

Notes of the Scrutiny and Overview Committee
Social Inclusion Working Group
23rd September 2013

Present: Councillors: George Cockman, Duncan England, Christian Mitchell, Godfrey Newman, Kate Rowbottom, David Skipp, Tricia Youtan

Apologies: Councillor Peter Burgess

By invitation: Janice Leeming, Chief Executive, Age UK Horsham District
Barry Mursell, Chairman, Senior Persons' Council

Officers: Damian Brewer, Equalities Officer
Clare Ebelewicz, Senior Youth and Older Persons Officer
Jill Scarfield, Head of Strategic Planning and Performance

1. ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN

Councillor Kate Rowbottom was elected as Chairman of the Working Group for the ensuing year.

2. TO APPROVE AS CORRECT THE RECORD OF THE MEETING HELD ON 17TH JUNE 2013

The notes of the meeting held on 17th June 2013 were approved as a correct record subject to an amendment to list Councillor Youtan as a Member of the sub-group in relation to the Information Shop.

3. TO RECEIVE ANY DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

4. ANNOUNCEMENTS FROM THE CHAIRMAN OR CHIEF EXECUTIVE

The Chairman welcomed Janice Leeming, Chief Executive of Age UK Horsham District, and Barry Mursell, Chairman of the Senior Persons' Council, to the meeting.

5. WORK PROGRAMME UPDATES

(a) Information Shop for Young People / 'FindItOut'

Members of the Working Group, along with students from Tanbridge House School, Horsham District Councillors and residents of the Y Centre had attended an event at the Horsham Information Shop (now re-branded as FindItOut based at the Y Centre)

on 11th July 2013 to hear from West Sussex County Council about the changes that had been implemented to the Centre; some of changes were in response to the students' original recommendations. The event also marked the service's 20th anniversary. The students and attendees had been pleased with the progress that had been achieved so far, although they felt there were some issues that remained. It was acknowledged that West Sussex County Council and Sussex Central YMCA would be considering some of those issues which might require more time and money to implement.

The Working Group received a summary of the feedback forms that had been completed by the students during their visit. They had made further suggestions in relation to the appearance of the centre, its opening times, signage, communication and public awareness, and the potential for outreach work.

(b) Review of how the Council is represented on outside bodies

The Cabinet had discussed the Council's representation on outside bodies and the updated list of representatives. Cabinet Members had suggested that, in reviewing the current schedule of representatives on outside bodies, regard should be had to the interests and skills of all Members. It was also agreed that some additional information was required regarding each of the bodies on the schedule, such as frequency of meetings, and that the list should be kept under review to ensure that it was relevant and up to date.

The Cabinet had asked the Chief Executive, in consultation with the Leader of the Council and the Leader of the Minority Group, to determine whether any changes should be made to any of the other representatives currently appointed until May 2015. Further, that the Chief Executive, in consultation with the Leader of the Council and the Leader of the Minority Group, should seek interest from all Members to fill existing vacancies.

The Cabinet had stated that all Members who are appointed to outside bodies should be required to report to Council on a regular basis, and in any event at least once a year, by means of a brief written information report. The Working Group noted that Councillor England had reported to Council on his attendance at Springboard Project meetings.

The Council had accepted the Cabinet's suggestions which had addressed the Working Group's recommendations.

(c) Horsham Town Access Audit and other access matters

The Head of Strategic Planning and Performance and the Equalities Officer provided an update on access matters.

Key activities were in place to ensure that disability access remained high profile in the District and within existing resources. Access was not only about physical access but also related to ensuring that attitudinal barriers were removed.

The Equalities Officer reviewed planning applications submitted to the Council and commented on accessibility to public and commercial venues. He also advised Building Control colleagues within Sussex Building Control about applications which needed specialist input.

The Equality Impact Assessment process was becoming embedded within the Council's working processes.

The Council was consulting on its Draft Single Equality Scheme; comments were invited by 30th September 2013. The Scheme outlined at a high strategic level how the Council planned to ensure that equality and diversity was incorporated into its core work and to ensure that the Council met its obligations under the Equality Act 2010.

The Council consulted the Horsham and District Access Forum via which local people with disabilities could raise access issues. The Council was continuing its work on the Shopmobility and Changing Places projects. Information on the latter, when available, listing the facilities in Horsham town where people with severe mobility issues could be supported with their toileting, changing and care requirements, would be posted on the Council's website, disseminated via other media where possible, and shared with Age UK Horsham District.

A Members' Seminar '*Knowing our community*' would be held on 16th October 2013 to examine who lived in the District, using information from the 2011 Census, and to consider the Council's public sector duties under the Equality Act 2010 to deliver inclusive services for its residents and share information about how that was done on a day-to-day basis, looking at some of our services which focus on older and younger people, disabled and vulnerable residents.

The Older Vulnerable Persons' Tactical Group had met on 19th July 2013 as part of the Horsham District Community Safety Partnership. Relevant agencies considered the *Who Cares?* campaign and worked together to consider how the most vulnerable members of the community could be made aware of potential fire risks in the home and the free safety checks on offer from the West Sussex Fire and Rescue Service. The Group had considered the *Think Jessica* campaign at its second meeting, and it would continue to focus on a different issue at each quarterly meeting. An attendee from the local Alzheimer's Society had expressed a wish to establish a Dementia Forum in Horsham; the Council would like to liaise on that proposal. The District Council and Age UK Horsham District were working with Parish Councils and other partners to support vulnerable adults. Work included a mapping exercise to identify local schemes that supported some or all of the Village Agent concept objectives.

The Head of Strategic Planning and Performance and the Equalities Officer would keep the Working Group informed of progress on access matters.

6. REVIEW OF POVERTY AMONGST AN AGEING POPULATION - UPDATE

Age UK Horsham District had, on 3rd September 2013, hosted an event, 'Loneliness and Isolation and Local Older People: impact and solutions'.

Those Members of the Working Group who had attended the event expressed how useful and informative it had been. It had included the launch of the research undertaken by the West Sussex Public Health Research Unit into loneliness and isolation in the District, and discussed the local implications arising from the results of the West Sussex Older People's Survey. It also heard from Paul Cann from Age UK Oxfordshire who was a founder member of the national Campaign to End Loneliness.

The research showed that loneliness was a more significant problem than simply being an emotional experience. It posed a health risk. The lack of social interaction was linked to the onset of degenerative diseases and linked to heart disease and depression.

In Horsham District approximately 20% of older people had indicated that they felt lonely and socially isolated; that was out of a total of almost 20,500 older people. The quality of relationships was a key factor to prevent loneliness; consideration could be given to linking older people with home visitors who had shared or similar interests.

The research had highlighted issues about older men's needs, how technology (use of telephones, Skype and use of the internet) could reduce loneliness, the significant benefits of recruiting older people in active and meaningful roles, to make people aware of what already exists and to promote the Council's Older Persons' Directory, to suggest that the District and Parish Councils convene summit meetings, to encourage schoolchildren to be more involved in relevant projects, the need to invest in community transport services, and to encourage neighbourly support.

Age UK had circulated the research results to all attendees and would be seeking to work in partnership to address the issues of loneliness and social isolation.

The Health and Wellbeing Partnership would soon be considering its priorities for the coming year. Tackling loneliness and social isolation would be suggested as a possible strand in its work programme.

Age UK Horsham District would be providing two new services: a Housing Options Adviser would provide one to one support, and a Home from Hospital service would commence in December 2013 to assist with the planned discharge of patients which would involve an assessment of their homes and offers of practical help.

Age UK's Arun magazine would be re-launched in October 2013

The Working Group raised the issue of older people being potential victims of scams and noted that Sussex Police had launched Operation Signature, a campaign aimed at protecting victims of scam mail. Details of that and the associated 'Think Jessica' campaign would be circulated to the Working Group.

The Chairman thanked Janice Leeming, Chief Executive of Age UK Horsham District, for attending the meeting and sharing the research findings.

7. SENIOR PERSONS' COUNCIL

Barry Mursell, Chairman of the Senior Persons' Council, explained the work of that organisation and how it provided older people with an opportunity to put forward their ideas to the District Council and to undertake their own initiatives to benefit the local community.

The Working Group noted the minutes of the Senior Persons' Council meeting on 20th June 2013. The meeting had included discussions with representatives of the Sussex Community NHS Trust, and with the District Council's Health and Wellbeing Manager. An update had been received on the project to provide security features in older people's homes; liaison was taking place with the District Council's Community Safety Manager. An update on the Pride of Place campaign had also been provided.

The Senior Persons' Council had conducted initial research work in 2011 in partnership with Age UK which had led to the further research that was presented at the Age UK event 'Loneliness and Isolation and Local Older People'.

The Working Group suggested that the issue of security features in new build homes could be referred to the District Council's Planning Policy Advisory Group, with a view to assisting older people by proposing the installation of items such as locks, chains, spy-holes, and key safes. The Chairman of the Senior Persons' Council and the Chief Executive of Age UK Horsham District were invited to prepare a list of those security and design features that would benefit older people in their homes. Those suggestions would then be forwarded to the Advisory Group.

The Chairman thanked Mr Mursell for attending the meeting.

The meeting finished at 7.03 p.m. having commenced at 5.30 p.m.

CHAIRMAN