



Westmeath Local Authorities

Building Access Report

February 2007

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Section 1

Athlone Civic Centre & Library

Athlone Civic Centre

1.0 Introduction

Both employees of Westmeath Co. Council and members of the council use the building on a daily basis and therefore, the building is used by people with varying abilities. Approximately 45 staff members use the building from day to day. The building houses, council's chambers, council's offices, the public library, motor taxation offices and customer services.

1.1 Parking

Current disabled parking is approximately 50m from the entrance at the front of the building. There is a car park to the rear of the building that is currently being constructed, in which more designated disabled car parking spaces should be made available.

1.2 Footpaths

- Provide corduroy hazard warning strips at top and bottom of slope coming from the disabled car parking space towards the building's front entrance.
- Glass panels at the front of the building to be visually marked so as to make them easier to distinguish.
- Provide visual contrasting on external furniture, which at present blends in with the surrounding ground covering.

1.3 External Steps

- Provide corduroy hazard strips on the top and bottom of all external steps.
- Provide visual contrast strips on the first and last step of every flight of steps.

1.4 Signage

Signage to both the exterior and interior of this building is extremely poor. When entering the building it is impossible to locate your chosen destination without necessitating the assistance from a member of the public or staff member.

- Provide adequate signage from all entrances to all public services.



Fig 1.1 Existing Signage unclear.



Fig. 1.2 Sign information on initial entry is very poor

1.5 Motor Taxation Offices

- Provide Signage from all entrances towards the motor tax counter and adequate signage at the counter.
- Provide a counter suitable for those who are seated.
- Provide a counter loop system to help those with hearing difficulties.
- Provide visual contrasting strips on all glass panels.

1.6 Reception Area/Customer Service

- Provide Signage from all entrances towards customer service and adequate signage at the counter.
- Provide a counter loop system to help those with hearing difficulties.

1.7 Vertical Circulation

- Provide corduroy hazard warning strips at the top and bottom of all steps and any changes of level.
- Provide visual contrast strips on the first and last step of every flight of steps.
- Provide handrails on both sides of all steps

1.8 Passenger lifts

- Provide tactile floor covering outside the lift door on all floors (1800 x 1800mm) Fig. 2
- Provide controls on platform lift so that the lift user can control the descent and ascent.



Fig. 1.3 No tactile warning outside lifts

1.9 Emergency

Emergency doors are opened with a push button or break glass apparatus. The break glass versions are very difficult to press to release the door and would be impossible for a person with arthritis or an older person.

- Provide easier to open emergency exit doors

1.10 General observations

Signage around and inside this building is of a very poor standard and this problem needs to be addressed to make the building more accessible for everyone.

When the car park to the rear of the building is opened, a greater number of people will be using the rear of the building for access. A person in a wheelchair doing this and wishing to access the children's library has to:

1. On entering the building get on the main lift and ascend to the first floor.
2. Exit the lift and enter the library.
3. Enter into the library while locating a member of staff to operate the platform lift.
4. Descent down to the ground floor (where they originally started).

At the rear entrance at ground floor level there is an emergency door between the entrance and the main lift. This door leads straight into the children's library and could be used as another entrance to the children's library (at present it can only be opened from the inside of the library). This would be far more convenient route for people in wheelchairs, people with buggies and for people who just want to access the children's library.

Section 2

Coole Area Office & Library

Coole Area Office

2.0 Introduction

Both employees of Westmeath Co. Council and members of the public use the building on a daily basis and therefore, the building is used by people with varying abilities. Approximately 30 staff members use the building from day to day. The building houses, Coole branch library, council offices, civic rooms and customer services.

2.1 Parking

Designated disabled parking spaces are generally good.

- Providing blue asphalt with yellow markings on disabled car parking spaces would make the spaces more identifiable and distinguishable from the rest of the car parking spaces.



Fig 2.1 Disabled Car parking spaces with adequate transfer spaces

2.2 Entrance

- Provide visual contrasting strips on front entrance door.
- Provide handrails along the ramp edges.
- Provide tactile warning at the top of the step and ramp.

2.3 Reception Area

- Provide audible assistance for people with hearing difficulties.
- Train staff in the systems use.

2.4 Vertical Circulation

- Provide corduroy hazard strips on the top and bottom of all internal steps.
- Provide handrails that are turned into the ground or wall.
- Provide handrails that run 300mm beyond the first and last step.

2.5 Passenger lift

- Provide suitable tactile floor covering outside the lift door (1800x1800mm) on all floors.
- Provide a mirror within the lift, opposite the door on the rear wall. Mirror to run from top of handrail to ceiling.
- Ensure the timing on the lift door closing mechanism is lengthened to a minimum of 8 seconds i.e. the door should remain open for at least 8 seconds.

2.6 Disabled Toilet

- Provide sign on outside of toilet door showing that the toilet is wheelchair accessible.

2.7 General Observations

This building generally has good accessibility and with a little work can be made more comfortable and easier for everyone to use.



Fig 2.1 Good signage towards entrance. (Tactile paving needs to spread the full width of the path).

Section 3

Environment Section

Environment Section

3.0 Introduction

Both employees of Westmeath Co. Council and members of the public use the building on a daily basis and therefore, the building is used by people with varying abilities. Approximately 10 staff members use the building from day to day. The building houses, Environment sections and customer service area/reception

In order to make the above building accessible to everyone the following sections must be read and all recommendations within those sections to be considered.

3.1 Parking

- At present there are no convenient designated disabled car parking spaces near this building

3.2 Signage

There are currently no signs to direct people to the office and at present people would have difficulty in finding it because it looks somewhat like a regular house.

- Provide signs leading people from the road to the buildings entrance.

3.3 Footpaths

The footpaths leading to this building are far from desirable.

- Provide a clear designated route from the street footpath to the buildings front door

3.4 Entrance

- Provide better signage towards the entrance and at the entrance.
- Provide adequate lighting at the entrance.

3.5 Lobby/Corridor

- Provide handrails on each side of the entrance corridor.

3.6 Reception

- Provide audible assistance at the counter for people with hearing difficulties.

3.7 General Observations

This building has the potential to be very accessible for all and with a little work can be made more comfortable and easier for everyone to use.

Section 4

Governor's House

Governors House

4.1 Introduction

Both employees of Westmeath Co. Council and members of the council use the building on a daily basis and therefore, the building is used by people with varying abilities. Approximately 15 staff members use the building from day to day. The building houses, sanitary services, water engineering services and a customer service desk.

4.2 Parking

Current disabled parking is at the front of the county buildings off Mount Street.

- Provide disabled parking spaces within the county building's car park.
- Provide adequate signage to and at the location of all disabled car parking spaces.

4.3 Footpaths

There are no footpaths at present leading a person from the current disabled car parking spaces to this building.

The current footpath that terminates at the housing building has many trip hazards along its route and obstacles blocking its full width.

A person would have to walk in the flow of traffic into the car park, which is not acceptable.

- Provide a designated footpath, free of steps from all disabled car parking spaces to the building (taking steps out of existing footpath).
- On any changes of level on this footpath corduroy hazard warning strips must be used at the top and bottom of any such level change.



Fig. 4.1 The path to Governors house terminates here at the end of the housing building

4.4 External Steps

- Provide corduroy hazard strips on the top and bottom of all external steps.
- Provide visual contrast strips on the first and last step of every flight of steps.
- Rebuild the steps ensuring that the risers are consistent throughout the flight.
- Compliment these steps by providing a ramp.
- Provide handrails on both sides of the steps that run 300mm beyond first and last step.



Fig 4.2 These steps make it impossible for anyone in a wheelchair to gain access to this office.

4.5 Entrance

- Provide directional signs towards the entrance.
- Provide a flush threshold for access by people in wheelchairs.
- Provide visual markings like signs on the doors to make them more distinguishable from the rest of the glass panels.
- Provide adequate lighting at the entrance.



Fig 4.3 Entrance must be contrasted and small ramp installed to make this office accessible to all.

4.6 Reception Area

- Provide a counter suitable for those who are seated.
- Provide a counter loop system to help those with hearing difficulties.
- Make provision for a person waiting in a wheelchair

4.7 General observations

People wheelchairs or people with buggies at present cannot access this building because the steps are not complimented by a ramp.

Directional Signage toward this building is of a very poor standard and this problem needs to be addressed to make the building more accessible for everyone.

There are no emergency signs in the event of fire etc.

There is an area en route to the building, which is dangerous for kids. It leads down to the basement under the building. There is an old rusty rail surrounding it on which kids can climb up on and risk falling in. A new rail with vertical bars would be a lot safer.

There is a drainage gully at the top of the steps that is blocked and water gathers and ponds in this area.

Parked cars can often block the current footpath.

Section 5

Kilbeggan Area Office & Library

Kilbeggan Area Office

5.0 Introduction

Both employees of Westmeath Co. Council and members of the public use the building on a daily basis and therefore, the building is used by people with varying abilities. Approximately 30 staff members use the building from day to day. The building houses, Kilbeggan area office, council civic rooms, Kilbeggan branch library and customer services.

In order to make the above building accessible to everyone the following sections must be read and all recommendations within those sections to be considered.

5.1 Parking

Designated disabled parking spaces are generally good.

- Providing blue asphalt with yellow markings on disabled car parking spaces would make the spaces more identifiable and distinguishable from the rest of the car parking spaces.
- Provide directional signs towards designated parking bays.

5.2 Entrance

- Provide better signage towards the entrance and at the entrance.
- Provide adequate lighting at the entrance.



Fig 5.1 These bollards may restrict wheelchair users while meeting pedestrians

5.3 Signage (Lobby)

- Provide standard permanent signs securely fixed to doors and walls
- Provide a sign in the lobby stating that the library is situated on the 1st floor for people using the lift.

5.4 Reception (Area Office)

- Provide audible assistance at the counter for people with hearing difficulties.
- Provide a counter suitable for those who are seated.

5.5 Vertical Circulation

- Provide corduroy hazard strips on the top and bottom of all internal steps and landings.
- Provide handrails that are turned into the ground or wall.
- Provide handrails that run 300mm beyond the first and last step.



Fig 5.2 Stairs down from library showing good handrails but no tactile warnings.

5.6 Passenger lift

- Provide suitable tactile floor covering outside the lift door (1800x1800mm) on all floors.
- Ensure the timing on the lift door closing mechanism is lengthened to a minimum of 8 seconds i.e. the door should remain open for at least 8 seconds.

5.7 Horizontal Circulation (Upstairs)

- Provide handrails on both sides of the corridor leading from the top of the stairs to the library door.
- Provide visual contrasting strips on the white pillars also in the corridor.



Fig 5.3 These white pillars need some colour contrasting.

5.8 Reception Desk (Library)

- Provide audible assistance at the counter for people with hearing difficulties.

5.9 Signage (Library)

- Provide adequate signage inside and outside the library towards the public toilets that are situated there.



Fig 5.4 Permanent signs needed for library and toilets.

5.10 General Observations

The Kilbeggan Area Office and Library has generally good accessibility and with a little work can be made easier for everyone to use and access.

Section 6

Killucan Branch Library

Killucan Branch Library

6.0 Introduction

Both employees of Westmeath Co. Council and members of the public use the building on a daily basis and therefore, the building is used by people with varying abilities. One staff member uses the building from day to day. It is a small library but adequate for the demand from the local community.

6.1 Signage

There are currently no signs on the road to direct people to the library and at present people would have difficulty in finding the library as it is to the rear of an existing building and thus out of sight.

- Provide signs leading people from the road to the library car park and library

6.2 Parking

Designated disabled parking spaces are not provided and people in wheelchairs will have difficulty in travelling across the existing ground.

- Provide a designated disabled car parking space near the entrance for convenience
- Provide a concrete area/path from the disabled car parking space to the entrance



Fig 6.1 Flush threshold on doorways but gravel area needs to be given a smoother, firmer finish. Outside light needed also.

6.3 Entrance

- Provide adequate lighting outside the main entrance door.

6.4 Reception Area

- Provide audible assistance at the counter for people with hearing difficulties.
- Train staff in the systems use.

6.5 General Observations

This building generally has good accessibility and with a little work can be made more comfortable and easier for everyone to use.

Section 7

County Building

County Buildings Mullingar

7.0 Introduction

Both employees of Westmeath Co. Council and members of the public use this building which houses the council chambers. Therefore wide ranges of people use the building with various abilities on a regular basis. Approximately 20 Westmeath Co. Council staff members use the building on a daily basis.

In order to make the above building accessible to everyone the following sections must be read and all recommendations within those sections to be considered.

7.1 Parking

- Provide directional signs towards designated disabled parking spaces.
- Provide signage at designated parking spaces.
- Ensure all disabled car parking spaces are covered in blue asphalt for colour contrast.
- Provide a designated walkway from disabled car parking spaces to all entrances.

7.2 External Ramp (Arts Centre)

- Provide Corduroy hazard warning strips at the top and the bottom of the ramp.
- Provide handrails both sides of the ramp 840mm – 940mm above the ramp surface
- It is best practice to provide handrails fixed in position 700mm above the ramp surface to accommodate children and smaller people.
- All handrails to run 300mm beyond the top and bottom of the ramp.
- All handrails must be turned in and not projecting into any route.



Fig 7.1 No Tactile hazard strips at bottom of ramp into the Arts Centre

7.3 External Steps (Arts Centre)

- Provide Corduroy hazard-warning strips at the top and the bottom of the steps.
- Provide visual contrast strips on first and last step.
- Provide handrails both sides of the steps 840mm – 940mm above the going level.
- It is best practice to provide handrails fixed in position 700mm above the steps going levels to accommodate children and smaller people.
- All handrails to run 300mm beyond the first and last step.
- All handrails must be turned in and not projecting into any route.



Fig 7.2 These steps have no tactile hazard strips plus the steps have no visual contrasting from the surrounding area.

7.4 External Steps (Side Entrance to Carpark)

This entrance is heavily trafficked.

- Provide Corduroy hazard-warning strips at the top and the bottom of the steps.
- Provide visual contrast strips on first and last step.
- Provide handrails both sides of the steps 840mm – 940mm above the going level.
- All handrails to run 300mm beyond the first and last step.
- All handrails must be turned in and not projecting into any route.



Fig 7.3 These steps have no tactile hazard strips nor are the risers consistent which is dangerous.

7.5 Entrance (Arts Centre)

- Provide directional signs towards the entrance from the car park and especially disabled car parking spaces.
- Provide doors that are easier to open.
- Ensure the double doors at the top of the ramp at arts centre are both opened and not locked.
- Provide visual strips on glass panels, doors etc.

7.6 Entrance (Main)

These doors give direct access to the main County Building and the Chambers. At present with the steps in front of this building a person in a wheelchair would not be able to enter the building from this entrance. Seeing that entrance can be gained through the Arts Centre and that this building is a listed building, I would consider the use of the Arts centre ramp acceptable.

- Investigate the possibility of providing mobile ramps in use with an intercom system.



Fig 7.4 These steps have no tactile hazard strips plus the steps have no visual contrasting from the surrounding area

7.8 Entrance Lobby

- Provide signage to allow people to find the reception area without the need for assistance.
- Use matwells in preference to loose mats.
- Provide visual strips on glass panels, doors etc

7.9 Reception Area

- Provide a clear route from the entrance/entrances to the reception area.
- Provide signage to the reception area from all entrances.
- Provide a reception desk (or section of original) of 750mm high for use by seated persons
- Provide a counter loop at reception for people with hearing difficulties and ensure on duty staff are trained in the systems use.
- Provide signage at reception for people who are progressing further into the building.

7.10 Internal Steps to Chambers

At present there is no means of access to the council chambers for people in wheelchairs.

- Provide Corduroy hazard-warning strips at the top and the bottom of the steps.
- Provide visual contrast strips on first and last step.
- Provide handrails both sides of the steps 840mm – 940mm above the going level.

- It is best practice to provide handrails fixed in position 700mm above the steps going levels to accommodate children and smaller people.
- All handrails to run 300mm beyond the first and last step.
- All handrails must be turned in and not projecting into any route.
- Provide means of access for people in wheelchairs.

7.11 General Observations

Access into this building can be gained through the Art Centre, for people in wheelchairs and through the main entrance for the majority of people. This however is less than desirable but seeing that the building is listed it is fair to say, that practically, the entrance ramp at the Arts Centre is sufficient.

At present a person in a wheelchair cannot gain access to the council's chambers because the only access to this room is via internal steps leading from the main building lobby upstairs to management offices and chambers. At present we are looking at various options of eliminating this difficulty by means of a chair lift or an access lift.



Fig 7.5 Ramp section with handrails but unfortunately to tactile hazard warnings at the top or bottom

Section 8

Moate Library

Moate Library

8.0 Introduction

Both employees of Westmeath Co. Council and members of the public use the building on a daily basis and therefore, the building is used by people with varying abilities. Approximately 2 staff members use the building from day to day. This library is widely used by the public and especially parents with children in buggies.

In order to make the above building accessible to everyone the following sections must be read and all recommendations within those sections to be considered.

8.1 Parking

There are no designated disabled car parking spaces close to this building although there is adequate room for them.

- Provide disabled car parking spaces convenient to the library building.

8.2 Entrance

At present the entrance to this building does not allow access for people in wheelchairs, parents with buggies and presents great difficulty for people who have lack of mobility or who have visual difficulties.

- There is no designated route from the main street into the library and the existing route is not level.
- These difficulties are directly caused by the steps which lead to the buildings entrance.
- The steps are in very poor condition and very smooth which leave them a major slip hazard.
- The risers of the steps are not consistent throughout the flight.
- After climbing these steps, users also have to negotiate an additional 120mm step at the entrance door.
- The handrail on these steps is also of a very poor standard.
- The path up to the door is only 850mm wide and 1160mm at the doorstep which would make it impossible for a person in a wheelchair to turn in the event of the door being locked. This path also is in bad repair and has vegetation growing on it.



Fig 8.1 No designated path to the entrance and poor surface.



Fig 8.2 Not much room to widen this path with access lane to museum.

8.2.1 To rectify these problems the following sections must be considered:

- Provide a designated route from the main street to the entrance.



Fig 8.3 Existing steps at entrance.

- Provide a long ramp of slope not greater than 1:20 replacing the existing steps.
- Widen the path at the doorstep section to allow easier access but also to allow a person to turn a wheelchair in comfort. (Turning circle of at least 1200mm)
- Provide a ramp at the entrance door allowing wheelchair access. (This ramp should lead up to the path which will be potentially wider with some renovation work as described above)
- Provide a better surface on the path from the top of the existing steps to the library entrance.



Fig 8.4 Existing path leading to the library door.

8.3 Reception Desk

- Provide audible assistance at the counter for people with hearing difficulties.



Fig 8.5 Existing doorstep with little room for manoeuvre and also 120mm entrance step.

8.4 General Observations

Moate branch library is at present in need of a lot of work outside the entrance to make it accessible to people in wheelchairs. Once inside the building there is good access with good room around the bookshelves and reception desk. This library, with the above works should make it quite accessible but if for some reason that the works cannot be carried out a re-location would have to be considered and may be a better option all together if this was possible.

8.5 May 2006

It has been advised that Moate library will be relocated to a different more accessible building.

Section 9

Motor Tax Office

Motor Tax Office

9.0 Introduction

Both employees of Westmeath Co. Council and members of the public use this office on a daily basis. Out of all the offices surveyed it is perhaps the office most used by members of the public.

In order to make the above building accessible to everyone the following sections must be read and all recommendations within those sections to be considered.

9.1 Parking

Designated disabled parking spaces are generally good.

- Providing blue asphalt with yellow markings on disabled car parking spaces would make the spaces more identifiable and distinguishable from the rest of the car parking spaces.
- Provide directional signs towards designated parking bays.

9.2 Entrance

- Provide better signage towards the entrance and at the entrance.
- Provide adequate lighting at the entrance.



Fig 9.1 Level threshold at entrance but entrance needs lighting.

9.3 Signage (Lobby)

- Provide standard permanent signs securely fixed to doors and walls

- Provide a sign in the lobby stating that the motor tax office is situated on the 1st floor.

9.4 Vertical Circulation

- Provide corduroy hazard strips on the top and bottom of all internal steps and landings.
- Provide handrails that are turned into the ground or wall.
- Provide handrails that run 300mm beyond the first and last step.
- Provide permanent colour contrasting strips incorporated into the first and last step of every flight.



Fig 9.2 These steps make access to this office impossible for a person in a wheelchair.

9.5 Customer Service

- Generally the customer service area is good for people who can make it into the motor tax office.

9.6 General Observations

This building is inaccessible for people in wheelchairs. It is also not accessible for elderly people whom may not be able to climb the numerous flights of steps to get up to the tax office. I have not listed the items above that would make the customer service area more comfortable for these users as they cannot access this area in the first place.

Section 10

Mullingar Library

Mullingar Branch Library

10.0 Introduction

Both employees of Westmeath Co. Council and members of the public use the library on a daily basis and therefore, the building is used by people with varying abilities. Approximately 5 staff members use the office from day to day and it is also used widely by the public.

In order to make the above library more accessible to everyone the following sections must be read and all recommendations within those sections to be considered.

10.1 Parking

Designated disabled parking spaces are generally good.

- Providing blue asphalt with yellow markings on disabled car parking spaces would make the spaces more identifiable and distinguishable from the rest of the car parking spaces.
- Provide directional signs towards designated parking bays.

10.2 Entrance

- Provide better signage towards the entrance and at the entrance.
- Provide adequate lighting at the entrance.



Fig 10.1 Wheelchair friendly access to library with automatic doors on the inside. Entrance needs outside lighting.

10.3 Signage (Lobby)

- Provide standard permanent signs securely fixed to doors and walls

10.4 Reception Desk/Customer service (Library)

- Provide audible assistance at the counter for people with hearing difficulties.
- Provide a counter suitable for those who are seated.

10.5 General Observations

This library has generally good accessibility and with a little work can be made easier for everyone to use and access.

Section 11

Mullingar Area Office

Mullingar Area Office

11.1 Introduction

Both employees of Westmeath Co. Council and members of the public use this building which houses the Mullingar area. Therefore wide ranges of people use the building with various abilities on a regular basis. Approximately 20 Westmeath Co. Council staff members use the building on a daily basis.

In order to make the above building accessible to everyone the following sections must be read and all recommendations within those sections to be considered.

11.2 Parking

- Provide directional signs towards designated disabled parking spaces.
- Provide signage at designated parking spaces.
- Ensure all disabled car parking spaces are covered in blue asphalt for good colour contrast.
- Provide a designated walkway from disabled car parking spaces to all entrances.

11.3 Footpaths

- Ensure all trees and shrubs are cut back clear of any route or footpath.

11.4 External Ramp

- Provide Corduroy hazard-warning strips at the top and the bottom of the ramp.
- All handrails to run, 300mm beyond the top and bottom of the ramp.
- All handrails must be turned in and not projecting into any route.
- Ensure that tree is kept cut back giving a clear height of 2200mm.



Fig 11.1 Good path leading to ramp but no tactile hazard warning strips in place.

11.5 Entrance

- Provide adequate lighting outside the entrance door and ramp.

11.6 Reception/Customer service

- Provide a reception desk (or section of original) of 750mm high for use by seated persons fitted with audible assistance.
- Ensure customer service staff are adequately trained in the use of the audible assistance device.

11.7 General Observations

This Mullingar Area Office has generally good accessibility and with a little work can be made more comfortable and easier for everyone to use.

Section 12

NRA Project Office

Project Office

12.1 Introduction

Both employees of Westmeath Co. Council and members of the public use the building on a daily basis and therefore, the building is used by people with varying abilities. Approximately 21 staff members use the building from day to day. The Project Office also houses in-house meetings and meetings with external agencies.

In order to make the above building accessible to everyone the following sections must be read and all recommendations within those sections to be considered.

12.2 Parking

Designated disabled parking spaces are generally good.

- Providing blue asphalt with yellow markings on disabled car parking spaces would make the spaces more identifiable and distinguishable from the rest of the car parking spaces.
- Provide signage at designated parking spaces.

12.3 Reception

- Provide audible assistance at the counter for people with hearing difficulties.

12.4 Reception Desk

- Provide audible assistance at the counter for people with hearing difficulties.

12.5 General Observations

This Project Office has generally good accessibility and with a little work can be made more comfortable and easier for everyone to use.

Section 13

Roads and Housing Building

Roads and Housing

13.0 Introduction

Both employees of Westmeath Co. Council and members of the public use this building, which houses Roads and Housing sections. Therefore wide ranges of people use the building with various abilities on a regular basis. Approximately 20 Westmeath Co. Council staff members use the building on a daily basis.

In order to make the above building accessible to everyone the following sections must be read and all recommendations within those sections to be considered.

13.1 Parking

- Provide directional signs towards designated disabled parking spaces.
- Provide signage at designated parking spaces.
- Ensure all disabled car parking spaces are covered in blue asphalt for good colour contrast.
- Provide a designated walkway from disabled car parking spaces to all entrances.

13.2 Footpaths

The current footpath that services this building has many trip hazards along its route and obstacles blocking its full width.

A person would have to walk in the flow of traffic into the car park, which is not acceptable.

- Provide a designated footpath, free of steps from all disabled car parking spaces to the building (taking steps out of existing footpath).
- On any changes of level on this footpath corduroy hazard warning strips must be used at the top and bottom of any such level change.



Fig 13.1 Parked cars and a step in the path make this section impossible to pass in a wheelchair.



Fig 13.2 Narrow path with vegetation growing over

13.4 External Steps

- Provide corduroy hazard strips on the top and bottom of all external steps.
- Provide visual contrast strips on the first and last step of every flight of steps.
- Provide a ramp into this building to compliment the existing steps.

13.5 Entrance

- Provide directional signs towards the entrance.
- Provide a flush threshold for access by people in wheelchairs.
- Provide visual markings like signs on the doors to make them more distinguishable from the rest of the glass panels.
- Provide adequate lighting at the entrance.



Fig 13.3 These steps impede access to this building to people in wheelchairs.

13.6 Reception Area

- Provide a counter suitable for those who are seated.
- Provide a counter loop system to help those with hearing difficulties.
- Make provision for a person waiting in a wheelchair.
- Provide signs for people going further into the building.

13.7 Vertical Circulation (Stairs to Roads)

- Provide corduroy hazard warning strips at the top and bottom of all steps and any changes of level.
- Provide visual contrast strips on the first and last step of every flight of steps.
- Provide handrails on both sides of all steps
- Install a platform lift to accommodate wheelchair users.

13.8 General observations

People wheelchairs or people with buggies at present cannot access this building because the steps are not complimented by a ramp at the entrance.

Directional Signage toward this building is of a very poor standard and this problem needs to be addressed to make the building more accessible for everyone.

Parked cars can often block the current footpath.

Section 14

Mullingar Swimming Pool

Mullingar Swimming Pool

14.1 Introduction

Both employees of Westmeath Co. Council and members of the public use the building on a daily basis and therefore, the building is used by people with varying abilities. Approximately 6 staff members use the building on a daily basis and due to the nature of this building it is widely used by members of the public, including school children, parents with babies, people with visual and hearing difficulties and disabled people.

In order to make the above building accessible to everyone the following sections must be read and all recommendations within those sections to be considered.

14.2 Parking

Due to this building's location in the town park, convenient car parking spaces cannot be provided but disabled users are catered for by designated car parking spaces provided close to the entrances to the town park.

- To make this building more accessible for disabled people provide designated car parking spaces directly outside the entrances to the town park

14.3 Footpaths

Footpaths are generally good apart from a section near the entrance at Austin Friar's Street. This section has cobbles laid and apart from causing a trip hazard they also cause a slip hazard when they are wet.

- Remove existing large cobbles and replace with tarmac or concrete.



Fig 14.1 Identifiable level entrance.

14.4 Reception

- Provide audible assistance at the counter for people with hearing difficulties.
- Provide a reception desk (or section of original) of 750mm high for use by seated persons.



Fig 14.2 Entrance lobby with good mat well.

14.5 Services

For people in wheelchairs, the staff in the swimming pool use a special hoist to provide access into and egress out of the water in the swimming pool.

- Ensure all staff has adequate training in the hoist's proper use and manual handling.



Fig 14.4 Hoist for swimming pool access.



Fig 14.3 Services for people with disabilities. (This room can also act as a changing room for people with disabilities).

14.6 General Observations

This Mullingar swimming pool has generally good accessibility and with a little work can be made more comfortable and easier for everyone to use. It has a level entrance from the outside and movement inside is quite easy with good use of information signage.