
Strategic Responses to Changes in the Population of Cheshire

Introduction

The purpose of this report is to agree a partnership approach to the development of an overarching strategy for older people in Cheshire.

Background

The profile of the population of Cheshire is changing. Although our total population will remain broadly stable between 2005 and 2021, we will see a 38.0% growth in the population of older people, and the population of those over 85, the most frail, will grow by 63.1%. At the same time, the population under 16 will fall by 10.6%. Our 'adults of working age' population will remain broadly stable, and this, combined with the growth of the population of older people will have a dramatic effect on the 'carer ratio' – the ratio of people who need care compared to those available to care for them, either formally or informally. These fundamental changes in the structure of population will have an impact on all aspects of the work of the Communities of Cheshire Partnership.

In recognition of these changes, in 2005 Cheshire County Council undertook a Scrutiny Review of its services to older people.

The Scrutiny Review led to a number of recommendations, the majority of which have since been implemented.

One recommendation of the review was that the County Council should develop an 'overarching strategy' to provide a context for all its work in relation to older people. Work started on the strategy in 2006.

Discussions within the County Council in relation to an early draft of the strategy have raised the question whether indeed the production of a single agency 'overarching strategy' is the most productive way forward.

Since the Scrutiny Review took place, we have seen continued development in the role of the Communities of Cheshire Partnership, of the supporting Local Strategic Partnership mechanisms, and of the Cheshire Local Area Agreement.

The suggestion has been made that a proposal should be put that the Communities of Cheshire Partnership would commission development of an overarching strategy for older people, which would extend across all parties to the Partnership, and which could support and co-ordinate the work of all partners in relation to older people in our community.

Local investigations have revealed that the Lancashire equivalent of the Communities of Cheshire Partnership, 'Ambition Lancashire', has undertaken a similar piece of work, and the product of this work 'Lancashire Partnership Strategy for an Ageing Population' is currently out for consultation. The draft document can be accessed at www.lancashire.gov.uk/corporate/consultation/

The document is comprehensive in scope (and care should be taken before printing, as it is very long) and it provides an overview of the current situation in Lancashire, and the partners' ambitions for older people, and contains proposals that the delivery of these mutual ambitions for older people.

Proposal

It is proposed that:

- (1) The Communities of Cheshire Partnership supports the development of such an overarching strategy in Cheshire.
- (2) The consultants who undertook the work on behalf of 'Ambition Lancashire' should be approached and asked to give estimates for the cost of undertaking a similar piece of work in Cheshire, and to suggest timescales for production.
- (3) That these estimates be made available to the next meeting of the Communities of Cheshire Partnership to inform more specific proposals for the commissioning of this piece of work.

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