

MAYOR AND CABINET		
Report Title	Positive Ageing Council	
Key Decision	Yes	Item No. 9
Ward	All wards	
Contributors	Executive Director, Community Services	
Class	Part 1	Date: 23 February 2011

Summary

This report outlines options for establishing a Positive Ageing Council for Lewisham which would give local residents over 60 years of age a forum within the Council structure for discussing issues relating to later life in the Borough. It seeks approval to proceed with a community based model which would give a high level of access within the current financial constraints of the Council.

1. Purpose

This report outlines two possible models for the delivery of a Positive Ageing Council for Lewisham, identifies the resource needs, outlines a potential timetable, and seeks a decision on the recommended model. It also notes that changes to the Council's Constitution will be required in order for the Positive Ageing Council to be formally recognised within the Council's reporting framework.

2. Recommendations

It is recommended that the Mayor:

- 2.1 agree to establish a Positive Ageing Council(POSAC) in Lewisham to debate and champion issues affecting older people in the Borough;
- 2.2 agree to using a community based model 2 outlined at paragraph 5.5.1, for the new POSAC, and to review the model again in three years time;
- 2.3 notes that changes to the Council's Constitution will be required in order for POSAC to be formally recognised within the Council's reporting framework and agrees that this matter should be referred to the Constitution Working Group to consider the changes to the Constitution necessary to implement these arrangements.

3 Policy Context

3.1 Shaping the Future – the Council’s Sustainable Community Strategy includes the following priority outcomes, all of which align with the areas of interest for the proposed Positive Ageing Council:

- Ambitious and achieving - where people are inspired and supported to fulfil their potential.
- Safer – where people feel safe and live free from crime, antisocial behaviour and abuse
- Empowered and responsible – where people are actively involved in their local area and contribute to supportive communities
- Clean, green and liveable – where people live in high quality housing and can care for and enjoy their environment
- Healthy, active and enjoyable – where people can actively participate in maintaining and improving their health and well-being
- Dynamic and prosperous – where people are part of vibrant communities and town centres, well connected to London and beyond

3.2 Council Priorities - Corporate priorities

The Council’s ten corporate priorities determine what contribution the Council will make towards delivery of the Community Strategy priorities. The priorities focus on the needs of local people and are geared towards ensuring that, in delivering services, the Council focuses on its citizens, is transparent and responds to changing needs and demands. Key corporate priorities that relate to the proposed work of the POSAC include:

- community leadership and empowerment: developing opportunities for the active participation and engagement of people in the life of the community
- clean, green and liveable: improving environmental management, the cleanliness and care for roads and pavements and promoting a sustainable environment
- safety, security and a visible presence: partnership working with the police and others and using the Council’s powers to combat anti-social behaviour
- strengthening the local economy: gaining resources to regenerate key localities, strengthen employment skills and promote public transport
- decent homes for all: investment in social and affordable housing to achieve the decent homes standard, tackle homelessness and supply key worker housing
- caring for adults and older people: working with health services to support older people and adults in need of care
- active, healthy citizens: leisure, sporting, learning and creative activities for everyone

- 3.3 The Mayor of Lewisham made a pledge in 2010 to establish an 'Elders Council' to enable older residents to be fully engaged in the issues relating to them, to be involved in making decisions that effect their daily lives and the communities in which they live, and to advise other Council Boards and Partnerships.

4 Background

- 4.1 For the past five years, there has been a Cabinet member for Older People. The postholder has championed the interests and needs of older people and has a sphere of influence which is cross-directorate. The post currently has responsibility for intergenerational links and the Council for Positive Ageing. Since the establishment of the post, a number of key initiatives have been delivered with key aims including: to involve local older people in local decision making; to tackle age discrimination and inequality; to keep older people informed and to develop intergenerational links.
- 4.2 Previously an Ageing Well Action Plan has pulled together the activity that relates to older people from across the Council and elsewhere. It is proposed that this is reviewed and refreshed so that it picks up existing and proposed activity and aligns, for example, with the key health and social care aims of maintaining independence and the provision of preventative services. The new action plan will focus on creating the links and partnerships between Council directorates to secure a more cohesive approach to responding to older people's issues, and focus on establishing better engagement methods with older people to ensure ongoing and appropriate service improvements.
- 4.3 This work will build on the successful work that has taken place to date including :
- a) The Positive Ageing Board, which comprises some 20 – 30 older residents who meet on a regular basis to discuss policies and initiatives and to share good practice. The group does not at present have a 'formal' role within the council partnership board structures, and its members (other than the Cabinet Member for Older People) attend other partnership meetings on an ad hoc basis.
 - b) The Lay Visitor Scheme which runs in partnership with Age Concern and enables older residents to volunteer their time as a peer lay visitor for those living full time in care homes.
 - c) An intergenerational DVD based on work with young people and older residents exploring both the benefits and issues of different generation working and living together.
- 4.4 While there have been numerous successful initiatives coming through the Positive Ageing Board (PAB), the Board does not currently sit within the Council reporting framework and as such the issues and

concerns of older people which the Board review, have no formal reporting pathway . Consequently the influence of the PAB has been limited. Although the views of some older residents have been gathered through consultations on specific issues, there is currently no wider engagement with the 60+ population across the borough. The establishment of a POSAC will broaden engagement with older residents, provide a platform for older residents to become more actively involved in their community and a framework for influencing local decision makers and service providers.

5 The Positive Ageing Council Initiative

- 5.1 The Cabinet Member for Older People and the PAB, along with Officers have been meeting to look at what an Elders Council might look like. An early thought was that PAB members felt that the term 'Positive Ageing Council' would better promote the energy and direction of the proposed Council than 'Elders Council' and this has been the working title throughout.
- 5.2 Members of the PAB visited Brighton and Hove to review a model that was well established and working very well, and Officers then developed a similar model (Model 1) to this for Lewisham and then consulted on this.
- 5.3 **Model 1: Setting up a new democratically elected Positive Ageing Council**
- To set up an elected council of 18 residents aged 60 years or over, from each of the 18 wards, with elections taking place every three years, or more frequently.
 - Candidates would register to stand for each of the 18 wards.
 - Public elections would take place via a ballot at identified venues in each of the 18 wards.
 - Ward candidates and voters would be targeted through a borough wide media campaign, the Local Assemblies programme and targeted engagement work.

The benefits of this model include:

- POSAC would be open to anyone aged 60 years old or over, living in the relevant wards and offer the chance of real local involvement on older peoples' issues.
- All candidates would be elected democratically through public elections.
- It mirrors the Young Mayor's programme and delivers the Mayor's Pledge.

The draw backs to this model include:

- The current Positive Ageing Board would be disbanded and replaced with POSAC, thus losing the benefits of having a number of experienced active older residents who have already been working closely with the Council around matters affecting older people in Lewisham.
- Through consultation there has been some opposition raised by older peoples' groups in the borough to Lewisham setting up a new council representing older people in this way as it was seen as unwieldy.
- Holding elections across 18 wards would have resource implications.
- It runs the risk of low participation in some wards, which could result in some wards having POSAC representation and others having none. This can be supported by the varied participation rates across the ward assemblies.

5.4 Consultation on Model 1

Positive Ageing Board

- 5.4.1 In September 2010, the Council consulted the Positive Ageing Board (PAB) on the proposed POSAC model 1. PAB members felt that it was very important that any candidates standing as POSAC members should be 'non-political' (i.e. that their involvement and support for issues should not be politically motivated). They thought the setting up of the POSAC would be costly and queried whether the Council could afford to do this in the current economic climate.
- 5.4.2 PAB members queried the need to elect from the general population over 60, and suggested that existing older people's organisations might be better. However, after discussion, the PAB felt that organisations might have a particular agenda to push which might conflict with the role of the POSAC member, and also that it didn't really engage with the Mayors original pledge to involve local individuals.
- 5.4.3 It was felt that the logistics and robustness of the voting process in wards would be difficult and costly.
- 5.4.4 **Key older people's organisations in the Borough**
- 5.4.5 Key stakeholders representing older people's organisations in the Borough were consulted in September 2010.
- 5.4.6 There was some concern that the current PAB would be dissolved to make way for the POSAC, particularly as current PAB members were committed to promoting and tackling older people's issues and had

delivered well on some areas of concern over the past two years. A loss of that experience and understanding was felt to be regrettable.

- 5.4.7 The model was felt to be unwieldy, not only in terms of cost but also the capacity of ward elected POSAC members to deal with the range of issues/concerns that may be raised with them by local older people.
- 5.4.8 There was concern that unlike the stability and proactiveness of the current PAB members, a number of people could be elected who were not in touch with people and who just wanted to sit on a Board. The success of POSAC would be based on getting the concerns of people to the Council so it is important who the representatives are and how they communicate and action items.
- 5.4.9 The POSAC would lose credibility quickly if results aren't forthcoming so there is a need to define some outcomes and also some terms of reference for members.
- 5.5 With a number of concerns over the viability of model 1, officers looked at another model (model 2) taking into account the feedback from the consultation.

5.5.1 **Model 2: A community- based POSAC**

- 5.5.2 Under this model, the POSAC would hold 4 meetings a year (in a ward assembly type format) which would be open to any resident over the age of 60 to attend and give a view.
- 5.5.3 The POSAC would operate as an open forum that would exist to debate and champion issues affecting older people in the Borough. It would operate in a similar fashion to the local assembly, identifying priority issues and working in partnership to identify and implement solutions. This could take the form of raising concerns with the Council or other public sector partner services and seeking responses and improvements, as well as members of the POSAC working on solutions to local issues themselves such as the lay visitors scheme.
- 5.5.4 The POSAC would use similar tools for influencing local decisions as the assemblies i.e. the ability to refer matters to select committees and the power to take one motion per annum to the Mayor and Cabinet. However it would be anticipated that the majority of actions would take place by consensus through partnership working. The Cabinet Member for Older People would act as an official advisor to the POSAC and would take forward to Mayor and Cabinet any key issues or papers. There would be an independent facilitator of the quarterly POSAC meetings.
- 5.5.5 The current PAB would form a co-ordinating group and would meet between POSAC quarterly meetings to plan the agenda and oversee the actioning of items raised at the open POSAC meetings for the first

year of operation to ensure stability. The co-ordinating group would be re-elected again in year 2. Some co-optee positions would be available for the co-ordinating group to enable new interested members from the POSAC quarterly meetings to take part.

5.5.6 The co-ordinating group would represent the POSAC by attending Council partnership boards and other forums as observers and feeding back on current issues to the POSAC meetings.

5.5.7 The POSAC would offer Council and partnership boards and forums a body of knowledge and expertise on issues related to older people in the Borough.

5.5.8 The POSAC would be supported by officers from Community Services Directorate who would support and note meetings, and ensure meetings are publicised widely.

Benefits of this model:

- Cost effective – no election costs just officer facilitation support
- Open meetings, maximising participation , could be linked to other engagement processes such as online forums
- Light touch and non bureaucratic
- Retains current expertise of the PAB members for the first year initially to ensure stability.

Drawbacks:

- Managing size of meetings
- Ensuring representation

5.6 Consultation on model 2

5.6.1 Positive Ageing Board

5.6.2 The members of the Positive Ageing Board were consulted on model 2 in January 2011.

5.6.3 The PAB felt that model 2 was a better model in that it offered the opportunity to engage with the wider 60+ population through the quarterly open POSAC meetings, and meetings could take place in different areas of the Borough to enable all 60+ residents to take part easily.

5.6.4 PAB felt that the ability to take forward their views to Mayor and Cabinet via the Cabinet Member for Older People was a powerful tool for local older people to ensure that their concerns would be heard. Currently the PAB isn't clearly established within the council structure of Boards and formal forums and the POSAC would enable this to happen.

5.7 Launching the POSAC

- 5.7.1 In the interim, whilst the Constitution Working Party meets to discuss the changes necessary to the Constitution to enable the POSAC to operate within the Councils reporting framework, it is proposed to launch the POSAC on 17th May 2011 and bring together local older people to identify issues and priorities that they want to focus on for the first year of operation.

6 Financial implications

The report recommends the establishment of a Positive Ageing Council (POSAC) using a community model. The POSAC will be supported by Community Service staff from within the existing Local Assemblies establishment. Other costs are not expected to exceed £500p.a.

7 Legal implications

- 7.1 The Council's Equality Policy is set out in the Council's Comprehensive Equalities Scheme (CES). The CES recognises age as one of the six recognised equality strands and sets out the Council's commitment to ensuring equality for all. The Equality Standard for Local Government recognises engagement through assessment and consultation as one of the five levels required to promote best practice systems in equality and diversity. The establishment of the POSAC is therefore in accordance with the CES and will enable the Council to demonstrate that an effective mechanism has been put in place to enable the Council to take account of the needs of older people and ensure that outcomes are fed into the Council's service planning process.
- 7.2 The Council's Constitution will need to be amended in order for POSAC to be formally recognised within the Council's reporting framework. This report therefore recommends that this matter should be referred to the Constitution Working Group to consider the changes to the Constitution necessary to implement these arrangements.

8. Crime and Disorder implications

There are no direct implications arising from this report.

9. Equalities implications

The POSAC will give people over 60 years of age a formal forum where they can actively become involved on issues of importance to older residents and enable them to contribute at a range of levels and influence decision-making processes.

10. Environmental implications

Issues such as travel and health are important to people over 60 years of age, some of whom may be retired and the POSAC will be a forum

where concerns and improvements can be discussed and provide an opportunity to effect change.

Background Documents

None

If you have any queries arising from this report, please contact Annette Stead, Service Manager, Sport and Leisure on 0208 3148496.