

## Older People Task and Finish Group

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**Date:** 1 October 2020

**Purpose of the Report:** Information paper – update on scoping activity for Older People including timescale and next steps.

**Contact Officer:** Sarah Jewell, C&E Services Support Officer

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<b>Corporate Objective/s</b>	27. To consider ways to support the increase in leisure opportunities for older people.
<b>Implications:</b>	
<b>Financial</b>	
<b>Human Resources</b>	
<b>Operational/Service delivery</b>	
<b>Procedural/Legal</b>	x Exploration to assist Committee’s consideration of service provision
<b>Risk/Health and Safety</b>	

1. **Information paper to review the scoping activities, timescale for actions and to propose what the next steps are for progressing this project:**
  - 1.1 **Scoping activity findings:**
    - a) **Older people survey – online, hard copy and telephone.**
    - b) **Discussions with Central Bedfordshire Council and other organisations and community groups who actively support older people.**

## 2 BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The stated strategic aim of the Council is, No. 27: -“To consider ways to support the increase in leisure opportunities for older people”.
- 2.2 The proposal for funding Older People’s services was originally put forward pre-Covid-19 lockdown.
- 2.3 At its meeting on 09/12/19, ref. 36/CE, it was agreed to set up a Task and Finish group to look at schemes suitable for elderly people in the town with a view to inclusion within the 2021/2022 budget.
- 2.4 Following the report dated 5 June 2020 the Task & Finish Group agreed to an online community survey (using Survey Monkey) to gather information about groups/activities over 55 year olds are currently engaged with and what over

55 year olds are seeking from these groups/activities. (**Appendix 1** – additional excel attachment for the survey).

Due to the limitations of an online survey, it was subsequently agreed an additional hard copy survey would be circulated, targeting more socially isolated and in some cases 'older' residents.

- 2.5 It was identified that 'Older People' would be defined as '55 years old and above' as that is the age at which people can become members of Movies for the More Mature, an initiative already run and endorsed by the Town Council.

It was also highlighted that a specific emphasis be given to those self-identifying as lonely, as these members of our community are especially vulnerable. The 'Reaching Out' paper focuses on this with some pointers as to how to address this in **Appendix 2**.

### **3 INFORMATION/ RESEARCH**

#### **a. The Survey**

- 3.1 The online survey (**Appendix 1**) was launched using Survey Monkey on 25 June 2020 and ran for 3 weeks. 78 participants responded to the survey.

It was promoted in the Leighton Buzzard Observer, on social media (Facebook and Twitter), through known contacts and via contacts gathered when researching existing groups for this project.

The hard copy survey was circulated from 9 September with a deadline of 30 September. Over 200 copies have been distributed through retirement homes and via telephone 'befriending' chats that Leighton Linslade Helping Hands have carried out.

#### **b. Survey findings**

- 3.2 Initial findings from the online survey

- U3A were the most frequently mentioned group followed by the Friday Club, then the WI. (Question 2).
- *Company/Socialising* and *Interest/Themed/Hobby-activity* were the main 'purposes' stated for the groups/activities respondents were members of/part of. (Question 5).
- When asked the 'reason' respondents need a group or service, *Company/Socialising* and *Interest/Themed/Hobby-activity* stayed high, but \**Physical Activity* shot right up in the priority of respondents. (Question 9).

- The majority of groups that responded stated that activities were currently suspended and all of them reported this was due to Covid-19. (Question 6).
- It was clear that groups/activities need to be available throughout the week and weekend, and at a wide range of times in the day and evening. (Question 10).
- The majority (94%) of respondents would be willing to pay a sub fee or membership charge for a group/activity. (Question 12).
- There was a limited desire from the respondents to lead in the set up of a new group (just the Rotary club mentioning the Rotary Community Corps initiative). (Question 14).
- On being asked if there was anything respondents wished to explain about groups/activities they wished to see, as well as people listing specific activities (e.g. craft, assisted walking, cooking etc.), several mentioned venue issues and the fact 'they' (over 55 year olds) also work full time, are not always retired, so this needs to be noted. (Question 16)
- **On assessing the gender difference, Male respondents maintained a higher percentage of 'not' being part of a group or activity (65%). This is a national trend demonstrating that older men are not participating in activities as much as women.**

\*It's important to note that due to the survey being carried out during lockdown (pre lockdown relaxation) some answers may have been affected by the frustrations/limitations that Covid-19 presented to respondents. It could be that people's desire to have more groups/activities that met their physical activity requirements may have stemmed from respondents inability (or lockdown limitations) to get out and do physical exercise/activities.

### **c. Survey limitations**

3.3 When the survey was first launched, the first question asked:  
**Are you a member of one or more group(s) whose membership is for over 55 year olds?**

The wording of this question clearly became a barrier to data gathering as most groups cannot be exclusively for this age range. As soon as this was identified, the question was changed to:

**Are you a member of one or more group(s) whose membership includes over 55 year olds?**

As can be seen in the question 1 responses the response flipped from majority answering 'no' (I'm not a member of groups) to 'yes' once the question was altered. Some responses in 'comments' also highlighted that many respondents do not want to be in groups that are exclusively for their

own age group but like to be in mixed age groups/activities. This did however result in limiting the number of groups people listed as being members of. (Question 1).

There are other questions that in hindsight could have been included such as; 'Do you use/need support with transport to access a group'.

Every respondent completed the survey themselves. This also demonstrated that we may not have reached respondents who are not 'online' or needed support to answer the online surveys.

We did not manage to reach any over 84year olds in the online survey, with a limited amount of 75-84 year olds responding. This led to the hard copy survey being circulated through retirement homes and via Leighton Linslade Helping Hands to try and reach older residents 'not online'.

There was by far a higher amount of female respondents (78%), therefore getting a full picture of what groups/activities men are involved in and interested in was not gained. (Question 19)

Equally, 78% of respondents reported not having a disability; so getting a full picture of the needs of those with disabilities/mobility issues has not been achieved. (Question 20)

While the 78 respondents gave some insight, a figure slightly closer to 100 would have given us a more statistically representative figure for the current population of over 55s. If this survey had been carried out 'outside' of Covid-19, we would have been able to carry out face-to-face surveys.

#### **d. Discussions with other organisations**

The officer held many discussions with organisations and individuals who could be seen as stakeholders in this work, including:

- Central Bedfordshire Council
- Leighton Linslade Helping Hands
- Bedfordshire Rural Communities Charity
- Community Action Bedfordshire
- Older Peoples Network
- Community Catalysts
- Active Lifestyles
- Men in Sheds
- The Friday Club
- Healthwatch

#### **3.4 Central Bedfordshire Council**

Jane Moakes – Head of Strategic Commissioning, Adult and Social Care  
Sarah Hughes – Community Engagement Manager

Key discussion points:

They commend the Town Council on looking at supporting their older residents as they have seen the success of its youth projects and agree this work could balance that out.

- They see value in both building on the number of volunteers supporting community groups, and supporting the placement of volunteers.
- Stroke Association and Tibbs Dementia Bedford have been altering their service offering due to Covid, and have increased their telephone calls to clients, letter writing and online activities from 'music 4 minds' to online befriending chats.
- CBC provided direct contact for the Older Peoples Network, Active Lifestyles, Community Catalysts and importantly, Community Wellbeing Champions.
- They see value in having some grants to community groups, but also having a 'landmark partnership scheme' for example Men in Sheds that really showcases Town Council's investment in older people.
- CBC have the community grant schemes that requires match funding. This would tie in with a Town Council grant scheme as community groups who require additional funding can use the Town Council grant as a 'match fund' to access the CBC grants as well.

### 3.5 **Leighton Linlade Helping Hands**

Natalie – Volunteer Coordinator

Befriending service. Currently carrying out regular calls to 75 clients, have more on their books.

They receive referrals from surgeries/health workers.

Don't have an online presence as they have no volunteers who are able to/want to keep a website updated.

### 3.6 **Bedfordshire Rural Communities Charity (BRCC)**

Kate Ellis – Community and Wellbeing Service Manager

Penny & Bernie – Community Wellbeing Champions

Community Wellbeing Champions (CWCs) – 'Social Prescribers'

BRCC have a 'socially isolating' online activity calendar currently

<https://yourwellbeingbedfordshire.org.uk/self-isolating-need-something-to-do/>

Prior to Covid they had an 'activities' page where you could type in your location, interests, availability etc. and through their asset mapping it told 'you' what activities/groups that met your criteria were available.

Digital inclusion. BRCC are interested in this and have (alongside the CWCs) helped socially isolated people become digitally connected. This is possible as long as the person 'has a device', is vaguely familiar with digital devices and can be guided over the phone or has someone in their 'bubble' who can talk them through the process.

Gaps come where people are keen and willing, but have no device.

### 3.7 **Community Action Bedfordshire**

Gina Croxford – Community Engagement Manager

Sarah Jewell meeting ‘virtually’ on Wednesday 30 September.

### 3.8 **Older Peoples Network** (Coordinated by CBC)

Ruth Featherstone – Network member (older person)

Cheryl Stimson – Project Manager, Service Development, CBC

An email composed by the Officer about this scoping exercise and potential work has gone out to the Older Peoples Network. **(See member list in Appendix 3)**

The officer hopes to speak to a member of the network who is a Leighton Buzzard resident.

Ruth Featherstone raised the following:

- MIND project in the village of Broom, found older residents who self-identified as ‘lonely’, they gathered their interests/likes/personality type and compatibility matched them with other ‘lonely’ residents. Those people formed relationships by phone/face to face etc.

- Digital inclusion is fine for those with smart phones/tablets/computers but for those who don’t/have no interest/ability to obtain/use one, they have to be included by other means – telephone, letter writing, newsletters etc.

- Trust – it’s important to older people that they trust the person/organisation approaching them/making contact with them. The Town Council are trusted, as are uniformed organisations such as fire service.

- Behaviour change – MIND doing a pilot with ‘hoarders’ where Cognitive Behaviour Therapy being trialled. What can be learnt from that in terms of changing people’s behaviour?

- Covid – outdoor activities are going to be the lowest risk activities for older people/shielding. Outdoor gym equipment could be key to this. It is accessible, free, safe. Can we promote activities around all the Town Council’s equipment?

- a sense of place is key to older people. Making any project plans relate to the geography of our town, e.g. embracing canal walks, utilising local green spaces near to where older people live (having localised activities for older people in their immediate neighbourhood).

Q. Would we like to be an official member of the Older Peoples Network (See Appendix 3 for list of members)?

### 3.9 **Community Catalysts**

Ian Hanton – CBC

Alistair Bucknall – Community Enterprise Catalyst for Central Bedfordshire

Ian Hanton deferred to Alistair who is the Community Catalyst for our area. Sarah Jewell will be meeting ‘virtually’ with Alistair on Wednesday 30 Sept. Ian did highlight his interest in working closely with the Town Council on the future care home on Hockcliffe Road.

Sarah Jewell attended a 'Community Connections' Session at a virtual conference run by the Community Catalyst scheme. A Hereford market town 'Ross-on-woye' (about a quarter of Leighton Linlade's size) presented what it had done to reduce loneliness among its older residents.

They formed a 'Good Neighbour' scheme called – Ross Community Development Trust <https://www.rosscdt.org.uk/>

They have many elements that we have here in Leighton-Linslade, except ours sit with several separate partner organisation – theirs combine under one community group banner.

They have a concept called 'Community Buddies' who exist in most neighbourhoods of the town and who can connect people with other people/activities/support organisations.

Could the Town Council act in the role of bringing all our stakeholders together in an 'Older Peoples Network Leighton Linlade' to help make connections where connections aren't being made? All the Town's existing community groups and organisations who have a clear support path to older lonely people, can network and ensure we aren't doubling up work in some areas (e.g. befriending calls) instead filling gaps where they are identified (**Appendix 4**).

- 3.10 **Active Lifestyles Team** (Tiddenfoot), CBC  
Debra Marden – Officer is yet to 'meet' with Debra

- 3.11 **Men in Sheds**, Dunstable  
Martin Young – UK MSA Ambassador, Northern Home Counties. (in a voluntary capacity) <https://dunstablemeninsheds.org.uk/>

Successful project in the eyes of CBC and Dunstable Town Council.  
Currently has 25 members (more have passed through/adhoc members).  
Biggest obstacle to it's set up is premises identification and cost, followed by Health & Safety adherence.  
An example of a project that focuses on social isolated males who historically are harder to reach/less likely to access activity groups.

Invitation extended by Martin to visit the shed and meet with the trustees.

- 3.12 **The Friday Club**, Leighton Buzzard  
Laura Wheeler – Former Chair, current group member  
Very popular club, have closed their waiting list as it's so big. Restricted by venue size.

- 3.13 **Healthwatch** 'Festival for Older People' 28 Sept – 2 Oct (virtual event)  
Dee Dillstone, Engagement and Volunteer Officer  
<https://healthwatch-centralbedfordshire.org.uk/news/festival-for-older-people-2020>

'Attend' the festival on Friday 2 Oct for the Q&A session and 'review' of the week.

We can put things in the Healthwatch weekly e-newsletter and/or quarterly newsletter in the future, plus they would be happy to have any links on their website.

Healthwatch would also be happy for us to consult them on any future questionnaire/survey as they have expertise in this.

### 3.14 Timeline

- 1 October 2020** - **Task & Finish Group Meeting '1'**  
Officer presenting research so far
- 2 October 2020** - Festival for Older People final day - Officer (and Cllrs) attend the Q&A and Review  
Review hard copy questionnaires (\*ones returned)
- w/c 5 October** - Officer to meet with Active Lifestyle teams & Cheryl Stimson (re. Digital Inclusion)
- Date tbc** - Meet with any potential partner organisations/  
community groups identified as being of interest in  
2 Oct meeting.
  - Create draft grant scheme if this is a potential option.
- 15 October 2020** - **Task & Finish Group Meeting '2'**  
Decide on options to go into the paper to be presented to the C&E Committee.
  - Review final hard copy questionnaires
- 29 October 2020** - **Task & Finish Group Meeting '3'**  
Sign off the paper to be presented to the C&E Committee.
- 7 December 2020** - **C&E Committee Meeting**  
Present the 'Older Peoples Project' paper to the Committee

## 4 NEXT STEPS

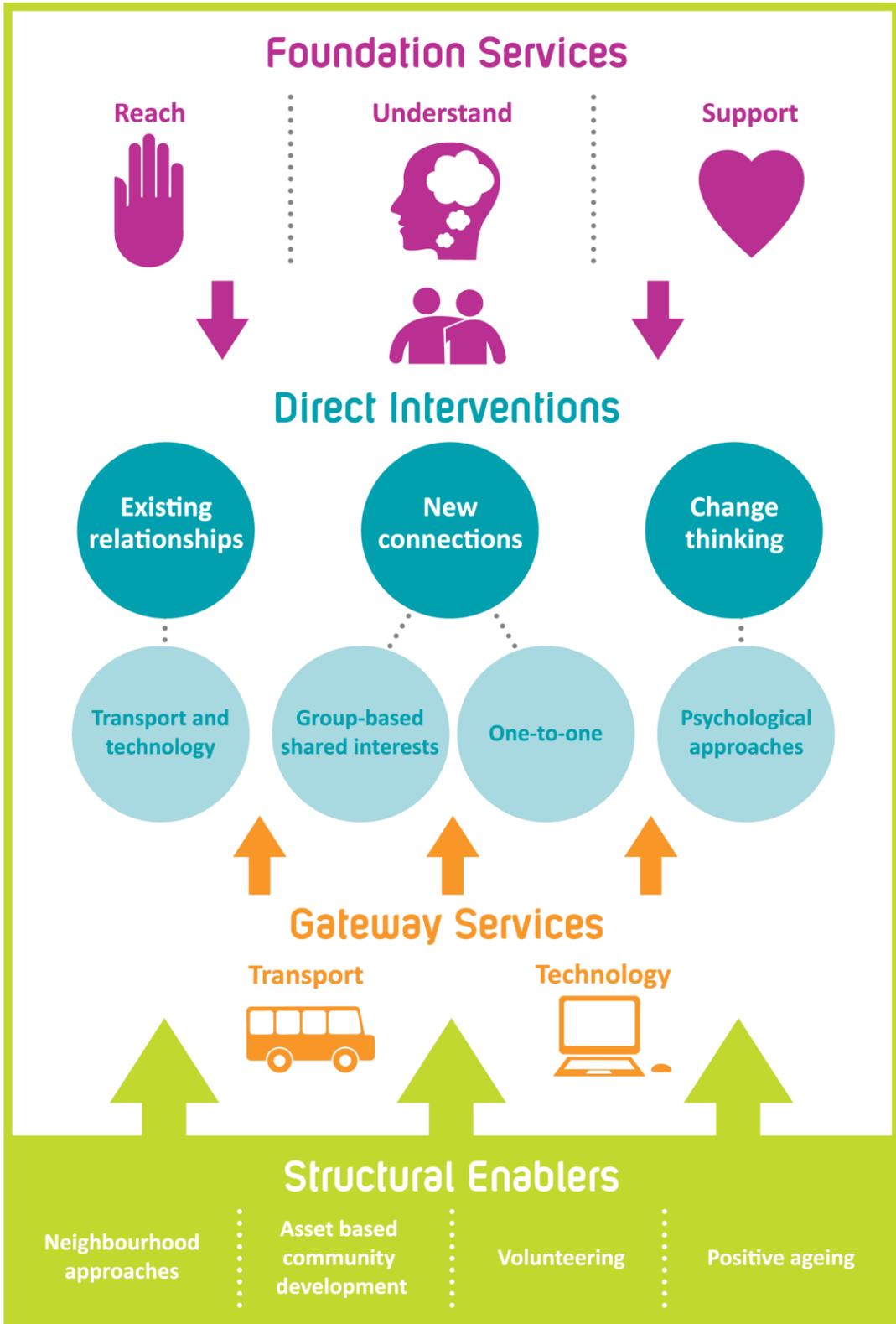
- 4.1 Consider opportunities to partner with an organisation or community group on a 'Landmark' scheme – a scheme that personifies the importance of Older community members to the Town Council. Youngsters have TACTIC, older people have ....e.g. *The Men in Shed Project*. Explore potential projects and project partners further including organising a virtual face to face with potential partners.
- 4.2 Consider the creation of a grant scheme to offer support and/or seed funding to community groups for work that specifically supports older people, with special

preference given to organisations specifically targeting the reduction in loneliness. For example the Rotary Club could benefit from a grant to further supporting their 'Community Corps' initiative (if they had a Community Corps whose remit was to reduce loneliness through a specific activity) see 3.2. Work on guidelines and protocols for granting monies to voluntary & community organisations.

- 4.3 Consider working with a known charity with shared aims and route support via this organisation. This could be to help recruit and place volunteers with groups supporting older people, or supporting an organisation already running a service (e.g. befriending) but who are being prevented from rolling it out wider due to finances.
- 4.4 Consider other ideas brought into play through the Task and Finish Group discussion.

**Appendix 1, attached,  
Appendices 2 – 4, see below**

**APPENDIX 2**



## APPENDIX 3

### Older Peoples Network

[https://www.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk/info/18/health\\_and\\_social\\_care/322/getting\\_involved/3](https://www.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk/info/18/health_and_social_care/322/getting_involved/3)

The Central Bedfordshire Older People's Network seeks to promote the inclusion and integration of older people living in the various communities of Central Bedfordshire, to promote equality of access to information and services, to promote a positive attitude to ageing and to promote an enhanced quality of life for older people.

The network is open to all and we would welcome your support to help us to get it right.

The membership includes a range of older people, organisations and with local groups who represent the voice of older people



## APPENDIX 4

## **'Older Peoples Network Leighton Linslade'**

Hypothetical group brought together by the town council to form community connections/help organisations/representatives' network and thereby ensure we are reaching as many lonely older people as is possible. Members could include:

Community Wellbeing Champions (social prescribers)

Community Catalyst

Leighton Linslade Helping Hands

Leighton Linslade Helpers

Community Action Bedfordshire

Carers in Bedfordshire

Citizens Advice

GP Surgery representatives

Healthwatch

Other NGOs e.g. AgeUK, Stroke Association, DementiaUK (those who have an active presence in Leighton Buzzard)

Group representatives from – U3A, The Friday Club, WI, Rotary (any group whose membership includes older people and who are interested in the networks benefit)

Managers from retirement homes/residential homes for the elderly

Central Bedfordshire Council representative