

Attendance at Over 50's Assembly-11th August 20089

Copy of Presentation re review attached at **Appendix 1**.

Members of the Assembly made reference to a vacancy on the Eastern Area Partnership for an Older Persons representative. It was proposed that a lady from the Assembly be appointed. Are OP reps on each of the Area/Thematic Partnerships/Renaissance?

The following questions were posed by the Assembly:-

Q Why does the Scrutiny Committee have to look at these issues. Should it not have been carried out before it reaches Council?

A. We test and challenge to make sure a proposal is robust. In the new Cabinet structure people are given an area of responsibility but it is Officers who do the ground work to be presented at Cabinet.

Q Do you listen to older people? Do you take notice of what they say? We have kerb side collections but the refuse people will not collect or return the wheelie bins of older people. Why don't the boxes for cans, etc have wheels to make it easier for older people?

Issues were raised around Registered Social Landlords (RSL's) and social housing and the governance of these services. It was questioned the requirement for indemnity insurance when arranging outings for residents. The Chair advised that insurance is usually for up to £5m and costs in the region of £30 per year. If people are arranging these trips regularly for the same people they may want to consider recouping the cost through contributions from the people. This will provide protection against any claims for damages or injury of the people taking part.

A member of the Assembly advised of a situation with the RSL she has. She wanted to know why some items (cooker, fridge, etc) could not be moved with residents when they go to another scheme.

Pete Smith advised that the first option should be the RSL's complaints procedure that they are obliged to have. If still unhappy with response the complaint can be passed to the Housing Ombudsman.

A member asked why you pay the same council tax for a smaller property. The Chair advised that although smaller it may still be in the same banding as the former property.

A member also wanted to know where the Advocates have gone. He was assisted by one some time ago but there doesn't appear to be any now. It was understood that Advocacy services can still be accessed through Stockton Advice and Information Service (CAB).

Peter Smith: Older People's Strategy

PS gave a presentation on the main points of the Older People's Strategy. He pointed out that the strategy document has been in place for a number of months and the Scrutiny Committee are taking the opportunity to review it and see what progress is being made against the action plan.

Comments and opinions are welcome as part of this review and these can be passed to PS at Adult Strategy Team, 1st floor, Tithebarn House, High Newham Court, Hardwick, Stockton-on-Tees TS19 8RH.

The chairman (MR) suggested that the full document is quite extensive and even the condensed version is substantial and has been seen by very few people. There is a concern that these extremely useful papers are lost on ordinary citizens of the Borough. Would they know what the Older Person's Strategy was if people in the street were asked? This raises the spectre of how can we consult in a meaningful way if people don't know what we are consulting on. More awareness of allowances suitable for OP would be welcomed.

A member asked if services need to change perhaps a good starting point is to ask what do we have now, before we change it?

SCRUTINY REVIEW OF OLDER PEOPLE STRATEGY

-Cttee of members asked to carry out 'Scrutiny Review' of Council's Older People Strategy 2007-2025, which was approved in Dec 07 following input from this Assembly;

-the Strategy identifies the future needs of OP based on an expected increase in the number of OP both nationally & locally;

-Purpose-to make sure strategy is being fully considered by all Council depts & partners; and that they are delivering services that are still valid;

SCRUTINY is:- top to bottom approach; independent viewpoint of members, critical challenge, seeking to recommend improvements to the service/issue being scrutinised;

OTHER CURRENT SCRUTINY REVIEWS:-

- Obesity;
- Audiology
- Roads & Footpaths-Condition
- Customer First
- Registered Social Landlords
- Tees Active

Recently completed reviews on:-

- Waste Management & Recycling;
- Use of the River Tees;
- Voluntary & Community Sector;
- Rats & Pigeons issues in Borough

SO FAR, AS PART OF OP REVIEW, CTTEE has:-

- Received a summary of first six months progress report from all services contributing to the Action Plan of the Strategy;
- Heard from those responsible for Community Safety re multi agency approach to safeguarding OP; preventing OP being victims of crime (No Cold Calling Zones); reducing peoples fear of crime & informing them of measures in this regard;
- Culture & Leisure Services-Museums, libraries (housebound service, mobile library), leisure, arts & cultural activities; Health Referral Scheme; Falls Prevention service;

**-Tees Active- services/classes provided, links with PCT;
-Housing-Council's aim of providing Decent Homes for Life; physical adaptations to properties; partnership with other Social Housing providers; eligibility/accessibility by OP to Housing/Council Tax benefits; Benefit regime paperwork!;**

-Age Friendly Community in the North 2020- Northern Housing Consortium consulting with people to see what their views on housing, neighbourhoods and local services are; and how they would wish them to be by 2020.

FUTURE EVIDENCE TO BE HEARD FROM:-

-Bunny Hill Centre, Sunderland-One Stop Shop for public, private, PCT & VCS services. Council committed to opening Customer Centres in Thornaby (Jan 09), Stockton & Billingham. What services should be in there?

-Transport Partnership-increase uptake of free bus passes, improve access to Community Transport Service, monitor OP level of access to key services by public transport;

-Employability-support OP in to employment,

-Health & Well Being Partnership- continued promotion & development of this Assembly & events such as Are You Being Served; Aids & Adaptations in Homes, take up of home fire & general safety checks; range & quality of services for OP inc sheltered housing, extra care services, community alarm services, telecare services, reduce reliance on nursing and residential care sector etc.

OVER 50's ASSEMBLY VIEWS?

-What do you want? What issues matter? What do you like; what don't you like? What is the most important thing we need to highlight to services for you?

-Any views/questions received today can be fed into the scrutiny review and put to relevant services

-How would you like to hear about feedback on the Strategy/how its performing in the future? Via this Assembly?

-Is there a need for a Member Champion for OP who is identifiable to all and can be approached on the wide range of matters affecting OP?

-Are services consulting enough with you regarding service provision; are they providing you with enough information for you to be able to access the services that are there?

