

Social Issues Scrutiny Panel – 8 March 2010

Older Persons Informal Scrutiny Group Final Report

Report of the Chair of Older Persons Informal Scrutiny Group – Councillor Weston

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Purpose of the Report

To provide the Scrutiny Panel with the opportunity to comment on the final report from the Older Persons Informal Scrutiny Group (ISG) convened in July 2009.

The Scrutiny Panel is asked to consider this matter as part of its role in holding portfolio holder to account and monitoring the progress the Council is making in achieving the Health and Wellbeing outcome as set out in the Sustainable Community Strategy. In particular this in-depth review had regard to the portfolio holder's responsibilities with regard to the older person in the District, Community Development and Social Inclusion. The ISG considered issues related to access to and communication of services for the elderly resident of the District and of the City Council's role in relation to the overall benefit to the public from services provided by the City Council and other organisations that impact on the wellbeing of the District.

Recommendation

1. That The Scrutiny Panel considers the report and recommendations of the Informal Scrutiny Group.
2. That the Panel request that Cabinet approve the recommendations of the ISG set out at paragraph 3 of the report.
3. That the Portfolio Holder for Communities and Safety report on Cabinet's progress to implement the recommendations of the ISG to the Social Issues Scrutiny Panel on 15 July 2010

Risk Management Issues

There are no direct risk management issues arising from this Report.

Background Documents

None

Appendices

Appendix 1 Older Persons Informal Scrutiny Group Report



Winchester
City Council

**SOCIAL ISSUES SCRUTINY PANEL
REPORT SO106**

8 March 2010

**Report by the Chairman of the Scrutiny Review,
Councillor Victoria Weston**

**OLDER PERSONS
INFORMAL
SCRUTINY GROUP**

OLDER PERSONS INFORMAL SCRUTINY GROUP

REPORT OF THE CHAIRMAN – Cllr Victoria Weston

1. INTRODUCTION

At the Social Issues Scrutiny Panel 16 July 2009, it was agreed that an Elderly People's Issues Informal Scrutiny Group be appointed for the 2009/2010 municipal year and the membership would include:

Councillors Berry, Clear, Fall, Hammerton, Nelmes, Thynne and Weston.

At the first meeting held on 10 September 2009, Cllr Weston was appointed chair and the Terms of Reference for the group agreed.

It was discussed that services are being provided to the older person within Winchester, and that there are several partnership groups working together to achieve improvements and discuss current targets. It was agreed that the remit of the group would be to look at whether older people had sufficient access to services provided specifically for them in the Winchester District, and how these services were communicated to them.

Themed meetings were arranged over 6 months with specific guest to tackle the issues deemed most vital for the elderly person. These were Adult Services, Housing Transport and Care.

2. SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

Several members of the group attended the Older Person Partnership on the 23 September, with the chair attending all meetings to date, and the recently formed Over 55's Forum in October. This highlighted the good work that is already on going within the District, although most of the information was new unless it had been personally experienced.

All guests who attended the meetings came with relevant information, although it was recognised that there was no continuity in where this information was held. The ways in which the different agencies communicated their work and services is varied if at all.

It was also evident that leaflets and booklets were published, but the marketing of this information is the main issue. Most use doctor's surgeries and libraries to distribute loose leaflets to be displayed on notice boards and left lying on tables in surgeries that are already to their capacity with information. This vital information is therefore lost in the mass of paper leaflets. It would seem that unless you know exactly what you were looking for and from whom, the information was hard to gather. Often, the older generation and their relatives are looking for broad information or to investigate what services are provided.

The Older Persons Partnership was looking into a directory to cover services and groups; however there are issues surrounding how the funding would be secured from partners for this project (including the City Council), how it would be kept up to date and how it would be distributed.

There were some good practices discussed, including the issues that were previously surrounding Choice Based Lettings, although it is clear that the City Council are working on these and are conducting a lot of consultation and working with disadvantaged groups in improving the service.

Despite most people not considering themselves to be elderly when they reach 55, Government guidelines make this distinction as to the age when services available change to better match people's circumstances. Changes to Housing, Care, Allowances, insurance and even holidays happen at this threshold. Agencies, although providing services from this age, encounter service users at an average age of 69. Based on their own data, there are very few 55 year olds who require these types of services in the Winchester District.

There are issues relating to the slow uptake of benefits from the elderly population, and although the Revenues section are working hard to reach these people, in the main, the older generation believe there is a stigma attached to asking for or accepting help. It is these barriers that the City Council has a duty to try and breakdown.

3. RECOMMENDATIONS

To create a portal page from Winchester City Council's internet site, specifically for the elderly people, their families and/or carers. This portal will use the same information already available on the site, but will consolidate in one place. In addition, there will be a 'signposting' on the page for links to all other dedicated organisations or pages from the agencies that provide services. (The name of the portal button shall be decided in consultation with the relevant community members)

Benefits

- This will decrease the amount of funding needed to print flyers and information booklets
- It will allow for councillors, parishes, customer service staff as well as people looking for information to have a "one stop shop"
- It can be a starting point for other similar improvements (for example portals for people with disabilities or children and young people)
- This approach plans for future generations of older people, as the next generation of elderly people will be using the internet much more.
- During the launch and subsequent marketing of the portal page, the City Council's Customer Services number will also be publicised to assist those who have no direct access to the internet. The Customer Services Centre staff will be able to navigate around these pages to provide information over the telephone.
- There are already useful pages for older people available, for example, Bettertime, e.volve and Opal, but as Community Leaders, our Districts residents should and will look to us for information first, not the county or outside agencies.

4. HOW AND WHO SHOULD THESE BE IMPLEMENTED BY

- Consultation with the Older Persons Partnership and the Forum using Community Wellbeing Team to help promote the work
- The Corporate Communication team will look to set up the portal within the next 12 months

5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

There is no cost to set this up or to consult with the residents in the districts. However the project time will be from the City Council's Corporate Communication Team and the Community Wellbeing Team. The financial implications of not accepting these recommendations is the continuing growth of financial resource that the City Council and partner organisations spend on information that is clearly not getting the relevant publicity or reaching the right people.

6. RISKS

If this recommendation is not agreed the risks are that

- The public and councillors will remain in the dark about the great services that are on offer for the older person.
- Money will continue to be wasted on vast amounts of leaflets and distribution. It should be noted that the City Council funds or contributes to a number of organisations that provide services for the elderly.
- The next generation of elderly people will have access to less information, as they are more likely to use the internet as their main source of information
- The City Council will be behind the times with sharing information.

7. HOW SUCCESS WILL BE MEASURED

As the consultation process will involve potential service users, they will be asked their opinions on the new look pages, and in addition, the councillors involved in the ISG, will revisit the website and report back to the Social Issues Scrutiny Panel within 12 months of the recommendation being agreed. In addition, the number of 'web hits' to the portal pages will be able to give accurate data to measure the level of usage.

8. THANKS AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The Older Persons Informal Scrutiny Group would like to thank the following people for taking part in this process, for their knowledge and information and for participating in the meetings.

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Eleanor Hodge	WCC
SarahKate Abercrombie	WCC
Jade Simmonds	WCC
The Older Persons Partnership	
The Over 55's Forum Winchester	