

**Equalities Panel
17 June 2013**

Reaching Out to Older People in Cambridge

1.0 Purpose of paper

- 1.1 Members are asked to consider some of the issues raised by Lynne Byrne from Age UK about “out-reach” work with older people in Cambridge and how access to services for older people can be improved, taking into account the Community Navigator service.

2.0 Summary

- 2.1 With increasing constraints on the availability of adult social care more emphasis is being placed on prevention and increasing the capacity of communities to support their own members.
- 2.2 A Community Navigator project initiated by Cambridgeshire County Council Adult Social Care, emerged from an “Ageing Well” pilot that identified the need for better access for communities to accurate and comprehensive information about services for older people and the range of activities available locally. Community Navigators are now in place in each district and will be a key point of contact, helping to coordinate local service delivery and developing a network of volunteers.
- 2.3 The Cambridge Local Health Partnership gave its support to the Community Navigator Service but had reservations about the establishment of a new forum to guide their work. It was felt that there was sufficient partnership working in the City to provide coordination to partners.
- 2.4 The Council has been aware of the need to improve the Information available to communities about services for older and disabled people and has produced a guide that is circulated widely. The Council’s Diversity Forum met earlier to discuss the work of the Cambridge Community Navigator and the Council’s involvement in Cambridgeshire Celebrates Ages and the work of the Council’s Housing Support Service. It will give a view on whether there is a need for additional coordination.

3.0 Background

Population characteristics

- 3.1 Cambridge has very different population characteristics to other Cambridgeshire districts, with a distinctive “age bulge” in people between 19 and 29 years of age, reflecting the large number of students in the City. As a proportion of the population of Cambridge older people have remained at about the same level since 2001, although the number of very elderly has slightly increased. Cambridge does not have an increasing proportion of elderly people as part of its population and is therefore out of step with the rest of Cambridgeshire and the UK.
- 3.2 One of the reasons for this though to be that a large number of more prosperous older people in Cambridge sell their assets (homes) and relocate to lower cost areas in the country, releasing some of their capital in the process. There is estimated to be 14,500 people in Cambridge over the age of 65 with one pensioner in five claiming benefits.
- 3.3 As people get older they are more likely to suffer ill-health, experience disability and live on their own. Older people presently make up a third (5,000) of all lone person households in Cambridge. Older people who live on their own can become lonely and isolated as their social networks can be more fragile and dependent on family members, who may not live locally.

A snapshot of existing activity

- 3.4 Lots of people, paid or unpaid; supported through an organisation, or simply active members of the community are involved in reaching out to isolated and lonely older people in Cambridge. This contact can help reduce the impact of loneliness and have the added benefit of keeping people healthier, living independently for longer and avoiding crisis situations from developing.
- 3.5 Cambridge has a vibrant community and voluntary sector, with a number of organisations, including Age UK Cambridgeshire, the Cambridgeshire Care Network and representative organisations, such as Cambridgeshire Older People’s Reference Group (COPRG) and Cambridgeshire Older People’s Enterprise (COPE), offering outreach services to older people.

Access to information

- 3.6 With increasing constraints on the availability of adult social care more emphasis is being placed on prevention and increasing the capacity of communities to support their own members and increase overall community resilience. It can be difficult, however, for neighbours and people not involved in local organisations to offer advice and support because they may not have access to information about services.
- 3.7 Ageing Well was a short-life pilot programme that took place in Cambridgeshire, as part of a national initiative, to shift power to communities by empowering local people to devise local solutions to local needs. The principles of the Ageing Well programme were to:
- promote well-being in later life
 - ensure that older people can live independently for longer
 - engage older people in civic life
 - tackle social isolation by recognising older people's potential

Local Health Partnership

- 3.8 Cambridgeshire County Council Adult Social Care Officers have been working with the five Local Health Partnerships, involving District/City Councils, Public Health, and other partners in health, housing and the voluntary sector, in particular, to progress the principles of Ageing Well. A reoccurring central theme that emerged was the need for access to accurate and comprehensive information about services, such as finding support and care, and wider community issues, such as transport and benefits and the range of activities available locally.
- 3.9 The County Council has recently commissioned a new Community Navigator Service. This service provides five District/City level co-ordinators who are developing a network of volunteers who will then act as a local key point of contact, identifying and assisting isolated older people in accessing appropriate services and activities at an early stage and so preventing crisis. Adult Social Care Officers made a series of presentations to the five Local Health Partnerships to increase awareness of the service and to discuss how organisations can work together to promote this key preventative service.

- 3.10 The Cambridge Local Health Partnership received its presentation on 29 November 2012. Members met the lead Community Navigator covering Cambridge and discussed the broad aims of the project, which were to help older people to move from positions of vulnerability and social isolation to regain a sense of contribution and social capital.
- 3.11 The Cambridge Local Health Partnership agreed to support the aims of the Community Navigator Service and felt there was a lot of good work in Cambridge for the project to build on. In particular the GPs in the partnership were keen to see how the service could offer a range of options for people who would benefit from information about community support and general information.
- 3.12 As part of the presentation it was suggested that an Ageing Well Forum could be set up, involving local groups in discussing issues affecting older people, helping to guide the project. The Partnership thought that this probably wasn't necessary because there were a lot of "community conversations" taking place in Cambridge and strong leadership in the voluntary sector, but wanted to get a view from wider community and voluntary sector organisations about the strength of existing collaborative working arrangements.
- 3.13 The Cambridge Local Health Partnership asked the Council's Diversity Forum if it could look at the present collaborative working arrangements for older people in Cambridge and provide an assessment of whether these could be improved.

An overview of Council work with older people

- 3.14 As Members know the Diversity Forum is a place where people from the voluntary and community sector and other local representatives can come together to discuss equalities issues. It takes place before the Equalities Panel meets. The Diversity Forum will be discussing the work of the Community Navigator, the Council's involvement in Cambridgeshire Celebrates Ages and the Council's Housing Support Service to help get a feeling for existing collaborative working. It will give a view on whether there is a need for additional coordination.

3.15 Cambridge City Council is presently involved in providing a wide range of support to older people, their representatives and voluntary and community organisations involved in the delivery of services. This includes activities run in local community centres promoted through Neighbourhood Community Development Teams, Community Alarms provided through our Independent Living Service, Advice about home adaptations and the fitting of adaptations in Council homes, a Shopmobility service, sheltered accommodation as a part of a housing support service, a Forever Active Programme as well as the provision of grants to local community and voluntary sector groups involved in the provision of local services to older people. More information about local services is shown in the Council's Guide to Services for Older and Disabled People.