

EAST AYRSHIRE COUNCIL

POLICY & RESOURCES COMMITTEE – 4 MAY 2000

THE BETTER GOVERNMENT FOR OLDER PEOPLE NETWORK

Report by the Director of Social Work

1. PURPOSE

- 1.1 To inform Committee of the “Better Government for Older People” programme and seek committee approval for East Ayrshire Council to join the programme.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The “Modernising Government” White Paper included an expectation that each Local Authority develop a strategy for an ageing population
- 2.2 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.
- 2.3 Twenty eight pilot projects have been established throughout the United Kingdom with three in Scotland in South Lanarkshire, Scottish Borders and Stirling Councils. The pilot projects involve partnerships between Local Authorities, Health Services, the Voluntary Sector and older people groups. The pilots have been active in developing various local initiatives to benefit and involve older people.
- 2.4 In recognition of the new devolved Parliament, the Scottish pilots held an event where they could discuss issues which were relevant to the new Parliament. The event took place on March 31st 1999 when twenty older people from each of the pilots met at Murrayfield Stadium in Edinburgh for the first Better Government for Older People Scottish Networking conference.
- 2.5 The outcome was to initiate an action plan of prioritised issues which could be used in discussions with Ministers from the newly elected Scottish Parliament.
- 2.6 The action plan contained three elements:
- Representation
 - Transport
 - Community Care
- 2.7 The three pilot programmes for the Better Government for Older People have had high political attention within the Scottish Parliament with Iain Gray, the Depute Minister for Health and Community Care and Christine Graham, the Shadow Depute Minister for Older People both having involvement in the Better Government for Older People programme.

3. THE SCOTTISH NETWORK

- 3.1 A conference was held in Edinburgh on the 2nd December 1999 when representatives from all thirty two Local Authorities in Scotland were invited to join the Scottish Network. Whilst the current programme concludes on 31st December 2000 work has already commenced on how the network can be facilitated beyond this date.
- 3.2 Both Iain Gray and Christine Graham attended the conference in Edinburgh along with representatives from the three pilot projects. Four Local Authorities have already decided to join the Network, these are Edinburgh, Glasgow, Dundee and Dumfries and Galloway. These Local Authority areas along with the 3 pilot sites will represent 40% of the population of older people within Scotland.
- 3.3 Provost James Boyd, William Shaw and Nora McCabe representatives from the Elderly Forum and Social Work Department staff attended the conference on behalf of the Council. Whilst many of the areas discussed within the conference are already being undertaken within East Ayrshire, the high political profile and the impact that the Better Government for Older People has within the Scottish Parliament would indicate that it is important that East Ayrshire Council join the Network.
- 3.4 East Ayrshire already has active Local Forums for Older People, positive liaison between the Council and the East Ayrshire Elderly Forum and the involvement of older people in the planning and development of Social Work Services
- 3.5 Representatives from the Scottish Borders Network met with the East Ayrshire Elderly Forum Group in Kilmarnock in February 2000 to share their experiences of being network members. While the East Ayrshire Forum members felt they already had an active role and relationship with the Council, they felt that there was benefits to membership to ensure they had a say in national issues which affected them.
- 3.6 At the liaison meeting between the Council and the East Ayrshire Elderly Forum on 29 March 2000 the forum agreed that the Council, subject to Committee approval, should join the network.
- 3.7 The benefits to the Council to being part of the Network would be to ensure that local issues are not omitted from national considerations and that issues which affect older people in general across Scotland such as transport would have a high profile within the Scottish Parliament.
- 3.8 Already the Network has been able to encourage MSP's to initiate a debate on pensions and on the Royal Commission for Older People.

4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 It would cost the Council £1,000 to join the programme until December 2000.

5. POLICY IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 If Committee agree to the Council joining the programme a Department would require to take lead responsibility for linking with other network members. As the Social Work Department has lead responsibility for the East Ayrshire Elderly Forum Liaison Group, it is recommended that the Director of Social Work identify appropriate officers to represent the Council as a member of the network along with older people from existing forums.

6. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 None.

7. RECOMMENDATION

- 7.1 It is recommended that Committee:-

- i) agree that the Council join the programme;
- ii) authorises the Director of Social Work to meet the costs of affiliation from within existing resources;
- iii) authorises the Director of Social Work to facilitate engagement in the “Better Government for Older People” programme through the nomination of a lead officer; and
- iv) otherwise notes the content of this report.

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Director of Social Work

For further information or background papers contact the implementation officer Martin Clark, Service Unit Manager, Older Peoples Services at Civic Centre, John Dickie Street, Kilmarnock, KA1 1BY, telephone number 01563 576927

List of Background Papers

Better Government Action Plan
Better Government Information Pack

AGENDA