

BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL

MEETING OF THE OLDER PEOPLE TASK GROUP

WEDNESDAY, 9TH MARCH 2011 AT 6.00 P.M.

PRESENT: Councillors Mrs. M. Bunker (Chairman), S. R. Colella, D. L. Pardoe,
C. J. Tidmarsh, L. J. Turner and Ms. A. Sowton

Officers: Mr. H. Bennett and Ms. P. Ross

59/10 **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

An apology for absence was received from Councillor D. McGrath.

60/10 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

No declarations of interest were received.

61/10 **PROGRESS UPDATE**

Recommendation 1 (UK Older People's Day)

The Director of Policy, Performance and Partnerships informed Members that building on the Older Person's Services Directory, the Council had launched the Directory on Older People's Day 2010. Further funding was being sought, but no funding opportunities had been successfully identified at this stage. The Director of Policy, Performance and Partnerships had met with the GP Consortium who had expressed an interest in the Older Person's Services Directory and felt that a handbook for the services provided by both Bromsgrove and Redditch councils would be useful. The Director of Policy, Performance and Partnerships informed Members that, there was no funding for this in the 2011/2012 budgets at either councils, but an electronic version would be cheap to produce and may be a way forward. Ms. A. Sowton would be attending a Department of Health funding meeting and would look at possible funding opportunities for a handbook.

Recommendation 2 (Free Swimming at the Dolphin Centre)

The Director of Policy, Performance and Partnerships informed Members that action was not due to be completed until June 2011. However, officers' view was that the free swimming scheme encouraged those already swimming to swim more, but did not really target non-swimmers. Reviewing the impact of the free swimming would be difficult as usage numbers only were available.

Recommendation 3 (Gym Facilities at the Dolphin Centre)

The Task Group had recommended that the Portfolio Holder for Youth, Sports, Recreation and Culture and the Deputy Head of Street Scene and Community be requested to scope the possibility of introducing a dedicated gym session programme for the 50+ age group to encourage greater use from this market segment.

The Council had not pursued this option. However, the Council had recruited an Age Well Coordinator who is coordinating a good range of activities for the over 50s. These included: postural stability instruction (to prevent falls), GP activity referral, mobility exercise, specialist MS support, table tennis, walks for health, over 50s badminton etc. The Director of Policy, Performance and Partnerships would also look into promoting these activities via the Parish Councils Forum along with the Older Person's Services Directory.

The Council had also gone out to consultation on what activities older people wanted. The results were due to be published in the March 2011 edition of Together Bromsgrove. The consultation asked those under 65 and those over 65 what they were looking for, 147 responses had been received. These results would help shape future facilities that the Council offered. The Council also offered retirement signposting and lifestyle advice.

Recommendation 4 (Community Transport Services - BURT)

Members were informed that, as the current bus was 7 years old and had proved unreliable, a budget bid for a new bus had been submitted as part of the 2011/12 budget consideration. Revenue funding was available for 2011/12, but the service would need to be evaluated. This had been delayed due the Head of Community Services being unwell. With regard to the boundaries, the Portfolio Holder had agreed to the bus crossing the border to get to Webb's, but generally the District boundary had been the limit of BURT's radius. Usage levels had continued to increase and the Women's Royal Voluntary Service (WRVS) were of the view that BURT was now at capacity.

The Director of Policy, Performance and Partnerships informed Members that following a proposal by Councillor C. R. Scurrill the Scrutiny Board had considered the future of BURT during its meetings held on 13th July 2010 and 26th October 2010.

Recommendation 5 (THE TRUNK)

The Trunk was undertaking a range of activities around health and older people. It had also undertaken inter-generational activities. Health activities were not specifically aimed at older people; however, people should benefit from these activities in later life. Health activities included smoking cessation, alcohol misuse, and healthy lifestyles including exercise classes, healthy eating and healthy cooking.

Ms. A. Sowton, Bromsgrove and Redditch Network (BARN) informed Members that THE TRUNK now had an older people's group and that the Age Well Scheme had secured funding to offer a cooking initiative using local produce.

Recommendation 6 (Older People's Strategy for Worcestershire)

Meetings had been held with Worcestershire County Council (WCC) on this agenda, in particular, around developing Bromsgrove District Council's, Older Person's Services Directory. No further meeting had been held since. The Bromsgrove District Council's, Older Person's Services Directory had been well received by WCC. WCC was currently consulting and completing an impact assessment on its draft Older People's Strategy.

The Director of Policy, Performance and Partnerships informed Members that it was important that the Council continued to engage with WCC on the draft Older People's Strategy to ensure a district dimension. Members agreed to recommend to the Overview and Scrutiny Board that a review of the draft WCC Older People's Strategy be included on the Overview and Scrutiny Board's Work Programme.

Recommendation 7 (Mapping Exercise)

Ms. A. Sowton, Bromsgrove and Redditch Network (BARN) had always struggled to complete this work due to a lack of resource. The Council's Older Person's Services Directory had in many ways mapped what was available to residents in the District. It was recognised that the Directory was too Bromsgrove town centric at the moment.

Work in 2011 would involve building up knowledge on services available in the more rural parts of the District, so that any future new edition of the Older Person's Services Directory would be more Bromsgrove District wide. The Director of Policy, Performance and Partnerships suggested involving the Parish Councils Forum when undertaking this exercise.

Recommendation 8 (A - Z Directory)

The Older Person's Services Directory had been completed and included on the Council's Website in October 2010. The Leader of the Council had recently attended the Older Person's Forum where very positive comments regards the Directory had been received.

The Director of Policy, Performance and Partnerships informed Members that he would revisit and review the Older Person's Services Directory during 2012/2013 funding permitting.

Recommendation 9 (Information Management)

The Older Person's' Services Directory was now on the Council's website and had been included with the winter 2010 edition of Together Bromsgrove, as

'Together Bromsgrove Plus'. Staff at the Customer Service Centre had been made aware of the Directory for signposting purposes.

No mystery shopping had been undertaken as the Council now had a dedicated Head of Customer Service who would be launching a new Customer Experience Strategy. Ms. A. Sowton, Bromsgrove and Redditch Network (BARN) suggested approaching the Older People's Forum to see if their members would carry out a specific mystery shopping exercise regards the Older Person's Services Directory.

Recommendation 10 (Older People's Champions)

It had been agreed with the Portfolio Holder to defer this and concentrate on the production of the Older Person's Services Directory. The Director of Policy, Performance and Partnerships informed Members that the Policy, Performance and Partnerships department was currently undergoing a shared services restructure. Once the new structure was in place the Director of Policy, Performance and Partnerships intended to engage with the Portfolio Holder and the Older People's Forum to look at the possibility of championing a 'Village Agents' project for 2011.

Village Agents could provide support to the over 50's in the Bromsgrove District by:

- providing high quality information
- putting people in direct contact with the agencies that are available to provide the service they need
- carry out a series of practical checks
- help build communities

Recommendation 11 (Older People's Housing Strategy for Worcestershire)

The Council's Strategic Housing Manager, representatives from Bromsgrove District Housing Trust and the Leader and Portfolio Holders for Planning and Strategic Housing had met over the past 18 months (Housing Choices for Older People Partnership Board) to develop a vision for housing for older people in the Bromsgrove District.

This partnership had met with Worcestershire County Council's key officers and was developing proposals for Extra Care and older persons housing. The aims and objectives of previous older people's strategies were considered by this Board which would review any newly developed aims and objectives that may be forthcoming.

Recommendation 12 (Housing)

The need to provide an appropriate mix to cater for the needs of older people had been highlighted in the newly developing Countywide Housing Strategy and identified within the priorities identified within the Local Investment Plan (LIP) currently in the process of being jointly developed with the Homes and Communities Agency.

Recommendation 13 (Lifeline)

In order to assist the elderly or vulnerable to live independently a range of activities to promote Telecare services had been undertaken.

Information had been produced in the form of promotional leaflets, posters and newsletters detailing the full range of telecare products and services available. These had been distributed to Lifeline Service Users and partner organisations including Age Concern, Social Services Teams for Older People and Hospitals, Doctors Surgeries, Church Halls and all District and County Council buildings.

Lifeline Installation Officers had attended community fairs and exhibitions, utilised market stalls, visited groups and promoted the service at the Fire Services Blanket testing days.

A comprehensive list of all organisations and partner agencies was maintained with contact being made on a regular basis to ensure there was a sufficient supply of posters and leaflets and that the current version was being displayed.

The Portfolio Holder for Older People, the Young and Vulnerable People informed Members that she had accompanied Lifeline Officers whilst they carried out their duties and had been impressed with their professionalism and the way in which they helpfully engaged with their clients.

Recommendation 14 (Benefit Service)

The Benefits Services Manager provided the following update: Meetings had been held with Dial and Bromsgrove and Redditch Network (BARN) to discuss closer working, with BARN providing a list of contacts. Both were keen to work with the Council on promoting and supporting Benefits, but neither had come back to the Council and the Council had not pursued this either. The Benefits Services Manager was hoping to pick this up again in the new financial year, once year end billing was out of the way.

A Benefit take up advert had been placed in the recent sport and leisure community publication. Also, although not specifically aimed at elderly customers, a targeted take up for Discretionary Housing Payments (DHP's) had been carried out in August 2010. This highlighted customers who had a shortfall between their Benefit and Rent/Council Tax charged and advised them of additional help that may be available (DHP's) and how to claim.

Members questioned benefit take up by older people. Following questions and suggestions from Members the Director of Policy, Performance and Partnerships agreed to look at the possibility of including benefits information with the leaflets produced and distributed by Lifeline Officers.

Recommendation 15 (Employment)

The Director of Policy, Performance and Partnerships informed Members that further action was required on this. An article had been included in the Older Person's Services Directory, featuring himself and his dad, which focused on the advice given by dad to son about joining the Local Government Pension Scheme. Although a start, the Council still needed to find ways of communicating with a younger audience. The proposed changes in national legislation around automatic opting in to pension schemes should help in this regard. Members queried the approximate implementation date of March 2012 shown for this recommendation. The Committee Services officer checked the information provided to the Overview Board during its meeting held on 30th March 2010. The approximate implementation date of March 2012 was correct.

Recommendation 16 (Adult Learning Opportunities)

THE TRUNK offered a range of adult learning opportunities with courses on "Get Back To Work", "Confidence Building" and ICT being offered. The courses were for all ages with take up by older people being good. THE TRUNK Manager was due to meet with Worcestershire County Council to look at the funding strategy for future years, given the current public spending environment. THE TRUNK was looking to roll out further computer courses via its Internet Cafe.

Recommendation 17 (Funding Opportunities)

The Director of Policy, Performance and Partnerships informed Members that the Council had a Service Level Agreement with Bromsgrove & Redditch Network (BARN) who used a database called "Funder Finder".

Members were informed that from May 2011 the Worcestershire Partnership, Funding Coordinator would assist the Council with any future funding bids.

Recommendation 18 (Worcestershire County Councils Highways Department)

Members were informed that, due to the last two very cold winters, pavement repairs and road repairs had become a national issue. Worcestershire County Council was responding; however, a key area of development would be the Area Action Plan for Bromsgrove town centre which was currently out to consultation. Community Infrastructure Levy monies should enable, in particular, the High Street to be improved which had been a particular issue for residents.

Recommendation 19 (Future Vision)

The Director of Policy, Performance and Partnerships informed Members that the Council probably needed to do more work in 2011, but the cover of the Older Person's Services Directory was a deliberately upbeat picture of older people. In addition, the Directory included information on the positive contribution older people made to the District, including Councillors. More

work could probably be done with the Older Person's Forum and this would be looked at following the Policy, Performance and Partnerships restructure. The Leader of the Council had recently attended an Older Person's Forum meeting. A range of residents had sat on the 2010 budget jury including a number of retired people. Officers would continue to take into account Lifetime Homes etc. through key policy documents e.g. core strategy etc. The Council was currently piloting Mosaic on Council Tax take up and benefits. If these pilots were suitable a joint budget bid with Redditch Borough Council was likely to be made for the 2012/13 budget round. The Corporate Communications Strategy was on hold, pending the forthcoming restructure, plus the Communications Team had agreement from the Chief Executive to focus on delivery; however, post restructure, the Strategy would be updated and the success of the Older Person's Services Directory would mean that we anticipated continuing a focus on older people, as they would be a significant feature of our future demographics.

Councillor D. L. Pardoe suggested looking at energy costs and energy savings for older people. Following further discussion the Director of Policy, Performance and Partnerships informed Members that along with the Climate Change Manager he would look at ways of informing and promoting energy saving ideas. Ms. A. Sowton, Bromsgrove and Redditch Network (BARN) suggested contacting Act on Energy Charity and Councillor C. J. Tidmarsh suggested contacting Central Networks who offered valuable energy saving information and 'warm packs' for older people. Members also suggested promoting energy saving ideas during any future events for Older People's Day.

The Director of Policy, Performance and Partnerships informed Members that he had looked at both Bromsgrove District Council and Redditch Borough Council's Core Strategies, both of which covered service delivery for older people.

Recommendation 20 (Older People's Strategy for Worcestershire – Phase 2)

The Director of Policy, Performance and Partnerships informed Members that a second Task Group review on Levels 3, 4 and 5 had not been undertaken, as Levels 3, 4 and 5 were not shown in Worcestershire County Council's (WCC) draft Older People's Strategy. However, Members agreed it would be an opportune time for the Overview Board to consider the WCC draft Older People's Strategy currently being developed.

RECOMMENDED:

- (a) that progress, as at February 2011 on the recommendations as set out in Appendix 1 of the report be noted;
- (b) that the Overview and Scrutiny Board review the Worcestershire County Council's draft Older People's Strategy;
- (c) that the Director of Policy, Performance and Partnerships continue to scope the possibility of a handbook for GPs on the health related services that the Council provides and to source possible funding for this;

- (d) that the Portfolio Holder for Older People, the Young and Vulnerable People, the Director of Policy, Performance and Partnerships and the Age Well Coordinator promote the activities offered for the over 50s via the Parish Councils Forum;
- (e) that the Director of Policy, Performance and Partnerships revisit and review the Older Person's Services Directory and mapping exercise during 2012/2013 and considered involving the Parish Councils Forum when undertaking this exercise;
- (f) that the Director of Policy, Performance and Partnerships contact the Older People's Forum regards their help with a mystery shopping exercise specifically on older people's services,
- (g) that the Director of Policy, Performance and Partnerships engage with the Portfolio Holder and the Older People's Forum to look at the possibility of championing a 'Village Agents' project for 2011;
- (h) that the Director of Policy, Performance and Partnerships and the Benefits Services Manager look at including benefits information in the leaflets produced and distributed by Lifeline Officers, and
- (i) that the Director of Policy, Performance and Partnerships and Climate Change Manager look at ways of engaging with specific partner agencies, (Act on Energy, Central Networks) for informing and promoting energy saving ideas for older people and to use any future Older People's events to promote these ideas.

The meeting closed at 7.21 p.m.

Chairman