

OLDER PEOPLE'S PLAN UPDATE JULY 2021

Cabinet Member(s)	Cllr Jane Palmer Cllr Ian Edwards
Cabinet Portfolio(s)	Health and Social Care Leader of the Council
Officer Contact(s)	Kevin Byrne Social Care and Health
Papers with report	Appendix A - Older People's Plan update

HEADLINES

Summary	To provide an update on the progress in delivering the actions in the plan for older people.
Putting our Residents First	The Older People's Plan assists the Council to deliver its plans to put residents first. Supporting older people to live independent, active, healthy lives and providing opportunities to improve well-being is key to Hillingdon's Health and Wellbeing Strategy.
Financial Cost	There are no direct financial implications for the Council in respect of this strategic update report.
Relevant Select Committee	Families, Health and Wellbeing
Relevant Ward(s)	All

RECOMMENDATION

That Cabinet notes the successes to date and continued progress to deliver the Older People's Action Plan during 2020-21 to improve the quality of life, health and wellbeing of older people in Hillingdon.

Reasons for recommendation

The Older People's Plan endorses the commitment from the Council and its partners to the continued improvement of services and support designed to create a better quality of life for older people in Hillingdon. The plan supports the Council to put residents first and contributes to improving the health and wellbeing of Hillingdon's older residents.

Alternative options considered / risk management

The alternative would have been to not deliver some or all of the support offered to older residents which would not have enabled the Council to achieve its objectives of supporting older people to live well and be independent.

Select Committee comments

None at this stage.

SUPPORTING INFORMATION

1. Supporting older people to live independent, active lives, to make a positive contribution to local communities and helping older people to feel safer in their homes and in the wider community and contributes directly to the priorities of the Health and Wellbeing Strategy.
2. In Hillingdon there are well-established arrangements to hear from older people and keep Hillingdon's older residents informed and involved across the Borough on important matters. This includes their involvement through Hillingdon's Older People's Assembly.
3. Hillingdon's Older People's Plan, led by the Older People's Champion (Cllr Ian Edwards, Leader of the Council) sets out a range of actions that the Council and its partners are undertaking in response to issues that older people in Hillingdon have said are important to them.
4. The Older People's Plan is grouped under 5 broad headings - Safety and Security, Preventative Care, Keeping Independent and Healthy (Health and Wellbeing), Supporting Older People in the Community, and Housing. The Plan is discussed and agreed through the Older People's Assembly (when the forum can meet) and with the Leader of the Council in his role as Older People's Champion.
5. The Covid-19 pandemic has inevitably curtailed some activities, but services have risen to the challenge and there have been several achievements during 2020-21. Some are highlighted in the summary below, with a fuller update attached at Appendix A.

Safety and Security

6. To help older people feel safe and secure, free burglar alarms have been installed into the homes of older people aged over 65. Since the beginning of the scheme in 2008, the Council has installed 11,103 alarms in the homes of Hillingdon's older residents.

7. The service was suspended in March 2020 and has now resumed, though the volume of applications is significantly lower than before the pandemic. In the period October 2020 to end May 2021, 177 alarms were installed in Phase 12, leaving 191 to be installed. Funding for Phase 13, for a further 1000 alarms, has already been approved.

Preventative Care

8. The TeleCareLine service supports residents to live safely and independently in their own homes using a range of equipment, such as sensors and detectors all connected back to a control centre to assist to older people when needed, 24/7. As at 31ST May 2021, Hillingdon had 6,835 residents in receipt of Telecare, which is an increase of 193 on last quarter. 5,766 are aged over 75 years.

Keeping Independent and Healthy

9. All programmes and activities delivered or commissioned by the Sport and Physical Activity team were suspended from 23rd March 2020. Between this date and end of June, the team worked with 9 library staff members to make regular telephone calls to provide a welfare and wellbeing check to over 400 older residents who were registered to attend our chair-based, tea dance and dementia coffee morning programmes. 57% of these residents requested a follow-up telephone call either every 2-3 days, twice a month or monthly. Feedback from people receiving these phone calls was very positive and in many cases was the only contact they were receiving.
10. From February 2021, the team has offered 65+ online gentle exercise classes. Participants sign up for sessions by completing a health questionnaire. Online codes to join class are sent out weekly and participants complete a 1 hour weekly live class. 106 residents joined the sessions over 12 weeks.
11. In December 2020, residents were invited to attend the online performance of the Compass theatre pantomime. The sports team working with Uxbridge library produced a 30-minute Christmas video which was sent to 120 residents and shown to 40 residents in libraries.
12. Dementia continues to be a serious problem which particularly affects older people. The Sport and Physical Activity Team has developed a wide range of initiatives to provide support to people with dementia. Throughout December 2020 to April 2021, online support continued with 6 zoom sessions happening each week. Video calls were also made using Alexa Echo devices to 4 residents. Working with libraries, the team secured funding from the Reading Agency to purchase tablets to enable residents with no internet access to join on online sessions.
13. A small 'Buddy' resource pack is sent out weekly to residents living with dementia. The packs include a variety of puzzles, quizzes, songs, poems, reminiscence stories, and chair-based exercises. Doorstep visits have been offered to residents who do not have online access. During the January to March 2021 lockdown weekly emails continued to be sent to 120 residents including reminiscence articles.

14. The Brown Badge Older Person's parking scheme continues to be popular with older residents. There are currently 13,461 active Brown Badge users. Between October 2020 and May 2021 an average of 78% (611) of the Brown Badge applications were made using the new online application system.
15. Opportunities open to older people are promoted regularly through Hillingdon People magazine, which carries a dedicated Older People's page in each edition.
16. The Older People's Assembly brings together older residents to discuss topics of interest and to review the Older People's Plan. Meetings have been suspended during the pandemic but will resume when it is safe to do so.

Supporting Older People in the Community

17. The Leader's Initiative for Older People provides funding to support capital and revenue projects which benefit older people living in Hillingdon. Following a long period in which virtually no grants have been awarded, officers have written to all previous applicants to confirm that the scheme is still operating. Grant applications for summer and Christmas/winter events are accepted from groups which:
 - provide events or other activities for older people (aged 65 or over) living in Hillingdon
 - are properly constituted – with a bank account in the name of the group
 - submit an application which shows details of what is being requested and shows value for money
 - Apply for funding towards the direct costs of food, transport, and other reasonable items, including entertainment
 - Do not include in the application items such as staff costs, overheads, overnight stays, gifts and prizes.
18. Age UK Hillingdon provides a range of services which support older residents. Age UK's information and advice services helped Hillingdon's older residents to secure £493,735 of benefits during the second half of 2020/21.
19. The Age UK Hillingdon Help at Home service continued to support clients throughout lockdown. In the final quarter of 2020/21 they made 3,091 visits, providing 4,417 hours of support to 204 of our most vulnerable clients. They delivered services such as shopping, meal preparation and general wellbeing checks requested from families who were unable to visit their parents/grandparents.
20. Age UK Hillingdon's Call, Chat, Care service continued to ensure that the most isolated or vulnerable people had support. Referrals were taken from social services, social prescribers, GP's and other organisations and clients were given the choice of how many care calls a week they received from our volunteers. The frequency of calls was from once a fortnight to three times a week. Each call consisted of asking if enough food and medication was available and if the client felt unwell or had any Covid symptoms. They then were signposted for further help if required. Just as important as this was the call itself. The regular contact with a volunteer stopped many from feeling forgotten or alone during shielding or just being isolated from family and friends.

21. The Befriending services continued to deliver support by telephone, although we briefly had garden face to face visits until restrictions came back in again. The service met some challenges, for instance, a hard of hearing gentleman was isolated but could not hear on the telephone, so one of the volunteers worked with the client's son to set up Skype calls.
22. Growing numbers of older people have access to, and make use of, the internet but there are still many who do not use this technology. Age UK Hillingdon is running a project for people 65+ living in Hillingdon who are vulnerable / low resilience, requiring coping strategies and practical support to enable them to have new access and ability to use the internet, to combat loneliness, support mental/physical health and aid resilience to future/prolonged lockdowns. Using a tablet loaned to them (with the option of purchasing at the end of the course) clients complete a 6-week tailored course learning the skills needed to use the internet. At the end of the course, they will be able to use the technology for both practical day-to-day tasks and to keep in contact with families and groups/activities.
23. Falls are a major reason for older people losing independence. Age UK Hillingdon runs a falls prevention service. Over the second half of 2020/21 the Falls Prevention Team worked with 122 clients in their homes on one or more occasions, with a total of 411 visits or phone calls. Strong risk assessments and use of PPE have ensured staff and patient safety.
24. Age UK Hillingdon also operates a 'Good Neighbour' Service. Due to the huge impact on older people's confidence in going outside during and after Covid lockdowns, a short walks task was added to the service. An older person who is mobile enough to walk safely and independently is matched with a volunteer for a short walk each week. This has improved people's confidence in going outside and has improved health and wellbeing both physically and mentally and allows them to re-enter the community feeling supported by a volunteer.

Financial Implications

There are no direct implications for this strategic update.

RESIDENT BENEFIT & CONSULTATION

The benefit or impact upon Hillingdon residents, service users and communities?

The Older People's Plan is welcomed by older residents as positively continuing to raise their value and profile and is an opportunity to improve the lives of older people in the community. Appendix A includes more detail on the work being carried out.

Consultation carried out or required

Regular feedback from the Hillingdon Older People's Assembly Steering Group and Older People's Assembly is used to help shape future priorities. The Older People's Assembly in Hillingdon normally periodically receives progress updates on delivering the promises set out within the Older People's Plan, though at present the Assembly is suspended.

CORPORATE CONSIDERATIONS

Corporate Finance

Corporate Finance has reviewed the report and concur with the financial implications set out above, that there are no direct financial implications associated with the recommendations in this report.

Legal

The Borough Solicitor confirms that there are no specific legal implications arising from this report.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

NIL