide, not more than 600mm deep, and with their bases set between 400mm and 800mm above floor level. Additionally there is provision for lockers to accommodate artificial limbs.

Showers will have controls so that they can be operated independently by an ambulant disabled person and/or person with dexterity impairments. The water temperature will not exceed 41 °C. The markings on shower controls will be logical and clear to visually impaired people.

3.11.1 Spectator Areas

The main pool designated spectator area incorporates a specific area for spectators with mobility impairments. This area also features fold-down seats to allow carers and/or accompanying visitors to sit with their companion.

The glazed spectator areas ensure people of small stature and wheelchair users have a suitable line of sight.

3.11.2 Hearing Enhancement

Induction loops will be provided to aid communication with people with hearing impairments to the reception desk and café servery as well as infrared devices to the meeting spaces. There is one large meeting room in the scheme (this can be divided into several smaller meeting rooms when necessary by the way of folding screens).

Induction loops will be provided to aid people with hearing impairments to the first floor sport hall and the dance studio. Provision has also been made for spectators who may require an enhancement device. People who wear hearing aids suffer in locations where there is excessive background noise. The provision of auxiliary aids for communication has been incorporated into the design to ensure suitability with the structure, fixtures and fittings.

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3.11.3 Staff kitchen

A servery and kitchen is to be provided on the ground floor, this has been designed with accessibility in mind. Taps will be of a swivel neck mixer style, with clear markings to indicate hot and cold settings to aid people with vision impairments.

The hobs/equipment controls will be easy to locate and the settings will be easy to identify and operate. All appliances and equipment will contrast in colour and luminance to aid people with visual impairments. Switches and controls within the kitchen.

A combination of standard height and lowered work surfaces will be provided for wheelchair users with the suitable knee recess. Lighting to be specified within the kitchen area will be in the range of 150-300LUX without providing glare, shadows or reflections to the sink, worktops or equipment. Fluorescent lights with electronic ballasts will be used rather than inductive chokes which can cause interference to hearing aids.

As with all staff areas; the individual and their work environment will be assessed upon appointment to ensure they are suitable to undertake the specific tasks required in their job description. To ensure the council's duty to disabled employees is fulfilled, subsequent adaptations to the fixtures and fittings may be required at a later date.

3.11.4 Pool Areas

Both studio pool and the main pool will feature hoist facilities to allow mobility impaired persons to be assisted into the pool.

3.12 Signage & Way-finding

Whilst signage is to follow WCC corporate branding, a specialist signage supplier will be consulted in order to employ a signage scheme for the project that is consistent and well contrast in colour and luminance. Where appropriate; signage will include text, pictorial information and tactile/Braille features.

Emergency signage will also be specified to involve well-positioned illuminated features throughout.

Ongoing management of signage will be implemented which is essential to prevent 'overloading' of information and the erection of temporary posters inconsistent with the scheme. Designated poster display positions will be incorporated to assist this procedure.

3.13 Emergency Egress

All emergency hardware to fire doors and external fire exits will be designed to BS EN 1125 for panic situations. The mains connected alarm system will include audible sounders and flashing beacons to all routes. For frequent visitors and staff with hearing impairments, alert pagers will be provided when on site.

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All fire break points will be colour contrasted and wall-mounted at 1000mm above floor level for use by all visitors. All of the external fire exits will provide level egress via the use of a level threshold and external ramp to the assembly point.

Protected refuges have been provided to both escape staircases clear of the path of evacuation. These refuges incorporate a two-way communication system suitable for use by people with sensory impairments. An EVAC chair will also be provided in conjunction with the building management to ensure the correct number of suitably trained staff are on-hand at all times.