

REPORT TO	DATE OF MEETING
CABINET	9th September 2015

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SUBJECT	PORTFOLIO	AUTHOR	ITEM
Scrutiny Report Review of Loneliness and Social Isolation affecting Older People	Housing & Healthy Communities	Ian Parker	

SUMMARY AND LINK TO CORPORATE PRIORITIES

Efficient, Effective & Exceptional Council & Strong and Healthy Communities

CONSIDERATIONS

The Scrutiny Committee should be thanked for undertaking this review and for highlighting this as an issue that affects many people across all social spectrums.

The Scrutiny Report is helpful in the sense that it recognises that a great deal of work is already taking place throughout the Council and through its partners to support elderly and vulnerable people. Loneliness and Social Isolation clearly affects older people, and there are a myriad of triggers, ranging from poor health through to bereavement. It's reasonable to assume that the older someone becomes, the greater likelihood they will experience loneliness and/or social isolation.

However the Report is keen to develop a series of initiatives which it lists within its recommendations. Unfortunately the Report does not contain quantifiable data to allow for meaningful extrapolation; it is difficult to assess the scale of the problem and whether existing partners are in a position to support any latent demand that c/would be uncovered.

Since the Report was written, Guidance for Local Authorities and Commissioners has been published. The Campaign to End Loneliness has launched a new online resource, Loneliness and Isolation with new guidance that identifies adult social care, clinical commissioning groups and public health teams as resources that can influence loneliness experienced by older people in their local populations.

The new Guidance for Local Authorities recognises loneliness and isolation as being harmful to health: research shows that lacking social connections is as damaging to our health as smoking 15 cigarettes a day.

Approximately ten per cent of those aged 65 and over experience loneliness all or most of the time and this can be costly to local health and social care services. Lonely individuals are more likely to visit their GP, undergo early entry into residential care and use accident and emergency services independent of chronic illness.

Clearly, the national debate and subsequent revised guidelines identify more precisely where the benefits of intervention are most abundantly felt, namely within the health sector.

Lancashire County Council is undertaking a review of Loneliness & Social Isolation and it is worth considering whether to support this review by undertaking a pilot exercise locally. LCC's approach is for a review that is pan-Lancashire, but will inevitably lack a depth and richness that a deep and narrow pilot could achieve.

The Scrutiny Review does not contain sufficient data for extrapolation to take place – a pilot study could provide that data and inform LCC's review accordingly.

Not all the recommendations within the Report were data reliant. The recommendations and thoughts for consideration follow:

1 A South Ribble older people's partnership is created and chaired by the Council's Older People's Champion with appropriate officer support:

The Council has an Older People's Champion and it is felt that this role can link into the existing South Ribble Strategic Partnership.

2 Using the information and evidence gathered as part of this review the South Ribble older people's partnership develop a partnership action plan to improve the quality of life for older people including tackling loneliness and social isolation.

This is premature at this stage but is worth reviewing once analytical data is developed either through a pilot study and/or via LCC's review.

3 An accredited protocol is developed for partner organisations referring older people to other agencies so that the case is managed more efficiently and effectively, including data sharing.

This is for South Ribble Local Strategic Partnership to consider

4 The Council and key partners develop a scheme, delivered by volunteers to visit each older person's home in the Borough to talk to them about their needs, signposts and share information.

This is technically achievable using the technology that the Council has invested in. The Report does not identify the numbers involved; nationally 10% of the over 65 years is identified as being lonely and/or socially isolated. This approach could form the basis of any proposed pilot (including LCC?). This would enrich the LCC review with analytical data.

5 Each My Neighbourhood Forum carry out an audit of older people's groups, events and activities in their area for collation into a directory for sharing in the local community.

This is a matter for the My Neighbourhood Forums to consider, and I will write to the Chairpersons highlighting this recommendation.

6 South Ribble becomes a Dementia Friendly Borough and builds upon the successful dementia friends training scheme Friendly community scheme adopted by Western Parishes My Neighbourhood Forum.

I have asked that Gateway investigate suitable awareness training for our front line staff with a view to increasing Dementia awareness; following which we can assess its success.

7 The proposed My Neighbourhood newsletters have a section on local older people's events and activities.

This is a matter for the My Neighbourhood Forums to consider, and I will write to the Chairpersons highlighting this recommendation.

8 Low cost hire charges are introduced for the Banqueting Suite, community centre and council venues to encourage older people's activities to take place.

In exceptional circumstances we do offer reduced rates, however during the last two years the room hire options have been placed on a commercial basis for two reasons; firstly the Council was losing money on bookings and secondly there are alternative venues offering

the same commercial hire. I have asked that a policy is developed that would allow (or otherwise) any reduced rates.

- 9 Public sector partner organisations be asked to review their commissioning procedures to award contracts for longer periods of time to improve the sustainability and impact of projects.**

This is mainly targeted to both LCC and CCG. This Council will continue to consider the costs, resources and impact on its commissioned projects.

- 10 The next Scrutiny Committee following May's elections be asked to consider reviewing how the voluntary, community and faith sector is supported and co-ordinated in South Ribble.**

This is for the Scrutiny Committee to consider.

END