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10 March 2009

S U M M O N S

MEETING: Overview and Scrutiny Committee
DATE: 18 March 2009
TIME: 6.00 p.m.
PLACE: Committee Room 1, Town Hall, Gosport
Democratic Services contact: Chris Wrein

LINDA EDWARDS
BOROUGH SOLICITOR

MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE

Councillor Forder (Chairman)
Councillor Mrs Salter (Vice-Chairman)

Councillor Allen	Councillor Dickson
Councillor Beavis	Councillor Edwards
Councillor Carr	Councillor Mrs Forder
Councillor Champion	Councillor Salter
Councillor Cully	Councillor Miss West

FIRE PRECAUTIONS

(To be read from the Chair if members of the public are present)

In the event of the fire alarm (single continuous sound) being activated, please leave the room immediately.

Proceed downstairs by way of the main stairs or as directed by GBC staff, follow any of the emergency exit signs. People with disability or mobility issues please identify yourself to GBC staff who will assist in your evacuation of the building.

IMPORTANT NOTICE:

- If you are in a wheelchair or have difficulty in walking and require access to the Committee Room on the First Floor of the Town Hall for this meeting, assistance can be provided by Town Hall staff on request

If you require any of the services detailed above please ring the Direct Line for the Democratic Services Officer listed on the Summons (first page).

NOTE:

Please note that mobile phones should be switched off for the duration of the meeting.

AGENDA

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

To receive apologies, if any, for inability to attend the meeting.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

All Members present are reminded to declare, at this point in the meeting or as soon as possible thereafter, any personal (including financial) or prejudicial interest in any item(s) being considered at this meeting.

3. MINUTES

To confirm the Minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 29 January 2009 (attached)

4. DEVELOPMENT OF A WORK PROGRAMME

A) REQUESTS FOR SCRUTINY

To consider any requests for scrutiny received by the Borough Solicitor. A copy of the Scrutiny Work Plan Prioritisation Aid is attached.

B) WORK PROGRAMME

To consider the work programme (attached) for the Committee and any suggestions from Members for issues to be scrutinise.

C) OTHER SUGGESTIONS FOR SCRUTINY

5. REPORTS TO BE RECEIVED

(i) SERVICES FOR THE ELDERLY WORKING GROUP

To present the final report of the Working Group (attached)

(ii) GOSPORT'S SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITY STRATEGY – PROGRESS UPDATE

To provide Members with a progress update on Gosport's Sustainable Community Strategy and its Local Strategic Partnership (briefing note attached)

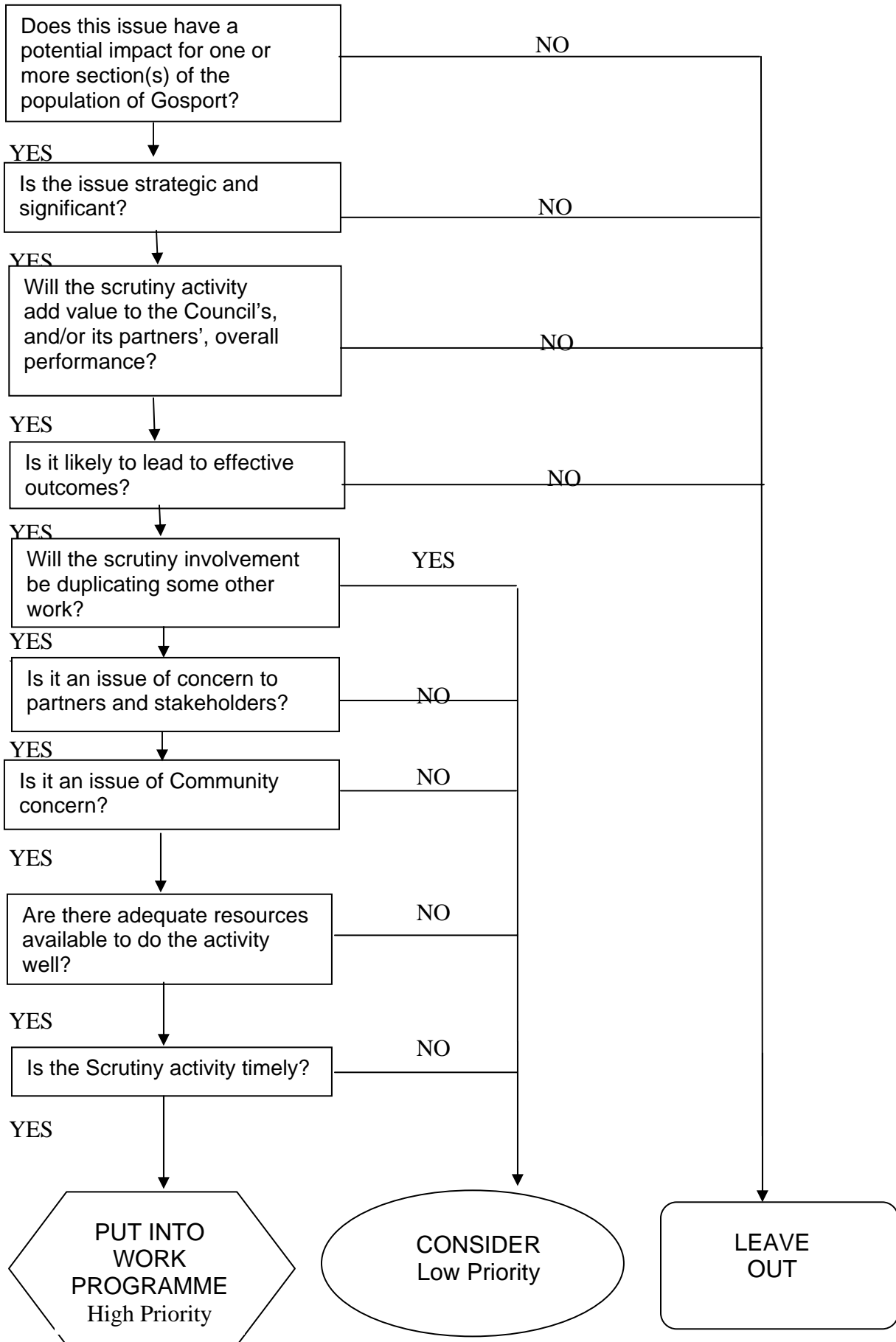
(iii) SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES ACT 2007

Verbal update from the Borough Solicitor.

Overview and Scrutiny Committee
18 March 2009

- (iv) ANNUAL REPORT ON THE WORK OF THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
To consider the Annual Report of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee for the Municipal Year 2008-2009 (attached)

6. ANY OTHER BUSINESS



OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE: WORK PROGRAMME

Work Area	Lead Member/Officer	Date to be reported to Committee
Annual Report on the Work of the Committee	Chairman	18 March 2009
Performance Information: <i>Consideration of performance information relating to actions agreed by CMT</i>	Mike Jeffery	At 6-monthly intervals. Next report: 23 July 2009
Community Strategy Action Plan: <i>Policy Framework Document</i>	Julie Petty	At 6-monthly intervals: Next report 18 March 2009
Disability Equality Scheme: <i>Receive progress report on an annual basis</i>	Julie Petty	Annually: Next report 11 June 2009
Race Equality Scheme	Julie Petty	Annually: Next report 28 January 2010
Services for the Elderly Working Group		Final report 18 March 2009
Review of Outturn Budget (Whole Committee Scrutiny)	Peter Wilson	23 July 2009
Sustainable Communities Act 2007	Linda Edwards	18 March 2009
Calls for Action and Local Petitions	Linda Edwards	When the provisions of the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 are brought into force
Work areas: <i>Review at each meeting</i>		

AGENDA NO. 5(i)

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE 18 MARCH 2009

Report of the Services for the Elderly Working Group

Membership

Councillors Richard Dickson, Kim West, Inge Forder and Bob Forder

Adviser: Frank Dunn (Age Concern, Gosport)

Officers servicing the Working Group: Chris Wrein and Lisa Reade.

Development of the Scrutiny

The Overview and Scrutiny Committee resolved to establish a Working Group at its meeting of 25 September 2008. Although the precise terms of reference were at first unclear, it was felt that this subject would be important and have a high profile in the near future and that the Council would have a role to play.

The Working Group met on 2 December 2008 having invited Frank Dunn (Age Concern, Gosport). See appendix 1. A conclusion arising from the discussion was that the issues of loneliness and day centre provision were of particular concern and could usefully be focused upon by the Working Group. It was agreed that this issue should be central to the scrutiny. The meeting also agreed that the Chairman should meet with Borough Council officers who had a particular interest in this issue to ascertain their opinion and draw on their experience.

The Chairman, accompanied by Chris Wrein (Democratic Services) met with Sue Kendall and Carol White (Housing Services) on 18 December 2008. The main points arising from this meeting are recorded in Appendix 2.

Following the meeting of 18 December 2008 Carol White and Mary Burgess (Housing Services) submitted written evidence to the Working Group. See appendices 3 and 4).

Further to a request from the Chairman Lisa Reade (Democratic Services) conducted some research (appendix 5) in which she contrasted relevant provision in Gosport with that evident in Portsmouth and some other nearby local authorities.

On 18 February 2009 the Working Group met with Jean Legg (Gosport Voluntary Action- Co-ordinator, Befriending Service) and Margaret Wilkinson (Hampshire Adult Services). Once these witnesses had left, there was also a discussion about the conclusions which the Working Group could draw and the recommendations it could make. See appendices 6 and 7.

Conclusions

The Working Group decided that it should publish a report at this stage because time would not allow any further enquiries or research before the end of the Council year. However there is undoubtedly more useful work that could be undertaken if the newly convened Overview and Scrutiny Committee decided to in 2009-2010

The Working Group drew the following conclusions:

1. There is much good work being undertaken in Gosport to alleviate loneliness and isolation. For example, Working Group members were particularly impressed by the Befriending Service offered by Gosport Voluntary Action.
2. Nevertheless, there is much evidence to suggest that loneliness and isolation are major and growing problems. There is a widespread suspicion and considerable anecdotal evidence to suggest that the problem is more widespread than is generally recognised.
3. There is no comprehensive systematic data available to accurately assess the extent of the problem.
4. Responses designed to alleviate the problem are inclined to be ad hoc and depend on the enthusiasm and voluntary initiatives of particular individuals.
5. Members of the Working Group felt unable to make very specific recommendations as to how the problem could be addressed because Members lacked expertise. However they did think that there was unlikely to be any single initiative that would answer. Solutions would be best provided by 'chipping away' at the problem and they would probably best be provided by a wide variety of organisations and voluntary bodies.

Recommendation

The Council explore the possibility of organising and hosting a conference on loneliness and isolation among the elderly.

Local churches, scout groups, schools, charities and other voluntary bodies would be invited. The conference would begin with a presentation designed to highlight the problem, but this could be brief. The majority of the time would be spent with participants working together exchanging information about good

practice and generating strategies that could help in addressing the issues and considering ways in which they could contribute to alleviating the problems.

List of appendices:

1. Record of the meeting held on 2 December 2008
2. Record of a meeting held on 18 December 2008
3. Written evidence submitted by Carol White
4. Written evidence submitted by Mary Burgess
5. Record of research undertaken by Lisa Reade
6. Record of the Working Group meeting held on 18 February 2009
7. Information on the Befriending Service offered by Gosport Voluntary Action

APPENDIX 1

NOTES OF THE MEETING OF THE SERVICES FOR THE ELDERLY WORKING GROUP HELD AT 2.00 PM ON 2 DECEMBER 2008

Membership: Councillors Dickson (P), Mrs Forder (P) , Forder (P) and Miss West

Officers: Chris Wrein

Also in attendance: Frank Dunn (Age Concern)

1.0 BACKGROUND

- 1.1 At its meeting on 25 September 2008, the Overview and Scrutiny Committee decided to establish a Working Group to scrutinise the provision of services for the elderly in Gosport.
- 1.2 It had been felt that this subject would be important and high profile in the near future and that the Council would have a role to play. Currently, information was dispersed and many people did not take up benefits or services to which they were entitled.
- 1.3 It was hoped that the outcome of the scrutiny would be a report identifying areas of need and appropriate recommendations designed to help alleviate them.

2.0 DISCUSSION AT THE MEETING

- 2.1 Frank Dunn provided the Working Group with an overview of the work of Age Concern (Gosport) which provided an information and advice centre at the Methodist Church in Stoke Road on a daily basis. They provided help to elderly people wherever possible and at one time had assisted with house moves. However, resources were limited and they were dependent on volunteers which restricted the assistance that could be given.
- 2.2 Income was generated by grants from the Borough and County Councils and through fund raising e.g. flag days
- 2.3 Age Concern (Portsmouth) differed in that it ran two day centres and employed paid officers with money provided by Portsmouth City Council. There was a good overlap of work between the two Age Concern organisations.
- 2.4 Mr Dunn listed areas where Age Concern offered assistance:
 - Recommendation of tradespeople and solicitors

- Form filling
 - Advice on facilities available in the Borough e.g. nursing homes
 - Advice on where to access services/practical assistance
 - Insurance enquiries (these are directed to Age Concern (Portsmouth))
 - Advice on sheltered accommodation and housing/re-housing
 - Limited financial advice
 - Some benefit advice (the Council provides help, including home visits)
 - Lending out of books and will packs
 - Pensions advice
- 2.5 Age Concern (Gosport) had a good relationship with Gosport Borough Council and the Citizens' Advice Bureau from whom it received referrals from time to time.
- 2.6 Mr Dunn gave examples of where Age Concern (Gosport) were unable to provide practical help, although it was acknowledged that Gosport Voluntary Action (GVA) were often able to provide a service:
- gardening
 - befriending service (loneliness amongst elderly people was a common problem)
 - queries on access nursing home services
 - abuse of the elderly (cases would be referred to Social Services)
- 2.7 With regard to nursing homes, Age Concern (Gosport) knew a great deal about the varying standards of provision in Gosport but there were not enough bed spaces with a number of establishments having closed due to e.g. lack of lifts.
- 2.8 Mr Dunn identified Margaret Wilkinson, the manager of the Carers' Centre, who would be able to provide a great deal of information.
- 2.9 Age Concern (Gosport) were known by all the GP surgeries in Gosport and it was felt that this may be an area which could be expanded on.
- 2.10 Mr Dunn advised that all people who attended day centres were required to be referred by Social Services. This provided a much needed day out for some service users and also some respite for carers. Service users were becoming more and more numerous and some of them were mentally frail. The inadequacy of day centre provision was one of the most serious issues in Gosport.
- 2.11 Councillor Dickson observed that many of the current elderly generation valued their pride and independence and were reluctant to seek help, a problem which was exacerbated where a person lived alone. They were also often reluctant to become involved with paperwork, had an aversion to jargon and liked to keep to their own daily routines. Newly

retired people may be the best people to be encouraged to provide help but Mr Dunn advised that it was becoming ever harder to recruit volunteers.

2.12 Mr Dunn advised that, nationally, Age Concern and Help the Aged would be merging. The process would probably take a couple of years.

2.13 It was felt that the areas for the Working Group to focus on should be:

- awareness of entitlement benefits
- loneliness and a possible lack of adequate day centres
- adequacy of nursing home provision

2.14 It was agreed that the Chairman speak with Sue Kendall, the Council's Older Persons' Services Co-ordinator (Housing Services) prior to the Working Group inviting Margaret Wilkinson to meet them.

APPENDIX 2

Record of the main points arising from a meeting held at Gosport Town Hall on Thursday 18 December attended by Sue Kendall, Carol White, Chris Wrein and Bob Forder.

Background

The meeting was held as the result of a decision of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee's Working Group on Services for the Elderly held on 2 December. The Chairman had been asked to hold a meeting with Sue Kendall (GBC) to explore which of the issues identified by the Working Group could be profitably pursued and what work had already been carried out by GBC. In the event it was thought appropriate to invite Carol White to the meeting too.

Sue and Carol both strongly felt that the Working Group could have most impact if it were to consider the issue of loneliness and day centre provision. Their opinion was supported by various evidence, including their own research.

Bob explained that in his view the Working Group's Report would have to contain the following:

- i) Evidence that there was a unfulfilled need,
- ii) Examples of how provision could be improved,
- iii) Recommendations as to how such an improvement could be achieved.

With respect to the first of these Sue and Carol both agreed to write brief reports summarising their evidence that there was a need.

Chris would begin to arrange a questioning session for the Working Group to which Margaret Wilkinson (Adult Services) and Jean Legg (GVA) would be invited.

Lisa (Democratic Services) could investigate Portsmouth City Council's Day Centre provision which was thought to be of a good standard if Linda Edwards considered this appropriate.

Action points:

- Sue Kendall and Carol White to write brief reports as explained above.
- Chris Wrein to set up Working Group meeting in early to mid February to which Margaret Wilkinson and Jean Legg will be invited.
- Lisa to undertake research as above.

Evidence based report to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee's Working Group.

I have been working on the Telecare project since January 2008. In that time I have carried out over 120 assessments to residents in Gosport. There has been the same pattern forming for individuals who are at home and alone with no family, friends or neighbours.

They suffer largely from loneliness; mostly due to not being very mobile, or have a disability in some way. Some of these people do not belong to clubs, they have no contact with anyone and have no idea what they may or may not be entitled to. Transport is also a strong consideration as they cannot in most cases get out and about.

1. Telecare has helped to offer security and assistance when they live on their own. If they were to fall or become ill they would be able to summon help.
 - We have been able to signpost people to help that they had no knowledge of, such as: The Pension Service, The Befriending Service, DART, Gosport Voluntary Services, and Carer's Centre etc. Information has also been given where appropriate for our sheltered schemes.
 - Currently we have 180 Telecare customers. 175 are over the age of 65. We have 30 clients who we respond to as they have no family living locally.
 - Total population aged 65-74 predicted to live alone in Gosport is 1,765 in 2008. This is predicted to rise to: 2,315 by 2015.
 - Total population aged 75 and over predicted to live alone in Gosport are: 3,147 in 2008 and is predicted to rise to: 3,638 by 2015.
 - There are 13,293 over 65's living in Gosport (2007 statistics provided by HCC), this has risen to 13,800 in 2008.
2. There is a way forward: Help could be at hand for those who is either on the telecare project or who in future may become clients of the Supporting People Lifeline service managed by the operational team in Housing. A phone call or a weekly visit would be all it takes. Staff could be trained in what other services are available and can signpost and offer advice where appropriate.
3. Recommendations:
 - Weekly visits or phone calls
 - Transport to clubs and associations
 - Youth activities to assist older people in the community
 - Mobile library or reading scheme
 - Day centre provision
 - Gentle exercise classes
 - Coffee mornings sessions – people alone live near each other and could be encourage to visit each other – they just need that first introduction.
 - Gardening assistance

Carol White, Project Officer (Private Sector), Strategy & Enabling, Housing Services

APPENDIX 4

GAPS IN PROVISION OF SERVICES TO THE ELDERLY IN GOSPORT

To: Chris Wrein

For Information

The following information is based on 9 years service with Gosport Borough Council sheltered housing service, the last two years as Senior Scheme Manager.

During this time, the service has become involved in carrying out Needs and Risk Assessments for those older people who are interested in coming into sheltered housing, and more recently on behalf of Telecare, where the person stays in their own home and support is provided via a dispersed unit in their home.

Although as a service we are unable to provide evidence to back up the following report, the information contained within it is based on experience and knowledge of the age group concerned.

Isolation and loneliness is becoming more of an issue for older people; there are many reasons for this and based on responses on our assessment forms, they include:

- Families and friends moving away from home (Gosport)
- People now tend to live longer, and may have fewer friends as they age.
- Health issues can cause older people to become isolated (fear and embarrassment).
- Mobility issues may be a problem for some, due to not being able to get out or to access public transport easily.

Carrying out Needs and Risk Assessments (NARA) has enabled us to identify people's needs for sheltered accommodation, and to highlight the support they require.

Since the introduction of the home assessments 173 people have expressed an interest in sheltered housing, a breakdown of the figures shows that:

- 15% want to move to Gosport to be nearer families for support.
- 20% feel their homes/gardens are too big and cannot manage them anymore.
- 50% feel isolated and lonely
- 15% for other reasons

Case Study 1

Mrs A lived in a one bedroom bungalow, however due to her feeling isolated and lonely she became depressed and as a result attended the memory clinic in Gosport. Through their recommendation it was thought that sheltered might be an option for her to look into. Since moving into sheltered Mrs A has now managed to establish a

good net work of friends and no longer needs to attend the memory clinic anymore for her depression.

Case Study 2

Mr B lived in a 3 bedroom house; he could not maintain his large home anymore and due to ill health could not get out to meet people and as a result became isolated and lonely. This was identified through the NARA interview process. He has since transferred into sheltered housing and says that it is the best thing he has done for a long time.

Sheltered housing is not a 'cure-all' or suitable for everyone, however, these two case studies have identified that in some cases, lonely and isolated older people can benefit from moving into sheltered accommodation.

The use of sheltered housing communal areas as a 'hub' for the older people living in close vicinity to a scheme is one that needs to be developed. There is resistance from residents living at the schemes having the communal areas made available to the wider community and there are security issues surrounding this which would need to be addressed, however, in order to alleviate some of the isolation, options for use could include:

- Learning in later life courses (Fareham college used to offer this service even in sheltered schemes, but due to funding issues were stopped. They included pottery making, Alexander techniques, glass painting, crafts including card making)
- Coffee Mornings in the community. (As most of our Schemes are surrounded by an older population, The Communal Lounge in each area could be used as a focal point)
- Making our Communal Lounges available to other Agencies i.e. Memory Clinic provides relaxation, anxiety classes etc. The Pension Service: - what older people are entitled to.
- Sometimes older people have difficulty in being able to facilitate what little resources are available to them, if they had weekly contact with a Scheme Manager this could alleviate some of the isolation and loneliness issues they feel, and at the same time staff would be able to signpost them to other agencies that may be able to help them.

It must be remembered that some older people are happy and indeed prefer to be on their own, and feel the need to live an independent lifestyle, however this does mean that not only are they isolated, but also suffer from loneliness. This could be addressed by GBC providing a service for the elderly of welfare visits in their own homes.

Below is a list of services available to older people, this is not a comprehensive list and has been compiled with the assistance of local providers. As you can see, bearing in mind that statistically the older population in Gosport is increasing, there would appear to be few choices for older people to combat isolation. Day centres organised and run by Adult services have not been included in this report.

The author of this report is also aware that there is a percentage of older people who are fit & active (mentally and physically) and who would want more from a Day Centre (sometimes seen as boring and too controlled) and for there to be access to alternative sources of social activity.

Service	By whom	How often
Lunch Club	The Salvation Army	Weekly
Coffee Morning	The Salvation Army	Weekly
Lunch Club	Baptist Church Stoke Rd	Monthly
Dial a ride (to take people Places	Has to be arranged by the person needing transport	Daily
GVA (befriending, dust busters, shopping service)	GVA	Waiting list for this service and is done once a week for shopping and cleaning. Befriending even less.
Coffee Mornings	Jacobs Well	Weekly
Lunch club	Jacobs Well	Monthly
Older People	Melrose	Monthly
Older People Club	Brendon care	Mon – Thurs Weekly

Author of report: Mary Burgess, Senior Scheme Manager

Date: 27th January 2009

Day Service Provision for the Elderly

1.0 Day Service Provision for the Elderly in Portsmouth

- 1.1 Portsmouth City Council provides a single full day care service for the elderly in Portsmouth, centred on those with dementia and high dependency needs.
- 1.2 The Royal Albert Centre, Buckland Court, provides a service from 8am-4pm including full personal care, meals, hairdressing and beauty salon, foot care, computer and Internet access, arts and crafts, cookery, exercise and well-being groups.
- 1.3 It also provides visits to places of interest, entertainers and guest speakers.
- 1.4 In order for residents of Portsmouth to use the service they must be assessed and referred by the Adult Services Team. They undertake an assessment of individual needs to establish if a place at the Centre is needed.
- 1.5 It would seem that Portsmouth City Council are also considering the proposal of an additional Day Care Service provision for the elderly be provided in the north of the City although no mention is made as to which section of the elderly it will focus on.
- 1.6 If an elderly person were to contact PCC as an individual suffering from loneliness or seeking friendship they would be offered two booklets 'Lunch and Friendship Clubs- Portsmouth Area' and 'Activities at Community Centres'.
- 1.7 The latter provides details of activities that are run by/held at community centres and includes both elderly specific and generic social activities.
- 1.8 The 'Lunch and Friendship Clubs' booklet provides details of a vast array of clubs mainly centred on lunchtimes. The clubs are run by a number of different providers including the Civil Service, Age Concern and the Salvation Army.
- 1.9 In addition to this it also lists 7 clubs run by Social Services in partnership with the City Council; these clubs are centred on the areas of Paulsgrove and Buckland, providing a variety of services including lunches, trips out, guest speakers, the opportunity to socialise amongst others. Some of the sessions are facilitated by a paid worker who supports the planning of a programme agreed by all members.

2.0 What is available in other areas?

- 2.1 On investigating the neighbouring Boroughs of Fareham and Havant it would appear that they too are aware of the issues in facilitating activities for the elderly. Both Local Authorities have run similar working groups to the Services to the Elderly Working Group at Gosport Borough Council although they appear to cover a wider spectrum of needs identified by the elderly members of the group. The culminations of the findings in each group are presented in the form of an action plan for development areas in the future.
- 2.2 Neither Fareham nor Havant Borough Council run day care sessions for the elderly, they identify the need to link up with local voluntary groups and publicise the work they do and opportunities they provide.
- 2.3 They do however publicise their own non elderly specific schemes e.g. walk to health as an example of activities available.
- 2.4 Havant Borough Council offers elderly residents the chance to attend the 50+ forum, providing them with the opportunity to express their views, concerns and opinions of what is important to them. This has resulted in a direct influence on various proposed projects.
- 2.5 Fareham Borough Council and Portsmouth City Council have also produced 'Strategy for Older People' Documents that document their findings and proposals for the future.

3.0 What is currently available in Gosport?

- 3.1 There are currently nine friendship/lunch clubs in Gosport run by Brendoncare.
- 3.2 Brendoncare is a company that facilitate clubs for the elderly in Hampshire and Dorset. The clubs are run by volunteers and aim to promote wellbeing and the opportunity to meet new people.
- 3.3 The support from the volunteers ensures that the costs can be kept low to the members; in addition they have a commitment to providing free transport when needed.
- 3.4 All the clubs in Gosport are held at Club Hampshire in Gosport with the exception of Lee-on the-Solent.

Lisa Reade, Democratic Services

APPENDIX 6

NOTES OF THE MEETING OF THE SERVICES FOR THE ELDERLY WORKING GROUP HELD AT 2.00PM ON 18 FEBRUARY 2009

Membership: Councillors Dickson (P), Mrs Forder (P), Forder (P) and Miss West

Officers: Lisa Reade

Also in attendance: Frank Dunn (Age Concern)

1.0 Background

- 1.1 This was the second meeting of the Services for the Elderly Working Group. Members agreed that as the Municipal Year was drawing to a close it was important to tie up the work of the group in order that a report could be written and presented at the final Overview and Scrutiny meeting of the year.
- 1.2 Members accepted that there were likely to be some loose ends, but that there was a possibility of re-examining the issue in the next Municipal Year.
- 1.3 Since the last meeting Councillor Forder had met with Sue Kendall and Carol White who had produced reports with examples of loneliness that they had encountered in their daily work.
- 1.4 There had also been research into the type of provisions made by surrounding Local Authorities.
- 1.5 The group invited Margaret Wilkinson of the Carers Centre, Adult Services, Hampshire County Council and Jean Legg, Befriender Coordinator at Gosport Voluntary Action to a joint questioning session.
- 1.6 The purpose of this questioning session was to further explore existing provisions in Gosport designed to combat loneliness and isolation amongst the elderly and explore the potential for improvement.

2.0 Discussion at the meeting

- 2.1 It was suggested that the idea of a conference be explored with Margaret and Jean. The purpose of the conference would be to invite representatives from groups that could help provide some of the volunteers and facilities needed to support the work already being undertaken by existing groups such as GVA.
- 2.2 Possible links included Schools, Churches and other voluntary groups.
- 2.3 The group acknowledged that there were already some facilities available, including the Befriending Service but that one of the key issues was that there were many people suffering from loneliness who remained undiscovered.
- 2.4 Mr Dunn felt that one of the priorities was to establish ways of identifying these people. He explained that some G.P's surgeries were helpful in referring patients to organisations but that others were less proactive.
- 2.5 The group recognised that many of the people who would benefit most from the services were those who were unable to, or felt they could not leave their homes so would not benefit from the promotion of services in existing facilities.
- 2.6 As a result the group explored the possibility of including a 'Guide to Services for the Elderly' in publications including Coastline, Lee Advertiser and Free Ads as distribution was guaranteed to all houses in the Borough. The article would be elderly specific and include details of benefits available, Travel Tokens and the Befriending Services.
- 2.7 Members enquired as to whether existing organisations encountered difficulties with elderly people who were old and lonely being stubborn or feeling that they were causing a fuss and not wanting to worry people. Members also queried whether there were difficulties with elderly people feeling too proud to ask for help as they perceived it to be a sign of weakness.
- 2.8 Mr Dunn explained that many elderly people no longer fell into this category and that it was a generational issue that was gradually passing. He acknowledged that the problem still existed but that it was not the main obstacle in reaching those in need.

- 2.9 The Group explored the idea of inviting external organisations to a conference style event and how the organisations could help address the issues. Activities suggested were:
- Familiarisation for attendees of the issues of loneliness surrounding the elderly;
 - Group sessions discussing how the external organisations themselves felt they could help; and
 - Exploring what the organisations could provide to support existing and newly developed projects.
- 2.10 The group examined the benefits of inviting Churches and Schools to the event. It was hoped that the schools could encourage sixth-formers to contribute their time voluntarily to support their own projects as part of their Citizenship Education and for other community based projects e.g. Duke of Edinburgh Award.
- 2.11 It was also hoped that Churches would be able to help by providing not only volunteers but facilities in which to coordinate projects.
- 2.12 Mr Dunn advised that he had recently been in discussion with St Mary's Parish Church, Alverstoke as they were exploring the idea of setting up a 'buddy' service for the elderly. He explained that they were very keen and had contacted Age Concern for advice. The group felt that this would be an extremely useful service as St Mary's Church benefited from the use of a good facility whose Parish covered a large area of Gosport.
- 2.13 The group felt that, to ensure any recommendation was productive, they must make the aims simple. They were aware that they could not completely solve the issues surrounding loneliness for the elderly as there was no definitive answer, however the group felt the best way forward would be to help support the existing facilities and promote the issues to others in the hope that more facilities would become available.
- 2.14 The group discussed barriers to the elderly getting out and about. Councillor Dickson advised that he often transported a large number of elderly people by taxi as they were unable to use buses as a result of mobility problems.
- 2.15 He also reported that recent legislation had meant that existing taxis were gradually being replaced by London style cabs, and that although this meant that they would all be accessible to wheelchair users, they would isolate the elderly with mobility problems.
- 2.16 The Group suggested that taxis might be another potential distribution

point for advisory leaflets.

- 2.17 The conclusion of the first section of the meeting was that the group could not completely solve the problems facing them; the group would discuss the idea of a conference with the guests and investigate what support they would like to receive from the Working Group.
- 2.18 Councillor Forder would look at the possibility of organising a conference; he would discuss with the Chief Executive or Borough Solicitor the possibility of the resource of an Officer to facilitate the event.

3.0 Questioning Session with Margaret Wilkinson and Jean Legg

- 3.1 Margaret and Jean were advised of the background to the Working Group, and where the group felt it was presently at. The questions were presented in an informal way, with other Members invited to expand if they felt the need.
- 3.2 Jean explained that she worked 15 hours a week as a befriending coordinator for the GVA. Her duties included visiting clients and matching clients to volunteers.
- 3.3 Margaret worked for Hampshire County Council, working with carers of vulnerable people; her work covered any aspect of supporting unpaid carers. In addition she was also the Chair of Trustees for Gosport Voluntary Action.
- 3.4 There were no immediate funding issues to the services supplied by the GVA. They were fortunate enough to receive National Lottery funding which would continue for the next four years. This security meant that they could look at the potential for expansion and prepare fully for future funding applications.
- 3.5 It was a restriction of the Lottery that the money awarded must be used for the designated projects and also that Jean could not be paid for more than 15 hours work per week. Margaret advised the group that Jean did in fact work many more hours on top of those she was paid for.
- 3.6 The Befriending Service received referrals from a number of sources, including Hospitals, General Practitioners and Age Concern, a home visit was then made by Jean to assess the needs of the Client. The volunteers undertook an induction interview, they underwent police and reference checks, and Jean would then introduce the volunteer to

the Client and maintain contact with both.

- 3.7 Any volunteer would undertake first aid and listening skills training, and be entitled to attend any other training offered by the GVA. An annual appraisal took place for every volunteer and neither volunteer nor client had to continue if they felt uncomfortable with the person they were with.
- 3.8 Jean advised the group that the majority of clients were initially wary when the process began. As a relationship developed between the Client and volunteer, the client would become more responsive not only to the volunteer, but the outside world. It was also noted that often the people who were self-referrals became volunteers rather than clients.
- 3.9 The service provided signposts to improve the social lives of the clients, but similarly to Mr Dunn, Jean expressed concern for those people that were potential clients and the difficulty reaching them.
- 3.10 The service often received self referrals from the recently bereaved and in particular bereaved carers. The group was advised that the carers of people with dementia were particularly vulnerable as often friends and families' offers of help diminished as the illness progressed. This was in part due to the carer's embarrassment surrounding the dementia sufferer and their illness, this led to them becoming withdrawn. When the bereavement occurred the carer no longer had a focus and often turned to the befriending service for support. It was often these people who become volunteers.
- 3.11 The Working group were advised that in Gosport there were the following provisions available:
- Befriending for the visually impaired
 - Alverstoke Church
 - LV Care Group in Lee-on-the-Solent.
 - Salvation Army
 - Brendon Care
 - Homeserve
 - Dial a ride
 -
- 3.12 In addition, as a result of the Older Persons Well Being Strategy, there were a number of County run schemes including Social Clubs and Opal Project.

The Opal Project was a new scheme run by Age Concern in

conjunction with Hampshire County Council Older People's Well-Being Team and Hampshire Voluntary Groups Advisory Service. A leaflet had been produced for the elderly advising that OPAL could help provide links to social events, support and care amongst other things. The group was particularly impressed with this publication and was keen to see the project in Gosport.

- 3.13 Jean advised the Working Group that the Befriending scheme was very effective in Gosport and that she could not advise on other schemes as a number of them were yet to be launched.
- 3.14 The need for more volunteers was also noted and that there was a list of clients waiting for volunteers.
- 3.15 Jean advised that the waiting list was prioritised to ensure those in most need were allocated first and that often a client would have a telephone befriender whilst waiting for a visiting volunteer to be allocated.
- 3.16 The Working group presented the idea of a conference to Margaret and Jean. The group discussed ideas that could be developed from it and the benefits/issues that it could bring.
- 3.17 The group explored the possibility of a link with 6th Forms, positives of this would include the enjoyment elderly people often experienced from the company of younger people, and the fact that the young people would benefit as any time they gave would help towards any community projects they may be undertaking and provide work experience for those hoping to choose care work as their career. It was hoped that it would also promote the service to the wider community through word of mouth.
- 3.18 There was concern as to the need for Criminal Record Bureau Checks for any individual volunteering; a possible solution was that the young people could start attending along with existing volunteers in the capacity of a helper e.g. a wheelchair pusher on a trip out. This could help many of the existing volunteers who were unable, due to their own problems, to undertake such tasks and may lead to the young person becoming a volunteer in their own right. As the young person would not be undertaking the visits on their own a CRB would not immediately be required.
- 3.19 It was hoped that a conference or similar would enable representatives to attend and develop an understanding of some of the issues and return to their organisation and enthuse the people they worked with.

- 3.20 Everybody present was aware to the fact they did not want to increase the workload of the Befriending Service but were keen to find ways to increase effectiveness.
- 3.21 It was felt that, in order for the event to be successful, representatives from schools, churches and other voluntary groups should be invited and that it must not overlap with the topics covered at the recent networking event
- 3.22 It was hoped that the event would not only promote the issues that needed addressing and recruit volunteers, but also advise potential volunteers of the benefits to themselves and their community. It was hoped that the event would help promote issues to the wider community to enable those currently not receiving help to be aware of what was available for them.
- 3.23 Margaret and Jean advised the group that, apart from additional funding, they would like the Councillors to use their positions to talk to members of their individual wards about the services available as they were most likely to encounter individual members of the public. It was also hoped that this word of mouth would help promote awareness and encourage neighbours to look out for each other.
- 3.24 They were very keen on providing a document through the post to elderly residents, either as a supplement with Coastline or when issuing bus token leaflets.
- 3.25 The group was advised that the issue was currently a priority of the Government and that initiatives such as OPAL were a result of the Older Person's Wellbeing Strategy. GVA was also linked to the NHS, but found that levels of support for the scheme were varying from practice to practice.
- 3.26 There were good links with the families of clients as often they were the referrers and attended the first visit from the volunteer; this support was also useful in establishing trust. There were also projects being explored that would support the whole family rather than a just an individual member. An Alzheimer's Café was currently being established in Bridgemarky to provide Educational and Social Support.
- 3.27 Margaret and Jean both felt that the issues could not be resolved, merely chipped away at to ensure the services that were in existence were as effective and well supported as possible.

4.0 Conclusion

- 4.1 In summary the group felt that it may be beneficial to start by targeting specific smaller groups with the information already available. This could include an individual street or individual sheltered housing scheme. It was hoped that the success of this could then be evaluated for further use in other locations.
- 4.2 The group debated whether a conference was appropriate for the aims they had and whether it was the best option for progression. The importance of not increasing the workload of the GVA was again reiterated.
- 4.3 It was suggested that an initial recommendation would be hard to achieve without doing so and that as the issues would still be present next year, the option for the working group to be re-established could be explored.
- 4.4 The idea of a meeting with external organisations was still welcomed, with the inclusion of a workshop to explore ways forward. A summary report would be produced and Councillor Forder would investigate whether an Officer could be made available to facilitate such event.

GOSPORT BOROUGH COUNCIL

POLICY/SERVICES OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

DATE: 18th March 2009

ITEM FOR DISCUSSION

TITLE: Gosport's Sustainable Community Strategy – Progress Update

AUTHOR: Chief Executive

1.0 PURPOSE

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide Members with a progress update on Gosport's Sustainable Community Strategy and its Local Strategic Partnership.

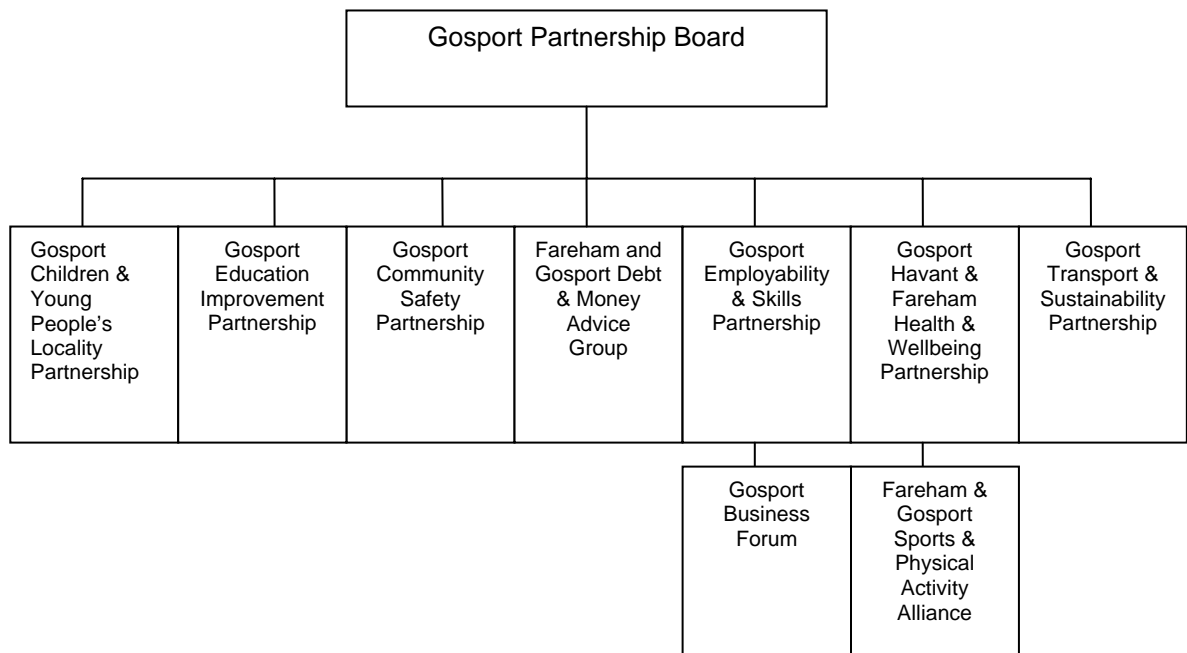
2.0 BACKGROUND

- 2.1 Gosport Borough Council has a statutory duty to prepare a Community Strategy through the Local Strategic Partnership (LSP).
- 2.2 Gosport Borough Council is a key partner in the LSP which is known as the Gosport Partnership. The Partnership also includes representatives from Churches Together, Gosport Voluntary Action, Government Offices for the South East, Groundwork Solent, Hampshire Constabulary, Hampshire County Council, Hampshire Primary Care Trust, Ministry of Defence, Portsmouth Housing Association, South East England Development Agency and St Vincent College.
- 2.3 A new Sustainable Community Strategy has been produced by the LSP and this has been subject to scrutiny as it is a policy framework document:
- The Overview and Scrutiny Committee scrutinised the approach and process for reviewing and revising the Community Strategy in October 2006.
 - The Committee then scrutinised the new Sustainable Community Strategy in September 2007 and also requested six monthly progress updates to be provided.
 - The Council adopted the Community Strategy in November 2007.

3.0 REPORT

3.1 LSP Structure

- 3.1.1 The LSP is in the process of dissolving two of its thematic subgroups (Gosport Community Learning Forum and Gosport Regeneration Action Forum) and creating an Employability and Skills Partnership to help address its strategic priority around increasing local employment opportunities.
- 3.1.2 The LSP will now also encompass the Gosport Education Improvement Partnership. The slightly revised structure is set out in the diagram below.



- 3.1.3 The recommendation from this Scrutiny Committee in September 2008, that there should be greater educational representation on the Board, has also been implemented. Eric Halton, District Manager for Education and Inclusion, Hampshire County Council has joined the Board in his capacity as the Chairman of the Gosport Children and Young People's Locality Partnership. The March Board will confirm that the Gosport Education and Improvement Partnership should also become a subgroup of the LSP, resulting in the Chairman of that Partnership (currently Ian Johnson, Head of Brune Park), also joining the Board.

3.2 Action plan

- 3.2.1 An action plan has been developed to assist with the delivery of the Sustainable Community Strategy.

- 3.2.2 The action plan focuses on strategic priorities as identified from the 'Make your Mark' consultation in 2006 and baseline data evidence:
- Reduce traffic congestion
 - Increase employment opportunities
- 3.2.3 Following its first annual review in September 2008, where the Board reviewed the [data report](#)¹ for Gosport and its priorities, a third strategic priority was identified; Health and Wellbeing.
- 3.2.4 The strategic priority, reduce traffic congestion, is being underpinned by the work of the Gosport Transport and Sustainability Partnership (GTSP) which continues to work on its changing travel behaviour campaign to encourage people out of cars and on to more sustainable forms of transport. The Travel Gosport website is due to go live in the next few weeks and will include a dedicated car sharing service for Gosport. The layout of the new website can be viewed at <http://travelgosport.intelligent-marketing.org/>. The GTSP is also working closely with Hampshire County Council to finalise details of the signs which will be placed along the A32. The Fareham Environment and Transport Partnership will also be working in partnership with the GTSP on this action. As part of its lobbying role, the GTSP responded to recent consultation on the BRT by writing a letter strongly in favour of the scheme to Transport for South Hampshire for them to include it in their bid to Government. This work directly supports the LAA priority around congestion.
- 3.2.5 The strategic priority, increase employment opportunities, is being underpinned by various actions. The LSP Board has agreed to again fund Gosport's Big Day Out 2009. Last year's event was hugely successful, attracting 10,000 visitors who were overwhelming positive about the event. This event supports LAA Theme H Strong Communities. Plans for a Skills Festival Autumn 2009 are underway with the Education Business Partnership ready to run the event and HMS Sultan to host. The LSP Board has raised £6750 for this event but needs an additional £6750 and is waiting for confirmation of funding from the Learning and Skills Council. This event will support several LAA priorities including improving the life chances for 16-19 year olds and employment rates. The new Employability and Skills Partnership which first meets in April will be the lead partnership for this priority.
- 3.2.6 The strategic priority, Health and wellbeing, is initially progressing through lobbying various agencies to assist Hampshire Teenage Pregnancy Partnership to reduce the number of teenage pregnancies in the Borough. This will directly support the LAA priority on teenage pregnancy. At its March meeting, the Board will be reviewing other health issues in the Borough and possible actions.

1

<http://www.gosportpartnership.co.uk/partnershipboard/Gosport%20Partnership%20Data%20Report%20September%202008.pdf>

3.3 Additional projects

3.3.1 The LSP, through its thematic subgroups, is also currently working on the following projects:

3.3.2 The Communities for the Future project aims to:

- Get better local intelligence and knowledge of the issues around worklessness and low incomes affecting 3 communities of disadvantage in Gosport (Bridgemary, Rowner, Forton/Leesland)
- Learn from past interventions getting people involved in learning, training and skills development.

A report and recommendations for action will be reviewed by the LSP Board mid 2009. This project supports several LAA priorities including increasing skills levels, employment rate and reducing health inequalities.

3.3.3 Gosport Savers Project

The extension of Hampshire Savers into Gosport was launched at the Family Fun Day on 21 February 2009 in the Nimrod Centre in Rowner. From 1 March a credit union multipoint will operate from the Nimrod Centre initially on Monday afternoons, and from April one morning a week. Gosport Voluntary Action will also act as an information point for the multipoint. The overall aim is to increase the number of multipoints in Gosport over time. Also planned is money management support/advice through local schools and children's centres. This project directly supports several LAA priorities including life chances for young people, fuel poverty and reducing health inequalities.

3.4 Performance management

3.4.1 The LSP has finalised its Performance Management Framework.

3.5 Future challenges

3.5.1 The LSP's key challenges in delivering the Sustainable Community Strategy are:

- Making the action plan happen – limited financial and staff resources make delivery challenging. However, a focused action plan and the work that has been undertaken over the past two years will improve the LSP's ability to deliver.
- Ensuring that all partners contribute to making the action happen and that it is not always Gosport Borough Council-led. For instance although the LSP funded the Big Day Out, it would not have happened without a huge time and staff commitment from Lynda Dine and her team. However, the projects relating to the transport priority are being led very effectively by Groundwork Solent and other partners and the Skills Fair is being led by St Vincent College and the LSC so progress is being made.
- Local Area Agreement – the District LSP links into this process are still unclear although effort is being made by the LSP to ensure Gosport is included, e.g. through the GTSP and by aligning LSP projects to LAA priorities.

All information on the LSP can be found at www.gosportpartnership.co.uk.

4.0 CONCLUSION

- 4.1 An action plan for the Sustainable Community Strategy has been produced and tangible outcomes have already taken place and more are under development. A Performance Management Framework has been finalised and the first annual review has taken place.

Supporting Information

Financial implications: None.

Legal implications: None.

Risk Assessment: Failure to deliver actions in respect of the Sustainable Community Strategy poses a risk to partnership working and reputation management.

Background papers including previous reports:

- A. PowerPoint Presentation to Scrutiny Committee October 2006
- B. Report to Scrutiny Committee September 2007
- C. Report to Scrutiny Committee March 2008
- D. Report to Scrutiny Committee September 2008

Enclosures/Appendices:

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Julie.petty@gosport.gov.uk

AGENDA NO. 5 (iv)

Annual Report of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee **Municipal Year 2008-2009**

- a) The Committee completed the following reports:
 - 1. New Councillor Induction – referred to Standards and Governance Board
 - 2. Cycle Lanes – referred to Community and Environment Board
 - 3. Noise Monitoring – referred to Community and Environment Board
 - 4. Services for the Elderly.
- b) The following information was received and debated:
 - 1. Performance Information (submitted by Mike Jeffrey)
 - 2. Community Strategy Action Plan (submitted by Julie Petty)
 - 3. Disability Equality Scheme (submitted by Julie Petty)
 - 4. Race Equality Annual Report (submitted by Julie Petty)
- c) Two training sessions were organised for all Councillors (including those who were not Committee members):
 - 1. The first dealt with issues concerning the role of the Committee in a Fourth Option Council; what Overview and Scrutiny entails and how success might be achieved. This session was lead by Linda Edwards and Ian Lycett.
 - 2. The second focussed on 'Effective Questioning' and was led by Simon Baddeley on Birmingham University.

Both sessions were well-attended and led to some purposeful debate.
- d) A watching brief was kept with regard to developments concerning the Sustainable Communities Act, 2007 and Calls for Action and Local Petitions (an aspect of the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007).
- e) The Committee also committed itself to review the out-turn budget on an annual basis, commencing in July 2009.
- f) The Committee adopted a checklist designed as an aid to the prioritisation of potential scrutinies. Copy attached.

Scrutiny Work Plan Prioritisation Aid

