

# North Somerset Council

REPORT TO THE EXECUTIVE

DATE OF MEETING: 11<sup>TH</sup> MARCH 2008

SUBJECT OF REPORT: CORPORATE OLDER PEOPLE'S STRATEGY FOR APPROVAL

TOWN OR PARISH: ALL

MEMBER PRESENTING: COUNCILLOR IAN PEDDLESSEN, EXECUTIVE MEMBER COMMUNITY SERVICES ADULTS AND HOUSING

KEY DECISION: NO

## RECOMMENDATIONS

That the Executive:

- i) approve the revised draft strategy.
- ii) agree the proposed establishment of an older people's champions group, reporting to the Executive Member to ensure implementation of the strategy is promoted and monitored across the Council.

## 1. SUMMARY OF REPORT

The Draft Corporate Older People's Strategy (Appendix 1) was noted by the Executive at its meeting 11<sup>th</sup> December 2007 it was agreed that the implications of the strategy should be considered as part of the budget setting process for 2008/09. The draft strategy is therefore now being submitted for approval. An extensive consultation process was undertaken between July and September 2007 with a good range of individual responses received from members of the public and organisations involved with older people. An action plan was subsequently developed highlighting the priorities identified by older people and structured according to the seven national outcomes for adults as defined in the White Paper, 'Our Health, Our Care, Our Say.

A joint Members' Working Group including members of the ASSH panel was set up to advise and comment upon the strategy during its development. Effective implementation is important both in terms of the Council addressing the needs and aspirations of local communities for services provided by the Council which are relevant to older people and in order to meet the standards required by relevant inspectorates e.g. the Commission for Social Care Inspection and the Audit Commission.

## 2. POLICY

There are numerous central government policy documents relating to older people some of which are listed in an appendix to the Strategy. The Department of Health White Paper, 'Our Health, Our Care, Our Say' has been used in particular to inform the development of this piece of work and underlies its structure. The draft strategy has been produced in line with Corporate priorities and policies and with the priorities agreed by the Executive in October 2007. The 'Background Papers' section of this report lists other National Policy documents used in the development of the draft strategy. Since the publication of the draft older peoples' strategy the Government announced its "Putting People First" programme to support the transformation of social care. One of the main aims is to ensure that health and wellbeing is promoted with people receiving improved information and advice and to achieve greater choice and control over services.

## 3. DETAILS

- 3.1 The strategy has been developed as part of the Council's work in relation to its aim of enhancing health and well-being. Its purpose is to bring together the work in all Directorates of the Council relevant to older people and to ensure that this work is coordinated, consistent and relevant to the wishes and aspiration of older people in North Somerset. For the purposes of the strategy, 'Older People' includes everyone in North Somerset over the age of 50. Development of such a strategy though not a legal obligation is now an expectation in terms of the wider national agenda for older people's services and included within performance assessment by the Audit Commission in relation to CPA.
- 3.2 The draft strategy was developed taking in to account the Council's guidelines for a development of such a strategy document, and learning from examples from other local authorities. Its format sets out the policy context in which the strategy is produced both nationally and locally, identifies key facts and issues concerning older people in the district, and gives a brief description of the services the Council provides for older people or which are particularly relevant to older people. The outcome of consultation with older people about their priorities is summarised. The Strategy then sets out a list of strategic priorities which are linked to an action plan (Appendix 1 to the Strategy) which covers a three year period.
- 3.3 An officer monitoring group has been already been set up to ensure implementation of the strategy across the Council. Lead Officers have been identified for specific actions within the plan. This group will meet on a quarterly basis. The joint Member's Working Group which led the development of the strategy is meeting again on the 13<sup>th</sup> March 2008 to agree how the panels of older people can most effectively engage with the Council. At the February meeting of the Adult Social Services and Housing Overview and Scrutiny Panel, it was agreed to recommend to the Executive that the Member Working Group continues to meet as an Older Peoples Champions' Group taking responsibility for leading and monitoring implementation of the Strategy and ensuring effective collaboration across the Council.

#### 4. CONSULTATION

From July to September 2007 a consultation exercise took place to build on the information gathered from previous consultation and engagement exercises with older people. The consultation took the form of a written consultation document which contained a number of priorities which respondents were asked to rate in importance. There was opportunity for 'write in' comments and several focus groups also took place. Over 100 responses to the consultation document were received. A full report on the consultation process is available upon request. During the implementation period it is planned to develop a regular process of engagement with older people. Older People's panels are currently being established through the POPP (Partnerships with Older People Projects) and there will be discussions with Working Group Members about how the Older People's Panels will relate to Scrutiny and options for ensuring a voice for older people in the wider service planning and decision making process of the Council.

#### 5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The draft strategy and action plan is based on the use of a number of existing funding streams from the Council and partner agencies, and in particular on the 'POPP' grant of £997,000 to stimulate the development of significant parts of the Action Plan. All areas have been reviewed in the light of proposals for the Council's budget in 2008/09 and 2009/10. Finalising the strategy has taken account of the budget issues, and service areas which have been identified for review where the level of service provision may change. The focus of the strategy is to ensure that the needs of older people are taken into account.

#### 6. EQUALITY IMPLICATIONS

The Council is committed to working for equality of opportunity, treatment and access for older people. The development of a corporate strategy for the Council's work with older people is an important contribution to demonstrating this commitment and putting it in to practice.

#### 7. CORPORATE IMPLICATIONS

7.1 The delivery of council policies and services which within resource and legal constraints meet the needs and aspirations of older people is a Council-wide issue, and in line with the councils strategic vision, aims and values.

7.2 The need for the Council to develop a Corporate Older People's Strategy has been identified both by the Corporate Performance Assessment in 2006, and by the Commission for Social Care Inspection in its Performance Assessment Report for 2007.

#### 8. OPTIONS CONSIDERED

N/A

## AUTHORS

Alun Davies, Policy and Planning Manager, Adult Social Services and Housing  
Paul Slade, Assistant Director Adult Care

## BACKGROUND PAPERS

**CSCI Summary Performance Assessment Report for Adult Services in North Somerset 2007**

**Comprehensive Performance Assessment Report for North Somerset – Audit Commission (October 2006)**

**Our Health, Our Care, Our Say** (White Paper) Department of Health 2006

**National Service Framework for Older People** Department of Health 2001

**Older People – a changing approach** Audit Commission Report 2004

**Opportunity Age: Meeting the Challenges of Ageing in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century** Department of Work and Pensions March 2005

**A Sure Start to Later Life, Ending Inequalities for Older People** Office of the Deputy Prime Minister, Social Exclusion Unit January 2006

**All our tomorrows: Improving the quality of life of Older People** Discussion paper from ADSS and LGA 2003.

**Putting people first: a shared vision and commitment to the transformation of adult social care** Department of Health 2007

Appendix 1

# Older People Strategy

November 2007

## CONTENTS

Foreword from the Leader of the Council and the Chief Executive Officer

Section 1:	Introduction	3
Section 2:	Local and National Context	4
Section 3:	Older People in North Somerset	6
Section 4:	Council Objectives and Services	11
Section 5:	What Older People Tell Us	14
Section 6:	Our Strategic Priorities	23
Section 7:	How will the Strategy be Implemented and Monitored?	26
Section 8:	Strategy Impact and Review	27

## FOREWORD

North Somerset's Corporate Strategy for Older People sets out the services and developments which will benefit older people over the next few years. This is the first time the Council has brought together its plans for older people into a single document. The proportion of older people in the population is growing and longevity increasing. It is important therefore that the Council plans both to meet the needs of this growing population and to ensure that citizens remain active and healthy into older age. The strategy is therefore not only about meeting the needs of the oldest members of our community but also about making sure that those who are approaching retirement age have the opportunity to engage fully in the community and remain healthy, active and increasingly involved in their communities.

The action plan which accompanies the strategy has been devised to be delivered within the Council's expected available resources. It is not a wish list or a rosy tinted vision of the future. It sets out what the Council will do in partnership with its older citizens to ensure that North Somerset remains a good place to grow up and a good place to grow older.

I am pleased therefore to be able to introduce this document as a practical and realistic approach to facing the challenges of a future in which our older citizens will play an ever more important role.

**Councillor Nigel Ashton**  
**Leader of North Somerset Council**

**Graham Turner**  
**Chief Executive Officer**

## Section 1: Introduction

- 1.1 This is the first North Somerset Council strategy to focus only upon older people.
- 1.2 The strategy is a plan for the whole Council, and addresses the needs of all older people, not only those of people who need help with care services. The document is concerned primarily with the Council and the services it provides or commissions. It is likely that future revisions of the strategy will be developed with the Council's partners in the North Somerset Strategic Partnership.

### Background

- 1.3 It is well known that the population of the UK is getting older. The latest figures for England show that the percentage of people over the age of 50 in the country is now 34% and is expected to grow to 39% over the next 15 years. The 65+ population is around 16% now and will grow to nearly 20% over the same time period. In 2006 there were 39,000 people over the age of 65 in North Somerset. In 2023 it is predicted that there will be 57,000 people in that age group.

### Who are "Older People?"

- 1.4 This strategy aims to improve the quality of life for "older" people, but when do you become an "older" person? This strategy defines "older" as people from the age of 50 upwards. This might seem rather "young" for some. However, this is increasingly the definition that is used nationally. What people do in their fifties has an impact on their later years: for example living healthily in your fifties can improve your chances of a healthier older age. Focusing on people from 50 upwards is a new approach for the Council. We expect to learn more about the needs of this age group and to have improved our communication with them by the time the strategy is reviewed in three years time.

### Understanding the Scope of this Strategy

- 1.5 This strategy cannot offer immediate answers to every problem. Many of the issues that the strategy identifies are complex and will take time to address. The strategy must be delivered mainly within existing resources, which are of necessity limited as North Somerset receives a smaller share of Government funding than the majority of unitary authorities.

### How the Strategy has been developed

- 1.6 The process of developing and producing the strategy has been guided and led by

North Somerset's Older Persons' Strategy Group. This is a group of key representatives from both inside and outside the council which includes older people themselves, carers, key voluntary organisations and other partners including North Somerset PCT and local NHS Trusts. Consultation and engagement activities have also been undertaken with older people across the District. These are explained in chapter 4.

## Section 2: The Local and National Context

### A Growing District

- 2.1 North Somerset is currently home to around 200,000 people, the population having more than doubled since the 1950s. During the 1980s, the district was the third fastest growing shire district in the country. It is estimated that between 2001 and 2006, the population grew by a further 5% and growth continues to be above that for the UK as a whole. The government has recently published plans which could result in further significant development in the district.
- 2.2 Although much of North Somerset's population is relatively prosperous, there are also significant pockets of deprivation. Two wards within Weston-super-Mare fall within the 10% most deprived in England.

### A Changing Community

- 2.3 As noted earlier, there is an increasingly older population with people aged over 65 already accounting for around 19% of North Somerset's population, compared with 16% nationally. Young people up to the age of 19 account for around 23% of the population and unemployment is less than 2%.
- 2.4 North Somerset Council is a unitary authority and delivers all local government services. The Council's vision is to become "an excellent Council, which improves the quality of life for all." The following values guide the Council's planning and delivery of services:
  - Put people first
  - To respond to local opinion
  - Encourage a culture of achievement
  - Work with and involve others
  - Value everyone equally and respect diversity
  - Provide a better quality of life for current and future generations
  - Deliver value for money

The above values also guide the Council in its dealings with local residents, including older residents. The Council is organised into five directorates which provide a wide range of services - from planning services to social care, library services and Council tax benefit processing. The Council employs over 7,000 staff.

### Council Expenditure and Taxation

- 2.5 The Council's net revenue budget for 2007-08 is £127 million with a total capital

programme of £109 million. Government funding for the Council is significantly lower than the average for unitary councils. Despite this, through sound financial management, the council tax (band D) at £1,080 (excluding Town and Parish Council and Police and Fire Authority precepts) is the fourth lowest of the 44 tax-raising authorities in the South West.

- 2.6 Like all local authorities, North Somerset Council has to balance the demand for quality services with the ability of taxpayers to afford these. There is increasing concern amongst the public about the increase in the level of council tax, especially among older people who tend to be on fixed incomes. The Government has also indicated that, in future, it will expect councils to look for ways to reduce expenditure and that new services will need to be funded by cutting existing costs and redirecting resources.

#### The Local Area Agreement

- 2.7 The Council works with many other organisations through the North Somerset Partnership, our Local Strategic Partnership. The Partnership's overall vision for the district to 2025 is:

"That North Somerset is a place of safe, healthy, thriving communities. By working together we aim to improve the quality of life and well-being of all, creating an inclusive, sustainable district, where local people have a real say in the decisions that affect them and future generations".

The plan to achieve this is set out in the Partnership's Community Strategy, which is currently being reviewed and will be adopted as a Sustainable Community Strategy for the North Somerset area in early 2008.

- 2.8 The Partnership is made up of a wide range of organisations, including the North Somerset Primary Care Trust, the Police and other government agencies, and representatives of the local business and voluntary and community sectors. The Council and partner agencies have together developed a Local Area Agreement for North Somerset. This is an agreement which identifies priorities for action in North Somerset (for example reducing crime and the fear of crime) along with details about who will take action and how progress will be monitored. The agreement is in place to assist local organisations to work together to improve the wellbeing of local residents. The Local Area Agreement identifies a number of targets and actions aimed at improving outcomes for older people.

#### National Policy Context

- 2.9 There are a number of regional and national initiatives and policies that the Council has regard to in its work with older people. The White Paper, "Our Health, Our Care, Our Say" published by the Government in 2006, is one of the key documents which sets out the Government's approach to health and social care. The White Paper emphasises early intervention through health and social care services to prevent problems from

worsening and talks about the need to support people in their own homes (which allows people greater independence and is much more cost effective than hospital or institutional care). The White Paper also sets out the Government's plans for tackling inequalities and providing people with greater choice in health and social care. It focuses on improving access to community services and shifting the balance between these and acute care.

- 2.10 Another key document which sets out the Government's strategy for older people is "Opportunity Age: Meeting the Challenges of Ageing in the 21st Century." This is a cross-government strategy which looks at the issues facing British society as people live longer lives. The strategy aims to assist people to work longer and live healthier lives with greater control over the services they use. The strategy sets out a number of key changes to government policy, some of which have already been implemented. These changes include the reform of equality legislation to prevent age discrimination, the provision of free local bus travel, and other ambitious changes such as providing people with individual care budgets and reducing crime and the fear of crime.

## Section 3: Older People in North Somerset

3.1 The mid-year estimates for 2006 based on the 2001 census indicate that:

- There were 39,000 people aged 65 or over living in North Somerset. This is 19.4% of the population, higher than the national average.
- 80,400 people are aged over 50, 40% of the total population, compared to the national proportion of 34%.
- 5,800 people are aged 85 or over and this is 2.9% of the total population.
- According to 2005 estimates, 43% of people aged 65 or over are male and 57% are female

3.2 According to the Office for National Statistics, the numbers of older people in North Somerset will grow as follows over the next sixteen years:

	<b>2007</b>	<b>2012</b>	<b>2017</b>	<b>2023</b>
<b>50-64</b>	41700	41800	44400	47600
<b>65-74</b>	19400	23800	27400	26500
<b>75+</b>	19800	21600	23800	30200

This represents a substantial percentage increase as shown below:

	<b>%increase by 2012</b>	<b>% increase by 2017</b>	<b>%increase by 2023</b>
<b>50-64</b>	0.2%	6.5%	14.1%
<b>65-74</b>	22.7%	41.2%	36.6%
<b>75+</b>	9.1%	20.2%	52.5%

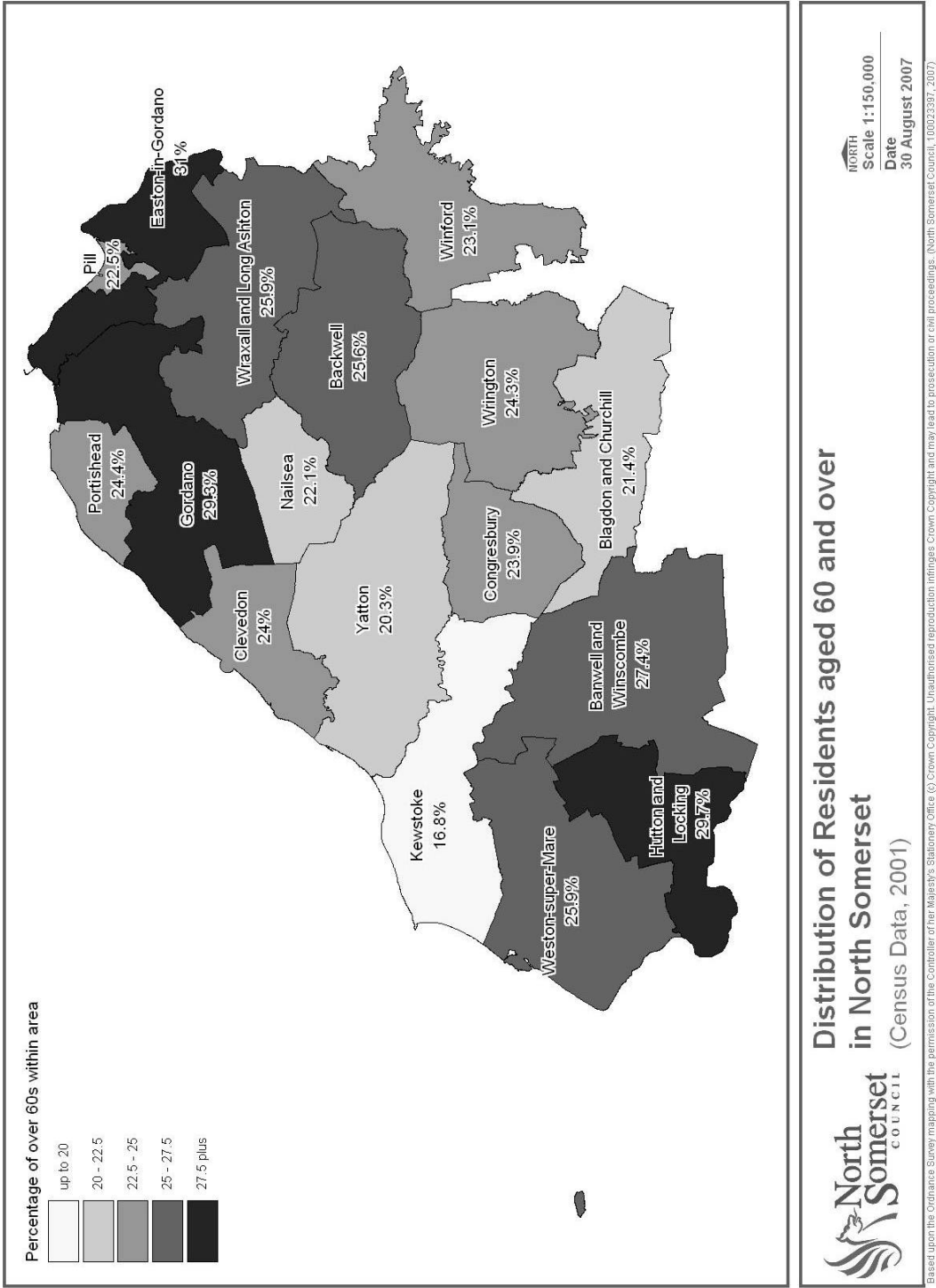
In the next decade, the number of people aged 65-74 will increase by 37%. The number of people over 75 will increase by 50%.

3.3 According to the 2001 census, 0.35% of the 65 and over age group was from ethnic minority communities. This proportion is increasing and will continue to increase.

3.4 The census also shows that 35.5% of the over 50 and 75.5% of the over 85 population identified themselves as having a "limiting long term illness or health condition". This is higher than the national average. As the older population grows, the number of older people with mental health difficulties such as dementia will also increase. For example research shows a 57% increase in the number of people over 65 years suffering from dementia between now and 2025.

3.5 The areas with the highest percentages of people over 75 years of age are the main coastal towns of Weston-super-Mare, Clevedon and Portishead. In Weston-super-Mare wards, the number of people aged 60 plus varies between 14% at one extreme

and 37% at the other. In Clevedon wards, the variation is between 12% and 41% and in Portishead wards, between 17% and 34%. In all three towns the highest concentration of older people is found in areas by the sea. A map showing the percentages of older people living in different parts of North Somerset is shown below.



## Health and Social Care

- 3.6 The increasing number of older people with health problems places considerable pressure not only on local health and social care services, but also on the family carers and voluntary organisations which play a major role in providing care and support. In North Somerset, as in many other local authorities, funding for social care services has come under greater pressure as a result of funding from central government not keeping pace with rising demand. This is supported by a recent survey carried out by the Local Government Association of 132 councils which found that councils with responsibility for social services and caring for older people were expecting to increase taxation by 3.9%, whereas expected tax increases for councils without this responsibility was 3.1%. A further recent report into social care funding by the Local Government Association found that the majority of councils with responsibility for social care could only afford to provide care to people with "substantial and critical needs". Central government has indicated that funding levels for social care will not significantly change in the near future.
- 3.7 There are an estimated 19,000 people who provide care for relatives and friends in North Somerset. The Council has developed a range of services to support carers in their role but it is clear that this is an issue that needs increasing attention. Providing support makes great demands on the physical and mental health of carers, especially as a growing proportion of the carers are themselves older people. Many of the informal support networks providing care for older people in the community are largely run by older people themselves.
- 3.8 The average life expectancy for residents of North Somerset is 80.2 years. The average female life expectancy is 82.2 years and the average male life expectancy is 78.3 years. All of these figures are higher than the average life expectancy in England and Wales which is 79 years (81.1 for females and 76.9 for males). However, in North Somerset there are large differences in life expectancy at birth and this difference continues into old age. At 65 years of age, people living in the most affluent parts of Weston- super-Mare can expect to live seven years more than those living in the least affluent areas.
- 3.9 The latest Health Survey for England found that older people with lower incomes were generally in poorer health than those who were more affluent. People on lower incomes were more likely to rate their health as poor, more likely to say they had a limiting long term illness and had higher levels of depression. Therefore men and women living in some parts of Weston-super-Mare can expect a poorer quality of life in their retirement and to die earlier than their more affluent neighbours elsewhere in the district.

## Income and Deprivation

- 3.10 Some older people experience significant financial difficulties. For example, according to Age Concern, 2 million pensioners, (before housing costs), and 1.8 million (after housing costs) are in poverty. Age Concern figures also reveal that nationally older pensioner households have lower incomes which is of concern, given that there is a projected increase in people aged 75 and over expected in North Somerset. In 2004-05, pensioner couples where the man was aged 75 and over received £324 net income per week on average, compared with £389 net income per week for those aged under 75. The fact that older pensioners have a significantly lower income than pensioners aged under 75 is of concern given that

older people often face increased costs associated with medical treatment, care costs and home services (e.g. gardening, home maintenance etc). This information may also indicate that people's personal savings may not last as long as they expect, since their income reduces substantially as they age.

- 3.11 There are older people in the district who do have a "good level of income and standard of living". Many of these however, like people on lesser incomes, would argue that because their incomes are largely fixed and do not reflect the inflation costs experienced by older people, the rising cost of services eats into their wealth leading potentially to financial difficulties. A recent national study, for example, found that, in the twelve months to October 2006, the real rate of inflation experienced by pensioners was 9% - with substantial increases in the price of gas, electricity and petrol over this period. The Council recognises that tax increases can put pressure on older people's budgets as older people often have few options to reduce expenditure.
- 3.12 In terms of older people claiming benefits in 2006 there were a total of 3,600 people in North Somerset over 50 claiming incapacity benefit and severe disability allowance. There were a total of 7,545 people in North Somerset claiming Disability Living Allowance. There are 1,225 people in North Somerset claiming Jobs Seekers Allowance, of whom 230 or 18.4% are over 55. This compares with a national figure of 16.4% people over 55 claiming Job Seekers Allowance. Nationally, between £1.7 billion and £2.9 billion of benefits went unclaimed by older people in 2002/03. Benefit take-up campaigns among older people are therefore important initiatives to help address poverty among older people.

#### Social Issues

- 3.13 It is now illegal to discriminate against older people because of their age. However age discrimination is a problem, especially in employment. The Council recognises that age discrimination exists within society and that older people can be treated adversely simply because of their age. This discrimination has a harmful effect on older people and needs to be challenged. The Council is committed to doing this through its Corporate Diversity and Equality policy which states that the Council will work to make sure that everyone is treated fairly and lawfully.
- 3.14 There is increasing evidence to show that as people get older they become more vulnerable to abuse. The House of Commons Select Committee on Elder Abuse in 2004 suggested that nationally, half a million older people in the UK are being abused at any one time. Councils have a central role in co-ordinating safeguarding arrangements for vulnerable adults, including older people at risk of abuse. North Somerset Council has established policies and procedures to deal with cases of abuse cases and developing this area of work with partners.
- 3.15 There is some evidence of an issue of lack of "community cohesion" in parts of North Somerset, particularly in some areas of Weston-super-Mare. This appears to be an issue in wards with a high turn-over of population, and a wide range of ages from young single-person families to very old people, where there are occasionally tensions between groups of people with widely differing views and needs.
- 3.16 Feedback from older people has indicated that many feel threatened by the behaviour of younger people at times. This clearly impacts upon older people's sense of security. More generally, the fear of crime is also a major concern for older people and other North Somerset residents. This fear impacts on the quality of older

people's lives. However, it should be noted that Home Office research shows older people's risk of experiencing crime is in fact much lower than that for other age groups. One of the Council's priorities for future years is to continue to work with the police and other organisations to help create a safe environment and ensure that all local residents feel safe and secure, and in particular improve older people's perception of safety.

- 3.17 According to the 2001 Housing Needs Survey, the number of households in North Somerset was 80,000 and 15% of households were occupied by single older people and 12% by older couples. Nationally, 2.4 million older people live in houses classed as "non-decent homes" and in North Somerset, 39.2% of non-decent homes are households with older people. This situation obviously places pressure on resources such as Disabled Facilities Grants. There are also older people in North Somerset who experience difficulty meeting winter fuel costs.
- 3.18 Over two-thirds of North Somerset is rural. Whilst some communities do continue to support older people in their communities, there is growing evidence of some older people being isolated, vulnerable and lonely with few extended support networks. The fact that many older people in North Somerset have lived most of their lives outside the district and moved to this area to retire may exacerbate this problem. Nationally, studies show that older people spend between 70-90% of their time in their home and around 30% of people over 65 do not see a friend at least once a week. Limited public transport services in rural areas also make it difficult for people living in these areas to access services.

## Section 4: Council Objectives and Services

- 4.1 North Somerset Council provides over 600 different services to local residents. Some of these services are designed specifically to assist older people (such as some adult social care services), whereas other services are accessible to older people and all residents. The information below provides an overview of these services and the Council's objectives. Initiatives the Council has planned which form part of this strategy are identified separately in section 6.

### Promoting Lifelong Learning Opportunities

- 4.2 The Council provides a wide range of services and facilities to support an educated community. The Council funds and supports 78 schools in North Somerset, provides 13 libraries and two mobile libraries. The Council also funds and supports learning activities in local communities, particularly in areas of disadvantage. The activities are aimed at widening participation, improving confidence and supporting the acquisition of new skills, as appropriate. The Community Learning team actively participates in Community Cafes and public awareness raising events to promote the benefits of educational opportunities. The team also provides a NEXTSTEP service to adults in the community. NEXTSTEP provides information, advice and guidance to adults aged 19+ on learning, training and employment opportunities that are available in the local area. Advisers can also help with CV and application form preparation and interview skills.

### Enhancing Health and Wellbeing

- 4.3 The Council is committed to providing assistance to older people to allow them to enjoy a good quality of life and maintain their independence. The main services the Council currently provides to do this include:
- funding for adult social care (this includes long term, respite and day care)
  - the provision of home care support, equipment and advice on adaptations to properties
  - Disabled Facilities Grants to fund major adaptations
  - the provision of community meals
  - support for carers
  - specialist services for people who have a visual or hearing impairment
  - specialist services for older people with mental health difficulties
  - the provision of occupational therapy services to assist people who have had falls and mobility classes for people who are at risk of having falls
  - supporting physical rehabilitation to develop abilities and promote independence through integrated working with the Primary Care Trust in the Intermediate Care Service.
  - Advice, assistance and access to housing suitable for older people including sheltered housing and 'extracare' housing
- 4.4 Support for older people is one of the priorities identified in the North Somerset Local Area Agreement. As part of this agreement, the Council is working to improve the number of older people who have "self directed care packages". There are also other council services outside social care services that provide support to and are used extensively by older people. These include libraries, particularly mobile

libraries, and leisure facilities, including parks, open spaces, leisure centres and theatres.

## Protecting and Improving the Environment

- 4.5 Having a clean, attractive environment with quality roads and infrastructure is vitally important to local people. The Council is responsible for waste management and collection, road and highway maintenance as well as development and planning control and enforcement. Waste management and collection includes recycling. Highway maintenance covers pavements as well as roads, and planning includes individual planning applications as well as major development proposals. Services in this area provided by the Council which particularly assist older people include dial-a-ride services, the diamond travel card (which provides free bus travel for those over 60 and some other residents) and reduced parking permit charges for older residents.

## Building Safer and Stronger Communities

- 4.6 People in North Somerset have consistently told us that the single most important factor which makes an area a good place to live in is a low level of crime. The council has been working with the Police and other organisations to reduce alcohol and drug misuse and crime through a variety of initiatives. The Council carries out ongoing work to reduce underage sales of alcohol, reduce anti-social behaviour and create a safer environment (through for example better street lighting and safer car park design). The Council is also assisted by local residents who have formed 32 Local Action Teams which work to create a safer environment in their area. A range of work has been undertaken by the Council to help improve home security for older people living in North Somerset and the Council has also supported initiatives which help older people to connect with others in the community including a Community Safety event for older people in Nailsea and funding to a Bowling Club towards CCTV.

## Increasing Prosperity

- 4.7 The Council is committed to working to increase the prosperity of North Somerset and to creating local employment opportunities. The Council has recently adopted a Replacement Local Plan and is working with other agencies to establish a new Local Development Framework which will set out how the area will develop over the next 20 years. Increasing local employment opportunities is a key priority for the Council, as North Somerset has a high proportion of people working outside the district, which places pressure on roads and public transport. The Council part-funds Business West to assist new businesses and works in partnership with the Weston Job Centre and the Learning and Skills Council to provide local training opportunities. The Council is also working with private developers to progress a number of significant projects throughout North Somerset.
- 4.8 The Council processed around 4,700 council tax benefit claims over the last year. Many of these were made by older people who are eligible to receive a benefit if they receive a pension or are on a low income.

## Ensuring Continuous Improvement

- 4.9 The Council is committed to improving the services it provides to residents and increasing its efficiency. Over £5 million in efficiency savings were made in the last financial year and the Council has announced a review of all its services to identify areas where costs can be reduced further. One of the Council's priorities over the next three years is to improve its customer service and also its consultation and communication with local people. As part of this, the Council will be considering how it can improve services for older people and consultation with them and this strategy will help to identify how this could be done.

## Section 5: What Older People Tell Us

- 5.1 Over the past three years, the Council has carried out a number of consultation exercises with older people. There have also been on-going discussions with groups representing and working with older people, such as the Senior Citizens Forum and Age Concern. Finally there are many people over 50 who take part in the Council's "Citizens Panel", which is a regular forum for local residents to provide feedback on council services and proposed initiatives.
- 5.2 This consultation has provided a great deal of information about what older people are thinking and the issues that concern them. The following is a summary of the issues that have either been raised most often or rated as most important by older people. It should be noted that this is not a comprehensive list of all of the issues that have been raised.

### Areas where improvements could be made

- Improving the maintenance of pavements
- Improving public transport, especially in rural areas
- Many older people were opposed to either the level of council tax increase proposed for next year or to older people who do not earn income being required to pay tax
- Many older people expressed concern over anti-social behaviour and the level of crime occurring locally -- there is also some distrust of younger people
- Many older people said they preferred printed information and contact via the telephone or in person rather than having services available on the internet
- Older people said they wanted to remain living in their own homes and want to have access to a range of flexible services to do this
- There is a growing problem for older people who fund their own care but whose funding runs out
- Difficulty in accessing buildings and facilities in the area
- New housing development occurring without supporting infrastructure such as roads, shops and other services being developed

### What's Working Well?

- The Diamond Travel card was appreciated by older people
- Many older people strongly supported the introduction of waste recycling services
- Many people praised the mobile library service, but there was some concern about the limited range of books

## The Consultation carried out for the Strategy

- 5.3 In order to build on this picture, a new consultation exercise was undertaken for the development of this strategy. The consultation was carried out through a questionnaire survey, and through a number of focus groups targeted at specific groups of older people. The detailed report on the consultation is available on request from Alun Davies (contact details in Section 8).
- 5.4 Notice of the questionnaire was sent out to community and voluntary organisations across the district, and widely publicised elsewhere through posters and leaflets. By the end of the consultation process on 28<sup>th</sup> September 2007, 110 responses had been received. The report gives detail of the breakdown of these responses in age and area. A total of four focus groups were held with older people from rural communities, older people with a learning disability and older people from Black and other minority ethnic group respectively. A total of 34 attended these events.
- 5.5 The numbers of responses means that the outcome of the consultation is not a definitive statement of the views of all older people in North Somerset. However it does give a good indication of older people's views and priorities.
- 5.6 The questionnaire was structured under the seven national outcomes for adults as defined in the Green Paper 'Independence, Well-being and Choice' (DH, 2005) following consultation undertaken by the Department of Health:
- improved health;
  - improved quality of life;
  - making a positive contribution;
  - exercise of choice and control;
  - freedom from discrimination or harassment;
  - economic well-being; and
  - personal dignity.
- 5.7 For the purposes of the consultation a number of priority issues were identified relating to each outcome. Respondents were asked to rank the priorities in order of importance by scoring each priority. The result of this process is summarised below. The overall score averaged from all responses to the consultation is given against each of the priorities.

### Outcome 1: Improved health

**Priority 1:**

To develop and progress our agreed plan which will better connect and co-ordinate health and social services for older adults and carers in North Somerset.

Score 3.54

**Priority 2:**

The council to continue to work closely with health partners on initiatives such as the community matrons and expert patient programmes to provide services and support for older people to manage their health conditions themselves.

Score 3.22

**Priority 3:**

Concentrate on identifying how older people and their carers can be supported to stay active and how the council can support this.

Score 3.01

**Priority 4:**

Continue to make access to council services and facilities for older people and disabled people a priority.

Score 2.91

**Priority 5:**

To continue to work with the Avon and Wiltshire Mental Health Partnership to improve services for adults and older people with mental health difficulties, their families and carers.

Score 2.2

Outcome 2: Improved Quality of Life

**Priority 1:**

Focus work with transport provider partners on the transport needs and requirements of older people particularly subsidised schemes for rural areas and community transport and dial-a-ride schemes.

Score 5.07

**Priority 2:**

Encourage leisure centres to develop more programmes and activities focusing on older people.

Score 3.85

**Priority 3:**

Develop a strategy within the crime and drugs partnership to promote projects which encourage older and younger generations to work together to develop trust and respect.

Score 3.82

**Priority 4:**

Work in partnership so that neighbourhoods feel cleaner, safer and greener by tackling litter, graffiti, abandoned vehicles and fly tipping by using the new enforcement powers alongside better education.

Score 3.53

**Priority 5:**

Work with schools to explore the potential for older people to become involved in joint schemes to raise awareness of recycling and green issues.

Score 3.28

**Priority 6:**

Continue to work with developers to make sure that all future developments in the district are sustainable.

Score 2.71

### Outcome 3: Making a Positive Contribution

**Priority 1:**

In all future strategies ensure that issues raised by older people are specifically reported and solutions identified where possible.

Score 3.43

**Priority 2:**

Work with older people and their organisations to improve the involvement of older people in developing policies and services

Score 3.29

**Priority 3:**

Working with the community and voluntary sector and council directorates to increase the volunteering opportunities for older people.

Score 3.13

**Priority 4:**

To undertake consultation with older people on the best way for the council to consult with them in the future.

Score 3.07

**Priority 5:**

Work with local organisations to identify best practice and practical solutions to assist those older people and carers who want to continue or get employment.

Score 2.79

### Outcome 4: Exercise of Choice and Control

**Priority 1:**

To take into account, when developing the council's customer access policies and services, older people's preferences for traditional communication methods.

Score 3.85

**Priority 2:**

The council will work with independent-sector providers to improve the information about the range and quality of services used by people who fund their own care.

Score 3.08

**Priority 3:**

To work with partners to explore how learning and education for older people on computers and electronic communication can be improved.

Score 3.06

**Priority 4:**

To continue to explore ways of developing the mobile library service, community cafes and other access points to council information services

Score 2.87

**Priority 5:**

To give focus to developing and extending the opportunity for self-directed support schemes in North Somerset -- these are new ways of offering people more choice and control over services.

Score 2.73

Outcome 5: Freedom from Discrimination or Harassment

**Priority 1:**

To work across agencies to continue to raise awareness of and provide an effective safeguarding service for all vulnerable adults.

Score 3.83

**Priority 2:**

Undertake work to identify and tackle the numbers of older people experiencing harassment in North Somerset.

Score 3.61

**Priority 3:**

Work with organisations to identify where there may be unfair treatment and discrimination being experienced by older people in contact with the council, and develop actions to tackle this.

Score 3.41

**Priority 4:**

In the life-time of the older people strategy, work on and produce an "Age Equality Scheme" for the council.

Score 2.57

**Priority 5:**

Undertake work to identify as accurately as possible the current numbers and needs of older people from black and other minority ethnic groups working with the race equality forum.

Score 2.29

Outcome 6: Economic Well-being

**Priority 1:**

To work with organisations providing advice about money and support to older people to develop a strategy for improving advice and information to people in low incomes just above benefit levels and who fund their own care.

Score 2.91

**Priority 2:**

To continue to make older people aware of the existence of council tax benefit and seek ways to improve the claiming process.

Score 2.71

**Priority 3:**

Work with organisations working with older people to gain advice from older people themselves on how it could be easier for them to access benefits.

Score 2.59

**Priority 4:**

Through the older people housing strategy, develop plans to address the issue of housing disrepair, and continue to raise awareness and information about tackling winter fuel poverty.

Score 1.76

Outcome 7: Personal Dignity

**Priority 1:**

To look at how more services can be provided for older people living alone in isolation

Score 3.06

**Priority 2:**

To make sure that funding from central government keeps pace with the increased demand on adult social services arising from the increasing number of older people over 80 in North Somerset.

Score 2.92

**Priority 3:**

To look at how new technology can help older people to remain living at home.

Score 2.27

**Priority 4:**

Review the existing carers' strategy in relation to older carers to make sure the needs of all carers are being met by existing policies and services.

Score 2.21

5.8 Respondents were also asked to identify any other priorities or to raise other issues. These are all recorded in the detailed report on the consultation.

5.9 Additionally a number of focus groups were organised across the District involving some targeted groups of older people: people living in rural areas, people from minority ethnic communities, older people with learning disabilities and people living in care homes. The following summarises the main points arising from each of the focus groups:

Rural Areas Group: (South)

**Priorities:**

- Roads and pavements to be better maintained.
- Adult Education and interesting activities to be available locally.
- Bus service to be improved and made more flexible
- Health and Social Care organisations should communicate better with each other.
- The level of Council Tax should not be increased.

Rural Areas Group (North)

**Priorities:**

- Transport: more accessible, more flexible and easier to read information.
- Roads and pavements to be maintained in better condition.

- Communication to be better: more information, easier to understand and an increased Council presence in outlying areas.
- Controlling the level of Council Tax and ensuring it represents value for money

#### Focus Group with older people from Black and other Minority Ethnic communities

- There was a clear feeling of disenfranchisement in the sense that people felt there was not a two-way conversation with the Council on Race Equality issues. This was compounded by a perception that the Council did not appear to be proactive on the issue, and that there was still a need for diversity and awareness-training for staff at the "front-end" of the Council. There was also a feeling that people had to agitate in order to bring about change.
- There is a perception of a generalised low level racism in North Somerset as a whole which is not blatant enough to be amenable to legal action but still hurts. This was visible on the streets, but had also happened to some people in contact with organisations. Some people felt this was getting worse rather than better, but some people also said the majority of people were ok.
- Some people felt strongly the level of Council tax was too high, and that people should not be imprisoned for not paying Council tax.
- There was a recognition that when you did get a service from the council they were generally good services: "Sometimes the Council do good things e.g. helped me sort out equipment to help with disability."

#### Focus Group with older people with learning disabilities

- Four of the five people attended Weston College on courses specifically for people with learning disabilities. It was felt that they should be able to access and to be supported to attend all the other mainstream courses at the college.
- Only one person worked. The others felt that their choices of activities during the day were very limited.

#### Focus Group in residential homes

This section is based on one to one discussions with a small number of residents.

- There should be more attention paid to pavements as one person had fallen because of defects
- One person very much appreciated the fact that the library service provides a good variety of talking books
- One person would like more regular visits from their social worker.

- Free transport on the buses was appreciated, but a feeling that there are not sufficient buses going to outlying areas like Winscombe
- Welcomed specific swimming sessions for people over 50, and felt the swimming pools were very good.
- The funding system for residential care can be difficult and complicated
- A real preference for talking to a "real person" rather than automated computer answering services.

5.10 The consultation confirmed that the majority of the areas identified by the Council as priorities were recognised by older people and their representative organisations. It is clear that in many cases priorities against individual outcomes were given very similar weight. Conversely some of the areas which were given a relatively low score by consultees (housing issues and carers' strategy for example) are areas that nonetheless the Council has a clear responsibility to address. The consultation also suggested some additional issues that the Council should address as a result of the 'write in' comments. The following chapter sets out the strategic priorities adopted for the strategy as a result of the consultation process and the local and national policy issues which the Council must address.

## Section 6: Our Strategic Priorities

These are the Council's strategic priorities for services for older people over the next three years. They are set out under the national outcomes from the White Paper 'Our Health, Our care, Our Say'. The action plan appended to this document (appendix 1) will deliver these priorities which are closely linked to those agreed by the Executive of the Council at its meeting of 30<sup>th</sup> October 2007 listed in Section 7.

### Outcome 1 - Improved Health

#### **The Council will aim to improve the health of older people in North Somerset by:**

Improving older people's access to Council Services

Developing with its partners better integrated health and social care services for older people including services for older people with mental health problems

Assisting older people to manage their own health conditions and needs

Promoting healthy active lifestyles

Continuing to address carers' needs and improve carers' services

### Outcome 2 - Improved Quality of Life

#### **The Council will aim to improve older people's quality of life by:**

Addressing access issues in relation to transport in both urban and rural areas

Developing leisure and cultural activities designed for older people

Promoting activities that bring together older and younger generations

Working with partners to improve older people's sense of security in their communities and the quality of their environment

Promoting sustainable development that takes account of older people's needs

Encouraging the development of specialist housing designed or renovated to meet older people's needs

Providing community services designed to maximise older people's independence

### Outcome 3 - Making a Positive Contribution

#### **The Council will assist older people to make a positive contribution to their communities by:**

Listening to the views of older people when developing new Council strategies and involving older people in relevant policy and service developments.

Promoting volunteering opportunities for older people

Assisting older people and carers who wish to, to continue in employment or to re-enter employment.

#### Outcome 4 - Exercising Choice and Control

##### **The Council will promote choice and control for older people:**

Making information on Council policies and services more easily available in accessible and user friendly forms

Promoting older people's access to and understanding of 'new' technologies

Enabling people who fund their own care to get appropriate advice and information.

Enabling access to support and care services which give back control to older people themselves (such as Direct Payments and Individual Budgets)

#### Outcome 5 - Freedom from Discrimination and Harassment

##### **The Council will combat Discrimination against and Harassment of Older people by:**

Continuing to improve arrangements for safeguarding vulnerable older people

Identifying instances of harassment or discrimination against older people

Producing a Council Age Equality Scheme

Identifying the needs of older people from minority communities and providing appropriate services to meet these needs

#### Outcome 6 - Economic Wellbeing

##### **The Council will promote the economic wellbeing of older people by:**

Improving financial and benefits advice available to older people

Assisting older people to access funding or service to improve the quality of their housing where this is necessary

Providing advice on affordable warmth

Maintaining an affordable and sustainable level of Council Tax

Outcome 7 - Ensuring Personal Dignity

**The Council will promote Older People's personal dignity by:**

Working to reduce the social isolation of older people within communities

Developing the range of services to help older people to continue to live in their home including the use of new technologies

Revising North Somerset's Carers' Strategy

Working with partners to improve the maintenance of dignity in care and health settings

## Section 7: The Executive's Priorities Statement and the Older People's Strategy Action Plan

7.1 The Council's Executive has identified nine Corporate Priority areas for the Council. These are:

- Ensure older people are adequately supported
- Improve the life chances of vulnerable children
- Address environmental concerns
- Reduce the amount of waste that goes to landfill
- Make our streets and communities safer
- Ensure development is well planned, with a focus on creating quality facilities and employment opportunities
- Improve the roads
- Improve customer services
- Maintain an affordable and sustainable level of council tax increase

7.2 The Executive Priority areas to which the Action plan for the Older People's strategy will contribute are:

1. Ensuring that older people are adequately supported.
2. Making our streets and communities safer
3. Ensuring development is well planned with a focus on creating quality facilities and employment opportunities
4. Improving the roads (including pavements)
5. Improving customer services
6. Maintaining an affordable and sustainable level of Council Tax

7.3 The action plan follows as appendix 1. It is organised around the outcomes used in the consultation process and addresses the top priority issues identified in the consultation relevant to the Council's work, areas identified by the focus groups as well as other priorities linked to national or Council policies. The actions will be reviewed annually and adjusted as necessary in the light of resource and policy developments over the three year period of the strategy.

## Section 8: Strategy Impact and Review

- 8.1 An equalities impact assessment has been undertaken and completed and is available by contacting the responsible officer (see 8.2).
- 8.2 The Council contact for this strategy is Alun Davies, Adult Social Services and Housing, North Somerset Council, 01275 884033, email: [alun.davies@n-somerset.gov.uk](mailto:alun.davies@n-somerset.gov.uk)
- 8.3 Review process: the action plan will be monitored on a bi-monthly basis by a group including older people and officers. The strategy will be reviewed annually and completely revised in 2010/11.