

REPORT OF THE PEOPLE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

The People Scrutiny Committee met on 24 September 2024.

Present: Councillors Johanna Howell (Chair), John Ungar (Vice Chair), Colin Belsey, Charles Clark, Anne Cross, Kathryn Field, Peter Pragnell, Stephen Shing, Colin Swansborough, Trevor Webb, Eleanor Kirby-Green (substitute for Councillor Nuala Geary) and John Hayling (Parent Governor Representative) and Maria Cowler (Diocese of Arundel and Brighton Representative)

Also Present: Councillor Bob Stanley, Lead Member for Education and Inclusion, Special Educational Needs and Disability
Councillor Bob Bowdler, Lead Member for Children and Families (via MS Teams)
Councillor Carl Maynard, Lead Member for Adult Social Care and Health (via MS Teams)

1. Scrutiny Review of Healthy Ageing

1.1 The People Scrutiny Committee has completed its Scrutiny Review of Healthy Ageing. A copy of the Committee's full report is attached at Appendix 1.

1.2 The People Committee heard at its March 2024 meeting that a key priority for Adult Social Care and Health (ASCH) was responding to the needs of an increasing older population in East Sussex and that the Department would welcome scrutiny input into how preventative approaches could support people to age well in the county.

1.3 A Scoping Board was held in May 2024 which considered key demographic data for East Sussex, implications of an increasing older population for local services, research on preventative actions which support people to age well, and work currently underway within Public Health, and with partners, to promote and deliver healthy ageing initiatives and programmes. The Board concluded that whilst it was encouraged by the work underway, there were issues that could benefit from closer examination by scrutiny through a review.

1.4 The Scoping Board agreed to focus on the following areas, which were subsequently agreed by the committee as the basis for the scrutiny review:

- Supporting people to age well through physical activity;
- How more positive attitudes towards ageing can help people to age well; and
- How to maximise on the opportunities of having an older population in East Sussex.

1.5 The Review focussed on the benefits of physical activity and explored local engagement with physical activity programmes; barriers to participation; and opportunities to increase opportunities to inclusive activities. The Review also considered how negative attitudes towards ageing, including internal ageism, could impact on people's ability to engage with healthy ageing initiatives and access support and found that inclusive communications and adopting a positive narrative of ageing locally could support people to age well in the county.

1.6 The Review concluded that the Department was progressing a number of projects and initiatives to support people to age well and work with partners was key to delivering these. There was also a need for an ongoing conversation about how older people are defined, communicated to and engaged with in order to tackle ageism and support people to participate in healthy ageing initiatives and behaviours across the life course.

1.7 The People Scrutiny Committee **recommends** to the County Council that –

1.7.1 The Department should use insights from this Review to strengthen content and promotion of the campaign, ‘Getting East Sussex Moving’; sharing messaging and imagery that particularly encourage and promote opportunities for older people to be active and addresses known barriers to participation.

1.7.2 The Department should continue to work with Active Sussex to maximise opportunities to embed physical activity into Adult Social Care processes and pathways, to include but not limited to:

- a) Upskilling social care staff to confidently raise the issue of physical activity and signpost to physical activity opportunities; and
- b) Establishing sustainable Stronger for Life strength and balance sessions across clinical, community and care settings in East Sussex, particularly focusing on areas where falls are more prevalent.

1.7.3 Continue to support the establishment and the embedding of Active Partnerships across all districts and boroughs in East Sussex, including through:

- a) Ensuring that the physical activity workforce is able to offer activities that support a range of abilities and health conditions; and
- b) Consulting older people on the types of activity that they wish to take part in.

1.7.4 The Department should explore opportunities, including with partners, for intergenerational activities to create social connections, and tackle ageism.

1.7.5 The Department should work to support people in the workplace as they age, including by:

- a) Progressing work with HR to explore the principles within the Age Friendly Employment Pledge to understand how these apply to existing ESCC policies; and
- b) Promoting the benefits of and supporting local employers to become Age Friendly Employers through its Wellbeing at Work Programme.

1.7.6 The Department should seek to work across the Council to influence a more positive narrative of ageing in East Sussex including:

- a) By promoting age friendly imagery and language that engage people at different life stages and ensures people of all ages are represented when promoting a range of services;
- b) That the benefits of an ageing population, including contributions to caring and volunteering, are included in communications about East Sussex; and
- c) Supporting the development of further training on positive ageing for staff and Members.

PEOPLE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

1.7.7 The Department should promote flexible volunteer opportunities that address barriers to volunteering and link people to opportunities based on their interests, ability and skills.

1.7.8 The Department should continue to strengthen partnership work to enable further development of healthy ageing workstreams across East Sussex by:

- a) Establishing a new multi agency Healthy Ageing Partnership Group and sharing learning from this Review to inform future system priorities;
- b) Working with district and borough councils to pilot Age Friendly Communities in East Sussex to support people to age well; and
- c) Exploring the use of ageing well ambassador programmes.

[See also Report of the Cabinet – 13 November 2024]

24 September 2024

JOHANNA HOWELL
Chair