

## HAMPSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

### Report

<b>Committee:</b>	<b>Safe &amp; Healthy People Select Committee</b>
<b>Date:</b>	16 May 2011
<b>Title:</b>	Age Proofing Mainstream Public Services' and 'Engaging with Older People' Scrutiny Reviews
<b>Reference:</b>	2908
<b>Report From:</b>	Director of Economy, Transport and Environment

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#### 1. Purpose of Report

1.1 Following a report in June 2010, the Safe & Healthy People Select Committee asked the Executive Member for Policy and Resources to consider the recommendations of the 'Age Proofing Mainstream Public Services' and 'Engaging with Older People' Scrutiny Reviews. The Leader, as the Executive Member for Policy & Resources, subsequently asked that the feasibility of the proposals be explored. This report responds to that request by outlining the progress made in the interim period and the proposals for further development in relation to the four recommendations, namely;

- A** *Consideration is given to the creation of a central 'intelligence' function to complement and help co-ordinate engagement activities across service providers and departments in the County Council. The feasibility of a 'single access point' could be explored as part of this work.*
- B** *The function suggested above also acts as a resource for sharing feedback received by the County Council and informs other opportunities for service improvement. This will reduce the risk of duplicated work and provide a useful complement to departmental initiatives. It would also provide valuable information for policy and strategy development.*
- C** *Consideration be given to publishing at appropriate periods what the Council has learned from its engagement with local people and how it has responded. Different ways of providing this information to different communities will be considered as part of this process.*

**D** *The application of the template provided by Eastleigh and Southern Parishes Older People's Forum be considered as part of any consultation activities undertaken by the County Council.*

1.2 In April 2011, the Hard to Reach Review Panel for the Culture and Communities Select Committee also highlighted similar requirements in relation to customer insight.

## **2. Contextual Information**

2.1. Since the recommendations of the Select Committee were made, a number of changes have taken place in relation to the organisational arrangements for delivery of some of the key functions involved. These changes, amongst other impacts, will address many of the concerns raised by the reviews.

2.2. The main changes that have taken place are:

- A proposal to form a corporate Research and Intelligence (R&I) function, based in the Economy, Transport and Environment Department, with responsibility for co-ordinating research activity for the whole County Council
- A major review of Communications has resulted in a move away from having departmentally based communications teams to having 'centres of expertise' providing the functions required to the whole organisation. The market research centre of excellence forms part of the above Research and Intelligence team.
- Development of Hantsweb as the Council's knowledge base with a programme of content improvement.

2.3 One of the aims of the above is to achieve a more co-ordinated approach to understanding customer views and needs, to ensure that they are considered when services are being developed. Equally important in the current climate will be understanding them in relation to the achievement of efficiencies.

## **3. Progress to date**

In respect of the Scrutiny Panel's specific recommendations, progress is underway as outlined below.

- 3.1 **The creation of a central 'intelligence' function** - the creation of the new R&I unit, using existing resources, is now well in hand as part of the restructure of the new Economy, Environment & Transport Department and the Communications Review. Initial proposals are for the unit to ensure a strong and visible evidence base for decision-making in Hampshire by;
- consolidating the Council's existing socio-economic-demographic data service (this had provided much of the key information for the Scrutiny Panel's considerations) with its market research activities;
  - improving the availability and use of customer information;
  - improving the quality and relevance of service data;

- ensure better data publication including, reinvigoration of the Hampshire Observatory proposal and a potential link with the Local Government Improvement and Development Knowledge Hub.

The unit will also help the Council improve the availability and use of data to fulfil its new Equality Act obligations including satisfying the requirements of the Public Sector Equality Duty.

**3.2 Provision of a resource for sharing feedback and informing service improvement** - a key aim of the new unit will be to ensure that robust information, including that from customer and community sources, is catalogued and easily accessible to officers and outside stakeholders so it can aid decision making and improve service design. This will complement the Council's Performance Management Framework and meeting the Equality Act duties. The information will include that obtained via the Council's consultations, the improved coordination of market research activities and the development and application of customer insight. This will build on the customer data available from Hantsdirect, including contacts and complaints. Ensuring the availability and application of this data will be a key focus for the Unit. This will complement the corporate ambitions on the transparency and open data agendas which are also linked to the programme of content improvement for Hantsweb.

Steps to improve the availability of demographic and socio-economic data are progressing through the development of the Hampshire Facts and Figures web pages. This includes the publication of data such as that used in the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment and the 'Housing Provision for Older People in Hampshire' report.

<http://www3.hants.gov.uk/planning/factsandfigures> .

Further steps to improve data availability will be part of the proposals to reinvigorate the Hampshire Observatory, which will aim to publish data supplied and used by all public agencies and voluntary sector organisations. Opportunities to use the proposed Local Government Improvement and Development Knowledge Hub are also being progressed.

**3.3 Publication of what the Council has learned from its engagement** - the ambition to evidence clearly how consultation feedback informs the council's decision making is consistent with a partnership and customer focussed approach and the wider transparency agenda. Whilst publication is evident in a number of service areas, ensuring that a consistent approach is applied by all Departments and builds on the many existing areas of good practice will be an area the R&I team will help to develop.

In respect of older people, data from recent consultations are held by Adult Services on a database which allows results to be viewed by district, age, gender, ethnicity and all narrative comments collated under the seven dimensions of independence. These have been made available to all districts, Hampshire Fire and Rescue, older people's forums and voluntary groups etc.,

through the Joint Older People's Wellbeing Steering Group. They have also been presented at the County Health and Wellbeing Board, and to the local Health and Wellbeing Boards. The new Older People strategy was therefore informed by the findings and a selection of the results is being published on the 'bettertime' website <http://www3.hants.gov.uk/bettertime> . Recent applications of intelligence in decisions relating to Adult Services are set out in Appendix 1.

- 3.4 **Application of a new template for consultation activities** - the scrutiny review asked that consideration be given to representations submitted by the Eastleigh & Southern Parishes Older People's Forum for a model engagement process to be used by the Council and its partners when consulting on new policies and proposals. In particular, they sought assurance that the council's consultations seek to influence plans rather than endorse decisions. Also that reports clearly indicate how the feedback informed the debate and decisions being made.

Such practice is broadly in line with the One Compact for Hampshire and the Commissioning Code, both of which can be found at: <http://www3.hants.gov.uk/compact.htm> . Whilst there are many examples of good practice from around the Council, there remain occasions when this has to be considered in light of the broader public interest test with the need for a balanced approach between the extent of consultation and the need advance certain programmes promptly and efficiently.

#### 4. Conclusions

- 4.1 Further to the Select Committee's consideration of the Scrutiny Review findings, the Council is well set to consider and action the recommendations, through the newly formed Research & Intelligence Unit in conjunction with the more co-ordinated approach to consultation and communication and improvements to Hantsweb.

The new Research and Intelligence Unit will consider the Committee's recommendations in building its business plan, with future progress being monitored through the department's performance reporting arrangements.

## Appendix 1

### Recent engagement activities aimed specifically for older people.

1. A consultation was carried out June - October 2010 to refresh the **Older People's Wellbeing Strategy** for April 2011- March 2014, using numerous existing older people groups and organisations and HCC libraries, information points, CAP etc. 2,014 questionnaires were returned and 1,000 older people conversations were held. The questionnaire consisted of 16 priorities older people had identified as being important to them to remain independent at home with a positive quality of life. They were asked to rank their top 5. The consultation has been used to refresh the strategy and the county action plan and also the local district action plans during 2011.

The consultation took various "customer" aspects into account - age, gender, ethnicity, geography - this information is available in the strategy documents. The results for BME groups are being used by the Community Development Team to prioritise areas of work. The results showed that we need to do more to explore the relations between sexuality and ageing. Members of diverse faiths were consulted, although this information was not collected as part of this process, this time round at least.

The results from the OPWS consultation have been fed back to the forums as requested.

2. The **Hampshire Association of Older People's Forum (HAOPF)** has been running for one year and had its first AGM in February 2011. It represents 11 local forums, which included 3 new forums being formed during the last year. The county association now have consultation guidelines, to ensure that they are not overrun with requests to respond. They are also developing their own website which will be linked to the Hantsweb 'bettertime' web pages.  
<http://www3.hants.gov.uk/bettertime>

The HAOPF have specifically taken part in the Older People's Wellbeing consultation, concessionary bus pass review, mobile libraries and home adaptations review. At present they are taking part in the Supporting People Older Persons Strategic Review.

Representatives from the HAOPF attended the Senate on 7th September 2011 and took part in its workshop on older people. The Adult Services Executive Member and older persons champion, Cllr Hindson, is a member of the HAOPF.

3. There are quarterly meetings of the **Joint Older People's Wellbeing Steering Board**. There are over 30 organisations working with older people across the county who sit on this board including relevant HCC departments e.g. passenger transport, libraries, adult services, to implement the strategy and Acton plan with and for older people

4. There are various **BME groups** supporting local communities, including older people around the county in addition to a number of multicultural forums and a recently established Multicultural Seniors Forum in Basingstoke. Work is ongoing to ensure BME forums have links with other community led organisations, such as generic 55+ forums, disability forums etc to ensure that information is channelled appropriately.

The Community Development Team are developing means of providing information to diverse communities - for instance, skilling up community members to act as signposts, or providing audio information to communities where literacy levels (for English and mother tongue) are low.

**CORPORATE OR LEGAL INFORMATION:****Links to the Corporate Strategy**

<b>Hampshire safer and more secure for all:</b>	yes
Corporate Improvement plan link number (if appropriate):	
<b>Maximising well-being:</b>	yes
Corporate Improvement plan link number (if appropriate):	
<b>Enhancing our quality of place:</b>	no
Corporate Improvement plan link number (if appropriate):	

**Section 100 D - Local Government Act 1972 - background documents**

**The following documents discuss facts or matters on which this report, or an important part of it, is based and have been relied upon to a material extent in the preparation of this report. (NB: the list excludes published works and any documents which disclose exempt or confidential information as defined in the Act.)**

DocumentLocation

Age Proofing / Engaging with Older People

[http://hantsweb-staging.hants.gov.uk/councilmeetings/advsearchmeetings/meetingsitemsummary.htm?pref=Y&tab=1&item\\_ID=1749&cancel=n](http://hantsweb-staging.hants.gov.uk/councilmeetings/advsearchmeetings/meetingsitemsummary.htm?pref=Y&tab=1&item_ID=1749&cancel=n)

## **IMPACT ASSESSMENTS:**

### **1. Equalities Impact Assessment:**

The proposals in this report seek to improve the organisation's capacity to understand and improve accessibility to community intelligence so this may improve the focus of our services, particularly for minority, hard to reach and disadvantaged members of the community.

### **2. Impact on Crime and Disorder:**

Improving our ability to identify and promote better outcomes for all people has a direct impact on economic wellbeing and, therefore, on their potential involvement in criminal activity.

### **3. Climate Change:**

#### **3.1.**

The conclusions of this report will have no impact upon the carbon footprint or energy consumption in Hampshire.

The conclusions of this report have no direct link with adaptations to climate change.