

**Alliance of Service Users and Carers
Shared Space Subgroup**

29th April 2008

Leeds Involvement Project

**Notes of a Shared Space Meeting with the Alliance Shared Space Sub
Group and Officers of Leeds City Council**

Present:

Barry Naylor, Mary Naylor, Alan Oldroyd, Joyce Rogers, Keith Spellman, Joy Fisher, Victor Jackson

Mike Darwin and Gillian McLeod – Leeds City Council Highways

In attendance:

Joseph Alderdice (LIP minute taker)

Mags Barrett (Reed Social Care) Personal Assistant

Meeting opened 10.30am

Keith accepted the invitation to chair the meeting and welcomed everyone. Introductions were made.

Mike offered an update. He has met with his counterparts in eight 'core cities', discussing the issue of Shared Space and different authorities' approaches to it. He reported that they are all going ahead with it, although two are looking at using contrasting paint.

Mike has also met with West Yorkshire's County Councils who are willing to have small cul de sacs made into shared space, with any other shared spaces having a designated route through for disabled people. This proposal was endorsed by the Highways Authority, taking into account recommendations from today's meeting and emerging publicity and guidance.

Mike referred to a Guide Dogs publication containing various design proposals for guidance paving, including kerbs of various shapes and sizes and raised painted lines. There is no consensus on what is the best design as yet, which Mike said is why he is here. Group members felt that, until a suitable delineation method was devised, no changes should be made to the existing pavement system. One member suggested that to do anything else would be a failure in their duty of care.

Gillian responded to this by stressing that they are compelled to follow Government proposals and that by consulting the group today they are considering their safety. Mike elaborated that he is formulating a policy which he is inviting the group's input on today. If he doesn't produce this policy, the development will be based on Government policy instead (without the group's input).

One member raised the practical issue of cane users requiring a minimum radius to swing their canes.

Mike talked about the designated area for pedestrians and the options for delineating it from the road, including kerbs and white lines.

It was asked how much opposition there is to the scheme in other cities. Mike had the impression that there was a similar level of opposition in other cities.

There was a discussion around Kensington High Street (a London Shared Space area), the various demarcations used and its improved safety record.

A number of group members accepted that there are times when traffic needs to use pedestrian areas in towns and cities, such as to make deliveries. However, it was stressed that to open up pedestrian areas to traffic around the clock in suburban areas is a different matter altogether.

Mike brought the discussion back to marking the border between pedestrian and traffic areas. He asked again for a recommendation to take back, since the research presented earlier hadn't reached a conclusion. He listed the options again. The border will not necessarily be marked between the pedestrian areas and gardens.

It was felt that the demarcation must clearly designate the area to motorists, yet no matter what the system is some people will always park illegally.

There was a general agreement that it would be best to have a strong colour contrast between the areas, complimenting a raised (30mm) kerb between them. It was also felt that there should be designated crossing areas at which the kerb is lowered, with tactile paving beside it.

It was felt that walls, gardens and kerbs acts as tactile landmarks for cane users and that to make areas uniform would be disorientating. A further issue was raised, of knowing where Shared Space ends and a busy main road might begin.

Various issues of garden walls, children's play areas and supervised play were raised. Mike explained that these issues were nothing to do with his work, or Shared Space.

The group recommended that the borders between pedestrian areas and the roads are mirrored by a border at the edges of gardens. Mike accepted that this would be useful, but argued that the edges of gardens are private property. He did offer to take the issue back for further discussion.

The group recommended that the paths are smooth, to contrast with the block paving on the road. Mike said that research has shown that having block paving in both areas causes drivers to slow down. Group members stressed that to navigate block paving with a cane can be quite painful. Mike made it clear that the issue of block paving was beyond negotiation.

There was a discussion around motorists obeying speed limits.

Concerns were expressed around maintaining block paving and the dangers of replacing them unevenly when private telecommunications companies dig them up. It was feared that such a tripping hazard would be the "cobblestones of the future". Mike reported again that block paving is the preferred option for other interested parties. He offered to take the group's concerns back, although he warned that it is overwhelmingly likely that block paving will be used. He offered the consolation that the policy is "not set in stone" and will be reviewed every two years.

Gillian offered the group opportunities to observe the first Shared Space projects in Leeds when they are completed.

There was a discussion around the lack of coordination between the various bodies that dig up highways. It was addressed in the Traffic Management Act, which gives the responsibility for maintenance to the Statutory Undertakers. It was felt that they regularly fail in these responsibilities.

Mike will ask his equivalents in other cities if they are willing to be contacted by group members interested in how Shared Space is progressing elsewhere. One group member warned against losing focus on Leeds.

The issue of training engineers on access rights and legislation was raised, along with the issue of penalising contractors for non-compliance. This is beyond Mike's remit.

There was a discussion around street contractors "cutting corners" and ill-placed street furniture. Mike reported that the intention is for all replacement street lighting to be installed at the back of the pavement if at all possible.

Mike will report the agreed demarcation design to the Planning Board and Highways. He thanked the group and was thanked in return. He is willing to be contacted at any time.

Mike and Gillian left at 12.00 noon.