

Notes of the Scrutiny and Overview Committee
Social Inclusion Working Group
16th June 2014

Present: Councillors: George Cockman, Christian Mitchell, Godfrey Newman,
Kate Rowbottom

Apologies: Councillors: David Coldwell, Duncan England, David Skipp, Tricia Youtan

Also present: Councillor Roger Arthur

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 23RD SEPTEMBER 2013

The notes of the meeting held on 23rd September 2013 were approved as a correct record.

The Working Group noted, in relation to the Council's representation on outside bodies, that Council agendas had a standard item of business to receive reports from the representatives on those external bodies; a brief written information report was requested at least once a year. Part 2 of the Constitution, paragraph 5.3, set out additional functions of the Vice-Chairman of Council which included the role of ensuring that those members serving on outside bodies reported regularly to Council. The Vice-Chairman of the Council, Councillor Youtan, would be asked to comment on how that would be achieved.

3. TO RECEIVE ANY DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

4. ANNOUNCEMENTS FROM THE CHAIRMAN OR CHIEF EXECUTIVE

There were no announcements.

5. REVIEW OF POVERTY AMONGST AN AGEING POPULATION

The Working Group received further information in relation to the review of poverty amongst an ageing population including the West Sussex County Council / Joint Strategic Needs Assessment report '*Lives of Older People in West Sussex 2013*' which

measured community connectedness experienced by local older people and investigated levels of social isolation and loneliness and the relationship with health and wellbeing. Over 2,800 people aged 65 years and over were interviewed (i.e. over 400 respondents from each of the seven local authority areas in the county); 24.4% of respondents indicated that they were moderately or severely lonely (and the figure for Horsham District was 19.5%).

The Working Group noted the report's recommendations that local partners should commission and provide services that aimed to reduce feelings of loneliness for older residents and particularly those in poor health or experiencing multiple emergency hospital admissions; that building community capacity was important in improving health-related quality of life for older people by means of fostering strong communities via neighbourhood co-ordinators and networks; and noted that the issues highlighted were a priority in both rural and urban areas.

The Working Group also noted news articles that suggested loneliness among the over-65s could be tackled by training more older people to use the internet, the Age UK campaign to help end loneliness, information about the Silver Line which provided a confidential and free helpline for older people across the UK, and the Royal Voluntary Service Good Neighbours scheme in West Sussex.

Members noted that there was a proposal, to be considered by the Personnel Committee on 18th June 2014, to appoint three additional Health and Wellbeing staff, one of which would be a Falls Prevention Advisor. Other than the Horsham Hospital Falls and Fracture Prevention Service there were no further such services available to Horsham District residents. Falls by people over 65 years in age could destroy confidence and increase isolation, with around 1 in 10 older people who fall becoming afraid to leave their homes. A tailored exercise programme could reduce falls by as much as 54 per cent.

Members noted that the Health and Wellbeing Service commissioned services and seven projects had been identified, one of which was tackling fuel poverty.

The Chairman reported on the success of the Village Agent scheme in Billingshurst and Shipley; the agent was employed by Age UK Horsham District, with funding also being provided by Billingshurst Rotary, Lions and a national trust. The agent was employed part time for 10 hours a week. She assisted residents who were over 50 years in age to gain the right information to meet their needs and put them in contact with organisations that provided services they required. The scheme would be rolled out to other areas. The Working Group suggested that the village agent be invited to attend a future meeting to discuss her work.

Members of the Working Group re-examined the scope of the review and its terms of reference and considered recommendations that could be presented in a report to the Scrutiny and Overview Committee. The review had focused on a broad examination of poverty (extending beyond that of financial hardship) affecting the increasing ageing

population. It had considered social isolation and loneliness, how older people accessed services and information, and how information was provided to them.

Members stated that some older people may not want to use computers to access services and information and that some may not be able to afford internet services. The Working Group felt that there should not be an insistence on the public accessing services and information solely via the Council's website and other websites. Members were mindful that such information should still be available via telephone contact or by visiting the Council offices.

Members felt that the Working Group should focus on co-ordinating information rather than duplicating the efforts of other organisations. The Working Group agreed to recommend that relevant information for local older people about services, helplines, organisations and applicable documents be collated and posted on the Council's website which was being upgraded. That information could also be featured in the Horsham District News magazine (Spring 2015 edition) which would be delivered to households. The Older Persons' Directory was being revised and should be clearly accessible on the Council website and also distributed in hard copy throughout the District to appropriate locations. The Business Transformation, Communications, and Community Development teams would be asked to assist with that work.

The Working Group's recommendations would be presented to the Scrutiny and Overview Committee.

6. CHANGING PLACES CAMPAIGN – UPDATE

The Working Group received an update about the Changing Places campaign which aimed to secure provision of toilet facilities for those people who could not use standard accessible toilets. That included people with profound learning difficulties and/or physical disabilities. Toilets needed to be publicly accessible with enough space and equipment including a height adjustable changing bench and a hoist.

Members welcomed the news that the Council had reached agreement with Places for People Leisure to provide a Changing Places toilet at the Pavilions in the Park leisure centre, that a Changing Places toilet would be provided in the new Broadbridge Heath leisure centre when it was built, and that the Council was in discussion with a major retailer regarding a Horsham town centre based Changing Places toilet.

The meeting finished at 6.17 p.m. having commenced at 5.30 p.m.

CHAIRMAN