

**Note of Engaging with Older People Review Panel held on 9 February 2010**

**PRESENT**

**Chairman**

**p Councillor Mrs. P.A. West**

**Councillors:**

**p A. G. Dowden**

**p R. J. Kimber**

**a E. J. Neal**

**p F Pearce**

**p Mrs. J. A. Porter**

**p A.W. Rice, TD**

**1. Declarations of Interest**

Cllr Alan Rice declared a personal non prejudicial interest, as he is an honorary member of the WRVS, who were contacted during the course of the Engaging with Older People review.

**2. Chairman's Communications**

The Chairman welcomed all to the meeting, and informed the review group that in order to ensure that Select Committee and review group meetings continue to record attendance correctly, a register would now be circulated at the beginning of each meeting. This register would be signed by the Chairman at the end of each meeting to verify that a correct record has been taken.

The Chairman set out the aim of the meeting, which was to receive background information on both the Age Proofing and Engaging with Older People scrutiny reviews, the progress of the current review since the group were last updated in November 2009, and the main conclusions and findings of both reviews.

**3. Refresh of Progress with Review**

The Scrutiny Officer presented to the review group the progress of the Age Proofing and Engaging with Older People reviews.

(Take in presentation)

Members heard:

- That the review of Age Proofing Mainstream Public Services began in February 2009. The main issues of this review were:

- How older people influence the planning and delivery of public services;
- Whether resources given over to age-proofing could be used more sustainably;
- Whether any obstacles to the progress of Age-proofing public services need overcoming.
- The main conclusions of the Age Proofing review taken from the evidence provided by key stakeholders included:
  - That work is ongoing by Hampshire County Council and its partners to age proof mainstream services, or to design services with older people in mind;
  - That aside from age proofing, organisations must also ensure that they are providing mainstream services that account for all sections of society, rather than aiming them specifically at older people;
  - That a majority of the Council's departments and its partners do not engage specifically with the older person demographic;
  - That where there is engagement, feedback needs to be relayed to the older people who have contributed, and fed back in an appropriate manner;
  - That older people need to feel that they have influence over the planning and delivery of mainstream services.
- These findings highlighted that there was scope for a subsequent review, which would scrutinise how Hampshire County Council and its partners engage with older people, with desired outcomes of the review being:
  - To make transparent the channels available to older people for comment on both specialist and mainstream public services;
  - To explore if the outcomes of engagement with older people are fed back in an acceptable and appropriate manner;
  - To assess the influence older people have on the planning and delivery of public services.

#### **4. Conclusions of Engaging with Older People Review**

The Scrutiny Officer presented to the review group the conclusions of the Age-proofing and Engaging with Older People reviews.

(Take in presentation)

The review group discussed the evidence received in relation to the Engaging with Older People review and made conclusions that could be identified from this.

- That the response to the Engaging with Older People review was limited; evidence was requested from 113 individuals, placed

within 71 stakeholder organisations, but the response rate was less than 10%.

- That the majority of responders were service providers, rather than service users or representatives of such, and therefore the evidence could not claim to be representative of older people's views across Hampshire.
- That a large proportion of respondents use paper consultations when engaging with older people, with one Older People's Forum stating that they are overburdened with this type of consultation request.
- That there is a willingness to meet where older people do, but this presumes Older People are not financially or socially excluded.
- That the Older People's Wellbeing team are working hard to improve the levels of engagement with older people, and older peoples forums by forming the Hampshire Association of Older People's Forums.
- That conferences and events have popularity, but travel costs are a deciding factor.
- That those Departments that provide specialist services have the broadest range of engagement options

Following discussion, members stated that:

- That Hants Direct, as the primary mechanism for Older People to make comment to Hampshire County Council, need to ensure that their procedures include a response back to any individual that contact them, in order to inform them of how their comments have been used.
- That there may be a good business case for making Hants Direct a single access point for all public services in Hampshire. This would simplify contact and allow for a more structured feedback system.
- That having a single number for Older People to call (much like the long running 101 system, which is a service for reporting anti social behaviour and other minor issues).may allow for greater enablement of comment on service provision.
- That a credit card sized listing of all the useful numbers relating to service provision in Hampshire (such as Hants Direct, NHS, etc) would enable an older person to find a number relating to a specific service at a glance. Alternatively, this could be a 'cut out and keep' section to locally distributed Council magazine.
- That the members of the review group stated that the consultation model provided by the Eastleigh Southern Parishes Older People's Forums in their evidence was a good example of a template that all Hampshire County Council services should use. The key points of the model were:
  - discussion prior to the introduction of new services or changes, along the lines of Equality Impact Assessments (EIA's);
  - receipt of requests for comments on emerging proposals;

- amendments incorporated into proposals that have been consulted on;
  - a copy of the final document with reference to the contribution they have made;
  - acknowledgement and thanks for the consultees, contribution to the consultation.
- That feedback from consultations needs to be widely accessible to all, in a variety of media.
- That the issue of transport provision for some consultees to be able to attend consultation is something that needs further investigation. There could be a possibility of using community bus services to transport willing consultees to events throughout Hampshire, but this would need exploration.
- That some consultations could be perceived to be primarily information giving events, rather than examples of active engagement and comment. Therefore attendees need to be informed of which items are for information and what decisions are to be consulted on at events.
- That all Hampshire County Council services need to follow a protocol during consultations, which include points such as key speakers remaining at consultations throughout the day, in order to answer any questions the consultees may have, and to listen to key themes emerging from workshop sessions.
- That the times of day that consulting events with Older People happen could affect outcomes, as there was agreement that afternoon sessions are not conducive to getting the best results in terms of engagement with the older population.
- That it is just as important for an individual to feel that they have influence, as having the opportunity to be influential.
- That it was felt that there should be a continuation of having a single Older People's champion, who should be the Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care, as this provides a consistency of service across all areas of Hampshire.
- That any further review relating to older people should include more carer organisations, and housing associations, as key stakeholders.
- That Older People with disabilities will have different service requirements and opinions to provide, and so including organisations that represent such groups in future consultations might be useful.
- That utilising the Hampshire County Council complaints system as a way of receiving feedback may mean that only negative comments about service delivery are heard – there needs to be an avenue for individuals to communicate positive feedback on what has worked well.

**RESOLVED:**

**That the Review Group begin drafting a report of the Engaging with Older People scrutiny review, to be brought back before the review group in May 2010.**