

Report of the Ageing Well Working Group

Why we formed a working group

In January 2012 a proposal was submitted to the Scrutiny Committee by Cllr F J Rosamond in which it was stated that the 3 main components for local government in developing a response to the Ageing Well agenda were:

- To diagnose the areas of work which needed to be prioritised
- To select a menu of improvement opportunities
- To collect and disseminate information and good practice

A Working Group was established to include a co-optee from the Community Well Being Policy Development Group.

The Corporate Plan states that the findings from this Working Group will feed into a strategy for providing future services to older people

Who we were

- Cllr Mrs Heather Bainbridge – Chairman (co-optee from the Community Well Being Policy Development Group)
- Cllr F J Rosamond
- Cllr A V G Griffiths
- Cllr Mrs Jenny Roach
- Cllr T G Hughes

What was our objective?

The key aim and objective was identified as follows:

- The need to foster an inclusive society that meets people's needs through co-ordinated working with partners.

Statistical context

The table below shows how the population is predicted to increase across the whole of Devon over the next 20 years based on the 2008 population estimates. By 2020 the 65+ population is predicted to increase by 42,400 to 215,200, and then to 264,400 by 2030, representing a 53% increase (2011 to 2030). It is predicted that the most significant increases in population will be in the 80-84 and 85+ age bands up to 2030, with percentage increases of 80% and 98% respectively.

	2011	2015	2020	2025	2030	% increase 2011 to 2030
People aged 65-69	50,200	58,700	52,500	56,300	64,400	28%
People aged 70-74	38,900	45,400	56,200	50,600	54,500	40%
People aged 75-79	31,800	35,100	41,700	52,000	47,100	48%
People aged 80-84	25,500	26,600	30,500	36,700	46,000	80%
People aged 85 and over	26,400	29,700	34,300	41,800	52,400	98%
Total population 65+	172,800	195,500	215,200	237,400	264,400	53%

(Table taken from, Devon County Council, Adult Social Care 'Demand Analysis', February 2012)

Devon County Council – the statutory providers

Over the past few years Devon County Council has attempted to revolutionise the way it looks after elderly people who need social and health care. A government report entitled 'Putting People First' identified a shared vision for the transformation of Adult Social care ensuring that people stay healthy and live independently for as long as possible. Putting People First is about giving people more choice over how they get the support they need to do this. Devon County Council claim that the people they support must be able to:

- Stay healthy and safe in their own homes
- Enjoy a good quality of life through access to leisure and social activities
- Make a positive contribution to their community through employment, volunteering and involvement on decision making
- Maintain personal dignity and take control of their lives by exercising choice
- Realise a sufficient income to meet their needs and participate in community life
- Have quality of access to services and protection from discrimination and harm

The District Council does not have a statutory duty to provide specific services to the elderly although of course it does do so indirectly through such services as leisure, planning, housing and waste. The challenge for the working group was to try and identify how the District Council fits into the County Council's aims, what it can do to support their vision and to try to establish whether there are any obstacles impeding effective partnership working.

The questions we asked ourselves?

The Centre for Public Scrutiny recommends that there are ten questions to ask if you are scrutinising local preparation for the ageing society. These are listed under the following headings (not all apply to district councils):

- 1) **Strategy and partnerships** – does the council and its partners have a comprehensive strategic framework for older people?
- 2) **Involving older people** – are older people involved in all aspects of the work of council and its partners, including strategic planning, quality monitoring and, where relevant, service delivery?

- 3) **Achieving cost effective services** – are the council and partners working jointly to achieve efficiency savings and cost effective services?
- 4) **Diversity, dignity and equality** – do the council and partners have a comprehensive approach to tackling age discrimination and inequality and promoting positive images of older people?
- 5) **Being prepared for later** – do the council and partners provide joined-up, accessible, comprehensive information to enable people to plan for later life and retirement and to be able to access specialist support if needed?
- 6) **Maintaining active healthy lives** – are the health needs of older people embedded in health promotion and healthy initiatives?
- 7) **Participating in work, training and learning** – do the council and partners provide comprehensive support to enable older people to access education, training and employment?
- 8) **Fostering a good place to grow old** – can the council and partners demonstrate that the needs of older people are taken into account when developing homes and neighbourhoods?
- 9) **A little bit of help** – to what extent will the council and its partners retain a comprehensive range of preventative, low level and enablement support to help older people maintain independence and reduce costly interventions down the line?
- 10) **Personalised health and social care for older people** – do the council's plans for transforming adult social care meet the needs of older people?

How we attempted to seek answers to these questions

1. Needed to establish what the Council currently did to provide services to older people by meeting with officers from service areas
 - a) Head of Planning and Regeneration:
 - The older age group are not specifically targeted regarding specialist support
 - The housing needs survey had identified a number of enquiries about 'extra care' and 'lifetime' units but none had been built yet
 - All policies should go through an Equality Impact Assessment to ensure no discrimination
 - Planning policy requires on sites of more than 10 units that 20% of housing should be built to lifetime home standards
 - Planning are working with developers on the right size housing in order to meet the needs of our population
 - b) Head of Housing and Property Services and Homelessness and Enabling Team Leader:
 - Housing Department has an Older Persons Strategy
 - The Homeless and Enabling Team Leader's role was to work with partners to ensure adequate extra care provision, however, the person

in this post retired and the post was not refilled due to budget constraints

- Should be more links from Council's strategy to voluntary groups
- Council not built any sheltered housing since 1970's
- Housing doing all they can within current financial constraints

c) Leisure Facilities Manager:

- The 55+ age group are the biggest and most loyal membership group
- The Leisure Service has actively marketed and targeted people aged over 60 in an off peak annual membership promotion. Much work was done during 2013 and the results have been really encouraging. In October 2012 there were 130 over 60's on the off peak annual membership, this October the number has increased to 474.
- The Leisure Service is working more with organisations like Age UK, who come to open days and the Leisure Service send out literature to them to give to their clients and groups.
- Mid Devon District Council has some funds allocated for physical activity from Devon County Council and has just formed a Health Working Group where they are looking at introducing more activities for the public, many of which they hope to be free (walking groups, cycle groups with bikes for them to use).
- They are offering more low intensity classes such as Pilates which appeals to the over 60's age groups.
- Leisure Centre brochures feature more mature people than younger ones
- Leisure Centres provide neutral environments, not age specific, for social gatherings
- Difficult to get help with funding and support from health service
- In an ideal world activities would be free for the over 50's

d) Customer Service Team Leader:

- Do not have a specific older persons strategy although they are their biggest customer group
- Older people's views are sought in all surveys
- The Council has installed hearing loops and appropriate signage
- Signpost elderly to other relevant agencies
- Most complaints are about the website and locating information
- It is important to promote all forms of communication
- More could be done to promote Leisure Services
- Customer Services need to know what other services are doing for the elderly population therefore the exchange of information between services is vital

e) Recycling Officer:

- Currently provide assisted bin collections, this would need to increase as the elderly population grows but this would have an impact on resources and we need to think long term
- Waste collection dates are printed in various formats
- There needs to be sensitive treatment of people with mental health problems

- f) Communications Officer:
- Try to ensure content of stories is appropriate and accessible
 - There are positive images of older people in literature and on website

2. Meeting with Honorary Alderman Mr Eric Shapland – Chairman Tiverton Senior Citizens Group – July 2012

Main points of discussion:

- Joint activity is important for social interaction, it reduces feelings of isolation
- Older people value face to face contact when a service is changed in some way
- They also value a bit of 'forethought'
- There is confusion over the services provided by the District Council and those provided by the County Council
- Supporting independence was key
- Voluntary organisations are vital

3. Meeting with Age UK, Devon Senior Voice and the National Pensioners Convention – August 2012

National Pensioners Convention (NPC)

Discussed problems in relation to:

- Social Care reform
- County services versus district services
- Rural isolation
- Transport
- Changes in the sheltered housing area
- National insurance fund and finances
- Intellectual and spiritual needs as well as physical

Devon Senior Voice (DSV)

Key concerns:

- There had been no consultation with the District Council regarding Devon County Council's 'Ageing Well' document despite references to leisure
- Confusion regarding the different tiers of local government
- Mid Devon's strategy – how best to approach, suggestion was made that the following aims be addressed:
 - Physical, mental and emotional wellbeing
 - Improved quality of life
 - Making a positive contribution
 - Attaining economic wellbeing
- The folding of the Local Implementation Group following a retirement which had been viewed as a previously effective forum
- Large numbers of volunteers would be lost due to the increase in national retirement age
- Rural isolation

- Ineffective consultation with the public

4. Blackdown Support Group and Supported Housing Manager - December 2012

- Catchment area of 200 square miles
- Supported by circa 100 volunteers, recognised nationally as a good model
- Mid Devon District Council has reduced its grant but it was getting thousands of hours of free voluntary work. If Blackdown Support Group were not there who would do this?
- Volunteers need more support
- List of needs is endless including help with benefit forms, travel, home visits, lunch clubs, foot care services, prescription pick ups
- Carer support is vital

5. Supported Housing Manager – December 2012

- Supported Housing Officers have replaced wardens
- New term is ‘targeted support’
- Service linked to the person not the accommodation as some people had been moving in and then declining the service
- Everybody’s needs will need to be assessed
- There will be a tariff of services in the future
- Stringent budget cuts

6. Discussion with Commissioning Manager from DCC – July 2013

Key points:

1. Procurement of services is now through the Clinical Commissioning Group’s
2. There is no long term strategy for the next 25+ years
3. No one single document, different regions want different things
4. Move to personal budgets and direct payments means County are not able to say how care should be provided
5. Local councillors are at the front end and will have a role in taking conversations forward with the elderly
6. District Council has a role through housing, leisure and planning – County Council not tapping into this as a resource
7. Used to be a closer relationship between County and District, reduction in staff numbers and restructuring has damaged this
8. Preventative community agenda is key as is home based support – District Council can play a key role
9. Developers need to be working with Planning to create better housing environments for the elderly
10. County aspires to have a diverse mix of different types of care homes
11. Reduced budgets are the biggest problem facing adult social care
12. Rural isolation more and more prevalent – should County invest in community based day centres and de-invest in traditional County led day centres?
13. People ought to be able to make choices about assisted support before they need it
14. More liaison needed between the two tiers of local government

15. Workshop had recently been held to discuss public health, the social care system and the community agenda but the districts had not been involved

What did we conclude?

- Devon County Council does not have a 20/30 year long term strategy and whilst there are a lot of policies in place it does not appear that these are being transferred into action.
- Great importance should be placed on the need for comprehensive care packages for the elderly in their own homes as there are limited numbers of good residential care homes especially those that the elderly can afford. It was also felt that the amount of time allocated to the elderly for attendance by a carer should not have an amount deducted for the carers travelling time.
- For Council owned and maintained properties – the District Council needs to be thinking 20 – 30 years ahead, whenever there is a change of occupant adapt property for more elderly residents e.g. put ramps in or whatever it takes to make the property more accessible (where there are no adaptations hospital beds are being blocked).
- Majority of people want to stay in their own homes.
- Mid Devon District Council's Leisure Service are to be congratulated for the good work they are doing in recruiting people over the age of 55 and in actively promoting their health and well being.
- Developers should be forced to ensure everything is done when houses are built e.g. making sure there is enough space in the loft to accommodate a lift.
- Blackdown Hills Support Group – provides an excellent model of community/voluntary support.
- Local Implementation Group should not be reinstated, better to have local groups rather than one overall body.
- Lack of liaison with the District Council by the County Council despite providing essential services used by older people.

What do we recommend?

Main recommendation

Mid Devon District Council to develop a corporate strategy with an action plan covering the next 25-30 years. This will need to be factored into the medium term financial and corporate plan. The strategy needs to identify what the Council is currently doing to support the elderly (e.g. assisted bin collections) but most importantly how services will plan for the future to meet the increase in demand given the rising numbers of people in Mid Devon over 65. The strategy must go for consultation before approval which should also include Towns and Parishes.

Additional recommendations

- a) Assign a specific lead officer who needs to work closely with Devon County Council and provide a lobbying mechanism. Suggest that this is somebody based within the Community Development Team. The Grants and Funding Officer could assist in getting organisations to apply for schemes.
- b) Devon County Council Commissioning Manager spoke about a greater emphasis on local communities taking responsibility. Mid Devon District Council Council should promote the community hub currently running in Newton St Cyres and highlight this as a model for best practice through Parish Matters.
- c) Issue guidance/protocol to the parishes on identifying signs of vulnerability in adults initially through Parish Matters.
- d) Raise the issue at the Devon Districts Forum through the Leader and ask what are the other districts are doing.
- e) Ascertain how many and what voluntary groups are out there and link in with the Devon County Council register.
- f) Consider setting up a garden share scheme and include as part of the strategy.
- g) Consider setting up a register of trusted tradesmen or link in with that already provided by Age UK and proactively promote this.
- h) Consider using the Pannier Market as a community hub and liaise with Involve over its operation.