

# The Senior Council for Devon

**Nothing about us without us!**

Newsletter – January 2008

## Senior Council for Devon

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WE WOULD LIKE TO THANK EVERYONE WHO HAS JOINED THE SENIOR COUNCIL AS A MEMBER AND OTHER PEOPLE WHO HAVE CONTRIBUTED TO ITS DEVELOPMENT SO FAR IN MANY DIFFERENT WAYS

WE WOULD PUBLICLY LIKE TO THANK MEMBERS OF AGILE (Action Group in Later Life – Devon's current Older People's Advisory Group) FOR THEIR SUPPORT IN HELPING TO MAKE THE SENIOR COUNCIL A REALITY, AND TO BUILDING A BROADER VOICE FOR OLDER PEOPLE IN DEVON

## Launching the Senior Council – preparing for lift off!

Welcome to the first Newsletter of the Senior Council for Devon.

In this edition:

- One year on – formally setting up the Senior Council – see next page
- County Council and Primary Care Trust committed to funding for the Senior Council
- For the first time in 2008 an overall Devon wide strategy for people aged 50+ - see "Everyone's Tomorrow" inside
- Practical action gets results
- Common ground across the generations
- National Bus Pass – a reminder

Any retired or budding journalists out there? Let's set up an editorial group for future newsletters – contact us if you want to be involved

## Setting up the Senior Council for Devon

### *The story so far:*

- Public meetings have been held in all the 29 Local Senior Council areas, and local steering groups have been set up in most of these areas
- More than 500 people aged 50+ have become members and another 400 have expressed an interest
- A draft budget to cover the core costs has gone into Devon County Council and Devon Primary Care Trust
- Many local groups have been consulted on the constitution – key messages were the importance of limiting financial liability and having flexible arrangements to reflect the fact that Local Senior Councils are at different stages of development
- Now, with support from the Council of Voluntary Service and a charity lawyer, the “Constitution Working Group” has a draft constitution for members to approve

**The Constitution Group is aware that, whilst it is important to get a constitution agreed and the Senior Council up and running by the target date of the end of March 2008, the Senior Council is still in the early stages of its evolution. It has therefore built into the Articles of Association a full review, with the Local Senior Councils, of the structure of the organisation and the constitution and electoral arrangements after the first year of operation.**

#### **Senior Council Constitution – key building blocks**

1. The Senior Council should be built from the bottom up through the Local Senior Councils.
2. The Senior Council for Devon will be a company limited by guarantee. This limits the financial liability of the members.
3. The Senior Council for Devon (as a company limited by guarantee) is **one** organisation consisting of a county-wide structure made up of representatives from Local Senior Councils, and Local Senior Councils which operate through a model local constitution, or other less formal local arrangements agreed with the Senior Council for Devon.
4. The Senior Council for Devon, operating at a county level, will consist of 60 people elected by Local Senior Councils - 2 from each

of the 28 market and coastal town areas and 4 for Exeter (see below on elections).

5. The Local Senior Councils, coming together through their 60 Elected Representative members, will work collectively to set the overall policy direction and budget for the Senior Council.
6. The Elected Representative Members will be mandated by their Local Senior Council to approve the constitution (see below). They will also elect, from their own number, 10 Directors (including officers) of the Limited Company (see below).

***The timetable from now till the end of March:***

***The final stages of setting up the Senior Council will take place at two key meetings on February 20<sup>th</sup> and March 19<sup>th</sup>***

- Local groups in all the 29 Local Senior Council areas will meet during late January and the first part of February to:
  - Agree to setting up a Local Senior Council in their area (if they have not already done so)
  - Elect their Elected Representative Members to the Senior Council for Devon
  - Mandate their Elected Representative Members to approve the constitution at the meeting in 20<sup>th</sup> February
- On February 20<sup>th</sup> the 60 Elected Representative Members will meet as the Shadow Senior Council to approve the constitution
- Following this the Senior Council will be registered with Companies House as a Company Limited by Guarantee
- Between the 20<sup>th</sup> February and the 19<sup>th</sup> March the election process for the directors and officers of the limited company will be completed
- On the 19<sup>th</sup> March the full Senior Council for Devon will be formally constituted
- Once the constitution has been formally approved the Local Senior Councils will meet to appoint their officers and decide, based on their stage of development, whether they are ready to adopt the model local constitution or wish to have less formal arrangements.

**PLEASE NOTE:**

**Members who may wish to put themselves forward for election as an Elected Representative Member for their Local Senior Council should put the dates of 20<sup>th</sup> February and 19<sup>th</sup> March in their diary.**

## **Everyone's Tomorrow – Developing a Strategy for Older People and an ageing population**

On 1<sup>st</sup> October 2007 over 300 people came together in a ground-breaking conference on the International Day of Older People.

The conference marked the start of a new commitment by the County Council and Primary Care Trust to a new way of planning on the part of the public authorities in Devon.

Public commitments were made by the County Council and Primary Care Trust to:

- Provide the core funding for the Senior Council for Devon for an initial three year period
- Develop a strategy for older people in Devon – starting with the priorities identified by older people – see Aims and Outcomes Framework over the page

Members of the Shadow Senior Council for Devon have been meeting with the County Council to agree that formal Partnership Structures will be established so that Senior Council Members can work in partnership with the County Council and other organisations in developing the strategy. The aim is to have a first draft of the strategy by April 2008.

Local Senior Councils will be involved in discussing the strategy and consulting more locally, and the aim is to have the strategy completed by July 2008.

## Other recent developments

### **Practical action gets results**

Following a meeting of the Local Senior Council group in Exeter about disabled parking in supermarkets a member approached the Somerfields store in Heavitree, where the disabled parking was on a slope and not suitable for people with restricted mobility. As a result, Somerfields have now moved the disabled parking spaces to flat ground – an illustration of practical success through the action of a Senior Council member.

***Please let us know of other examples of success from Senior Council members or groups that we can feature in future***

### **Common ground across the generations**

Over the last two months Youth representatives and volunteer Shadow Senior Council members for Devon have held two meetings. This culminated in a workshop of around 30 people in the 15<sup>th</sup> December, which met with the Devon County Council Leader, Director of Finance and four County Councillors to consider the County Council's budget for 2008-9.

Common issues were identified across the age groups. Key priority areas were agreed jointly – transport, health, and age and other discrimination with 3 practical actions for each. These will be fed into local and county plans with two meetings a year between the Youth Council and the Senior Council – one to update on actions in 6 months time and one annual meeting to set priorities and new actions.

Shadow Senior Council Members thought the day was very productive:

Roy Abraham from Totnes said “I was very impressed with the quality of the contribution of the young people and how many issues we had in common.”

Janet Crocker from Exeter said “the workshop highlighted the fact that discrimination and prejudice happens at both ends of the age spectrum.”

Cliff Bell from the Barnstaple area said “Young people have so much to offer and it is vital that the Senior Council works to cross the generation gap to bring younger and older people closer together.”

## Aims & Outcomes prioritised by older people in Devon

Conference working groups revisions are shown in bold and underlined.

**Vision to improve the Quality of Life for Older People and the wider population;  
and to promote sustainable communities which are healthy, active and which celebrate diversity**

**Aim 1 Making a positive contribution**

**Aim 2 Making the Third Age a Positive Opportunity**

### Outcome 1a

Older citizens are engaged in decision making as real partners

### Outcome 1b

Older people are valued, respected and free from discrimination

### Outcome 1c

Older people are engaged with younger people and promote understanding and communication between and quality of life for all generations

### Outcome 1d

Older people are sharing skills, having the opportunity to volunteer and contributing to community life

### Outcome 2a

Older people have access to information and advice in different formats (including new technology) about opportunities and services in older age

### Outcome 2b

Older people will be able to access a range of affordable leisure, arts and learning opportunities

### Outcome 2c

Older people will have good social networks to combat social isolation

## Principles to underpin delivery of the strategy

- Having a positive approach to life and older age, promoting the active involvement of older people as citizens in contributing to the life of their local community, and recognising and retaining the skills of older people.
- Enabling older people to have control and make informed choices over the way they live their lives
- Ensuring mainstream services meet the needs and aspirations of older people
- Valuing the diversity of older people and addressing discrimination to ensure individual older people are treated with respect and have equality of opportunity
- Effective leadership to communicate, promote and deliver on the strategy.

– towards a strategy for older people and an ageing population.

**Aim 3** Having financial stability and security

**Aim 4** Having an accessible environment and good accessibility to all aspects of community life

**Aim 5** Physical, mental and emotional health and well-being

**Outcome 3a**

Older people have an adequate income

**Outcome 3b**

Older people have the opportunity to work

**Outcome 3c**

Older people have flexibility and support in preparing for retirement

**Outcome 3d**

Older people will be able to positively manage their lives after retirement

**Outcome 4a**

Older people can get out and about easily and access affordable transport

**Outcome 4b**

Older people will have affordable, decent, and appropriate accommodation and tenure choices and feel safe in their homes and communities

**Outcome 4c**

Older people will have an accessible environment in older person friendly neighbourhoods

**Outcome 4d**

Older people will be able to play a positive environmental protection role and have local access to re-cycling

**Outcome 5a**

Older people and family members and carers have access to honest and accurate advice and advocacy to provide information and support decision making

**Outcome 5b**

Older people and carers can access a range of affordable, good quality health and care services

**Outcome 5c**

Older people and carers can access a range of practical and preventative services that promote independence and physical, mental and emotional well-being

### Principles to underpin delivery of the strategy

- Being concerned about quality of life across the board, not just about older people – seeking inter-generational understanding and mutual respect and not setting older people and other population groups such as young people apart
- Promoting ideas and solutions rather than just identifying problems
- Encouraging a voluntary ethos, but not as something that takes over statutory responsibilities
- Ensuring participation by older people in all that we do to deliver on the vision, aims and objectives.

### **Growing the Membership**

- If you know of any other people aged 50+ who might wish to join let us know and we can send them membership forms
- If you have ideas on how to grow the membership, write in and we will put them in the next edition of the Newsletter

### **National Bus Pass – a reminder**

From April this year, free national bus travel on local bus services within England will be provided for all eligible residents aged 60 years or over, or those with disabilities. The new scheme will provide free off-peak travel within England between 9.30am and 11pm on weekdays and all day Saturday, Sunday and public bank holidays.

Welcome as this news is for those in urban areas, it has become apparent that for many people aged 60+ living in rural communities, the only outward daily bus arrives before 9.30 am, thereby limiting free access. A number of members living in rural areas have asked that the Senior Council, once it has been formed, look into this issue.

The current pass is only valid until 31<sup>st</sup> March. Current holders will be sent details of how to apply for the new pass. **The quicker you apply for the new national bus pass through your District Council the more likely you will be to receive it ready to use from April.**