

Report



meeting

SOCIAL SERVICES STANDING SELECT COMMITTEE

agenda item number 4

date

28th September 2004

REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF SOCIAL SERVICES

BEST VALUE REVIEW FOR THE PROMOTION OF INDEPENDENCE OF OLDER PEOPLE – IMPROVEMENT PLAN – PROGRESS REPORT

1. Purpose of the Report

1.1 The purpose of the report is to:

- (a) update Members on the progress of the Best Value Improvement Plan for the Promotion of Independence of Older People
- (b) advise Members of the project management approach and delivery of the Improvement Plan.

2. Information and Advice

2.1 The Best Value Review for the Promotion of Independence of Older People was initiated in July 2002 and initially reported to Cabinet on 23rd July 2003. A final report and response from the Cabinet Member for Social Services was reported to Cabinet on 3rd December 2003.

2.2 The focus of the Best Value Review is older people, who require low level support enabling autonomy at home. The overall aims are to provide services which:

- (a) prevent or delay the need for more intensive services
- (b) approaches which promote the quality of life of older people and their active involvement in the community.

2.3 Below, the report highlights progress achieved so far on key areas in the promotion of independence for older people. The Improvement Plan with progress on each of the twenty-seven recommendations and list of the recommendations are attached in Appendix A.

2.4 The project implementation manager came into post on 17th May 2004, fulfilling recommendation twenty-two of the Best Value Review Improvement Plan.

2.5 Recommendation 1: Senior Peer Mentor Project

2.5.1 The Senior Peer Mentor Project supports active older people to volunteer as mentors to less active older people. It encourages older people to increase their physical activity levels and also provides a social element, especially for lonely or isolated individuals.

2.5.2 The project began in Ashfield in July 2003, with a view to its extension across Nottinghamshire. Start up funding from Nottinghamshire County Council Social Services Department for the Ashfield development was £3,000. In Ashfield, fifteen people originally joined the training sessions and eight Senior Peer Mentors successfully completed the course to become 'Activity Friends', including a number of members of Nottinghamshire Older Persons Advisory Group (OPAG). To date, there are six remaining Senior Peer Mentors who have been very active. An evaluation report was completed in July 2004 and the steering group has agreed to recruit a further fifteen volunteers to supplement the existing Senior Peer Mentors. Further recruitment is critical to the project.

2.5.3 In Bassetlaw, the Primary Care Trust and the Community and Voluntary Service have developed a Senior Peer Mentoring Scheme called 'Ready, Steady, Go!' and twenty-five volunteers are to start training in September 2004. Funding from Nottinghamshire County Council Social Services Department for the Bassetlaw development was £3,000.

2.5.4 In Broxtowe, funding of £3,000 supported the development of a walks programme, which supports the aims of the Senior Peer Mentor Project.

2.5.5 Overall the main risks to the further development of the Senior Peer Mentor Scheme is resourcing from partner agencies, particularly Primary Care Trusts and sustainability of the volunteering effort required.

2.5.6 Mr Ian Philp, the Director of Older People's Services at the Department of Health visited the East Midlands at a conference on 16th July 2004 hosted by Government Office for the East Midlands and part of the Nottinghamshire County Council 'Beacon' programme of services for older people. Mr Philp has a responsibility for the National Service Framework for Older People. The purpose of the event was to focus on the role of the Champions for Older People and highlight good practice across the region related to health and active ageing.

2.5.7 The Senior Peer Mentor Scheme in Ashfield was presented at a workshop, which was very well received with much interest being expressed across the East Midlands Region.

2.6 Recommendation 5: Resource Centres or Networks for Older People.

- 2.6.1 Two pilot Older People's Resource Centres in Retford and Broxtowe have been developed with the involvement of a wide range of statutory and voluntary organisations and both opened in the summer of 2004. The aim of the projects are to provide a range of co-ordinated services to older people, who are possibly not receiving mainstream services, to enable them to retain independent lifestyles and improve their quality of life.
- 2.6.2 The Retford Resource Centre is located in the centre of Retford and received a County Council Acorn grant of £30,000 capital to refurbish the premises. The Retford Action Centre is undertaking the co-ordination of the centre assisted by a steering group of six organisations. Currently, the project involves some twelve to fifteen service providers and since it opened in June sessions have included Do You Need a Helping Hand (D.Y.N.A.H) (Handypersons Scheme), the Fire Service, the Department for Work and Pensions, Age Concern, County Contact, Disabilities Living Centre, warden services and transport providers. A further £30,000 Acorn funding will be required during the current financial year to enable services to be delivered.
- 2.6.3 The Broxtowe Resource Centre is based at Maycliffe Hall, Stapleford, and is principally a partnership between Maycliffe Hall Trustees and Stapleford Volunteer Bureau, although another ten organisations have agreed to deliver services from the centre. The centre is being co-ordinated by the Volunteer Bureau Organiser. It also received Acorn funding of £30,000, which is available for some capital costs, and as a contribution towards revenue costs. The Resource Centre has proved very popular and since it opened in July, sessions have included Disabilities Living Centre, Eco team, chiropody and alternative therapies. Some older people have started healthy walks from the centre and returning for lunch.
- 2.6.4 It is proposed that the first resource "network" is piloted in Gedling and work is underway on the formation of an Older People's Network to test out the potential of such a network as an alternative model to the resource centre concept.
- 2.6.5 Currently, consideration is being given to apply to the Invest to Save Budget (ISB) for 'Building Inclusive Communities', which is a joint Treasury/Cabinet Office initiative with an aim to create sustainable improvements in the capacity to deliver public services in a more joined up manner. The proposed bid for approximately £200,000 would further develop the potential of the Resource Centres linked to other recommendations in the Review, particularly Third Age Service aspects.

2.7 Recommendation 7: Flexible transport provision and systems

Flexline Pilot

- 2.7.1 Flexline was introduced by the Environment Department in July 2003 and was the County Council's first demand responsive transport service in rural Newark and Retford. This project was endorsed as a Best Value Review as a useful pilot in exploring more flexible transport systems, for older people in rural areas. A high quality, low floor fully accessible minibus was used to operate the service. Despite an intensive promotional exercise, take up has been disappointing with only five regular passengers now using it mainly for shopping trips. Currently, Flexline is being trialled at the new Retford Resource Centre. Although the centre is only open one day per week it was felt this would provide an ideal opportunity to promote Flexline and encourage other journeys. However, so far there is only one regular customer.
- 2.7.2 During September and October further research will be carried out by the Environment Department with the community in the Newark and Retford area, asking customers why they are not using the service. The results will assist in determining the future of Flexline. The Working Group on Flexible Transport (see below) is looking at other options including the Central Dispatch Centre, and accessibility planning for the new Nottinghamshire Transport Plan, 2005 - 2008.

Working Group on Flexible Transport

- 2.7.3 A working group on Flexible Transport made up of representatives from the Social Services Department, Environment Department and the OPAG are working on initiatives to improve the accessibility of transport for both older people and disabled people, under the current Best Value Review 'Promotion of Independence for Young Disabled Adults'.

Central Dispatch Centre

- 2.7.4 The Social Services Transport Unit, (SSTU) has managed the Nottinghamshire County Dial-a-Ride Service since its inception in 1988. The Dial-a-Ride service has traditionally been managed through a central 'Call Centre'. With the advent of Demand Responsive Passenger Transport services (DRT), it is considered that expanding the function to include the DRT services would be a very efficient and cost effective way to further develop the service and other passenger transport services provided or funded by the Authority.
- 2.7.5 In order to inform this development, the Working Group on Flexible Transport visited Lincolnshire County Council on 25th May 2004 to look at the operation of their Call Centre and related software. The conclusions very much supported the concept of the 'Central Dispatch Centre' for Nottinghamshire.
- 2.7.6 It is, therefore, intended to continue to extend the service provided by the call centre, to be known as the 'Central Dispatch Centre'. Services that will be

accessed through the centre will include, in addition to Dial-a-Ride and DRT, Special Education Transport, Social Services Transport, Mainstream Home to School Transport, other public transport services and community transport. The project, which is a collaborative partnership between the Environment, Social Services Transport Unit and Education Departments, will have short term, medium term and long term objectives. It is intended to commission the first services through the Central Dispatch Centre with effect from 1st April 2005. The benefits to older people include access to a co-ordinated and more integrated provision of transport across a range of providers. Currently invitations to tender for the highly specialised software packages are being sent out to companies who have expressed an interest in responding to the complex specification devised to meet the needs and requirements of the services to be supported by the unit.

2.8 Recommendation 9: Development of Home Improvement Agencies (HIA) linked to district based Handyperson Schemes

- 2.8.1 A review of Home Improvement Agency provision across Nottinghamshire was completed by external consultants in December 2003 and recommended a home improvement network across the county.
- 2.8.2 A successful bid to the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister for a grant towards the costs of HIA Services has led to the development of a Home Improvement Agency for South Nottinghamshire covering Broxtowe, Gedling and Rushcliffe. This will provide vulnerable people who live in poor or unsuitable housing in the private sector with advice and practical assistance in arranging home improvements and adaptations. The South Nottinghamshire Home Improvement Agency is planned for January 2005. Work is underway on developing a service specification for the handyperson schemes and a pilot scheme is planned for January 2005.
- 2.8.3 A key requirement for the development of Home Improvement Agency and the handyperson scheme is the recruitment of a Home Improvement Co-ordinator to carry forward the work.
- 2.8.4 A related scheme within the Supporting People Strategy is the pilot of a county-wide 'Winter Well-Being Service'. It is aimed at older people in owner occupied accommodation reliant on coal fires for winter heating and unable to safely maintain fires themselves. The pilot will provide advice and information regarding alternative heating options and provide help with firelighting and fire maintenance, including a risk assessment. The intended outcome of the pilot is to reduce the need for firelighting services.

2.9 Recommendation 16: Third Age Service

- 2.9.1 Third Age Service is a government commitment to move towards integrating, both one stop advice and access to social care, health and benefits for older people. Locally, it has been agreed the first stage in the development of Third Age Service is the linking of Nottinghamshire Social Services Adult Care Financial Services Fairer Charging Team and the local Pension Service to

establish joint teams. After setting up the joint teams the next stage should be more integrated local services, so that once service users contact one of the Third Age partners, they will receive a fully joined up service. Current challenges in the development of joint teams include Information and Communication Technology, Criminal Records Bureau Checks and sharing of information. The project is led by a new Third Age Strategic Management Board with senior level representation from older people, the County Council and external partner organisations

2.9.2 On 29th June 2004 a regional conference was hosted by Nottinghamshire County Council and The Pension Service called 'One Team – One Service', which was attended by Malcolm Wicks, the Minister of State for Pensions. Over 150 delegates attended the conference, including older people and representatives from the public, private and voluntary sectors across the East Midlands. The feedback from the conference should guide the development of the Third Age Service in Nottinghamshire.

2.10 Recommendation 19: County-Wide Strategy on Successful Ageing

2.10.1 The need for a county-wide Strategy on Successful Ageing was supported by the County-Wide Older People's Strategic Partnership (CWOPSP) and OPAG. Following the report to Cabinet on the Best Value Review, an event was held to create the vision for the Strategy. A working group of representatives from the CWOPSP have subsequently worked on the development of the Strategy and developed the key themes which include:

- Promotion of Independence
- Social Inclusion
- Health and Well-being
- Communication and Information.

2.10.2 The working group met on the 27th August 2004 to refine and agree the draft Strategy prior to the CWOPSP meeting on 25th October 2004.

2.10.3 The challenge in producing a strategy for Nottinghamshire is to ensure it doesn't duplicate existing work, brings added value, makes a difference for older people, and, it links to existing policy and initiatives. It will be important for the strategy to contribute towards the County-wide Community Strategy. Work is underway to ensure that the key principles and themes of the Strategy reflect national and local policy. Concurrently, the Department for Work and Pensions is co-ordinating a national strategy on older people across government departments. Nottinghamshire County Council participated in an Audit Commission study on 'Independence and Well-Being' for older people. Six reports have been published including one on 'Building a Strategic Approach', which evidenced work undertaken in Nottinghamshire. This work will inform the development of a county-wide Strategy on Successful Ageing.

2.10.4 Our strategic approach, including the outcomes of the Best Value Review, was the subject of a successful Beacon application on Services for Older People.

2.11 Project Management Approach and Delivery

2.11.1 **Steering Group**

A cross-cutting steering group is to be established consisting of representatives from Education, Environment, Culture & Community and Social Services Departments. This group will inform and co-ordinate the implementation of the Best Value Review and a first meeting is planned for September 2004.

2.11.2 **Project Management**

Guidance on project management for the implementation of the Best Value Review has been developed to effectively manage the process of a project, including risk analysis to identify and manage risk. (Guidance on project management approach is attached in Appendix B).

2.11.3 **Evaluation**

The success of the implementation of the Best Value Review will be measured against outcomes and this is built into the project management approach. However, identification and measurement of outcomes in preventative services is complex. As part of the Beacon Status Learning Exchange a workshop will be held on quality of life indicators and this work will be used to inform the evaluation of the Best Value Review.

2.11.4 **Accountability and engagement with older people**

The active involvement of older people in the implementation of the Best Value Review is central. The twenty-seven recommendations of the Best Value Review were built upon the needs of local older people. Representatives from the OPAG are members of the project groups, which are working on the implementation of the review and OPAG have agreed to be members of the steering group. In addition, the project implementation manager reports to the County-Wide Older People's Strategic Partnership on a six monthly basis.

2.11.5 **Budget**

The budget committed to the implementation of the Review for the year 2004 – 2005, has been reduced from £350,000 to £100,000 as part of the financial measures taken to address current budgetary pressures. This has particularly impacted on the proposed developments for handy person services and the project implementation manager is currently exploring alternative sources of external funding.

3. Recommendations

- 3.1 It is recommended that the Social Services Standing Select Committee note and comment on the progress to date on implementing the recommendations from the Best Value Service Review on the Promotion of Independence of Older People.

STUART BROOK

Director of Social Services (COMM-SELECT) PIOP / PW