

## Report for Information

**Report to** Executive  
21 January 2009

**Report of** Director of Transformation

**Subject** Independent Commission for Older People

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### **Purpose**

To inform the Executive of the findings, conclusions and recommendations of the Independent Commission for Older People contained in their final report "Talking about My Generation".

### **Recommendations**

1. To endorse the findings, conclusions and recommendations of the Commission.
2. To Support the circulation of the report to inform the services providers of the needs and feelings of older people living in and around Norwich.
3. The findings, conclusions and recommendations to be taken into account when developing all service areas.
4. To note that there is currently no City Council budget provision for implementation of the Commission's recommendations, and to agree to consider this as part of the budget preparation for 2009/10.

### **Financial Consequences**

The work of the Commission has been funded from within existing City Council resources.

However, there is no City Council budgetary provision identified for the delivery of the Commission's recommendations. These additional costs will fall both corporately in co-ordinating a response to the Commission recommendations, but also on specific service areas which work most closely with older people.

It should also be noted that the City Council is not statutorily responsible for the delivery of social care services to older people. These currently rest with Norfolk County Council, and so it will need to take responsibility for responding to the relevant recommendations. Further discussions will be needed with Norfolk County Council to address this.

### **Risk Assessment**

The findings, conclusions and recommendations contained in the report are those of an independent commission. However, there is a risk of reduced outcomes and

damage to the authority's image if the findings, conclusions and recommendations are endorsed by the Executive and then not actioned or taken into account when developing the authorities own services.

### **Strategic Priority and Outcome/Service Priorities**

The report helps to meet the strategic priority "Opportunities for all – communities to be able to access the wide range of services in the city provided by the Council" and the service plan priority OA7 – Set up an older people's commission.

The report also links with a number of other strategies, recommendations, priorities, performance indicators and partnerships. These are listed in Appendix B. Some of the links shown are stronger than others but in all cases the report should help to provide a useful insight into what older people think about the related subjects.

**Executive Member:** Councillor Arthur - Housing and Adult Services

**Ward:** All

### **Contact Officers**

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### **Background Documents**

None

## Report

### Background Information

1. One of Norwich City Council's strategic priorities for 2008-2010 was to establish an Independent Commission for Older People. This was established in July 2008.
2. The aim of the Commission is to help Norwich City Council and the providers of services to better understand the needs of older people living in and around Norwich so that appropriate services can be developed in the future.
3. Members of the Commission have listened to the views of older people, their families and carers, and organisations working with and for older people living in and around Norwich. This has been done by:
  - distributing a consultation document and analysing the feedback,
  - holding discussion groups,
  - taking evidence from people in person.
4. The seven themes consulted upon and discussed were:
  - Living independently
  - Improving the lives of carers
  - More choice and control
  - Involving older people
  - Making services more responsive
  - Focussing on all needs
  - Getting good results
5. The Commissioners were also briefed on the findings of national, regional and local research.
6. The Commission has taken into account all the evidence and information gathered and produced a final report; "Talking About My Generation" which it hopes will be used to influence and inform the development of services for older people in the coming years.

### 7. The key findings of the Commission were:

#### 7.1 Living Independently

- For a number of reasons maintaining independence can be difficult.
- Most older people want to remain living in their own homes.
- Isolation is one of the main challenges associated with living independently.
- Self directed care (individual budgets and direct payments) is not generally recognised by older people as a means of enabling independence.
- Older people, their families and carers need better access to

information.

- Some minority groups (for example lesbians, gay men, bisexuals and transsexuals) do not have sufficient family or social networks to support them to live independently.

## 7.2 Improving lives for carers of older people

- Approximately one in fifteen people living in and around Norwich care for an older person.
- Relatively few carers have their needs formally assessed.
- Help and support for carers often only arrives once their circumstances amount to a crisis.
- The full potential of carers is not being realised as they are often left out of communications between the person they are caring for and the organisations that are providing the support.
- Carers need better access to information.

## 7.3 More choice and control

- Difficulty in gaining access to information limited older people's ability to exercise choice and control.
- The changing shape of local communities is making it more difficult for older people to exercise choice and control.
- Better access to advocacy is required to help older people exercise choice and control.
- Individual budgets and direct payments are not fully understood by older people and their carers.

## 7.4 Involving older people and understanding their needs

- There is a large amount of data available, held by different organisations, that highlights the needs of local older people.
- There is not a robust structure in place that enables effective information sharing between organisations.

## 7.5 Making services more responsive

- Information is not always shared between organisations.
- Sometimes there is too much of a time lag between the need for care being identified and it arriving.
- Nobody seems to be comprehensively co-ordinating referrals between organisations.

## 7.6 Focussing on all needs

- Encouragement for family and community engagement is required to increase the number of people providing informal care and support for older people.

- There is a need to encourage volunteering and increase the capacity of voluntary services.
- Signposting and access to information needs to be improved to enable more people to organise their own lower level services.

### 7.7 Getting good results

- When trying to achieve good results consultation with older people, their families and carers is very important.
- While some mistakes may happen it is important that service providers learn from them and change their services or approaches accordingly.

## 8. **The Commission concluded that:**

### 8.1 Older people living in and around Norwich need:

- to be able to better influence decisions that affect their lives
- easier access to information that is reliable, complete and trustworthy at the point that they expect to find it
- to live in a community that has a network of good neighbours that support them to live independently, especially where family support is not available
- earlier access to everyday basic help that prevents, or at least slows down, any deterioration in a person's wellbeing
- the ability to get out and about as much as they want
- more effective co-ordination by service and support providers
- an adequate income, including more proactive support to ensure that they receive all the benefits to which they are entitled
- reassurance that the specific needs of minority groups are recognised.

### 8.2 Carers of older people need:

- to be included, as a matter of course, in communications between social services, health services and other service providers
- their status and authority to be explicitly recognised
- their circumstances and well being to be initially assessed and then reviewed regularly to ensure they are receiving the right level of support.

## 9. **The Commission has recommended that:**

- Norwich City Council establishes a single 'Older people's forum' for the city.
- Voluntary and statutory organisations should work together to find effective and consistent ways for older people to access information.
- Norwich City Council should work with existing and new community groups to develop good neighbour schemes within our communities.
- Local authorities should continue to develop an enabling and supporting

relationship with the voluntary and community sector, especially those working with and for older people.

- Local authorities, businesses and other organisations should ensure that the impact for older people is always considered and addressed when developing or changing the services that they provide.
  - Organisations need to further develop their co-ordinated working and information sharing practices.
  - Norwich City Council should work with others to extend local publicity about welfare benefits and other information relating to financial inclusion.
  - The local authority responsible for social care should conduct a mapping exercise to establish the specific needs of older people in minority groups.
  - The local authority responsible for social care should look into the feasibility of empowering carers, in appropriate circumstances, to have the authority to advocate on behalf of those they are caring for and to manage their care packages.
  - A 'Power of Care' authority for carers to be explored and, if practicable, established.
  - Local authorities and other organisations should take a more proactive and co-ordinated role in identifying carers and then assessing and supporting their needs.
10. The full report of the Commission detailing its workings, methodology, findings and recommendations can be found in Appendix A.
11. A list of the strategies, priorities, recommendations and performance indicators that the report links to are shown in Appendix B.