

WEST DUNBARTONSHIRE COUNCIL

Report by Acting Director of Social Work Services

Social Justice Committee: 14 June 2006

Subject: Sharing Experience: Developing the Strategy for a Scotland with an Ageing Population – A National Consultation

1. Purpose

1.1 To inform Committee of this important national consultation, to apprise Committee of local responses and to note the draft response to the Scottish Executive.

2. Background

2.1 The Scottish Executive is developing a 'Strategy for a Scotland with an Ageing Population', which will be published by the end of 2006.

2.2 Scotland is changing. As a result of lower birth rates and greater life expectancy, in the coming decades there will be many more older people in Scotland, and fewer younger people. This poses a challenge for Scotland's government – how to ensure that Scotland is a fit place in which to grow old? And how can Scotland benefit from this change? It's also a challenge for local authorities, businesses, charities, communities, and individuals. The Scottish Executive wants to recognize and maximize the contribution made by older people to society.

2.3 The aim of the strategy is to provide a long term framework for:

- Access to opportunities for older people (over 50) to make a continuing contribution, including:
 - identifying and removing barriers to opportunities,
 - establishing effective and diverse ways to involve older people in their communities and with government,
 - promoting equal opportunities,
 - promoting social inclusion,
 - combating stereotypical views of aging;
- Effective integrated services for older people;
- Promoting and maintaining health and well being;
- People living in accommodation and environments which continue to meet their needs and wishes as they age.

2.4 The objectives of the strategy are:

- To address the challenges and opportunities of an aging population in a sustainable way within an integrated and evidence based framework;
- To realise the potential that an older population can bring, and to recognise the contribution that older people already make;
- To maximise older people’s future involvement and contribution, including promoting active and healthy ageing, and to support those older people who wish to continue to work;
- To provide a context within which to review and develop existing policies to ensure that they adequately respond to the challenges and opportunities of an ageing population; in particular to set a direction of travel, identify gaps and ensure that priorities are right;
- To set a framework to help other develop their own plans for action and for future services, and to engage with the challenges and opportunities of an ageing population.

2.5 Consultation Themes

The Scottish Executive has developed a consultation questionnaire called “What do you think?” and this has been made available across Scotland. The key questions are grouped within 6 broad themes:

- contribution and opportunity
- work
- services for older people
- health and wellbeing
- housing transport and surroundings
- other issues

The Council has distributed nearly 5,000 copies of the questionnaire across West Dunbartonshire.

2.6 CoSLA Demographic Change Group

The Leader of the Council has been invited by CoSLA to be the chair of the “Demographic Change Task Group” to work with the Scottish Executive on developing a national strategy following the consultation.

3. **Demography**

- 3.1 By 2024 there will be 2.2million people aged 50 and over and more than half a million aged 75 and over in Scotland. The largest percentage increase will be in the oldest age groups. Alongside this, the number of people in the traditional working age group will decline as will the number of children. This trend is reflected in the local population.

3.2 The West Dunbartonshire Social & Economic Profile 2005/06 predicts a population reduction of 7.8% by 2018. The largest decline will be in the 5-15 year age band which is predicted to drop 25% by 2016. The part of the population that is predicted to show the biggest increase is the 45-59 age group which is projected to rise by 18% by 2016.

3.3 Changes in the balance between the three main age groups of the population; children, labour force, and pensionable age, have serious social and economic implications. For example, an increase in the population over 50 will make more demands on the health service, while an ageing population generally, means a reduction in the working age population which supports dependent populations such as the young and the old.

4. Local Consultation across West Dunbartonshire

4.1 The Council with support from key partners within the NHS Community Health Partnership and the Community Planning Partnership promoted a number of approaches to the Age and Experience Consultation including

- Over 3,000 individual questionnaires were sent to older people receiving services from the Council inviting them to respond to the Scottish Executive;
- All the key groups and organisations representing older people received information about the consultation and were invited to respond to the Scottish Executive;
- Two consultation events, attended by 50 people, were held in Clydebank and Dumbarton on 24 and 31 May 2006. At these events presentations were made by Councillor Martin Rooney, Bill Clark, Acting Director of Social Work Services, Tommy Gorman, Team Leader Welfare Rights Service and Cindy Murray, Health Visitor West Dunbartonshire CHP.
- Separate exercises were carried out within key Social Work Services such as sheltered housing complexes and day care services.

4.2 Summary of Consultation

The Consultation was met with enthusiasm by both service users and staff and carers. Participants were keen to have an opportunity to influence the planning of services in the short and long term.

A wide variety of topics were discussed and identified including the local transport infrastructure, access to services and the local environment. The feedback from the consultation sessions are the basis of the attached completed draft return to the Scottish Executive (Appendix 1). The original return date for this consultation was 5 June 2006, however permission has been granted by the Scottish Executive to allow a late response to allow consideration by Committee prior to sending the response.

4.3 Health Issues for Older People

The consultation events also involved sharing the results of a local survey carried out by West Dunbartonshire CHP health staff in the Dumbarton area. A full copy of the survey results on health issues for older people is attached as Appendix 2.

4.4 Strategy for Older People

In some other local authority areas work has been done to produce a Strategy for Older People to highlight their needs and rights. This idea was supported by local people during the consultation.

5. **Personnel Implications**

5.1 There are no personnel implications as a result of this report.

6. **Financial Implications**

6.1 There are no financial implications as a result of this report.

7. **Recommendations**

7.1 The Committee is asked to:

- i) note the report and request further reports as the results of the national consultation are made available;
- ii) to instruct the Acting Director to send the response to the Scottish Executive;
- iii) request the Acting Director of Social Work to bring forward proposals to develop a local West Dunbartonshire strategy for older people to a future committee and to involve key partners and older peoples' organisations in this work.

William W Clark
Acting Director of Social Work Services

Background Papers:

- i) Appendix 1: Age and Experience- What do you think? Questionnaire,
- ii) Appendix 2: Older Adults Health Needs in Dumbarton (PowerPoint presentation)

Person to Contact: Bill Clark, Acting Director of Social Work, Council Offices, Garshake Road, Dumbarton, G81 3PU Tel (direct line) 01389 737599