

Area North Committee – 27th February 2008

8. Supporting Older People in Area North

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Purpose of the report

To seek Members' endorsement for the detailed allocation of £10,000 from the Area North Service Enhancement budget towards a programme of activity and information aimed at supporting older people living in Area North.

Recommendation

It is recommended that members:

1. Endorse the allocation of £10,000 towards a pilot programme of support to older people as detailed in Section 6 of this report, with financial authority delegated to the Head of Area Development, in consultation with ward members as appropriate.
2. Note the arrangements for monitoring and evaluation, as part of the SSDC Service Enhancement programme as set out in Section 7 of this report.

Background

In October 2007, the Area North Committee (ANC) was allocated £40,000 to support service enhancements based on evidence of, and tailored to, local community needs. This allocation was part of SSDC's programme to enhance Area Working, approved by Full Council in December 2006.

In December 2007, the Committee allocated £10,000 in principle towards a programme aimed at supporting older people as a high local priority for Area North. This report includes a proposal from the SSDC Community Active Lifestyles team to work in partnership to deliver a programme of activity and education, and provide access to a range of services for older people.

Introduction

The Area North Development Plan, published by this Committee includes a local priority to ***"maintain and improve local access to services especially for health and social needs"***. This was identified from evidence from local research and consultation (e.g. from parish plans) and statistical evidence of the significant numbers of older people living in Area North. There are also areas which experience poor access to services due to distance and lack of available transport.

The Area North Committee has also identified the need for agencies (both public and from the voluntary and community sectors) to work in partnership and actively promotes local co-ordination.

In addition, SSDC corporate priorities aimed at promoting health and well-being, and active lifestyles for all residents have resulted in a variety of services and programmes designed to meet older peoples needs, however the resources available for these activities are limited, and so the opportunity for a service enhancement by the Area Committee seems both feasible and desirable.

1. Somerset County Council – Adult Social Care Services

Somerset County Council (SCC) is the agency responsible for social care services for older people, delivered through Adult Social Care (part of the Community Directorate). The aim is to support people in their own homes if possible, whilst ensuring the availability of good quality residential or nursing home care where this is not feasible. Most services are purchased from the independent sector rather than being provided in-house.

SCC provides support to older people in the following areas:

- Assessment of needs
- Care planning, co-ordination and review
- Emotional and practical support
- Protection of vulnerable adults
- Care in a residential or nursing home
- Personal care at home
- Sitting service (providing a break for carers)
- Community meals service
- Day services and opportunities
- Community equipment
- Adaptations to the home environment
- Support for carers
- Direct payments
- Advice on social care, health, housing and money from Somerset Direct
- Financial assessments and benefits advice through the Financial Assessment and Benefit Teams (FAB)

2. Partnerships for Older People Project (POPP) - Active Living

A government funded programme, largely delivered through Age Concern and SCC Adult Social Care, ending in March 2008. Further details have been previously reported to this Committee (see reports to ANC June and December 2007).

3. SSDC and the role of the Area Committee

The Area North Committee has taken an active interest in supporting activities and services (SSDC and partners) to older people through raising local awareness, in scrutiny and overview, and by direct financial support. Examples are:

- Active Living - (Partnerships for Older People Project (POPP) - reported on in June & December 2007)
- Raising awareness of the importance of reducing fuel poverty (Affordable Warmth and Energy Champions report to Committee, September 2006)
- Grant aid & support to the South Somerset Links Community Transport Service
- SSDC Community Activity Lifestyles (CAL) programmes
- Grants and officer support from the Area Development team for facilities and activities
- Area North Community Safety Action Panel
- Welfare benefits take-up reports (various)

- Support to and concern for village halls, Post Offices & small shops – where older people tend to be high users
- Funding for a temporary Community Development Assistant who carried out a range of tasks including an audit of activities for older people in Area North, and arranging the series of older people's safety awareness 'tea parties'

4. Evidence of need

Complementary to the evidence gathered through the above reports, projects and discussions, there are a range of statistical and consultation studies which together provide a good body of evidence to support additional service enhancements above the statutory roles of agencies, working with partners, and promoting voluntary and community involvement.

- Area North has a total of 8,981 residents over the age of 60, accounting for 28% of the total population of Area North. This figure is higher than the District average of 25%, while 21% is the English average.
- 55% of all 60-74 year olds, 58% of all 75-89 year olds and 58% of 90+ year olds live within the rural centres (market towns) of Somerton, Langport & Huish Episcopi and South Petherton. This means that 40% of the residents over 60 years are living in our rural parishes and may depend on mobile services and the Market Towns to access essential services.
- There are a higher number of single pensioners than pensioner couples living in Area North than in the rest of the District.
- Fear of crime: concerns about law and order and community safety in general feature in 10 of the 11 completed Parish Plans in Area North, where older people tend to be higher respondents.
- The South Somerset Sustainable Community Strategy reviewed a wealth of evidence, and concluded that "New generations of older people have different needs to previous generations and are more likely to want lifelong learning and are more mobile in their leisure and travel preferences"
- Consultation within the older population in Area North has been collated by the Age Concern / POPP field workers and has shown interest in the following activities:
 - Access to benefits and legal advice
 - NHS information and advice
 - Health talks
 - Carers' groups
 - Computer training
 - Toenail cutting
 - Outings
 - Arts and crafts, sewing and knitting
 - Community safety
 - Yoga, pilates, reflexology, flexercise
 - Aromatherapy, massage
 - Book exchange, reading group
 - Musical events e.g. outings, singing workshops
 - Board games
 - Family tree workshop, reminiscence work
 - Cooking classes
 - Watching films

5. Enhancing support to older people

To determine the most appropriate and effective means to deliver enhanced services for a pilot period, the Community Development Assistant has consulted with the following groups and partnerships:

- **Age Concern**, the lead partner for the Partnerships for Older People Project established by SCC (see reports to ANC June and Dec 2007).
- The **Community Activity and Lifestyles** team at SSDC which continues to work very successfully with Age Concern to provide activities for older people, including:
 - Working within communities to develop sustainable and cost free activities, e.g. health walks
 - Raising awareness of healthy lifestyles through access to exercise programmes (e.g. tai-chi)
 - Holding Health Fairs where people can have free health checks (or MOTs) and receive advice and referrals as necessary
- The **Adult Social Care** team at SCC, who would be supportive of the planned events.
- **Community Safety Project Worker.** In 2006-07 a series of afternoon sessions funded by the Area North Community Safety Action Panel, aimed at older people and bringing together a range of activities and services were a notable success. In particular, the police, fire service, Handyman Scheme and the Well Warm Initiative noted a higher level of take up for services than would have been achieved through other methods.
- **South Somerset Voluntary and Community Action** (Community Transport).

6. Proposal for Area North Service Enhancement – Supporting Older People

The allocation of £10,000 will provide co-ordination and publicity costs, start-up grants and event costs for the following:

1. It is proposed that, in conjunction with Age Concern and the SSDC Community Active Lifestyle (CAL) team, Area North Development will organise, publicise and help fund between 4 and 6 day time sessions along the lines of the very successful afternoon teas held in 2007.
2. The range of information and activities offered will be wider than before, incorporating the itinerary of the Health Fairs as well as addressing other concerns of older people, such as access to welfare benefits and community safety. The emphasis will be on prevention and well-being. Local groups (e.g. Women's Institutes, faith groups) will also be approached for assistance.

Information on the following services will be offered:

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|---|---------------------------|
| • Home Aid Partnership / Home Safety Action Panel | • Police |
| | • Well-being and activity |

- Health promotion (e.g. “health MOT”)
 - Benefits advice
 - Somerset Direct/Customers First
 - Community safety – e.g. fire brigade, home safety
 - A4e (A disability advocacy service)
 - South Somerset Homes
 - *Etc (to be decided as part of detailed planning)*
3. A programme of support to new community led activities for older people. This will be agreed after inviting bids from community and voluntary groups (e.g. Women’s Institute, University of the Third Age). Bids will need to be in by 30th June, after which the details will be finalised.
 4. An enhanced level of promotion and publicity for the variety of services and activities available to older people will be provided during the period of service enhancement.

The Head of Area Development North, Senior Active Lifestyles Manager and partners will agree the final proposals and accompanying project plans, in consultation with ward members as necessary.

7. Monitoring and Evaluation

An evaluation form will be developed by combining the methods currently used by CAL and Age Concern with the actual monitoring and evaluation being supported by the Area North Community Development Assistant.

A report which will include all the results of the Area North Service Enhancements pilots will be brought back to the Committee in December 2008.

Financial Implications

There is £10,000 allocated in the 07/08 budget for Area North Service Enhancement which can be used to fund this work. The expenditure will now be mainly in 2008/09 so District Executive approval will be sought to carry the budget forward in the outturn report in June 2008.

Implications for Corporate Priorities

- Objective 9: Identify and address the particular issues affecting rural areas.
- Objective 11: Work in partnership with others to improve the health prospects for all.
- Objective 14: Maintain above 90% the people who generally feel safe in their communities.

Other Implications

- Somerset Local Area Agreement Outcome 6: To prevent dependency, promote social participation and offer greater choice and control for older people.
- Area North Local Priorities:
 - 3.2: Promote safer communities

- 3.5: Maintain and improve local access to services especially for health and social needs.
- 3.6: Support communities to maintain and develop facilities and activities.
- 3.10: Promote and support local transport.

Background Papers: *None*
