

**REPORT BY: ALUN DAVIES, PLANNING AND POLICY MANAGER,  
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COUNCIL**

**DATE: 19TH SEPTEMBER 2011**

**SUBJECT OF REPORT: NORTH SOMERSET PARTNERSHIP (NSP)  
OLDER PEOPLE STRATEGY**

**Recommendations:**

- i. that the North Somerset Partnership endorse and adopt the NSP Older People Strategy.
- ii. that the Fire and Police members of the NSP identify representatives to join the Older People Champions Group.

**Summary of Report:**

The report describes the process of development of the North Somerset Partnership (NSP) Older People Strategy and sets out the final draft strategy and action plan for approval.

**Background and Detail:**

1. In July 2009 the Health and Well-Being Partnership on behalf of the North Somerset Partnership (NSP) resolved to develop a NSP-Wide Older People strategy. The strategy would begin from April 2011. The request for a NSP-wide strategy had been made strongly during the consultation on the council's own older people strategy in 2008. The strategy and action plan is attached as Appendix 1.
2. In October 2009 a project board was set-up to oversee the strategy's development. The membership of the project board includes representatives of all the NSP partner organisations, older people, carers and relevant voluntary organisations. The project sponsor was Mark Hughes, Head of Housing North Somerset Council.

3. When considering the development of the strategy the project board were aware of the considerable engagement that had taken place with older people in North Somerset over recent years. It was therefore decided to develop a list of key principles and priorities for consultation with older people. The NSP Executive considered the draft principles and priorities in April 2010 and the wider consultation took place from May to June 2010.
4. Another key issue for the project board was a realisation that to focus a NSP-wide strategy at an operational or service delivery level would both make the document unwieldy in length in terms of all the actions it would have to include, and would also repeat much of existing strategies which contain operational and service-level targets. It was therefore agreed to focus actions in this strategy on those at a strategic level and where work across the partnership and its organisations would be required.
5. There were two phases of consultation during the strategy's development. The draft principles and priorities were consulted on from May to July 2010. The full draft strategy was subject to consultation from December to February 2012. In each case the consultation period was 12 weeks.
6. The consultation process for both phases was very similar. The consultation for the draft strategy included informing over 200 community and voluntary organisations of the consultation and publicising it on all NSP member organisations websites. E-consult was used by the council, and the strategy was an agenda item on all the council's Scrutiny Panels. It was also considered by the Senior Community Links (SCL). The SCL are engagement groups of older people supported by the council and NHS North Somerset.
7. The following are changes the Project Board have made to the strategy as a result of the consultation, and issues that were raised most often:-

- \* The removal of "Social Isolation" as a priority. Although the Board had proposed to remove this priority because it was felt to be covered practically by other priorities, there was real concern that not having it specifically referred to would mean it would not be prioritised. Social isolation has therefore been added as an additional principle. A new action specifically focusing on social isolation has also been added to the Action Plan. This action will engage older people in the implementation and monitoring of actions to tackle social isolation, a request that came directly from the SCL representatives on the Older People Champions Group.
  
- \* There was concern that the vision has no caveat in case an older person's choices about their life are not achievable. The project board approved the following amended vision:  
  
"That older people have the opportunity to live their lives to the fullest extent possible, with dignity, choice and fairness free from discrimination".
  
- \* Several of the council's Scrutiny panels and some of the Senior Community Links felt there needed to be a stronger statement about how this was a partnership document and that all members of the partnership were equally committed to its delivery. The project board agreed the following addition before the vision:  
  
"All members of the NSP will strive to, and are fully committed to, the following vision".
  
- \* The Project Board agreed an amendment to one of the actions supporting the priority "Enabling Independent Living" (Appendix 1 4, 21 bullet 3) to make our ambition clearer as follows:-  
  
"We will develop and implement a Supported Living Strategy to develop the range of housing, care and support options available to enable older people to live independently in the community".

- \* The age definition of 50: this is the definition central Government adopted. It also recognises the impact that people's lifestyle from 50 can have on later life.
  - \* The ability to deliver the actions in the current financial climate: The actions have all been developed in the context of the financial constraints (as set out in paragraph 5 below), and will be constantly reviewed to ensure they can continue to be delivered if and as circumstances change.
  - \* The importance of transport as an issue: The issue of transport remains a difficult issue to address as public sector agencies have little influence over private transport providers.
8. During the strategy's development the Project Board recognised that the reductions to public sector funding resulting from the Coalition Governments emergency budget and Comprehensive Spending Review would have a significant impact on the ambitions of the strategy. The principles and priorities that were subject to consultation were revised in November 2010 to ensure that the strategy and action plan were consistent with the changing financial position facing public services and to avoid the strategy raising undeliverable expectations. The actions do not require any new or additional financial resources to be delivered. Some of the actions, such as reducing the dependency on residential care provision, are also intended to improve service outcomes and deliver savings. To ensure that the actions continue to be deliverable in the context of the resources available to services the strategy will be reviewed on a six monthly basis.

9. Responsibility for monitoring the implementation of the strategy will be with the Older People Champions Group which will report to the NSP. The Older People Champions Group includes councillors from each of the council's Scrutiny panels, the Primary Care Trust, and representatives from each of the Senior Community Links (SCL). The group considered how to strengthen links with the NSP to ensure the effective monitoring of the new strategy. It agreed to invite two representatives from the NSP to join the group to strengthen the direct links and communication. In terms of who specifically these representatives should be, the group felt that representation from the Fire and Police services respectively would be most helpful. These are important issues to older people but not currently adequately reflected in the group's membership.
10. The strategy has been considered and approved by the North Somerset Council Executive, the Primary Care Trust and Weston Hospital Trust respectively.
11. The strategy was emailed to all members of the board in April following the cancellation of the April board. Comments were received from several board members. Issues raised included the length and focus of the strategy, strengthening the reference to the community and voluntary sector, and increasing the profile of the work of the Fire service. This final version of the strategy reflects the issues raised, and board members are thanked for their positive and helpful contributions.