

Report to: **Cabinet**

Date: **18 October 2005**

By: **Director of Adult Social Care**

Title of report: **Strategy for ensuring Older People's Involvement in the Improvement of Public Services across East Sussex**

Purpose of report: **To approve East Sussex County Council (ESCC) as a formal partner agency to the Strategy and to approve the ESCC Action Plan**

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Cabinet is recommended to:

- 1. agree to the County Council becoming a formal partner agency to the Older People's Involvement Strategy; and**
 - 2. approve the ESCC Action Plan**
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1. Financial Appraisal

1.1 Adult Social Care has agreed to fund a dedicated Policy Officer (£50,000 per annum) to take the Strategy forward.

1.2 For 2005/06, the County Council was successful in obtaining £35,000 funding from the ODPM in a joint bid with Shropshire County Council. This will fund events, training, consultancy support from Shropshire and an older people's conference on 13 December 2005.

1.3 For 2005/06 Adult Social Care has awarded small grants and funding to the different forums and Age Concern East Sussex and the local Councils for Voluntary Service (CVSs) to assist in establishing and developing the forums.

2. Supporting Information

2.1 The East Sussex Strategy for Involving Older People in Improving Services (Appendix 1) has been drawn up in conjunction with a reference group of older people from across the county and the Involvement Sub Group of the Older People's Strategy Group. This strategy has been consulted on from January to April 2005 and many individual older people and groups have commented. The strategy has been revised accordingly and agencies across East Sussex, including ESCC, are now being asked to formally sign up as partners.

2.2 The Joint Review of East Sussex Social Services report of June 2002 and the subsequent Social Services Inspectorate (SSI) inspection of older people's services in East Sussex in 2003 identified the lack of an effective strategy for user and carer involvement. In response, the multi agency East Sussex Older People's Strategy Group (OPSG) commissioned a User & Carer Involvement Strategy.

2.3 In July 2003 the Social Services and Health Scrutiny Committee commissioned a Scrutiny Review to look at progress being made in improving the way in which users and carers were being involved. In 2004 the Scrutiny Review endorsed the development of a wider 'citizenship' approach to the involvement of older

people as proposed by Better Government of Older People (BGOP) and subsequently emphasised in the adult social care Green Paper.

2.4 The 2004 Conference 'All Our Futures' and subsequent development and consultation work on the strategy has established the need for the strategy to have a wider scope. Delegates were clear that their priorities and issues were not just restricted to health and social care, but also include quality of life, transport, finances, housing, education, life-long learning, employment etc.

2.5 A key Audit Commission recommendation from its recent Whole System review was that, as a whole system, mechanisms of engaging with older people must be strengthened. The Action Plan agreed by Cabinet on 19 April 2005 includes a commitment to 'Agree Older People's Involvement Strategy currently in development, as a means of ensuring wider engagement into the future.'

2.6 Local events were held across East Sussex in May and June in partnership with Age Concern East Sussex and the CVSs. There were inspiring talks from Shropshire older people about why it is crucial that older people join forces and have a louder voice. Eight forums have now been established in East Sussex. These are: Hastings and St Leonard's Seniors Forum, Eastbourne Older People's Forum (a long standing forum), Rother Older People's Forum, Newhaven Older People's Forum, Seaford Older People's Forum, Lewes and District Coalition of Older People, Wealden Older Peoples' Partnership and a Black and Minority Ethnic Elders Forum.

2.7 Local authorities' performance with their partners in delivering quality services and approaches to older people will now be assessed through the new Comprehensive Performance Assessment process. One key criteria is 'What has the Council, both corporately and with its partners, done to undertake meaningful engagement with older people and their representative groups on all aspects of the strategic approach to older people and service provision?' The Strategy and Action Plan is already fulfilling significant improvement in these areas and will continue to strengthen and sustain engagement into the future to the benefit of the Council as a whole and also older people themselves.

3. Conclusion and Reasons for Recommendation

3.1 It is important to progress the involvement strategy and action plan. Key steps need to be taken to progress this work and Cabinet's approval is now sought.

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BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

- Strategy for Ensuring Older People's Involvement in the Improvement of Public Services across East Sussex
- Over 50's EBook (Appendix 2)