Update on progress with Audit Commission recommendations from its report “Planning for An Ageing Population”

1. Purpose of Report:
The Audit Committee has referred the Audit Commission’s report “Planning for an Ageing Population” to the Health, Community & Care Overview and Scrutiny Committee so it can be discussed in more detail with a report back to the September 2011 Audit Committee.

Relevant Policy or Strategy: Draft Ageing Well Strategy

When last seen by Scrutiny and outcome(s): This is the first report on this subject to the Health, Community & Care Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Business Plan Objectives: Council Strategy – Protecting Vulnerable People

2. Background

There are personal, social and economic benefits to positive health and wellbeing throughout life. As advances in public health, healthcare and changes in society mean that people are living longer and as communities become more diverse, the challenges of supporting this increasing demand and diversity grow. Already in Britain there are more people over retirement age than children, and people can expect to spend a third of their lives in retirement. In Gloucestershire by 2025, 1 in 4 people will be aged 65 or over and nearly half the population will be aged 50 or over. This is both an opportunity and a challenge.

3. Introduction

At its meeting on 24th January 2011, the Audit Committee received a presentation from the Audit Commission on their report “Planning for an Ageing Population”. As well as noting the report, the Audit Committee felt that the report should be discussed in more detail by providers of the service so that an informed response could be collated. As a result it agreed that the report should be referred to the Health, Community & Care Overview and Scrutiny Committee who would report back to the September 2011 Audit Committee. This report summarises the Audit Commission’s main findings and updates the HCCOSC on the progress that has been made. This progress has been made as a result of adopting a partnership approach to developing a county wide strategy that will enable a co-ordinated response to our ageing population.


Using the Audit Commission’s national report “Under Pressure – the financial implications of ageing population for local councils” as the basis for its key lines of enquiry, a local audit team investigated 4 main questions:

- More older people-less money: how far does the Council understand differing local needs and populations, and develop solutions to meet them?
• **Managing costs** – maximising value for money, making hard choices, targeting, finding out what people value most
• **Prevention and early intervention** – going beyond social care to invest to save, understanding why need for social care arises and preventing it
• **Using information** – making better use of information, taking financial planning across silos to better fit corporate priorities.

Following their investigation, the Audit Commission concluded that “Gloucestershire County Council and its partners understand the pressures they face from the predicted rise in the older population..(and).. are clear that they need to take action to ensure that services can meet demand”. The report goes on to emphasise the importance of consulting widely with people, using information consistently and of maximising collective capacity (across district council partners) to address the challenges of an ageing population.

The Audit Commission’s resulting report entitled “Planning for An Ageing Population” concluded with 5 recommendations for the Council to address with its partners. The Audit Commission also issued an Action Plan that went into more detail how they expected their recommendations to be addressed. The main areas recommended for attention were:

1. Improve the understanding of the needs and aspirations of older people
2. Explore the scope for achieving a greater value for money more quickly
3. Develop locality and neighbourhood working further
4. Improve the impact of preventative initiatives
5. Complete a comprehensive older people’s strategy

### 5. Local Response to the report

The County Council was clear in its discussions with the Audit Commission that although their report was to the County Council, it has wider implications that require a strategic response from all partners. The Audit Commission accepted that the County Council cannot respond effectively in isolation and so urged it to share this report widely with its partners as a basis for agreeing a response to the report’s recommendations and the common challenge of an ageing population.

The table presented at the end of this report demonstrates that the County Council has made progress against all five of the recommended areas. The County Council has concentrated on engaging partners in developing a strategic response, recommendation 5, so providing the necessary framework within which to further develop the other recommendations more robustly.

The County Council first engaged the Gloucestershire Health and Community Wellbeing Board’s Executive Group who acknowledged the pressing challenges and opportunities for the County arising from our ageing population. As a result they hosted a well attended Workshop held on 31/8/10; information about the event is available on website: [http://www.gloshcwp.nhs.uk/healthylivin326712.html](http://www.gloshcwp.nhs.uk/healthylivin326712.html). Following an invitation, from Dave Martin, GCC C&ACD, at this event to develop a
strategic approach, 17 people volunteered to collaborate; representing both statutory and voluntary sector organisations.

6. Progress with developing a comprehensive older people’s strategy

Sponsored by the Gloucestershire Health and Community Wellbeing Partnership, with accountability to the then Community Strategy Executive Board, a multi-sector working group has developed a strategy with a scope that includes the wider determinants of ageing well rather than focussing solely on health and social care. The group was led by Christina Snell, CEO Age UK Gloucestershire and supported by Gloucestershire Association for Voluntary and Community Action’s Partnerships Team (GAVCA).

The draft Strategy for “Ageing Well in Gloucestershire” sets out how we want the experience of ageing in Gloucestershire to be positive and what needs to be done to achieve that. The vision has 5 key elements:

1. Best possible physical and mental health and wellbeing
2. Financial security
3. Being involved and included in the community
4. Feeling safe and secure
5. Dignity and choice

7. Consultation on the Draft Strategy

Consultation took place across the County between 4th February and 18th March 2011. The aim of the consultation was to establish whether the priorities identified were the right ones, whether there were other priorities felt to be more important and whether local organisations would like to be involved in delivering it. This also addressed the Audit Commission’s recommendation about improving the needs and aspirations of older people. The consultation took place in three main ways:

- Gloucestershire Rural Community Council (GRCC) ran a survey open to all Gloucestershire residents which was available either on-line or on paper. GRCC sent questionnaires to older people’s groups across the County, distributed them through both GRCC In-Touch events and Village Agents, GAVCA supplied Gloucestershire Libraries with questionnaires as well. A total of 407 completed questionnaires were received from equal numbers of people under and over 65. The on-line survey received 69% of responses while 31% were made on paper.
- GAVCA undertook a survey of organisations and received 13 responses from a range of voluntary and community organisations, public sector agencies and multi-sector partnerships. Many organisations offered their support to realising this strategy.
- Gloucestershire County Council Community & Adult Care Directorate ran 3 workshops for people with learning disabilities and engaged 43 people from 3 districts.
8. Results of the consultation

The key finding of the consultation was that being healthy and having enough money are the main concerns and priorities as people get older. Many respondents commented on the relationship between the various strands of the strategy, particularly the impact of money and health on issues such as control, choice and dignity e.g:

- “Being healthy and having sufficient income in retirement gives control over what you do with your life”.
- “Choice and control are linked in my mind and are dependent on good health”
- “The more money you have the more you can pay for choice”
- “If you can help me maintain my health and financial wellbeing, choice and dignity will follow”
- “Being financially secure is very important as it is essential to have enough money in order to keep healthy and to lead an active life and be part of a community”

There was support for the need to consider prevention and life long aspirations and recognising that how someone lives their life will affect them in older age. The most commonly raised issues felt to be missing from the list of priorities from across all three sources of feedback were transport and access to information and advice.

Each organisation has produced a report on the results of their respective contribution to the consultation. This complete report is available on the Gloshub http://www.gloshub.org.uk/website.

9. Next steps
A Prioritisation Event was held on 21st April and partners from both the statutory and voluntary sectors considered the results of the consultation. The Strategy is now being revised in the light of this; endorsement will then be sought from the Gloucestershire Health and Community Wellbeing Partnership. A Strategic Co-ordinating Group will be established to oversee the development of an implementation plan and work with other strategies, and organisations, to influence them to take into account the implications of the changing demographics. This implementation plan will include the specific Audit Commission recommendations to ensure they are embedded into our approach. The Strategy is included in the Gloucestershire Health and Community Wellbeing Partnership’s Joint Strategic Commissioning Plan and the Action Card for “Promoting and Maintaining Independence and Inclusion”.

10. Key Risks
The changing demographics presents a risk to Gloucestershire’s public services and the task of balancing the growing demand for services against financial constraints will be difficult. Whilst each organisation can address these individually, the real gains are to be made by working in collaboration in the way proposed. Endorsement
and support is needed at a senior level in each organisation in order for the strategy to carry the necessary weight.

**Appendix:** Table summarising progress against Audit Commission recommendations

**Background Documents:**
1. Audit Commission: “Under Pressure – the financial implications of ageing population for local councils”
3. Draft Ageing Well Strategy

**Officer Contact:** Dave Martin, Interim Director, Community & Adult Care
Email: david.martin@gloucestershire.gov.uk