

**The Symington Building
Equalities Impact; Update**

21.10.2013

Purpose of Note

To update the Executive Advisory Panel of Progress on Engagement with Equalities Stakeholder group in respect to the redevelopment of The Symington Building

Background

A community stakeholder group was set up in early 2013, as part of the Equalities Action Plan identified for the project, to ensure matters relating to equalities and equality of access were considered throughout the design and redevelopment of The Symington Building.

The stakeholder group features representatives from the Harborough Disability Action group, as well as representatives of a number of specialist interest groups. All members are local to Market Harborough.

Meetings have been held on a quarterly basis throughout. The latest meeting was held on 3rd October, and included a site visit to view the redevelopment work.

Key Observations and Notes

The following are those matters which remain outstanding from previous meetings only:

The group noted the locations and functions of lifts and access/entry points to the building. No issues arising at this time; at next visit all lifts will have been commissioned, so group reserved comment until this point.

At previous meetings, the design of the atrium area, and particularly the glazed balustrade and the treatment of the “edge” overlooking the atrium from the library/museum were key concerns; notably for those suffering vertigo and related conditions, and also for a number of potential users with learning disabilities who may struggle to visually interpret the spaces involved.

The steel “upstand” detail at the base of the balustrade was positively received as this overcomes many of these issues. The other key design detail which will support the use of the facility for this group is the graphic detailing to be applied to the glass balustrade. It was agreed to discuss these details with the group before being finalised.

A further key area of interest is signage within the building, with an emphasis placed on inclusivity. The main areas of concern here are:

(i) Signage is simple and easy to use for as many users as possible, including particularly users with learning difficulties. The group have offered to provide advice on this;

(ii) Signage is visually contrasting for partially sighted/otherwise visually impaired users.

The group noted the arrangements for emergency evacuation, including new fire refuges, which provide additional fire protection during an emergency evacuation.

Chris Clarke
Project Manager