

Corporate, Adult Services & Social Inclusion Select Committee

A meeting of Corporate, Adult Services & Social Inclusion Select Committee was held on Tuesday, 22nd April, 2008.

Present: Cllr David Coleman (Chairman), Cllr Mrs Lynne Apedaile, Cllr Mrs Ann Cains, Cllr Dick Cains (Vice Councillor Mrs Jean O'Donnell), Cllr Aidan Cockerill, Cllr Mrs Suzanne Fletcher, Cllr Andrew Larkin, Cllr Roy Rix

Officers: Mrs R Hill (CESC); Mrs T Harrison and Mr N Hart (LD)

Also in attendance: None

Apologies: Cllr Jean O'Donnell and Cllr Mick Womphrey

1 Declarations of Interest

Councillor Mrs Cains declared a personal non prejudicial interest due to being a trustee of the George Hardwick Foundation, which is a charity providing services for carers in Stockton and elsewhere in Teesside, for whom the Council gave an annual grant to provide service.

2 Draft Minutes of the Meeting held on 11th March 2008

Consideration was given to the draft minutes of the meeting held on 11th March 2008.

The Chair requested an interim report in relation to High Street accessibility for people attending meetings in the Town Hall; and in particular the suggestion that taxi's were being prevented from parking outside of the Town Hall to drop off passengers; some of whom were of low mobility.

Concluded that:-

1. The minutes of the meeting held on 11th March 2008 be forwarded to Council for consideration.
2. An interim report in relation to High Street accessibility be prepared and distributed to Members of the Committee.

3 Terms of Reference

Members considered the times of the meetings and the new terms of reference.

Concluded that:

1. The times of the meeting be changed to 9.30am.
2. The terms of reference be agreed.

4 Scrutiny Review of Older People's Strategy

Ruth Hill (Head of Adult Strategy) gave a presentation on the strategy for older people; which had been approved by Council in December 2007.

Members were advised that the strategy had been formulated to:-

- Support our future planning of service provision to meet older peoples needs,
- Consider how services needed to change to reflect this need,
- To connect services/provision, and
- To meet the needs of older people.

The Strategy had seven main points of focus:-

- Housing and Home
- Neighbourhood
- Getting Out and About
- Social Activities, Social Networks and Keeping Busy
- Income
- Information
- Health and Healthy Living

Members were advised that comprehensive consultation had been carried out during preparation of the strategy and the findings were then fed back to older people at the annual 'Are You Being Served' event; who then critiqued and endorsed the feed back.

The vision of the strategy was as follows:-

"Every older person will be a valued part of their local community, alongside people of every age. They will have access to services that help them improve their quality of life and their individual well-being. They will be able to contribute to their local community and to how Stockton develops services for its local people in future".

The strategic priorities were that older people would:-

- Be at the heart of community leadership and community development
- Be an important part of local welcoming communities
- Have real choice, control and equitable access
- Have opportunities to improve personal wellbeing

An action plan had been developed to drive the strategy forward, which was designed to be outcome focused, gain broad ownership via the various partnership structures, and be accountable to the Renaissance Board.

Quarterly reviews of progress against the Action Plan would be carried out with the first review update scheduled to take place this week. Feedback from this would be reported to the next meeting of this Committee; and it was noted that this may influence the extent of the further evidence required by the Committee.

Clarification was requested as to how the strategy addressed the transport issues of older people; including the need to connect to older people living in rural areas. It was noted that the Action Plan, upon which members would receive further information, addressed issues such as these and the provision of free bus passes, the Dial a Ride service, payment for taxis etc. An update would also be provided as to what action could be undertaken to influence developers regarding future house build so as to contain in-built features

designed to be more sympathetic to the needs of older people.

The Head of Adult Services acknowledged that more could be done in relation to targeting hard to reach groups, such as the BME, and that closer working with these communities was required.

It was noted that the actual financial cost of delivering the strategy was difficult to predict however, key elements/pressure points had been factored in to the medium term financial plan where possible.

It was observed that there were many older people who were in need of assistance yet they were very independent and had had little experience of requesting services or information. Every effort was made to publicise the available information and services provided for older people, however it was considered important that a person's first point of contact was able to refer that person direct to available social care if needed. It was suggested that it may also be beneficial to receive information regards the Direct Payments service.

Members observed that some individuals do not complete Council Tax/ Housing Benefit forms due to the amount of personal information required from them. Members expressed a desire for a way of still maintaining the robustness of the forms whilst not discouraging individuals from completing them.

The Committee thanked the Head of Adult Strategy for her presentation and noted that an update on progress against the strategy would be reported to the next meeting.

Members considered the draft scope and project plan for the review and suggested amendments including the need to consider recent CPA feedback, any available Viewpoint or Audit Committee information, service performance management information/complaints data, and the need to receive evidence from both officers responsible for cultural, leisure and library activities, including representation from Tees Active. It was also suggested that the Committee visit an identified best practice facility offering a range of services in one facility, directed at, amongst others, older people. Members were also invited to consider any future questions they may wish to raise when receiving evidence as part of the review.

Concluded that:-

1. The content of the presentation be noted and that an update on progress made against the strategy to date, be reported to the next meeting.
2. The scope and project plan of the review be approved subject to the minor amendments identified.