

WYRE FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL

CABINET MEETING
24TH AUGUST 2006

The Older People's Strategy for Worcestershire

OPEN	
COMMUNITY STRATEGY THEME	Improved Health and Wellbeing
CORPORATE PLAN THEME:	Enabling and Community Wellbeing
KEY PRIORITY:	Housing and Independent Living
CABINET MEMBER:	Councillor Anne Hingley
RESPONSIBLE OFFICER:	Head of Planning, Health and Environment
CONTACT OFFICER:	Tim Rice Ext 2560 tim.rice@wyreforestdc.gov.uk
APPENDICES	None

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To confirm the Council's agreement to the Older People's Strategy for Worcestershire. The Strategy and a Summary can be found on the following web link: <http://www.wyreforestdc.gov.uk/corpgen/new/Azo.htm>

2. RECOMMENDATION

The Cabinet is asked to RECOMMEND to Council:

- 2.1 **The Older People's Strategy for Worcestershire, as referred to in the report, be adopted.**

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 The Older People's Strategy for Worcestershire has been developed through joint working by Worcestershire County Council, the district, borough and city councils and the PCTs across Worcestershire. Together, these organisations make up the Older People's Strategy Group. The strategy looks at housing options for older people together with the full range of appropriate Health Care, Social Care, preventative services and support services that need to be delivered and joined up to enable people to live as independently as possible. The Strategy takes a "whole systems" approach to the needs of older people within the county and provides a strategic context for the development of a whole range of innovative services that will meet people's changing needs and aspirations.

- 3.2 The strategy sets out the vision for future development of services. Service providers, including housing associations, have been involved in shaping the strategy and have also responded to the final consultation. It is critical however to work in partnership with providers to ensure that services change to meet older people's needs and aspirations. As a result a provider conference is planned in September 2006 to ensure that they are involved in implementing the strategy.
- 3.3 The strategy covers a four-year period, April 2006 to March 2010 – allowing the Strategy to dovetail with the Supporting People Strategy that runs until 2010. The Strategy, in providing a context for housing options as well as a range of other services, includes a 30-year vision for the types of services being developed. This is particularly important for any building-based services, as the Housing Corporation (the government agency that funds social housing and regulates social landlords) is keen that new dwellings have a life span of 30 years as a minimum. The strategy covers a government requirement and is essential to provide a strategic context for capital bids to Department of Health and the Housing Corporation.

Consultation Process

- 3.4 The Strategy has been developed with older people, Housing Providers, District Councils and Health colleagues. An open consultation exercise was conducted, to gain the views of members of the public on current and future services for older people. The Voluntary and Community Sector provided input on the scope of the Strategy, with specific Black and Minority Ethnic community input. This was in addition to a range of consultation events during the development of the strategy, including a joint members seminar in October 2005.

Consultation Summary

- 3.5 The Strategy underwent public consultation between January and April 2006. Four consultation events were held across the county, alongside focus groups and meetings with Local Implementation Teams in the PCT Localities. Partner organisations also held consultation events internally.
- 3.6 The Councils response to the consultation was set out in a report to Cabinet on 27th April 2006, where it was agreed.
- 3.7 Overall older people and stakeholders warmly welcomed the Strategy and the vast majority support the strategic aims.
- 3.8 The Older People's Strategy includes a section on equity release schemes and their use by older people. However following a negative "Which?" report on equity release there are widespread concerns that this is high risk and potentially damaging for older people. As a result this section has now been re-drafted to reflect these concerns.

Issues from the Consultation

- 3.9 The following are the only strategic aims that received significant negative responses:
- Direct Payments (from the County Council direct to older people to pay for their

services)

- Telecare (home based technologies to enable people to remain in their own homes)
- Floating Support
- Community Wardens

- 3.10 The strategic aim for Direct Payments is to *“Improve older people’s opportunity to exercise choice and control by increasing the take up of Direct Payments by older people and their carers”*. Concerns from consultation responses were regarding older people not wanting ‘employer’ responsibilities.
- 3.11 The strategic aim for Telecare is to *“promote and develop the use of telecare as one of a flexible range of options to help older people to remain in their own homes for longer and to support their carers”*. The issue around this aim included concerns over reliability and possible loss of human contact.
- 3.12 In response we will continue to emphasise that these elements are part of a suite of available options and choices. This will be taken forward into the action planning and implementation process.
- 3.13 The strategic aim for Floating Support is to *“make the change from an accommodation-based model of housing-related support to a community-based floating support service with an integrated workforce that will go to a person regardless of where they live”* and the aim for Community Wardens is *“make the change from the traditional ‘warden’ role in Sheltered Housing schemes, towards employing flexible community wardens”*. The concerns around these aims are that there will be an effect on current services provided to tenants currently in sheltered accommodation.
- 3.14 The Strategy now includes a rationale to explain the reasoning and thinking behind these strategic aims and why these aims are important to maintain older people’s independence regardless of where they live. The strategic aims for floating support and community wardens are taken from Worcestershire’s Supporting People Strategy.
- 3.15 All of these changes were discussed at a meeting of the Older People’s Strategy Group on 4 May 2006, after the close of the consultation period. The partners and older people from Worcestershire’s Older People’s Forums discussed each of the amendments and were agreed upon before inclusion into the Strategy.
- 3.16 The Strategy Group has now addressed:
- Priority setting
 - Business case for priorities
 - Existing resources available to achieve Strategy
 - Commitment of resources from partners
 - Strategic joint implementation.
- 3.17 Clearly the need for rigorous priority setting is key, in order to break down what is an extensive Strategy into a manageable action plan, which will ensure that the aims of the Strategy can be taken forward over the next four years. This work is also being linked to the emergent Local Area Agreement housing targets.

3.18 Achieving the strategic aims set out in this Strategy does not necessarily require more resources – but it does require us to consider more creative ways of commissioning services and joint working, with older people and communities shaping the services. Progress with implementation will be reported back to cabinet over the 4-year strategy period (2006 – 2010).

4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

4.1 None directly.

5. LEGAL AND POLICY IMPLICATIONS

5.1 The Strategy should assist the Council meet its own corporate objectives.

6. RISK MANAGEMENT

6.1 None specifically.

7. CONCLUSION

7.1 This Strategy should help improve services to older people within Worcestershire and the Council's continued input at officer level will assist in this achieving this objective.

8. CONSULTEES

8.1 Corporate Management Team

9. BACKGROUND PAPERS

9.1 Older People's Strategy

31.7.06