

# EAST AYRSHIRE COUNCIL

## POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE -14 JUNE 2001

### BETTER GOVERNMENT FOR OLDER PEOPLE

#### Report by Depute Chief Executive/Director of Corporate Resources

#### 1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 To advise of proposals to amalgamate the Biannual liaison meeting between East Ayrshire and the Elderly Forum Steering Group with the Quarterly Better Government for Older People Group meeting.

#### 2. Background

- 2.1 The Council, at its meeting on 26 March 1998, agreed arrangements for elected member involvement in various Equal Opportunity Forums. The Forums established regular consultative arrangements with the aim of ensuring the appropriateness and effectiveness of Council policy in a wide range of issues such as equal opportunities, ethnic minorities, disability, women's issues, older people etc. Accordingly Biannual meetings between the Council and the East Ayrshire Elderly Forum Steering Group were established, chaired by the chair of Social inclusion. The Chair of Social Inclusion is the elected member appointed to this Group.
- 2.2 On 4 May 2000, the Policy and Resources Committee agreed that the Council should join the Cabinet Office initiative called "Better Government for Older People"(BGOP). Quarterly meetings were arranged and chaired by the Service Unit Manager for Older People from the Educational and Social Services Department who was given corporate lead responsibility for the Better Government for Older People programme in East Ayrshire.

#### 3. Better Government for Older People (BGOP)

- 3.1 The "Better Government for Older People" is a Cabinet Office initiative launched in 1998. The programme's aim is to improve public services for older people by better meeting their needs, listening to their views, and encouraging and recognising their contribution to society.
- 3.2 At Westminster in June 2000, a document called "All Our Futures" was launched by the Better Government for Older People steering committee. The report has 28 recommendations for Central and Local Government, older peoples groups and health agencies. The recommendations were split into 6 sections:
- Combating age discrimination
  - Engaging with older people
  - Better Decision Making
  - Better meeting older peoples needs
  - Promoting a joined up approach
  - Making it happen

- 3.3 Within East Ayrshire Quarterly Better Government for Older People meetings were established with representatives from existing elderly forums and each Council Department being present, along with representatives from Ayrshire and Arran Health Board, Ayrshire and Arran Primary Health Care Trust, Ayrshire and Arran Acute Health Care Trust, the Opportunities in Retirement Group, Age Concern, and Community Police. This meeting gives older people an opportunity to discuss issues which affect them, and for answers from relevant agencies and departments to be given following questions from older people. This forum therefore meets the functions of the BGOP programme.
- 3.4 One of the 28 recommendations was for each Local Authority to identify an Elected Member to champion for older people to champion the cause for older people. This Elected Member would ensure that all services Council adhere to the principals of BGOP and they consider the views and impact upon older people of services which are developed and delivered. It is proposed that the Chair of Social Inclusion would undertake this role.

#### **4. The Way Forward**

- 4.1 There is now duplication of the East Ayrshire Council Liaison meeting with the Elderly Forum Steering Group (which represents all elderly forums across East Ayrshire) established in 1998 before the Better Government for Older People initiative was launched by the Government. It appears appropriate that the Biannual East Ayrshire Council meeting with the Elderly Forum Steering Group and the quarterly BGOP meetings be amalgamated into a quarterly structure of BGOP meetings. The benefits would be that older people would have a wider group of relevant departments and agencies at meetings and the duplication in the meetings would be addressed. Corporate administrative support could also be provided to the BGOP group.
- 4.2 It is further suggested that the annual conference continues to take place which is organised by the East Ayrshire Elderly Forum and topics raised at the seminar are fed into the Better Government for Older People.
- 4.3 The East Ayrshire Council liaison meeting with the Elderly Forum Steering Group held on 1 June 2001 considered the details of the proposed meeting arrangements and, following consultation, the Elderly Forum Steering Group agreed in principle to the new arrangements.

#### **5.0 FINANCIAL/LEGAL/POLICY IMPLICATIONS**

- 5.1 The proposal to review the organisational support arrangements for older people is in line with policy requirements in relation to equal opportunities and social inclusion.

## **6. RECOMMENDATIONS**

6.1 It is recommended :

- (i) to approve the change in the terms of reference of the Better Government for Older People group to encompass the East Ayrshire Council Liaison meeting with the Elderly Forum Steering Group's arrangements; and
- (ii) to approve that the new forum for liaison between the Council and older people be the Better Government for Older People meeting which would be attended by the Chair of Social Inclusion who would undertake a lead role and that meetings be held on a quarterly basis.

Fiona Lees  
Depute Chief Executive/  
Director of Corporate Resources  
1 June 2001  
RB/MC

### **LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS - NIL**

Members wishing further information should contact Martin Clark, Service Unit Manager, Older People on 01563576927

Implementation Officer: Martin Clark.

**AGENDA**