



Overview Board

Older People Task Group

DECEMBER 2009

OVERVIEW BOARD

Supporting Officer: Pauline Ross



Bromsgrove
District Council

www.bromsgrove.gov.uk



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BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL
REPORT OF THE OLDER PEOPLE TASK GROUP
DECEMBER 2009

INTRODUCTION BY THE CHAIRMAN

The Task Group process has helped to identify the extensive range of existing services available and aims to promote access to mainstream services for older people, by informing and recognising that services need to help maintain or regain a good quality of life between work and retirement.

The Task Group identified the need to provide clear information on key services in a variety of formats and to establish a single point of contact for information on what services are available and how to access those services more easily. The recommendations within this report highlight the importance of providing clear, concise information and to raise awareness on the extensive range of existing services available.

The Bromsgrove Sustainable Community Strategy 2010-2013 and the Council Plan 2010-2013 both recognise and include older people as a priority, with key deliverables identified as access to services, housing, community transport and an age well scheme.

The Audit Commission 'Don't stop me now', preparing for an ageing population, suggests that all councils should work with older people to age-proof mainstream services. Councils need to engage with older people in commissioning, designing, and delivering both mainstream and targeted services. Older people's champions and representative boards can play an important role in assessing and evaluating the effect of local services in older people's lives. Marketing and promoting existing services to older people can increase take-up and support independent lives.

MEMBERS

Councillors Mrs. M. Bunker (Chairman), S. R. Colella, D. McGrath, D. L. Pardoe, C. J. Tidmarsh, L. J. Turner. The Chairman of the Older People Theme Group, Ms. A. Sowton (Bromsgrove & Redditch Network, BARN) was co-opted onto the Task Group.

This Task Group wishes to acknowledge the assistance received from the Assistant Chief Executive who has helped the Task Group from the start of the investigation and all the way through to the end of the investigation when this report was finalised.

Members would like to extend their personal thanks to Ms. A. Sowton and to all officers and partner agencies for attending meetings and providing presentation material and informing Task Group Members of the positive and comprehensive range of services provided. Thanks are also extended to the Portfolio Holder for Vulnerable and Older People (including Lifeline) for her attendance and contribution to Task Group meetings.

SUMMARY

The role of the Older People Task Group was:

- To carry out a scrutiny exercise to identify existing services and how they can be accessed.
- To identify any gaps and consider how they can be addressed or signposted to other agencies.
- To identify positive initiatives and make general recommendations for strengthening services offered for Older People and share best practice with partner agencies and the voluntary sector.
- To seek the views of statutory, voluntary and community organisations supporting older people services.

SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS

Healthy Living, inclusive of community facilities, activities, participation and inclusion - Recommendations 1 – 5

One of the agreed outcomes of the Task Group was to promote and celebrate older people and to investigate existing facilities and activities which led to the following:

1. UK Older People's Day

- (a) That the Council be requested to build on the success and continue to promote and celebrate UK Older People's Day throughout the Council and via the Councils Communications Plan; and that a Member / officer working group be developed to drive future promotions / events and provide an ongoing focus on older people.
- (b) That the Portfolio Holder for Vulnerable and Older People (including Lifeline) be requested to investigate funding opportunities for future events to be held throughout the District.

2. Dolphin Centre – free swimming

- (a) That following the expiry of the Grant funded Free of Charge (FOC) swimming scheme for 60 plus residents, the Deputy Head of Street Scene and Community be requested to review the impact the service has had the health of those participating.
- (b) That in partnership with NHS Worcestershire and other key members of the Local Strategic Partnership (LSP), Health and Well Being Theme Group, the Deputy Head of Street Scene and Community be requested to produce a report for Members to identify the key successes and failures of the scheme, make recommendations for the future provision to include additional funding opportunities, changes to the structure of the provision, key performance indicators required moving forward and, if required, alternative methods of service delivery.

3. Dolphin Centre – Gym Facilities

That the Portfolio Holder for Youth, Sports, Recreation and Culture and the Deputy Head of Street Scene and Community be requested to scope the possibility of introducing a dedicated gym session programme for the 50+ age group to encourage greater use from this market segment and report back to the Older People Theme Group within 6 months.

4. Community Transport Services - BURT

- (a) That the Portfolio Holder for Planning and Transport and the Assistant Chief Executive be requested to assess the service after one year, using the Council's project management framework, to determine usage, costs and feedback from users of the scheme in order to ensure continuous improvement.

- (b) That the Portfolio Holder for Planning and Transport and the Assistant Chief Executive when assessing feedback from users establish if there is a need to expand the Community Transport Service to a wider area and that the Assistant Chief Executive be requested to continue to raise awareness and promotion of the service.

5. **THE TRUNK**

That Members continue to work with THE TRUNK and utilise future developments at the Centre – drop in sessions, surgeries and the core group of (resident) advocates as a means of communicating, informing and updating residents on the Council's service provision.

Existing Services and Accessibility – Recommendations 6 - 7

It was often highlighted during task group meetings that there was a need for an increased awareness of the existing extensive services and facilities available, how to access them and to identify any gaps. The Task Group therefore recommend:

6. **Older People's Strategy for Worcestershire**

That the Portfolio Holder for Vulnerable and Older People (including Lifeline) and the Assistant Chief Executive be requested to continue to work with Worcestershire County Council, Joint Commissioning Officer on the revised Older People's Strategy for Worcestershire, with Bromsgrove as a possible pilot district, to ensure there is a Bromsgrove District dimension and that the services provided by the Council and its partners are responsive to the emerging challenges of the changing demographics.

7. **Mapping Exercise**

- (a) The Older People Theme Group Chairman be requested to develop the mapping exercise currently being undertaken in liaison with the Health and Well Being Team, Worcestershire County Council to identify any gaps and complete the mapping exercise by 31st July 2010.
- (b) That the Assistant Chief Executive and the Older People Theme Group Chairman continue to liaise with the Health and Well Being Team, Worcestershire County Council to promote existing services offered and to take an active role in the development of future schemes and re-commissioning of low level services for Bromsgrove District and work with community groups to set up sustainable initiatives with partner agencies.

Literature Review – Recommendation 8 - 10

The Task Group found that there is a vast amount of available literature for older people, both within the Council and partner agencies on the existing extensive services and facilities available throughout the District, which led to:

8. A – Z Directory

- (a) That the Portfolio Holder for Vulnerable and Older People (including Lifeline) and the Assistant Chief Executive be requested to scope funding to publish an A – Z directory of services available for older people in the Bromsgrove District , to be sustainable so as to keep it up to date. That the Assistant Chief Executive be tasked to produce the directory within 12 months and report back to the Cabinet.
- (b) That the A – Z directory be made available on the Council's Internet and Intranet Sites, a copy to be held at the Customer Service Centre and that Customer Service Centre advisors be requested to use the directory to signpost older people.

9. Information Management

- (a) That the Council's website and Connect site be regularly reviewed and updated with service information, contact details and particularly when staff changes occur and that consideration be given to a dedicated page for older people with links to related internet sites.
- (b) That any future mystery shopper exercises include a test of services to older people.

10. Older People's Champions

That a Member / officer working group comprising the Assistant Chief Executive, interested Task Group Members and the Portfolio Holder for Vulnerable and Older People (including Lifeline) be established to further explore Age Concern's, Best Practice and scope working with partner agencies to promote the introduction of 'Older People's Champions' (see **Appendix 1**) in each Parish who can disseminate information on available services and accessibility to residents in the Town Centre and surrounding areas within the Bromsgrove District.

Housing – Recommendations 11 - 13

The Task Group discussed housing issues and concerns including market and social issues and supporting people – Telecare adaptations, whilst taking into account residents' aspirational expectations. The Task Group therefore recommend:

11. Older People's Housing Strategy for Worcestershire

That the Assistant Chief Executive and the Strategic Housing Manager be requested to ensure that any opportunities to assist in meeting the aims and objectives being developed for the newly revised Older People's Housing Strategy for Worcestershire be explored at a local level.

12. Housing

That the Portfolio Holder for Strategic Housing, Environment and Climate Change and the Strategic Housing Manager be requested to ensure there is an appropriate housing mix and that older people's needs are catered for within the housing market as identified in the Bromsgrove Sustainable Community Strategy 2010-2013, Stronger Communities and the Bromsgrove Housing Market Assessment 2008.

13. Lifeline

That the Head of Street Scene and Waste Management be requested to continue to promote the Lifeline Service, including the range of monitoring equipment available and that the quarterly Lifeline newsletter be used to promote and inform residents of other services and benefits available.

Income and Employment – Recommendations 14 - 16

The Task Group looked at pension and benefits advice, employment and adult learning opportunities and preparing for retirement, which led to:

14. Benefit Service

- (a) That the Portfolio Holder for Resources and the Benefit Service Manager be requested to continue to raise awareness of the Benefit Service and proactively engage or seek elderly residents who are not claiming benefits by attending residents meetings, providing information surgeries and use of other service area meetings to find out how to reach or inform residents of the benefit service.
- (b) That the Portfolio Holder for Resources and the Benefit Service Manager be requested to continue to work with the relevant service areas within the Council to issue information to residents in receipt of council tax benefit.

15. Employment

- (a) That the Portfolio Holder Youth, Sports, Recreation and Culture and the Assistant Chief Executive be requested to explore opportunities to inform and educate young people regarding pension information.
- (b) That the Assistant Chief Executive be requested to liaise with the Local Strategic Partnership – Partners to explore opportunities of raising employees' awareness on pension information.

16. Adult Learning Opportunities

That the Portfolio Holder for Vulnerable and Older People (including Lifeline) be requested to work closer with the Adult Learning Team, Worcestershire County Council in order to be familiar with and to promote the adult learning packages available.

Funding Opportunities– Recommendation 17

The Task Group discussed funding opportunities for intergenerational projects and events for UK Older People's Day. Task Group Members highlighted the need to ensure that funding opportunities were not missed, which led to:

17. Funding Opportunities

That the Assistant Chief Executive be requested to investigate ways in which officers can keep up to date with funding developments and utilise the skills of officers to bid for future funding when appropriate.

Miscellaneous – Recommendation 18

Task Group Members raised questions on the general condition of footpaths, specifically around the Town Centre and areas surrounding sheltered housing, which led to:

18. Worcestershire County Council – Highways Department

That the Head of Street Scene be requested to liaise with and obtain information from Worcestershire County Council, Highways Department on the current work programme and future work schedule for Bromsgrove District regarding renewal and repairs of pavements and the identification of areas requiring additional dropped kerbs within Bromsgrove District, more specifically the Town Centre and areas around sheltered accommodation.

Future Vision – Recommendations 19 - 20

To focus on continuous improvement of older people's services, ensure older people are consulted when formulating new planning policies and the Town Centre Area Action Plan, the Task Group recommend:

19. Future Vision

- (a) That the Portfolio Holder for Vulnerable and Older People (including Lifeline) be requested to ensure that the views of older people in Bromsgrove are valued, shared and promoted within all service areas of the Council and negative perceptions of older people are challenged.
- (b) That the Assistant Chief Executive be requested to ensure that the Council achieves more formal engagement with Bromsgrove Older People's Forum.
- (c) That officers take into account the Communities and Local Government, Lifetime Homes, Lifetime Neighbourhoods strategy and other relevant evidence and strategies when formulating new policies.
- (d) That as part of the Council's decision to pilot Mosaic, it is used to target relevant marketing materials to older people.
- (e) That older people be considered as a possible priority in the Corporate Communications Strategy.

20. Older People's Strategy for Worcestershire - Phase 2

That the Overview Board be tasked with initiating, when appropriate, an investigation on the revised Older People's Strategy for Worcestershire, Levels of Inclusion, Levels 3, 4 and 5, which deals with dependency created by older age.

TERMS OF REFERENCE

At the meeting of the Overview Board held on 3rd February 2009, it was decided a Task Group would be established to scrutinise issues relating to older people.

The Task Group's terms of reference were approved by the Board at its meeting held on 3rd March 2009. The full terms of reference are attached at **Appendix 2**. The Membership of the Task Group was also agreed at the same meeting. During the Overview Board meeting on the 2nd June 2009 the Board agreed an additional Member to the Task Group.

The Task Group was given 4 months (from the date of its first meeting) to complete its work. During the Overview Board meeting held on 7th July 2009 the Task Group Chairman informed Members that due to the enforced cancellation of its scheduled meeting on 22nd June 2009 it was unlikely that the Task Group would be completed within the allocated 4 month period and that the Task Group would need to review its anticipated workload in order to determine how much additional time was needed. A further update was given to the Overview Board during its meeting on 1st September 2009 and the Board agreed that the Task Group report be presented to the Overview Board meeting on 2nd February 2010.

BACKGROUND AND METHODOLOGY

Public Involvement

A press release was issued informing the public that the Older People Task Group had been set up. Members of the public were encouraged to submit their views, comments and suggestions for the Task Group to consider. Information about the Task Group was also uploaded onto the website where again the public were encouraged to voice their opinions and suggestions for improvement.

One local retired resident replied requesting involvement in finding the best solutions to providing good support for our ageing population.

Task Group Members were informed that a local resident (via the Scrutiny email address) had questioned the Council's Core Strategy with the specific question "what is the Council doing in areas such as Alvechurch and Barnt Green, where elderly residents live in large detached houses, to facilitate these actively mobile elderly residents to down-size into 'suitable and appropriate properties, as they would be very unlikely to want to down-size into a small apartment/maisonette/flat built on top of each other with very little privacy and recreational facilities". Members received details of the Senior Solicitor's response.

Witnesses

The Older People Task Group worked closely with the Assistant Chief Executive and the following officers provided the Task Group with information on their specific service area: the Strategic Housing Manager, Sports Development Officer for adults and disabilities, CCTV and Lifeline Manager and the Benefits Service Manager. The Task Group also believed it was important to gain input from the Portfolio Holder for Vulnerable and Older People (including Lifeline).

Information and presentations were provided by –

Tanya Crawford, Advice Service Manager, Bromsgrove & District Citizens Advice Bureau.

Debbie Roberts, Centre Manager, THE TRUNK.

Kay Parry, Health and Well Being Manager, Worcestershire County Council

Colin Barnett, Adult Learning Manager, Worcestershire County Council

Sue Rollason, Head of Supported Services, Bromsgrove District Housing Trust

Sue Keating, Signposting Co-ordinator, Hereford & Worcestershire Fire & Rescue Service

Gillian Christison, Health Improvement Co-ordinator, Worcestershire Primary Care Trust

Duncan Jones, Independent Financial Advisor

Keith Sherman, Chief Officer, Age Concern, Bromsgrove & District

Carol Tipping, Secretary, Older People's Forum

Meetings attended

The Task Group Chairman and Assistant Chief Executive attended the Older People's Forum, 8th December 2009, with the Task Group Chairman attending the Equality and Diversity Forum on 10th December 2009 to present both Forums with information on the Older People Task Group and the 'draft' recommendations. Both Forums were asked –

1. Do you recognise the issues facing older people?
2. What services would make the biggest differences to your lives?
3. Is there anything else you wish to feed into the Task Group?

Research

Task Group Members were provided with the following background reading information –

Bromsgrove Profile, Mott Macdonald report. This document was prepared by Mott MacDonald on behalf of Bromsgrove Partnership in order to collate and present

evidence relating to the 6 blocks in Worcestershire's Local Area Agreement (LAA) -

- A** Communities that are safe and feel safe
- B** A better environment – for today and tomorrow
- C** Economic success that is shared by all
- D** Improving health and well being
- E** Meeting the needs of children and young people
- F** Stronger Communities

Bromsgrove District Councils Older People's Focus Groups, July – August 2008
draft report by SNAP Surveys.

The Older People's Strategy for Worcestershire, Worcestershire County Council,
(Members were asked to note that this document was currently being reviewed).

Neighbourhood Management, Overview and Scrutiny Commission, Task and
Finish Group, 'Looking Forward', Older People's Services in Stoke-on-Trent,
Final Report (September 1st 2006)

In-depth Scrutiny Project –To consider how well placed Southend is in relation to
the independence and wellbeing of older people "our own future selves"- Report
and Recommendations, Community Services Scrutiny Committee, June 2007.

Final report of the Older People's Services Commission presented to West
Lancashire District Council.

Review of Older People's Engagement with Government, John Elbourne –
Report to Government

Members Fact Finding Visit

Ms. A. Sowton and Councillor Turner attended a conference held by Lancashire
District Council, Learning from Lancashire, a Beacon Authority. The conference
included guest speakers and provided candidates with the opportunity to see the
many excellent and innovative services they provide for its older citizens.

Areas Covered

There were a total of seven task group meetings. During the first meeting a
schedule of work was devised, but due to the enforced cancellation of two
consecutive meetings the scoping checklist was reviewed during the task group
meeting held on 21st July 2009 and the following areas agreed:

- Healthy Living (inclusive of community facilities, activities, participation and
inclusion)

- Housing (inclusive of market and social, supporting people – Telecare, adaptations, handyperson schemes)
- Income and Employment (inclusive of pension and benefits advice, employment and training opportunities and preparing for retirement)

Members were informed during their first meeting that the Older People's Strategy for Worcestershire was currently being reviewed. During the task group process Members were informed by the Joint Commissioning Officer that they were currently planning a review of the older people's strategy and the development of a new strategy. Service users and representatives of the Older People's Forums across the county, as well as voluntary sector organisations would be involved in the development of the new strategy. The Assistant Chief Executive subsequently met with the Joint Commissioning Officer and Task Group Members were informed that the Assistant Chief Executive has requested that the revised strategy includes a district dimension. The Joint Commissioning Officer agreed and suggested working with Bromsgrove as the pilot district. We would recommend that the revised Older Peoples' Strategy for Worcestershire includes aspects on healthy ageing such as leisure, transport, learning opportunities, employment and volunteering.

FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Healthy Living, inclusive of community facilities, activities, participation and inclusion (Recommendations 1 – 5)

During the initial meeting of the Task Group the Task Group Chairman informed Members of UK Older People's Day on 1st October 2009, a day to celebrate the contribution older people make to society. Members agreed to recommend to the Overview Board that Cabinet approve the promotion of UK Older People's Day throughout the Council and via the Council's Communications Plan and that the Task Group drive the promotion in order to ensure a coordinated approach.

In order to raise awareness and to coordinate events a message was forwarded to all service areas within the council via the council's Connect site. No specific events were being held but positive responses were received from officers and Members, including the Member Champion for Promotions, Sponsorships and Public Events requesting to be actively involved in organising or supporting events to celebrate the day. We were encouraged with the responses received from officers and partner agencies who welcomed the celebration.

We looked at holding events throughout the district, but as the Task Group Chairman highlighted, there was no specific funding for events, so we had to rely on officers and partner agencies resources which meant that events would be limited to a smaller area. Following further discussions with officers and partner agencies the Task Group promoted and publicised events being held throughout the week to celebrate UK Older People's Day. A press release was issued and information slides were displayed by officers, partner agencies and on the television screen at the Customer Service Centre (see **Appendix 4**).

The Task Group Chairman, officers and partner agencies involved in the events held throughout the week received positive responses from residents and Task Group Members suggested that events should be held throughout the district next year.

The Task Group Chairman would like to thank officers and partner agencies for their positive help in organising events and for their support during the events, as events took place with no specific funding available.

The Task Group therefore recommend the following:

Recommendation 1 (a)	That the Council be requested to build on the success and continue to promote and celebrate UK Older People's Day throughout the Council and via the Councils Communications Plan and that a Member / officer working group be developed to drive future promotions / events and provide an ongoing focus on older people.
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Financial Implications	There are no financial implications.
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Recommendation 1 (b)	That the Portfolio Holder for Vulnerable and Older People (including Lifeline) be requested to investigate funding opportunities for future events to be held throughout the District.
Financial Implications	There are no financial implications.

One of the main areas the Task Group considered was 'Health and Well Being'. The current free swimming for the over 60's is funded until 31st March 2011 via the Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS), under the scheme anyone over the age of 60 can swim for free. The scheme has proved extremely successful. Further funding has been secured via the Amateur Swimming Association (ASA) to run over 60 lessons in the future (for free) so those who cannot swim will be able to access the free lessons and swimming for all the obvious health benefits. Officers are due to meet in the future with colleagues from Worcestershire County Council to look at a funding bid for a hoist access for mobility impaired users and to discuss new hoist systems to support usage in this area.

We were interested to learn of the successful uptake of the free swimming for the over 60's and were keen to investigate the possibility of an increase in usage of the newly refurbished gym with a programme offered to the 50+ age group. The Deputy Sports Manager informed the Task Group that all new members receive an individual induction and programme but there were no specific sessions just for the 50+ age group.

The Task Group therefore recommend the following:

Recommendation 2 (a)	That following the expiry of the Grant funded Free of Charge (FOC) swimming scheme for 60 plus residents, the Deputy Head of Street Scene and Community be requested to review the impact the service has had on the health of those participating.
Financial Implications	There are no financial implications.

Recommendation 2 (b)	That In partnership with NHS Worcestershire and other key members of the Local Strategic Partnership (LSP), Health and Well Being Theme Group, the Deputy Head of Street Scene and Community be requested to produce a report for Members to identify the key successes and failures of the scheme, make recommendations for the future provision to include additional funding opportunities, changes to the structure of the provision, key performance indicators required moving forward and, if required, alternative methods of service delivery.
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Financial Implications	There are no financial implications
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Recommendation 3	That the Portfolio Holder for Youth, Sports, Recreation and Culture and the Deputy Head of Street Scene and Community be requested to scope the possibility of introducing a dedicated gym session programme for the 50+ age group to encourage greater use from this market segment and report back to the Older People Theme Group within 6 months.
Financial Implications	There are no financial implications.

We agreed in the Terms of Reference that “Other areas such as transport have already been looked at taking into account the needs of older people, so will not be covered again”.

The Bromsgrove Sustainable Community Strategy 2008 – 2011, Priority: Transport in the District, highlighted the need for Community Transport. This was also highlighted by the company the Council commissioned to conduct the Older People Focus Groups in Hagley and Bromsgrove. The company concluded “the restrictions to social inclusion caused by poor or lack of public transport provision”.

During the Task Group process and in response to the Older People’s Focus Groups the transport sub-group of Bromsgrove Local Strategic Partnership (LSP) launched a new community transport service for the District - Bromsgrove Urban and Rural Transport (BURT).

The BURT minibus is specially adapted for easy access with low steps and a wheelchair lift. It is a safe, secure transport service for any resident of Bromsgrove District who has difficulties with personal mobility and are unable to use public transport, or if suitable public transport is not available.

We recommend:

Recommendation 4 (a)	That the Portfolio Holder for Planning and Transport and the Assistant Chief Executive be requested to assess the service after one year, using the Council’s project management framework, to determine usage, costs and feedback from users of the scheme in order to ensure continuous improvement.
Financial Implications	There are no financial implications.

Recommendation 4 (b)	That the Portfolio Holder for Planning and Transport and the Assistant Chief Executive when assessing feedback from users establish if there is a need to expand the Community Transport Service to a wider area and that the Assistant Chief Executive be requested to continue to raise awareness and promotion of the service.
Financial Implications	There are no financial implications.

Task Group Members welcomed the Centre Manager, The TRUNK to the September 2009 Task Group meeting. The Centre Manager provided us with brief details of the services and developments for Older People at The TRUNK. The services and projects are still in the early stages and being developed. We were informed that funding had been secured from the Citizens Advice Bureau to provide a weekly drop in session with a generic outreach worker with a possible monthly or bi-monthly specific advisor or specialist attending The TRUNK. Further funding has also been secured for a pilot project for intergenerational work with Bromsgrove District Housing Trust. Regular coffee mornings will be held to enable residents to be actively involved in shaping future service provision. The computer courses offered at The TRUNK have proved to be successful and a further day was offered to accommodate numbers; residents have also requested beginner computer courses. The TRUNK are looking at introducing a core group of residents to become advocates in order to inform people of services and prevent social isolation. During their recent open day residents had requested information on walking, so the Centre Manager met with Bromsgrove District Council's Walks Co-ordinator to promote this service. Future opportunities will include working on The TRUNK allotment in Sidemoor, specialist awareness days on benefits, pension and job centre information and cooking sessions will be offered at Crabtree Court.

We therefore recommend:

Recommendation 5	That Members continue to work with The TRUNK and utilise future developments at the Centre – drop in sessions, surgeries and the core group of (resident) advocates as a means of communicating, informing and updating residents on the Council's service provision.
Financial Implications	There are no financial implications

Existing Services and Accessibility

(Recommendations 6 – 7)

We had a very good response from officers and partner agencies who worked closely with older people. This was evident when promoting UK Older People's Day. We were encouraged by the level of service provision both from the Council (see **Appendix 5**), partner agencies and the voluntary sector. But it was often highlighted throughout the Task Group process that there is a need for an increased awareness by District Councillors, Parish Councils, partner agencies and residents of the services available and how to access them.

This was also highlighted by the company the Council commissioned to conduct the Older People Focus Groups in Hagley and Bromsgrove. The company concluded "that while the Council may not wish to make older people a stated priority, much more could be done to communicate to older people what services are available and how to access them".

During the first meeting of the Task Group the role of District Councillors and Parish Councils in reporting issues and concerns and also recognising and sharing good practice within their area was discussed.

The Assistant Chief Executive and the Portfolio Holder for Vulnerable and Older People (including Lifeline) attended the Parish Council Forum on 22nd September 2009 to present information on the role of the Task Group and to ask Parish Councils the following:

1. What are the issues facing older people in your parish?
2. What services would make the biggest differences to their lives?
3. Is there anything else you wish to feed into the Task Group?

Alvechurch Parish Council responded with –

The issues were discussed during the meeting and the points raised were:

- Older people & disability issues. Alvechurch Parish Council frequently have residents calling into the office to complain about access around the village such as:
 - Disabled parking bays not clearly marked, not well policed. Some could be repositioned for safer and easier access.
 - Dropped kerbs. Although the village does have dropped kerbs these are often blocked by poor and inconsiderate parking. Requests are often received for additional dropped kerbs in The Gaunts which is predominately older residents.

- Winter arrangements – lack of grit buckets and lack of gritting often an issue.
- Benches are removed to discourage anti social behaviour but these are used by older residents whose mobility is poor.
- The other area that has been raised frequently is Affordable housing for older people in the Parish.

Alvechurch Parish Council had received positive comments regarding the free swimming for the over 60s and the mobility sessions that take place in Alvechurch.

Older People’s Strategy for Worcestershire 2006-2010

Members were made aware that the Older People’s Strategy for Worcestershire was currently being updated. The current Older People’s Strategy for Worcestershire points out that most of the focus and resource for older people is on Levels 3, 4 and 5, which is dealing with the results of dependency created by older age, rather than focusing on prevention. Older people are such a huge subject area, that the Task Group agreed it would find it very difficult to cover all five levels in any detail with the time available. We therefore agreed to concentrate our time on Levels 1 and 2, as these are preventative, receive less funding and are areas where we may be able to have more influence.

Level of Inclusion	Elements
1. Citizenship, inclusion and active ageing.	Accessible housing. Information and advice services. Advocacy. Financial assessments and benefits take up. NHS Direct. Community safety. Affordable warmth/fuel poverty. Transport. Exercise. Learning, Ageing Well, Healthy Ageing Schemes. Volunteering and timebanks. Befriending and volunteer visiting schemes.
2. Prevention / Self Care.	Supporting people with long term conditions. Expert Patient Programme. Community equipment services/assistive technology. Community alarms. Telecare. Adaptations. Home improvement agencies. Handyperson/gardening schemes.

	Floating support. Community/neighbourhood wardens. Domestic support. Shopping. Community meals. Lunch clubs. Social clubs. Falls prevention. Short term breaks.
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In order to ensure that a district dimension was included within the revised Older People's Strategy for Worcestershire the Assistant Chief Executive met with the Joint Commissioning Officer, Joint Commissioning Unit, Worcestershire County Council. The Joint Commission Officer agreed with the inclusion of a district dimension and suggested working with Bromsgrove as the pilot district.

We would also recommend that the revised Older Peoples' Strategy for Worcestershire includes aspects on healthy ageing such as leisure, transport, learning opportunities, employment and volunteering.

Task Group Members therefore recommend:

Recommendation 6	That the Portfolio Holder for Vulnerable and Older People (including Lifeline) and the Assistant Chief Executive be requested to continue to work with Worcestershire County Council, Joint Commissioning Officer on the revised Older People's Strategy for Worcestershire, with Bromsgrove as a possible pilot district, to ensure there is a Bromsgrove District dimension and that the services provided by the Council and its partners are responsive to the emerging challenges of the changing demographics.
Financial Implications	There are no financial implications.

During the Task Group process we were interested to learn of the role and developments of the Health and Well Being Team, Worcestershire County Council. The team concentrated on the lower end of the services – the preventative spectrum which focused on keeping people healthy and independent, decreasing dependency on the acute services and delivering services closer to home within local communities, tackling inequalities, cultural differences and supporting people to take an active part in the commissioning and evaluation of services. It was highlighted that currently older people accessed services when a crisis occurred and the Health and Well Being Team felt it needed to engage with people before reaching this stage.

The Health and Well Being Team has evaluated the services offered, looked at what has gone well and how to roll out best practice across the County. A mapping exercise of the whole County has been conducted with a variety of older people's forums and community groups visited to find out about the communities and as potential service users what was needed and important to them. There were currently 3 County wide schemes offered –

- Handypersons
- Befriending /Mentoring
- Well Check

We were also informed that next year the Health and Well Being Team was hoping to offer help with gardening, housework and shopping and to develop and re-commission community meals and day care services and ongoing further low level services, even though these services proved difficult to evidence the impact on reducing money spent on acute services, evaluation would continue. The Health and Well Being Team was keen to work with community groups to set up sustainable initiatives and to work with partner agencies to develop a shared vision and objectives; where older people come together for like minded interests and not just because of their age, we therefore recommend the following:

Recommendation 7 (a)	The Older People Theme Group Chairman be requested to develop the mapping exercise currently being undertaken in liaison with the Health and Well Being Team, Worcestershire County Council to identify any gaps and complete the mapping exercise by 31st July 2010.
Financial Implications	There are no financial implications.

Recommendation 7 (b)	That the Assistant Chief Executive and the Older People Theme Group Chairman continue to liaise with the Health and Well Being Team, Worcestershire County Council to promote existing services offered and to take an active role in the development of future schemes and re-commissioning of low level services for Bromsgrove District and work with community groups to set up sustainable initiatives with partner agencies
Financial Implications	There are no financial implications.

The Task Group during their investigation were provided with information from the Health Improvement Co-ordinator, Worcestershire PCT on Postural Stability Instruction (PSI) and Falls Prevention. Members were informed that the 2008 Stakeholder event had identified the need for a robust model for falls risk management and falls prevention to reduce the risk of falls and recurrent falls. PSI formed part of the vision of Worcestershire PCT and its partners to meet this target. Falls were the leading cause of accidental death in the United Kingdom, with bone fractures, most commonly hip and associated medical complications. 50% of hip fracture patients lost their ability to live independently, which destroys confidence, leads to social isolation and deterioration in mental health. The cost of falls and hip fracture outcomes to Worcestershire PCT was highlighted to Members.

Task Group Members were further informed that PSI was the only evidenced based exercise programme for the prevention of falls.

The four point plan was to:

Improve balance and co-ordination

Increase functional capacity

Increase bone and muscle mass

Increase confidence – reduce fear of falling

Task Group Members were pleased to note that Bromsgrove Sports Development are to deliver PSI courses from April 2010 as successful bids had been secured through The Community Leadership for Health Fund.

The Chief Officer, Age Concern was invited to attend and present information on Age Concern, Bromsgrove and District. Members were once again delighted with the extensive range of services provided to Bromsgrove residents. The Chief Officer highlighted to Task Group Members that Age Concern did not offer a list of services, they provided services holistically; services that had been identified as needed via liaison work. He continued to explain the three key strands which had been developed over 7 - 10 years with Worcestershire County Council funding –

- 'Need to Know' – working to ensure that local people had access to the information they needed in order to make decisions about their lives, at the time they needed it.
- 'Safe at Home' – helping local older people to remain safe, secure and comfortable in a home of their own choosing.
- 'Circle of Friends' – working to supplement local older peoples' natural support mechanisms as these decrease with time.

The Chief Officer continued to inform Task Group Members of the comprehensive range of services identified and provided by Age Concern, Bromsgrove & District, including the Occupational Therapy Technician (OTT), funded by Age Concern for 12.5 hours per week. The OTT provided a 'base' assessment within 3 to 4 weeks, by using this assessment and providing simple aids this enabled older people to stay safe and more able in their own home until a full OTT assessment was carried out.

The Chief Officer also asked Task Group Members to note that he had received positive testimonies from users of the Bromsgrove Urban and Rural Transport (BURT). BURT had proved to be an important part of the process for older people who used Amphlett Hall and the drivers had proved to be both helpful and cheerful.

Literature Review (Recommendations 8 - 10)

The Assistant Chief Executive agreed to undertake a literature review on older people, as a pre-cursor to determining the methodology and focus of the Task Group's work. There is a mountain of available literature on older people, in fact one of the documents comments that there is a considerable amount of rhetoric versus action on the issues that older people face in England. The Assistant Chief Executive focused on the following 9 documents:

1. Bromsgrove Profile –

The Bromsgrove Profile has recently been commissioned by the Local Strategic Partnership Board to provide a profile of the District across the six objectives to the Sustainable Community Strategy. The Profile includes population projections for the District up to 2026, which clearly shows the dramatic projected increase in the over 50 population and decline in the younger population.

2. Bromsgrove Partnership Sustainable Community Strategy –

The Bromsgrove Sustainable Community Strategy 2008-2011 contains a high level action plan for the Older People Theme Group. The action plan includes:-

- Developing and operating an effective directory of services for older people;
- Mapping outreach services to older people provided by all agencies;
- Improving access to services for older people; and
- Giving older people a greater voice.

The Chairman of the Older People Theme Group, Ms A. Sowton, Bromsgrove and Redditch Network (BARN) was co-opted onto the Task Group. The Theme Group is also linked to the Older People's Forum. The main problem for the Theme Group is resourcing. No new funds have been made available to the Theme Group to complete the deliverables shown above so consequently progress has been difficult. A small amount of funding from the Local Strategic Partnership (LSP) Partners could make a significant difference to the Older People Theme Group. Capacity is required to undertake research work for the Theme Group and to support the deliverables, for example, despite being an excellent idea, there are currently no allocated funds for the proposed older person's directory.

3. Bromsgrove District Council – Housing Strategy 2006-2011 -

The Council's Housing Team has recently updated the District's Housing Strategy, including a housing market assessment to identify the true housing need in the District, versus the regional allocation. Older people were consulted as part of the update.

4. Place Survey 2008/2009 -

The Council has recently received the results of the national Place Survey, conducted on behalf of the Audit Commission and a key tool for measuring satisfaction and perception. There are still issues with the figures and an embargo; however, without providing the actual quantitative data for NI138 Satisfaction of people over 65 with both home and neighbourhood, it is possible to discuss some aspects of the results. For the older people of the District, roads/pavements, activities for teenagers and shopping are their biggest priorities. Crime and health, which have been priorities in the previous surveys, have seen a significant improvement, which presumably reflects the high levels of investment in these services over the last decade.

If the state of the District's road and pavements is the number one priority for older residents, it tends to suggest that the majority of older residents in the District have comfortable lives; however, the more vulnerable amongst our older community probably did not complete the survey, so the results need to be balanced with other sources of information. Interestingly another question in the Survey asks about the level of support for older people to live independently (NI139); the result suggests we have some way to go to improve the perception and reality of this provision.

5. Older People Focus Groups -

During 2008, the Council commissioned two focus groups, one in Hagley and one in Bromsgrove, with older people. Focus groups by their nature cannot be statistically valid and will attract older people who are sufficiently mobile to attend them; nevertheless, it is interesting to note the similarities with the Place Survey. Roads and pavements were a major concern. *“These responses may demonstrate that respondents were generally so comfortable in their lives, and so in control of them that there was little else to worry them. Alternatively, it may be more strongly linked to respondents attending the focus groups with the specific intention of complaining about the quality of roads and pavements.”*

The focus groups identified a number of pertinent issues, including “poor income” as a key determinant factor in the quality of older age and the restrictions to social inclusion caused by poor or lack of public transport provision, something currently being addressed through the Council's community transport scheme. Many of the Council's facilities were considered very good, for example, Sanders Park and the Artrix, however, access to them was considered a problem by many attendees.

The research company noted that crime was not an issue that was raised as much as expected. The company also concluded that while the Council may not wish to make older people a stated priority, much more could be done to communicate to older people what services are available and how to access them.

6. Don't Stop Me Now – Preparing for an Ageing Population –

The report points out that getting older is a diverse experience. For some it can mean more leisure time, grandchildren, renewed interest in learning, while for others it can mean bereavement, living alone, falling income and social exclusion. The report points out that it is important not to stereotype older people as dependent, when many are a beneficial resource to the local community through their contributions to voluntary work and civic life.

The report also explodes a number of myths about older people, for example, only 15% of over 65s receive social care and only 3% live in residential care, rising to only 28% in the over 90s; conversely, the unemployment rate for those aged 50 is higher than the average for the working population.

The report identifies that the Government's Opportunity Age, a ten year strategy for older people, published in 2005, has not been a success and contrasts this with the "Every Child Matters" agenda for young people. What the Opportunity Age paper does do is separate issues for older people into three manageable strands:

1. Work and income: ending the perception of older people as dependent.
2. Ageing: ensuring that longer life is healthy and fulfilling; and
3. Well being and independence: ensuring older people are full participants in society.

7. Towards Common Ground –

The Help the Aged's report focuses on the Government's concept of "place shaping" i.e. that Council's have a lead role in shaping the quality of life of their area, through integrated planning and service provision. There are ten recommendations within the report and Task Group Members were asked to note that the Council is responding to many of these, for example, the high dependency toilets, community transport scheme, proposals for improving the high street which suggests that the Council does have a sound understanding of its older community.

8. Social Inclusion and Older People: A Call for Action –

This report starts by making the point that the most vocal and active older people tend to be those that are most involved and whose opinions are heard, car parking would be a classic example of this, and that the more vulnerable are more likely to be overlooked. The report undertook some interesting engagement activity through care homes, a senior citizen's club, structured one to one interviews and a deprived estate.

9. Getting on Well Together – Councils Working with Older People –

The report states that more engagement is required, that the whole council should understand the requirements of older people, we need to focus on changing behaviours, deliver outcomes and evaluate what is delivered. These lessons could apply to anything the council does, so whilst a relevant backdrop the report did not really add much value to the specific role of the Task Group.

The Task Group considered the 9 documents and the information provided by the Assistant Chief Executive in his initial report to the Task Group which highlighted the need to ensure that partner agencies and older people are aware of services and facilities available. Older people often felt isolated and whilst Task Group Members agreed with service information being made available via publications, websites and the media; there is a need for information to be streamlined and presented in a user friendly format, A – Z Directory.

The Task Group therefore recommend the following:

Recommendation 8 (a)	That the Portfolio Holder for Vulnerable and Older People (including Lifeline) and the Assistant Chief Executive be requested to scope funding to publish an A – Z directory of services available for older people in the Bromsgrove District , to be sustainable so as to keep it up to date. That the Assistant Chief Executive be tasked to produce the directory within 12 months and report back to the Cabinet.
Financial Implications	Revenue funding implications, to be recommended to Full Council as part of the 2010-2013 budget.

Recommendation 8 (b)	That the A – Z directory be made available on the Council's Internet and Intranet Sites, a copy to be held at the Customer Service Centre and that the Customer Service Centre advisors be requested to use the directory to signpost older people.
Financial Implications	There are no financial implications.

During the Task Group process we also discussed the need for information provided by the Council to be current and up to date.

We therefore recommend the following:

Recommendation 9 (a)	That the Council's website and Connect site be regularly reviewed and updated with service information, contact details and particularly when staff changes occur and that consideration be given to a dedicated page for older people with links to related internet sites.
Financial Implications	There are no financial implications.

Recommendation 9 (b)	That any future mystery shopper exercises include a test of services to older people.
Financial Implications	There are no financial implications.

Throughout the Task Group process we were made aware that it has been strongly suggested that older people often feel isolated and whilst service information is made available via publications, websites and the media; there is a need for information to be presented in person, we therefore recommend:

Recommendation 10	That a Member / officer working group comprising the Assistant Chief Executive, interested Task Group Members and the Portfolio Holder for Vulnerable and Older People (including Lifeline) be established to further explore Age Concern's, Best Practice and scope working with partner agencies to promote the introduction of 'Older People's Champions' (see Appendix A) in each Parish who can disseminate information on available services and accessibility to residents in the Town Centre and surrounding areas within the Bromsgrove District.
Financial Implications	There are no financial implications.

Housing (Recommendations 11 - 13)

During the Task Group process we were presented with information detailing housing support for older people, identifying needs, options and services provided and “where are the gaps?”

There was a good supply of sheltered housing but these were not spread evenly across the district, with limited provision for those in the private sector. It was noted that the Council’s current draft Core Strategy did not contain a requirement for lifetime homes, although due to consultation responses, future versions would encourage the building of all new homes to be suitable for adaptation.

Both the Council and Bromsgrove District Housing Trust (BDHT) provided detailed information on the future and needs of older people in Worcestershire, showing by the year 2031 a 52% increase in those over 60 and a 155% increase in those over 85. With 7,000 people with dementia, increasing to 21,000 in the next 20 years and a growing number of older people with learning disabilities, rising to 6,000 over the next 20 years.

We were informed by the Head of Supported Services, Bromsgrove District Housing Trust (BDHT) of the Community Support Service available to anyone regardless of tenure with tailored packages to meet individual needs. This included offering an on site support team and an on site care team who were available twenty four hours, seven days a week. BDHT had recently built twenty seven new apartments, 12 rented, 9 shared ownership and 6 intermediate care. New windows, kitchens and bathrooms had been fitted to existing homes. BDHT were due to launch Gilbert Court, premier extra care housing scheme, offering an activities co-ordinator, beautician, therapist, hairdresser and intensive care apartments. The restaurant facilities would be accessible to all elderly residents. Currently housing options were limited; future development and service provision needed to meet people’s aspirations, providing and offering choice and specialist care.

Focus Group headlines showed that people wanted better information and advice on support, grants for adaptations and alternatives. Extra Care housing was viewed positively both for rent and to buy. Older people often experienced difficulty in getting practical jobs done. Telecare, aid and adaptations were seen as potentially helpful but not at the ‘expense’ of personal support from people. Residential Care was not popular, people were not aware of the full implications, for them personally and their finances, of different options.

Good Practice Pointers included early consultation by developers with Adult Social Care, it was also important to ensure a balance of nominated occupiers and self funders.

Consultation with older people highlighted the following –

- More options for older people in large family homes to downsize their property for younger households.
- The need to develop more aspirational, two-bedroomed products aimed at older people, including equity release schemes.
- The active promotion of shared ownership.
- The development of extra-care housing and ‘retirement’ villages, incorporating a range of options with tailored care and support.

We therefore recommend the following:

Recommendation 11	That the Assistant Chief Executive and the Strategic Housing Manager be requested to ensure that any opportunities to assist in meeting the aims and objectives being developed for the newly revised Older People’s Strategy for Worcestershire be explored at a local level.
Financial Implications	There are no financial implications.

Recommendation 12	That the Portfolio Holder for Strategic Housing, Environment and Climate Change and the Strategic Housing Manager be requested to ensure there is an appropriate housing mix and that older people’s needs are catered for within the housing market as identified in the Bromsgrove Sustainable Community Strategy 2010-2013, Stronger Communities and the Bromsgrove Housing Market Assessment 2008.
Financial Implications	There are no financial implications.

We were informed by the CCTV / Lifeline Manager that Lifeline enabled people to live independently in their own homes with the facility and peace of mind of being able to call for help in an emergency. Lifeline operated a 24 hour service 365 days per year and was operated by fully trained staff. Other monitoring equipment could be fitted in the property -bogus caller / panic button, carbon monoxide, smoke, flood, fall and extreme temperature detectors.

We therefore recommend the following:

Recommendation 13	That the Head of Street Scene and Waste Management be requested to continue to promote the Lifeline Service, including the range of monitoring equipment available and that the quarterly Lifeline newsletter be used to promote and inform residents of other services and benefits available.
Financial Implications	There are no financial implications.

Income and Employment
(Recommendations 14 – 16)

The recent 'credit crunch' led us to question if older people proactively sought information on benefits. We were concerned to note that despite mail shots, promotions and information provided by the Council's benefit service, only a small percentage of claimants aged over 60 had claimed housing council tax benefit direct, the majority of claimants were passported across or signposted by the Pension Service. Task Group Members questioned if potential claimants who had requested claim forms were followed up if the claim form was not returned. We were informed that although currently no follow up procedure was in place, there was no reason why a process could not be included when scoping future customer engagement.

We were pleased to note that staff at the Worcestershire Hub are trained and receive continuous updates on the benefit service to ensure residents are correctly advised. We were also surprised to learn that the benefit team operated a home visiting service and unlike other authorities the Council had no visiting restrictions. If a resident requested a visit the visiting officer would attend.

The benefit service case load had increased by 14.6% over the last twelve months with benefit claims being processed quicker than in the last eighteen months to two years, but the benefit service was still aware that despite moving forward there was a need for further engagement with customers. The team was aware of the need to proactively engage or seek elderly residents who weren't claiming benefits rather than being reactive. One good example provided was the work the benefit service team had recently carried out with the Council's Private Sector Housing Team Leader, where information on home improvement grants was issued to residents in receipt of council tax benefit.

We also felt that residents should be made aware that when calculating housing and council tax benefit, the benefits team, in accordance with central government legislation, can disregard some of the income in the calculation of benefit meaning their total income is treated as lower and they receive more help. We were informed that the government will only pay the Council a subsidy payment using the standard £10.00 disregard and since the Council fully disregard in respect of War Disablement and War Widows Pensions, the Council has to fund the extra benefit. However, the Council has provision within the yearly benefit budget to cover the extra cost.

Recommendation 14 (a)	That the Portfolio Holder for Resources and the Benefit Service Manager be requested to continue to raise awareness of the Benefit Service and proactively engage or seek elderly residents who are not claiming benefits by attending residents meetings, providing information surgeries and use of other service area meetings to find out how to reach or inform residents of the benefit service.
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Financial Implications	There are no financial implications.
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Recommendation 14 (b)	That the Portfolio Holder for Resources and the Benefit Service Manager be requested to continue to work with the relevant service areas within the Council to issue information to residents in receipt of council tax benefit.
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Financial Implications	There are no financial implications.
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Task Group Members questioned pension provision and pension awareness amongst young people. Task Group Members were informed by an Independent Financial Advisor that the recent 'credit crunch' had not specifically created issues currently experienced by older people. People were living longer in good health. The question was 'how do we finance living to an older age?'

It was highlighted that recent figures showed that out of 20 million people in work, currently 11 million were not included in any pension scheme. Europe had a robust pension system, whereas the western pension system had slowly declined, with well known, household names and large organisations facing deficit of their final-salary pension schemes. It was emphasised that out of the top 100 companies in the country only 3 had company pension funds. According to a survey many people were relying on cashing in on the rising value of their property to fund their retirement.

The Independent Financial Advisor highlighted there needed to be a general change in attitudes towards retirement. People needed to play an active part in preparing for retirement by becoming 'savers not consumers!'. He suggested one way to engage with young people and encourage them to join a pension scheme that was more attractive would be to look at a pension scheme for 'Life Events'. A scheme that allowed access to pension funds for specific life events and not just for retirement, to purchase a car, a deposit on a property etc. The Assistant Chief Executive suggested engaging with young people in order to establish their understanding and level of knowledge on pensions and to motivate them with a flexible pension scheme.

Task Group Members therefore recommend:

Recommendation 15 (a)	That the Portfolio Holder Youth, Sports, Recreation and Culture and the Assistant Chief Executive be requested to explore opportunities to inform and educate young people regarding pension information.
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Financial Implications	There are no financial implications.
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Recommendation 15 (b)	That the Assistant Chief Executive be requested to liaise with the Local Strategic Partnership – Partners to explore opportunities of raising employees' awareness on pension information.
Financial Implications	There are no financial implications.

During our investigation, we considered opportunities for adult learning and education. The Adult Learning Manager, Worcestershire County Council provided Task Group Members with details of the five learning opportunities available for adults aged 19+:

- The Life Skills programme provided free learning opportunities for adults aged over 26 years with learning disabilities and/or disabilities.
- The Skills for Life programme provided free adult learning opportunities for people who wanted to develop their Literacy, Language and Numeracy skills.
- The Comput@bus, a purpose built, fully equipped, mobile computer classroom with a range of computer courses provided. Some courses were offered free of charge with no upper age limit to be a student on one of the courses.
- Family Learning provided parents the opportunity to help their children to learn or learn new skills together, in the child's school, nursery or children's centre, local library or at home.
- Community Learning Outreach – the community outreach team travelled to venues all over the county where people would not have easy access to adult learning through established education centres, such as colleagues. The team worked in informal settings, from libraries, church halls, community centres and school halls.

We were encouraged to hear that community centres and schools could request learning activities, provided they identified a specific need. The Adult Learning Team had successfully rolled out a number of learning activities which local libraries had identified as a need for specific learning opportunities. With the programme for next year currently being developed, the Adult Learning Team welcomed the opportunity to work with partner agencies to develop further sustainable learning activities and opportunities.

We welcomed the fact that the Adult Learning Team during January 2010 would be contacting Parish Councils to scope additional suitable accommodation and possible learning opportunities. With the Adult Learning Team now having a full complement of tutors and sessional tutors we needed to ensure that partner agencies liaised with the Adult Learning Team with suggestions regarding possible venues and identifying further adult learning activities and opportunities.

The Task Group therefore recommend the following:

Recommendation 16	That the Portfolio Holder for Vulnerable and Older People (including Lifeline) be requested to work closer with the Adult Learning Team, Worcestershire County Council in order to be familiar with and to promote the adult learning packages available.
Financial Implications	There are no financial implications.

Funding
(Recommendation 17)

We were encouraged during the Task Group process to note that officers and partner agencies actively sought funding for initiatives and specific projects, but even further encouraged when it was highlighted that their main aim when bidding for funding was to show and evidence how projects would be sustainable.

This was demonstrated by the invaluable presentation from the Council's Sports Development Officer, Adults and Disability. The presentation highlighted the successful and positive activities offered to residents throughout the district (see **Appendix 5**).

Recommendation 17	That the Assistant Chief Executive be requested to investigate ways in which officers can keep up to date with funding developments and utilise the skills of officers to bid for future funding when appropriate.
Financial Implications	There are no financial implications.

Worcestershire County Council – Highways Department
(Recommendation 18)

During the final meeting of the Task Group members discussed the general condition of the footpaths and the lack of dropped kerbs within specific areas of the town centre and around sheltered housing accommodation. Members expressed concerns raised by residents who visited the town centre and also those who used motorised scooters around the district.

The Task Group therefore recommend:

Recommendation 18	That the Head of Street Scene be requested to liaise with and obtain information from Worcestershire County Council, Highways Department on the current work programme and future work schedule for Bromsgrove District regarding renewal and repairs of pavements and the identification of areas requiring additional dropped kerbs within Bromsgrove District, more specifically the Town Centre and areas around sheltered accommodation.
Financial Implications	There are no financial implications.

Future Vision
(Recommendation 19 - 20)

The Task Group was keen to ensure the continuous involvement of older people in the planning and developing of future services and that older people are consulted when formulating new planning policies.

The Task Group therefore recommend:

Recommendation 19 (a)	That the Portfolio Holder for Vulnerable and Older People (including Lifeline) be requested to ensure that the views of older people in Bromsgrove are valued, shared and promoted within all service areas of the Council and negative perceptions of older people are challenged.
Financial Implications	There are no financial implications.

Recommendation 19 (b)	That the Assistant Chief Executive be requested to ensure that the Council achieves more formal engagement with Bromsgrove Older People's Forum.
Financial Implications	There are no financial implications.

Recommendation 19 (c)	That officers take into account the Communities and Local Government, Lifetime Homes, Lifetime Neighbourhoods strategy and other relevant evidence and strategies when formulating new policies.
Financial Implications	There are no financial implications.

Recommendation 19 (d)	That as part of the Council's decision to pilot Mosaic, it is used to target relevant marketing materials to older people.
Financial Implications	There are no financial implications.

Recommendation 19 (e)	That older people be considered as a possible priority in the Corporate Communications Strategy.
Financial Implications	There are no financial implications.

As detailed in the preamble to Recommendation 6 of our report, the Older People’s Strategy for Worcestershire is being updated. As stated, the Task Group has chosen to focus on Levels 1 and 2 (preventative) and we are of the view that it would be desirable for the Overview Board to conduct a follow up exercise which focuses on Levels 3,4 and 5 which deals with dependency created by older age.

The Task Group therefore recommend:

Recommendation 20	That the Overview Board be tasked with initiating, when appropriate, an investigation on the revised Older People’s Strategy for Worcestershire, Levels of Inclusion, Levels 3, 4 and 5, which deals with dependency created by older age.
Financial Implications	There are no financial implications.

The recommendations within this report link to the Council Objectives, Sense of Community and Well Being, Regeneration and the following Priorities – Town Centre, Housing and One Community.

CONCLUSION

Task Group Members agreed that officers and witnesses provided a wealth of information on the extensive services and good practice currently offered to older people in the Bromsgrove district.

The Council provides good service provision, with a range of activities to promote health and well being, from free swimming, free swim lessons and the diverse range of activities supported by the Sports Development Team, Adults and Disabilities. The Lifeline service, an accredited service recognised by the Telecare Services Association enables people to live independently in their own homes with the facility and peace of mind of being able to call for help in an emergency, 24 hours a day, 365 days per year. Shopmobility offers customers who want to visit the town of Bromsgrove the use of manual and electric wheelchairs and motorised scooters offered free of charge.

The Benefit Service Manager has recognised the need for future customer engagement in order to raise awareness and inform residents of the benefit service.

We were briefly informed by the Strategic Planning Manager that the Communities and Local Government (CLG) ‘Lifetime Homes, Lifetime Neighbourhoods’ a national strategy for Housing in an Ageing Society along with other evidence/strategies would be considered when formulating new planning policy, including the Town Centre Area Action Plan.

We were encouraged to find that officers and partner agencies continually reviewed their service area and looked at ways of moving forward in the future to positively engage with customers. This was evident with the invaluable information provided by Bromsgrove & District Citizens Advice Bureau (CAB) who in order to meet the demand and rise to the challenge had changed the way they see clients to give quicker and better access; by offering morning appointments, gateway interviews (to assess a client's problem) drop-in sessions and telephone advice. A redundancy information pack had also been compiled to provide comprehensive information and guidance for clients. The Council had also committed funding to the CAB to employ a part time Debt Advisor for 16 hours per week to assist struggling owner occupiers and assist with the mortgage rescue schemes.

We also recognised the contribution of Age Concern, Bromsgrove & District who provide services holistically; services that have been identified as needed via liaison work.

As previously mentioned in the report, we were continuously made aware of the way information is made available to older people on accessing services that are delivered by a number of sectors including the Council, Worcestershire County Council, Worcestershire Primary Care Trust, Citizens Advice Bureau, Age Concern and the voluntary sector. The Task Group therefore recommends the development of a combined information services directory for older people.

The Task Group concludes that their shared vision for the future would be that older people are considered in all aspects and service areas within the Council; that the views of older people are valued, shared and promoted and that older people are involved and consulted in making decisions about issues affecting their lives and communities and that any negative perceptions of older people are challenged.

The Task Group Chairman was invited to attend the Equality and Diversity Forum meeting in June 2009 to provide forum members with brief details of the role and remit of the Older People Task Group and to include any feedback from forum members to the Task Group. The Task Group Chairman presented the 'draft' recommendations to the Equality and Diversity Forum meeting held on 10th December 2009.

The Assistant Chief Executive and Task Group Chairman presented the 'draft' recommendations to the Older Peoples Forum meeting on 8th December 2009 where the Forum welcomed the recommendations and were delighted with the presentation.

REVIEW

The Older People Task Group will reconvene in 12 months time to carry out a review of the outcome of this report including whether or not recommendations were approved and implemented and the impact of these actions.

ROLE DEFINITION

OLDER PEOPLE'S CHAMPION

To assist the Council and appropriate Portfolio Holders by advising on service issues which support and encourage active, independent and healthy lives for older people, to inform older people on the extensive range of services available and how to access them. To raise the profile of older people and their needs in policy development across all areas of the council.

- To act as a Spokesperson to promote the positive aspects of the Council's work with Older People.
- To encourage Older People to play a fuller role in shaping the policies of the Council and in designing its services.
- To work and promote positive images of Older People as citizens and to combat stereotyping and age discrimination.
- To scope and maintain links with local Older People's forums / groups.
- To report on progress to the Assistant Chief Executive and Portfolio Holder for Vulnerable and Older People (including Lifeline).

OLDER PEOPLE TASK GROUP

TERMS OF REFERENCE

The attached scrutiny exercise scoping checklist, (which will act as the Older People Task Group's terms of reference) was approved by the Overview Board on 3rd March 2009.

"Health and Wellbeing, Community Facilities and Activities, Housing and Cost of Living".

"Other areas such as transport have already been looked at taking into account the needs of older people, so will not be covered again".

During the Task Group meeting held on 21st July 2009 Task Group Members revisited the original scoping checklist and the following changes were made and agreed by the Task Group.

- Healthy Living (inclusive of community facilities, activities, participation and inclusion)
- Housing (inclusive of market and social, supporting people - Telecare, adaptations, handyperson schemes)
- Income and Employment (inclusive of pension and benefits advice, employment and training opportunities and preparing for retirement)

Task Group Members agreed the age group criteria of 60+ and to look at 'what is the need', existing services / provision, access to existing services / provision, identify any gaps and agree recommendations.



OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY EXERCISE SCOPING CHECKLIST

This form is to assist Members to scope the overview and scrutiny exercise in a focused way and to identify the key issues it wishes to investigate.

- Topic: **Mental and physical wellbeing of the older population of Bromsgrove District.**

- Specific subject areas to be investigated:

- **Health and Wellbeing**
- **Community Facilities and Activities**
- **Housing and Cost of Living**

Other areas such as transport have already been looked at taking into account the needs of older people, so will not be covered again

- Possible key outcomes:

(i.e. please state what Members hope to achieve through this investigation):

To develop a strategic plan for older people in Bromsgrove District to ensure that the services provided by the Council and its partners are responsive to the emerging challenges of the changing demographics.

All councils need to understand their older communities and shape both universal and targeted services accordingly. Increased awareness, better engagement and innovation could help many older people without significant expenditure. (Don't stop me now, Audit Commission 2008)

- Should the relevant Portfolio Holder(s) be invited to give evidence? **YES**

- Which officers should be invited to give evidence?

(Please state name of officer and/or job title)

Assistant Chief Executive/Senior Policy Officer; Strategic Housing Manager; Health Improvement Practitioner (from PCT based at the Council House)

- Should any external witnesses be invited to give evidence? **YES**
If so, who and from which organisations?

Age Concern; Worcestershire County Council; PCT; and Older Peoples Forum.

- What key documents/data/reports will be required?

**An assessment of each council priority to determine the extent to which its delivery currently takes into account the needs of older people. To include evidence and recommendations stating what changes will be needed in the future.
Scrutiny exercises undertaken by other authorities that may be relevant. Mott McDonald Bromsgrove Report 2007. Reports from other organisations e.g. Age Concern; Don't stop me now, Audit Commission 2008.**

- Is it anticipated that any site visits will be required? **NO**
If so, where should Members visit?

N/A

- Should a period of public consultation form part of the exercise? **NO**
If so, on what should the public be consulted?

Have already consulted via focus groups and there will be the usual press release requesting comments/suggestions from the public.

(Please Note: A separate press release requesting general comments/suggestions from the public will be issued in the normal way at the beginning of the investigation.)

- Have other authorities carried out similar overview and scrutiny exercises? **YES**
If so, which authorities?

**Stoke-on-Trent
West Lancashire**

- Will the investigation cross the District boundary? **NO**

If so, should any other authorities be invited to participate?

NO

If yes, please state which authorities:

N/A

- Would it be appropriate to co-opt anyone on to the Task Group/Board whilst the Overview and Scrutiny exercise is being carried out?

YES/NO*

If so, who and from which organisations?

Anne Sowton, Chairman of the Older Peoples Theme Group

- What do you anticipate the timetable will be for the Overview and Scrutiny exercise?

To be discussed by the Overview Board.

A List of those the Task Group Consulted

The Task Group considered evidence from the following sources before making its recommendations:

External Witnesses:

Public:

- Members of the Public via a press release and the Council's website. A total of 2 emails were received. The Manager at Brook Court, Retirement Apartments met with the Assistant Chief Executive and the Task Group Chairman.

Parish Councils:

- The Assistant Chief Executive and the Portfolio Holder for Vulnerable and Older People (including Lifeline) gave a presentation to the Parish Council Forum on 22nd September 2009 to obtain information and input from the Parish Councils on the three Task Group strands.

Partner Agencies

- Tanya Crawford Advice Service Manager, Bromsgrove & District Citizens Advice Bureau
- Debbie Roberts Centre Manager, THE TRUNK.
- Kay Parry Health and Well Being Manager, Worcestershire County Council
- Colin Barnett Adult Learning Manager, Worcestershire County Council
- Sue Rollason Head of Supported Services, Bromsgrove District Housing Trust
- Duncan Jones Independent Financial Advisor
- Sue Keating Signposting Co-ordinator, Hereford & Worcestershire Fire & Rescue Service
- Gillian Christison Health Improvement Co-ordinator, Worcestershire Primary Care Trust
- Keith Sherman Chief Officer, Age Concern, Bromsgrove & District
- Carol Tipping Secretary, Bromsgrove Older People's Forum

Internal Witnesses:

Andy Coel	Head of Strategic Housing
Rachel McAndrews	CCTV / Lifeline Manager
Arran Sharman	Benefits Service Manager
Laura Kerrigan	Sports Development Officer, Adults and Disabilities
Jan Woolley	Operations Officer, Spadesbourne Suite

Free Mobility Exercise Class

To celebrate U.K. Older People's Day, Bromsgrove Sports Development invite you to their mobility exercise event, led by a fully qualified professional. With refreshments available afterwards, you can watch or take part in the activity and chat to the team to find your local session, or even start your own! To book your place, please ask one of the Customer Service Advisors, or contact Laura Kerrigan on 01527 881631; email l.kerrigan@bromsgrove.gov.uk

Session Details **Date:** MONDAY 28th SEPTEMBER 2009
Time: 2.30 P.M. – 4.00 P.M.
Venue: SPADESBOURNE SUITE, BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL, BURCOT LANE

FREE Mobility Exercise Class, Bromsgrove Sports Development





U.K. Older People's Day - Events

Date: TUESDAY 29th SEPTEMBER 2009
Time: STARTING FROM 10.00 A.M.
Venue: HIGH STREET, BROMSGROVE

Bromsgrove District Housing Trust (BDHT) information stall with details of BDHT services, the Bromsgrove District Council Lifeline Service and West Mercia Police





U.K. Older People's Day - Events

Date: WEDNESDAY 30th SEPTEMBER 2009
Time: 2.00 P.M. – 4.00 P.M.
Venue: SPADESBOURNE SUITE, BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL, BURCOT LANE

Tea Dance
Admission: £2.50,
to include tea/coffee and biscuits








U.K. Older People's Day - Events

Date: WEDNESDAY 30th SEPTEMBER 2009
Time: 2.00 P.M. – 4.00 P.M.
Venue: SPADESBOURNE SUITE CONSERVATORY, BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL

Neighbourhood Wardens and Lifeline officers will be present to provide information

U.K. Older People's Day - Events

Date: FRIDAY 2nd OCTOBER 2009
Time: 10.00 A.M. – 12.00 NOON
Venue: THE TRUNK, HUMPHREY AVENUE, CHARFORD, BROMSGROVE

Coffee Morning
An opportunity to find out about future events and support for older people





Bromsgrove District Council, Sports Development Officer – Adults and Disability, activities currently offered to residents throughout Bromsgrove district:

Activity Referral

The 'Healthy Horizons' activity referral scheme developed in partnership with Sports Development, the Dolphin Centre, the PCT and the County Sports Partnership, has seen a 90% sign up from local doctors and practice nurses who refer patients with stable conditions onto the exercise programme. Participants receive expert advice on nutrition, stress relief and smoking cessation. The scheme benefits from free gym membership, exercise classes and swimming. The group is encouraged to explore different forms of exercise and is introduced to the Walks for Health programme, local bowls clubs and are provided with free taster sessions with local clubs to encourage life long sports participation.

Mobility Exercise Sessions

These sessions are currently being developed to offer mobility exercise sessions for older adults across the district. There are currently sessions based in central Bromsgrove, Alvechurch, Barnt Green and Hollywood, with sessions to be offered in the future in Charford and Sidemoor. Sports Development are looking to develop partnerships with Worcestershire Primary Care Trust and Age Concern to roll out the district's first postural rehabilitation course for people who have suffered from falls or who could be at risk of falling. Bromsgrove have a high number of people who have been injured through a fall. The Team work with the MS physiotherapist and provide an exercise session specifically for this group. Mobility exercise sessions will be offered in rural locations such as Hagley, Belbroughton and Clent if the bid to Sport England is successful.

Over 60's Swimming

The Sports Development team supports the Dolphin Centre in providing free swim sessions for the over 60's. Quarter one showed a significant increase in the number of people participating in the free sessions.

Disability Provision

The Keep on Moving project provides disability sports clubs for adults, is open to all abilities and incorporates a multi-sport club, a Boccia club (similar to bowls) and a dance club. Participants range in age from ages 16 – 70. The project benefits from guest coaches in fencing and wheelchair basketball and was created in partnership with Chadsgrove Sports College.

Families Fit Together

A successful bid has been secured for a sports project based on the theme of families to encourage all ages to engage in sport. This includes older men's table tennis club (with a mobility session added on), family cricket in the park, a mother and daughter netball club and a ladies only badminton club. Sports Development will continue to work with local accredited sports clubs to make this 16 week project sustainable.

Walks for Health

The Sports Development team supports the Walks for Health initiative. A volunteer led programme that provides led walks around the district. The scheme is currently being developed to cater for a variety of levels for all abilities, provide 'walk exchanges' with other districts and visits to new areas.

Current Provision



Shopmobility.

Bromsgrove Urban and Rural Transport (BURT).

Over 60s swimming concession.

Disabled facilities grant.

Free swimming lessons.

Lifeline.

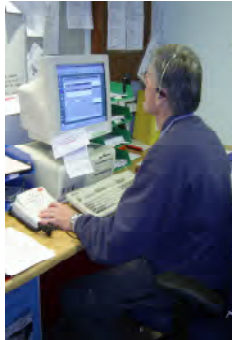
Mobility sessions for older people.

Activity referral scheme.

Walks for health.

Gilbert Court (BDHT).

Perryfields Development.



Current Provision



Benefits

- Pension Credits, Winter Fuel

Adult learning

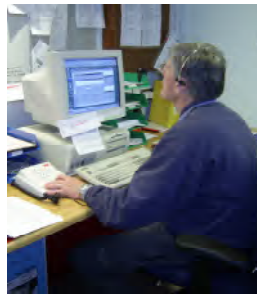
- Life Skills Programme
- The Comput@Bus
- Family Learning
- Community Learning Outreach

Age Concern Services

The Trunk (intergenerational project, computer courses etc)

Handyperson Scheme, Befriending Scheme, Well Check (WCC)

Falls Prevention Course (NHS Worcestershire)





**This report can be provided
in large print, braille, CD, audio tape
and computer disc.**



Bromsgrove
District Council

www.bromsgrove.gov.uk



Legal, Equalities and Democratic Services

Bromsgrove District Council, The Council House, Burcot Lane, Bromsgrove, Worcestershire B60 1AA.

Telephone: (01527) 881288, Fax: (01527) 881414, DX: 17279 Bromsgrove

e-mail: scrutiny@bromsgrove.gov.uk