

## **Scrutiny Task and Finish Panel Agenda**



### **Services for Older People and Disabled People Task and Finish Panel Thursday, 22nd February, 2007**

**Place:** Committee Room 2, Civic Offices, High Street, Epping

**Time:** 7.30 pm

**Democratic Services  
Officer:** Simon Hill Ext 4249 - Senior Research and Democratic  
Services Officer  
Email: [shill@eppingforestdc.gov.uk](mailto:shill@eppingforestdc.gov.uk)

#### **Members:**

Councillors Mrs S Perry (Chairman), Mrs J H Whitehouse (Vice-Chairman), Mrs A Cooper, D Bateman, Ellis, Mrs A Grigg, P House, D Kelly, P Turpin and K Wright

---

#### **1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

#### **2. NOTES OF THE LAST MEETING**

To agree the notes of the last meeting (To follow).

#### **3. SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS**

#### **4. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

(Head of Research and Democratic Services). To declare interests in any items on the agenda.

In considering whether to declare a personal or a prejudicial interest under the Code of Conduct, Overview & Scrutiny members are asked pay particular attention to paragraph 11 of the Code in addition to the more familiar requirements.

This requires the declaration of a personal and prejudicial interest in any matter before an OS Committee which relates to a decision of or action by another Committee or Sub Committee of the Council, a Joint Committee or Joint Sub Committee in which the Council is involved and of which the Councillor is also a member.

Paragraph 11 does not refer to Cabinet decisions or attendance at an OS meeting purely for the purpose of answering questions or providing information on such a

matter.

**5. ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

**6. FINAL REPORT - CONSIDERATION OF DRAFT REPORT (Pages 3 - 22)**

(Lead officer – J Scott/Chairman of Panel) A subgroup of members has now met to discuss the report to be made to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee. The latest draft is attached.

The Panel are asked to consider the report, make changes/decisions of content as necessary in order that the main Committee can consider it at their next meeting on 8 March 2007.

**7. DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS**

To be agreed if considered necessary.



**Epping Forest District Council**

# SCRUTINY

## **REPORT OF THE SERVICES FOR OLDER PEOPLE AND DISABLED TASK AND FINISH PANEL**

JANUARY 2007

Contact for enquiries:

**John Scott, Lead Officer**

**Epping Forest District Council, Civic Offices**

**Epping, CM16 4BZ**

[jscott@eppingforestdc.gov.uk](mailto:jscott@eppingforestdc.gov.uk)

01992 56 4051



## CONTENTS

1. Chairman's Foreword.....	3
2. Introduction and Overview .....	4
3. Context.....	6
4. Summary of Recommendations.....	7
5. Report .....	9
Services for older people provided by the district council.....	9
Handy Person Scheme.....	12
Concessionary Fares Scheme .....	13
Other Services .....	14
Day clubs.....	14
Disability Equality Duty of the Council .....	16
6. Conclusion .....	17
7. Acknowledgements.....	18
8. Appendices .....	19
Services for Older People Task and Finish Panel .....	20
Social Clubs for Older People.....	20



# 1. Chairman's Foreword

## Foreword By Councillor Susan Perry – Chairman of the Panel

As Chairman, I would like to thank my Vice Chairman, members of the Panel, the Joint Chief Executive, John Scott and officers for their support, guidance, and information. I would also like to extend a big thank you to Kay Ellis, a member from the Joint Management Team who agreed to become a co-opted member of our panel. Our thanks also go to those organisations that have helped us in this study or submitted themselves to our scrutiny.

Our study has brought forward some useful recommendations that we hope will contribute to the enrichment of the lives of the residents of our district.

### Summary of issues scrutinised

The Overview and Scrutiny Committee set up our panel to look at the services for older people provided by the district council and other agencies such as VAEF, and at services for the general public which elderly or disabled people have difficulty in using. We also reviewed the Council's response to the Disability Equality Scheme.



Our aim was to find out what is being provided, to highlight any difficulty accessing those services, whether there are any gaps, if the services are being under or over used, whether the eligibility criteria is consistent, and whether they continue to be adequately funded and advertised.

### Public interest justification

The justification for our study is the fact that there is a higher than average number of older people in Epping Forest District. There is a perception that despite a number of services being available for them, many people seem unaware of what is available and therefore how to access it.

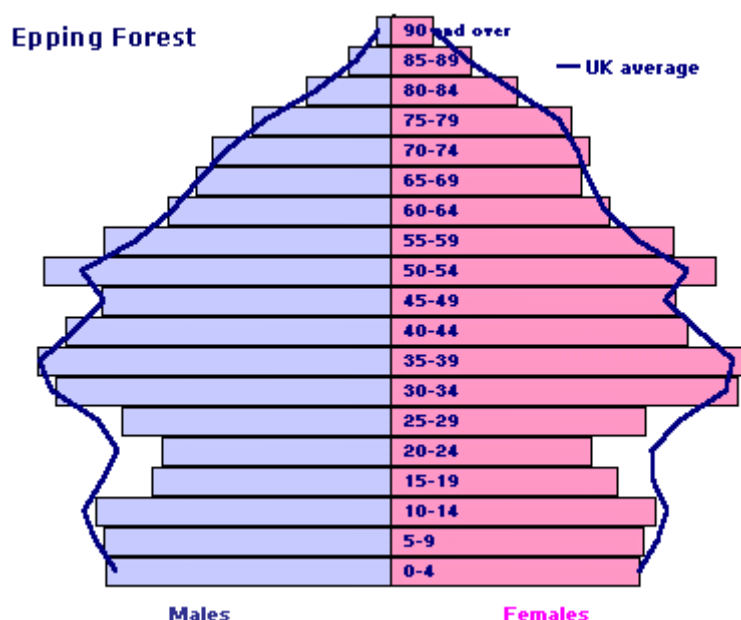
### Service

From December 2006 the Disability Discrimination Act requires that public bodies must anticipate problems and encourage the involvement of disabled people in public life. Some organisations have a specific duty to produce a Disability Equality Scheme, including the Council. Part of our review was to look at how such an equality scheme will be produced.



## 2. Introduction and Overview

The district of Epping Forest has a higher than average number of older people (see figure 1 below). Despite a number of services being available for them many seem unaware of these.



This Task and Finish Panel was set up in order to enable the services that support older people provided by Epping Forest District Council, Voluntary Action Epping Forest and other similar agencies to be identified, to consider if the services are being under or over used, and whether there are significant gaps in provision.

The Panel also looked at access to those services including whether the criteria for receiving the services was consistent and if the services were adequately funded and advertised.

**Figure 1**

The Disability Equality Duty came into force in December 2006. Part of the Panels review included how the Council was proposing to respond to the duty of public authorities to anticipate difficulties that disabled people may experience in accessing services and information and to encourage the involvement of disabled people in public life.

At an early meeting of the panel a wide-ranging investigation into the services and opportunities for disabled people, including children, was considered. However, it was later recognised that this would make the work of the panel too great so it was decided to focus on the implementation of the Disability Equality Duty at Epping Forest District Council.

The terms of reference of the panel therefore were:

- (1) To look at the services for older people provided by the district council.
- (2) To look at the services for older people provided through the voluntary sector and in particular Voluntary Action Epping Forest.
- (3) Look at the criteria for these services.
- (4) Look at any charges made for these services
- (5) Identify any gaps
- (6) Consider issues in relation to transport.



- (7) Consider the implications of the Disability Equality Duty for the district council and the council's proposed response.

### **Aims and Objectives of Review:**

These were agreed as follows:

1. To find out what services are provided by the district council, Voluntary Action Epping Forest and if there are any difficulties in accessing these services if there are any gaps and are they adequately funded and advertised.
2. To confirm if the council complies with the December 2006 section of the Disabled Discrimination Act that states that public bodies must anticipate problems and encourage the involvement of disabled people in public life.
3. To make any recommendations that identified the need for extra spending by 18 September 2006 in order to meet the deadline for the budget fixing round for next year
4. To find out about the specialist transport on offer, and about the Taxi Card System offered by other councils.
5. To investigate the use of bus passes and the relevance to the availability busses.
6. To Review the Council's Handyperson scheme
7. To co-opt Kay Ellis, Chairman of the Joint Management Team for Older Peoples Services, onto the panel

### **Who we consulted:**

Members of the panel received presentations on the work of the Joint Management Team (a multi-disciplinary team comprising representatives of all agencies involved in care for older people), the Handyperson scheme and CARE, and the concessionary transport fares scheme.

Members also attended meetings of the Sheltered Housing Forum, the Older Person's Advisory Group (OPAG), the Sheltered Housing Scheme Managers' Meeting, and the Careline operations centre. Individually they attended luncheon clubs and day centres for older people where they were able to speak with the users and organisers. Epping Forest is fortunate in having a number of such clubs and only a limited number were able to be visited.

### **How we went about gathering the evidence (i.e. by interview, site visits, questions to organisations, questionnaires etc.).**

Various members visited Careline, Sheltered Housing gathering information on how the day clubs were run and organised. Members visited Parsonage Court, Jessop Court and Robert Daniels Court. Members also attended the OPAG and each member gave a report on their observations at each Panel meeting. This evidence was a mixture of oral and written reports highlighting positive and negative feedback and issues with them at each visit.

### **Why the Panel did not look at some aspect of the topic they were charged to look at.**

The only aspect that was not looked at fully was the Council's response to the Disability Duty. This was due to the time factors involved in the Panels process and that the Council's consultant had yet to produce their report on the Council's scheme.



### 3. Context

#### Disability Equality Duty



There is a general duty that applies to all public authorities, plus additional specific duties to support the majority of public authorities in achieving the outcomes required by the general duty.

The basic requirement for a public authority when carrying out their functions is to have due regard to do the following:

- promote equality of opportunity between disabled people and other people
- eliminate discrimination that is unlawful under the Disability Discrimination Act
- eliminate harassment of disabled people that is related to their disability
- promote positive attitudes towards disabled people
- encourage participation by disabled people in public life
- take steps to meet disabled people's needs, even if this requires more favourable treatment.

'Due regard' means that authorities should give due weight to the need to promote disability equality in proportion to its relevance.

Key dates - The general duty came into force on 4 December 2006

#### Relevant Council's policies

##### Concessionary Fares:

The 2006/07 BVPP included the aim "To implement a system for issuing bus passes by post in order to reduce inconvenience to users of the countywide concessionary fare scheme."

**(Start with some general information about size and nature of the District – large towns and dispersed rural villages – poor public transport, rural isolation etc etc.)**







## 4. Summary of Recommendations

1. The Panel acknowledges the work carried out by the Joint Management Team who oversee services provided for Older People and in particular would like to see further progress with:
  - The development of a one-stop shop to provide advice on the services available for older people and how these services can be accessed. This could be through the Council's Careline Service.
  - The provision of an updated directory of services available for Older People – this would be an essential part of the one-stop shop provision.
  - The holding of a further summit on services for Older people in order to check on progress made and identify any new issues or concerns that need to be addressed.
  - Development of the Older People's Action Group (OPAG) in order to enable it to continue as an independent pressure group in relation to issues that effect Older People.
2. That the Council should identify grant aid support to help develop the OPAG vision and then use that group as part of its ongoing consultation processes.
3. That the Council notes the report issued by the Local Government Association "Without a care". Notes that the issues identified in the report mirror our own findings from discussions with Older People in our district and invites the County Council to.....
4. That the positive role which the Council's Leisure Services can provide in services to Older People should be acknowledged and developed since this can provide a lasting impact on people's later lives which can be cost effective in health and financial terms.
5. That the Portfolio Holder for Leisure Services be asked in particular to investigate and report back on how Leisure Services can assist in:
  - providing an healthy living approach which helps meet the social needs of Older People;
  - continue targeted projects such as that provided through the Arts Service "a sense of place";
  - the continued provision of the seated exercise programme;
6. That in relation to the Handy Persons Scheme, further DDF grant of £3000 should be made available in the financial year 2007/08 to match that provided in 2006/07.
7. That during the course of 2007/8 the Council should identify a means by which the DDF grant can become part of the CSB and inflation linked so that the value of the money made available to the Handy Person Scheme is maintained on an ongoing basis.
8. That the availability of the Handy Persons Scheme should be advertised more widely through The Forester.
9. That the value of the Concessionary Fare Scheme should be acknowledged.
10. That the changes to the Concessionary Fare Scheme proposed by Government should be kept under review in order to monitor:



- any financial implications for the Council;
  - whether in the light of the changes proposed the separate scheme with Transport for London is still necessary.
11. That the Day Clubs for the more housebound Older People provided in association with Housing Services have provided a valuable and much appreciated service, but should be kept under review in the light of:
- difficulties in recruiting volunteers to help run them;
  - difficulties in providing transport to and from the Clubs;
  - falling attendances.
12. We noted that whilst the Council has done a great deal to address equality issues within its Service provisions there is still a great deal more which needs to be done. In particular we recognised the resources issues within Service areas generally and that a specialist consultant has been employed to help produce the Disability Equality Scheme. This work needs to be brought to a conclusion and the scheme published without further delay.



## 5. Report

### How we went about the task

The Panel has met on 5 occasions. At our first meeting in June 2006 we set out to look at the scope of our review, how we would address the tasks which had been set for us and attempted to agree a programme of works.

It soon became clear that the task we had been set was enormous and without come prioritisation and focus would not be capable of being achieved. We therefore agreed that in relation to Older People we would concentrate on those services provided via the District Council or Voluntary Action Epping Forest (VAEF) and take an overview of other services and their impact as the opportunity arose. In relation to disabled people we agreed we would focus on the Disability Equality duty which had been placed on the Council by the provisions of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995. We reported back to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee who agreed this revision to our terms of reference.

### Services for older people provided by the district council

At our second meeting we met with the Joint Management Team, a voluntary partnership set up to oversee the provision of services for older people provided by the various statutory and voluntary agencies. The slides used by the joint management Team for their presentation are set out in the appendix, but the most telling remark which put matters into context for us was that “the numbers of older people in the Epping Forest District is greater than the numbers in Harlow and Uttlesford combined”. The team had been created some time ago following an older peoples summit. Its membership included:

- Adult Social Care
- District Council (Housing Services)
- Voluntary Action Epping Forest (VAEF)
- Primary Care Trust
- Champion/User
- Consultant Geriatrician
- Mental Health Trust

The Team aims and objectives were:

- (i) Consult with users to improve services for older people in Epping Forest;
- (ii) Achieve better coordination through joint working;
- (iii) Maximise resources through joint working (given limited resources);
- (iv) Share good practice;
- (v) Monitor the National Service Framework for Older People.

Members noted the changing nature of society with greater numbers of people in the 65-75 age bracket and noted some of the projects undertaken by the Team including the Tent card project and 'Message in a Bottle' which had been widely distributed to vulnerable groups. As there was no direct funding for the team, such projects were subject to grant funding or funding from the individual team partner organisations.



The team had also undertaken Scrutiny of the age based policies of the PCT, had introduced a 'falls team' - an integrated team of staff working on fall prevention - which had been achieved by integrated working. A 'tilt table had been purchased and this was being used locally by the falls clinic consultants, avoiding the need for patients travel.

The team had also secured funding from the Performance Fund for a full time member of staff to provide an advocacy service locally.

The team had further projects currently ongoing:

- (i) Update Services Directory;
- (ii) Seek the introduction of a One-stop shop possibly linked to the Council's Careline Service;
- (iii) Funding for nurse led clinic in sheltered housing (following recent pilot);
- (iv) Secure funding for research (to support consultations);
- (v) The implementation of telecare (one off funding now secured/ECC) - examples included links into the dispersed alarm system, fall detectors and bogus caller buttons;
- (iv) To fund further BME research;
- (v) Secure Funding for another Summit; and
- (vi) To seek to "Float" the OPAG as self managed group without losing momentum.

The Panel agreed that a lot of good work had been undertaken by the JMT since the initial summit in 1999.

In summary therefore the Panel:

- supported the idea for a One stop shop suggested by the JMT

The One stop shop could solve some of the problems with communication that each organisation face. It would need to be staffed with competent people and organisations would have to keep them informed of developments and what was available but it could prove to be an invaluable resource for everyone in the district.

The Panel also:

- Endorse the idea of an updated services directory for the elderly
- Encourage the holding of a further older peoples summit
- Supported JMT proposals to seek the floatation of OPAG

### **OLDER PEOPLE'S ACTION GROUP (OPAG)**

It is acknowledged by Government, the public sector and society as a whole that a radical change of perspective is needed, if public services are to meet the concerns of our ageing society. Better Government for Older People (BGOP) (explain what BGOP is) has been at the forefront of developing successful approaches to enable public services to meet these challenges. The very essence of BGOP's approach is for older people to be engaged as active citizens in all areas of public life – contributing to service planning, delivery and evaluation and to their wider communities.



OPAG works at the core of the BGOP, in partnership, to reflect the views of older people in their particular community.

OPAG is integral to the success of BGOP and are key partners within the organisation, and have representatives on numerous consultative committees:

- BGOP Advisory Committee
- National Partnership Group (Central Government)
- Association of Directors of Social Services (ADAS) (Older Peoples Committee)

### **The Aims of OPAG**

As older citizens and partner to BGOP are demonstrating the successful approach through their own working and are influencing local, regional and national practice to ensure it is shaped by the key aims of OPAG as determined from its launch back in 1988 – which are:

- (1) For older people to participate in all areas of public life including the formation of policies and the improvement of public services;
- (2) For the voices of older people to be heard effectively in national, local and devolved government;
- (3) For ensuring that the contributions older people make to their communities are recognised;
- (4) To improve the image and increase the profile of older people.

### **OPAG Work Locally**

Locally (Epping Forest District) OPAG meetings have been held in various residential homes. These meetings have been well attended, by both residents of the homes and other local elderly residents. Residents have been encouraged to talk openly, about their local area, what they feel is good, what is in need of improvement, what is considered bad. Topics have included Housing and the home, neighbourhoods, getting out and about, public transport, the state of the pavements, assessing information, health and healthy living, clinics and medical services, mental health services, council tax, road safety, speeding traffic and the departure of local shops, there no longer being any variety with too many eating establishments.

OPAG can convene as required, working groups to consider specific issues, for example the current focus is on the following themes and issues: active ageing, health care, housing and design, consultation and involvement and money matters.

Locally, with the changes going on within the National Health Service (NHS) and the amalgamation of Epping Forest PCT with Harlow and Uttlesford PCT's finance which had previously been forthcoming from the PCT and Voluntary Service, is now seriously restricted and could mean that the OPAG may not be able to continue its good work in the Epping Forest District, much to the disadvantage of the districts ageing population.

### **How the Council could help OPAG**

The Older Peoples Advisory Group (OPAG) is running well under the chairmanship of Doug Kelly. He is able to get people to talk and to summarise the problems.

The need is for the group to have someone who can take these problems forward to the appropriate authority. So far this has been done by Health, Social Services and Housing. With the change in



Health and Social Service, this is no longer possible, neither is it appropriate as each group should be run independently.

It would be of help if some money could be put into OPAG, to pump prime, to allow someone, from the group, to do this along with bookings and sending out of notices of meetings and to be able to have their costs covered. The group in future would need to raise money themselves to cover these costs.

We are of the view that the Council should identify grant aid support to help develop the OPAG vision and then use that group as part of its ongoing consultation processes.

### **Review of other Services provided via the District Council or VAEF.**

At our third meeting we received a comprehensive list of services provided via the District Council or VAEF. We took an overview of the target age group, eligibility requirements, number of users and annual budget provision. The summary of all these Services is shown in our appendices.

We have looked at the following schemes in greater detail.

### **Handy Person Scheme**

On 20 July 2006, the Portfolio Holder for Housing, Councillor Stallan, asked the Panel to carry out a review of the handy Persons Scheme. The request originated from a question to the Housing Portfolio Holder (Councillor Heavens) at Council on 21 February 2006 by Councillor Mrs Whitehouse.

The Handyperson Scheme is an offshoot of CARE (Caring and Repairing in Epping Forest) which is part of Environmental Services that provides the Council's Home Improvement Service. The stated purpose of the scheme is to provide retired homeowners and private tenants in the Epping Forest District with reputable contractors to carry out minor works.

We understand that typical handyperson jobs are small repairs: from leaking taps and gutters for instance, and work to prevent falls in the home, like fitting grab rails and hand rails.

The Service is provided free to people who are over 60, retired and on a means tested benefit (such as Council Tax Benefit and Pension Guarantee Credit) for work costing up to a maximum of £150. Minor repairs costing more than this can be carried out but the homeowner has to pay the difference. Works can also be arranged for the same client group but who are not in receipt of a means-tested benefit but only if they agree to meet the costs in full.

The initial concerns behind the question put by the Panels Vice Chairman, Mrs Whitehouse were finance related in that the budget for the Handyperson Scheme had not been increased since the Scheme was first set up in 1999. To some extent this concern was addressed by the allocation of an additional £3000 via the DDF in the financial year 2006/07, making a total sum available of £13,250.

In 2005/06, the Scheme undertook 93 jobs at a total cost of £9,827 from a budget of £10,000. So far this year a total of 52 jobs have been arranged at a total cost of £5868. Since demand rises in the winter months, it seems likely the total budget of £13,250 will be spent.

However, there is no assurance that the budget will continue at this level in future years, hence our recommendation.

This scheme provides an excellent service of which the Council should be proud. The panel have therefore recommended that the District Development funding should be repeated for 2007/08. Due



to the timescales involved in the budget making process we have already raised this issue with the Cabinet in advance of our formal report. We are also recommending that the Council's magazine, the Forester be used to publicise this scheme.

### **Concessionary Fares Scheme**

The Council works with Essex County Council and the other Essex districts to provide a county wide concessionary travel scheme. Working together in this way allows the participating authorities to provide a scheme that exceeds the statutory minimum requirements, which are that each district need only provide a scheme that operates within their own boundaries.

No charge is made for the countywide scheme passes and from 1 April 2006 these passes have allowed holders to travel free within the scheme boundaries. Prior to 1 April 2006 pass holders were entitled to half fare travel. This change in benefit has proved very popular and pass numbers have increased from around 6,500 at 31 March 2006 to almost 9,000.

The Council also has a concessionary fare scheme which runs in conjunction with Transport for London (TfL). We understand that this scheme is unique amongst district councils as no other districts have schemes that involve bus travel so far beyond their own boundaries. An agreement was entered into with TfL for the 3.5 years to 1 April 2004 and this has subsequently been extended on an annual basis.

Under the terms of the TfL scheme pass holders have been able to travel free on busses within the scheme boundaries since 1 April 2005. The area in which the pass can be used includes Edmonton, Tottenham and Enfield in the West to Romford and Ilford in the East and extending as far South as Stratford. A charge of £30, or £10 to those in receipt of benefit, is made for the passes, this is necessary as TfL charge the Council £180 for each pass. There are currently some 400 passes in issue.

A significant change was made to the issuing of passes for both schemes from 1 April 2006. The previous system had generated a number of complaints, as individuals wanting passes were required to attend in person. Passes are now issued by post from the Civic Offices.

We understand that nationally, a fundamental change will be taking place from 1 April 2008. As mentioned above, the current countywide scheme already exceeds the statutory minimum scheme, by allowing travel not just within a given district but also across the whole county. The new scheme will allow pass holders to travel anywhere on local bus services, effectively removing all boundaries.

This new provision applies only to local bus services and not national coaches. In theory pass holders would be able to travel long distances using their passes but they would need to change local services a number of times en-route.

Central Government announced this change in March 2006, but to date have provided little by way of detail on how the scheme is meant to operate. So far indications are that the Government will require districts to keep managing schemes locally rather than the Government operating one centralised scheme for the whole country.

We are aware that a Taxi Card System operates in some parts of Greater London, but we could find no evidence that any such scheme operates elsewhere in Essex.

The Essex Association for Disabled People did operate such a scheme at one time with funding from the national Lottery and there were people in the Epping Forest District who benefited from that scheme. Unfortunately when the lottery funding came to an end, the scheme had to close.



## Other Services

### Day clubs

The Council agreed the principal of setting up day clubs for the elderly within its Sheltered Housing Schemes in the early eighties.

The first such club was set up in 1984 when two former employees of the then County Council Social Services Department in partnership with the Council's Health and Housing Department set up a day club in Buckhurst Court, Buckhurst Hill.

This was quickly followed by a second day club at Robert Daniels Court in Theydon Bois and following the success of these two ventures, the Council set out to promote further clubs across the district.

The Council was proud of its provisions for the older residents via its Housing Services and keen to find ways of working with others to offer some benefit to older people generally. The Council recognised the high quality of the furniture and equipment of the communal lounges in its sheltered housing schemes and the fact that these were not too well used during day time periods. It therefore agreed to the promotion of day clubs for older housebound residents outside the Council Housing Service, accepting the extra costs of wear and tear providing no other costs fell on the authority.

Day Clubs are a discretionary service, run by hard working volunteer organisers and helpers. They are not Day Centres, have no professional carers in attendance but provide an opportunity for older people to interact with others and enjoy social activities. Members are assessed in advance by the volunteers and include either tenants or private sector occupiers living locally who are generally housebound and would benefit from a day out. They receive lunch, local transport and refreshments at a nominal charge of between £2.50 & £4 per visit.

It is important to note that the Day Clubs can only continue, with the agreement of the majority of the tenants of the sheltered housing scheme in question.

#### Current Situation

Day Clubs are operated at 5 sheltered housing schemes across the district. In 1995, two volunteers from each of the Clubs set up the Epping Forest Day Club Committee, which is a valuable forum where ideas and common problems can be discussed. The Committee meets on a six-monthly basis and is supported by Council officers.

The table attached as an appendix to this report sets out the Social Clubs currently in operation. As can be seen, membership of the Clubs is reducing with only 12 referrals being made to all Clubs during 2005/2006, which is the lowest ever. This is possibly due to older people having more options for socialising. The table also explains the problems being experienced within each of the Clubs in terms of recruiting volunteers and access to transport.

The Panel considered that there were the following issues:

- Issues of affordability of transport - transport costs are seen as one barrier to attendance at the day clubs
- Lack of volunteers – there were a general lack of volunteers for the day clubs – the requirement to pass a driving test for the transport was one particular issue.





- Falling attendances at day clubs was the reason for this more fit elderly – better promotion paragraph 8 of report - are older people doing this amongst themselves? – Not high on their agenda

### **Visits to Older Peoples Groups and Sheltered Housing Units.**

The Panel has undertaken visits to sheltered housing and day centres which involved group discussions and one to one interviews.

The perception was that for older vulnerable and disabled adults there appeared to be a lack of day care opportunities, which may link in with difficulties in accessing community transport. Without any statistical data to show places provided to those needed it was not possible to ascertain the true situation.

It was noted that this service is not provided by this Council and therefore not within the remit of this Panel.

Due to the high needs of this group the panel would request that the Council liaise with Essex County Council to ascertain the present level of service to need and also what possible changes are being planned for vulnerable older people with regards to day care.

It was generally recognised that services for older people will need to change to meet the aspirations of the older person. This can be shown in the difficulty in enlisting older people to volunteer to work with less able older people. In the past large numbers could be relied upon.

The idea that retired people can support the more vulnerable should be encouraged with an enabling approach by those who provide services in Day Care Centres and Sheltered Housing Schemes.

With the changes in attitude and aspirations of older people it was felt Leisure Services could have a greater role to play in the future, by providing the healthy living approach and meeting the social needs, by tailoring more services for the older person.

Active stimulated and engaged older people are more likely to experience a shorter period of disability in later old age.

The Leisure Service Art Project a Sense of Place was directed at the dependant older person who may be isolated through physical or mental disability. It brought a multi faceted approach both for the older person and those who work with them either in a paid or voluntary capacity and their family member(s) bringing about mutual benefits.

We would urge, this service be continued and held up as a flagship of good practise.

Seated exercises provided by Leisure Services for older people who may have or likely to suffer impaired mobility. These can make a big difference to the person's ability to get around and resulting in a positive impact for Health Services.

It was apparent that Leisure Services does have a positive role and a lasting impact on people's later lives which can be cost effective in health and financial terms. **Maybe we can recommend a feasibility study to see how Leisure Services can develop to meet the increasing needs of an ever-growing number of older people in society.**

In summary the Panel noted that:

- Some feelings were expressed about isolation of less mobile older people.



- Older people had concerns about uneven surfaces, other environmental conditions and local shopping facilities
- **Should OSC seek further discussions with social care about elderly care?**

### **Disability Equality Duty of the Council**

Our terms of reference require us to consider the implications of the Disability Equality Duty for the Council and how the Council is doing in responding to that duty.

We were supplied with copies of an overview document entitled “Doing the Duty”. This document had been produced by the Disability Rights Commission and is available from:

<http://rds.eppingforestdc.gov.uk/Published/C00000546/M00004827/AI00009182/DoingTheDuty.pdf>

An outline of the duty is set out on Pages 5 to 8 of the document.

### **Progress within the Council**

In 2004 the Council developed a Race Equality Scheme (RES) as required under the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000. The Council’s approach in developing this was that we would not look at a range of equality issues beyond race, i.e. gender and disability discrimination issues, so the RES effectively became the first stage of a corporate equality scheme.

Following the adoption of the RES by Cabinet, a number of pilot impact assessments (IAs) were carried out in late 2005. This created a heavy workload and did not prove possible to complete them internally due to resource issues. It was therefore agreed that an independent equalities consultant be brought in to complete the IA’s in consultation with Heads of Service and managers. This exercise was completed in January 2006, and Management Board considered a comprehensive report which made general recommendations for the development of a full equalities scheme and associated action plan. It was agreed to prioritise those actions which had an impact on our future CPA assessment. The IAs identified a number of issues which might impact on disabled service users, but no full analysis has been carried out yet.

The Council has therefore re-engaged the independent equalities consultant to draw up a Disability Equality Scheme which should be completed in early in 2007. This will involve analysing the results of the Impact Assessments and consulting the community to ensure that our services are responsive to the needs of disabled service users.



## 6. Conclusion

Very short version of report for busy people – maybe with an eye for putting this bit out as a press release.



## 7. Acknowledgements

To give formal acknowledgement to any sources used e.g:

Organisations;

People;

Officers;

Experts;

Websites;

Laws;

Locations visited;

Council policies etc.



## 8. Appendices

If needed to add background information, tables, graphs etc.

lists of services provided by the Council.

Social Club statistics



## Services for Older People Task and Finish Panel

### Social Clubs for Older People

Social Club	Day of Club	Number of Members	Number of Volunteers and Potential for Recruitment	Transport Arrangements
Buckhurst Court, Buckhurst Hill	Thursday	14	7 Volunteers. No potential for recruitment. VAEF have not put forward anyone and existing volunteers not aware of any interest.	Community Transport Scheme at a cost of £140 per month
Frank Bretton House, Ongar	Tuesday	10	6 Volunteers with 2 on stand-by	Taxis used with members and the Club paying half
Hyde Mead House, Nazeing	Thursday	12	8 Volunteers with 2 on standby	Taxis used and the Community Transport Scheme. Members relatives assist
Parsonage Court, Loughton	Wednesday	12	4 Volunteers. No potential for recruitment. VAEF have not put forward anyone and existing volunteers not aware of any interest	Taxis paid for by Club, volunteers also use their own vehicles
Robert Daniels Court Theydon Bois (Transferred to Warden Housing Association but still a member of the Day Club Committee)	Wednesday	13	6 Volunteers. Some potential for recruitment	Pool of drivers using their own vehicles