

REPORT TO: PEOPLE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
Date of Meeting: 2nd March 2017

Report of: Cllr Robson
Chair of the Dementia Friendly Council Task and Finish Group:
Champion for Older People

Title: Dementia Friendly Council Task and Finish Group Report.

Is this a Key Decision?

No

Is this an Executive or Council Function?

Executive

1. What is the report about?

To report the findings and recommendations of this Task and Finish Group to the People Scrutiny Committee.

2. Recommendations:

The Executive:-

- a) Encourage organisations such as the Alzheimer's Society, memory cafés and Age Concern to apply for allotments for use by those with dementia.
- b) Outlines the work of this Task and Finish Group, in a press and social media release, highlighting that the Council can offer appointments later in the day, upon request.
- c) Establishes what information sharing there is already between Council departments in respect of vulnerable individuals, such as those with dementia and investigate the process for recording and sharing new information.
- d) Continues to support dementia friendly staff training across the Council, encouraging staff to become Dementia Champions.
- e) Looks into providing different modules of more in depth training for officers who work directly with members of the public.
- f) Explores dementia training as a compulsory requirement before a Hackney carriage/Private Hire driver's licence is granted.
- g) Ensures that dementia friendly engagement is reflected and considered in the social inclusivity dimension of evaluating procurements.
- h) Requires trained front line staff in particular to wear dementia friendly badges and a forget-me-not sign to be placed in a prominent place in the Customer Service Centre.
- i) Investigate the viability of providing a second toilet and/or carry out improvements to the existing toilet (including access) in the Customer Service Centre subject to costings and available resources.
- j) Provides clearer signposting for the toilet in the Customer Service Centre subject to costings and available resources.

- k) Provides a higher level of dementia awareness training for security staff.
- l) Investigates the potential for dementia friendly red coat tours.
- m) Ensures that information concerning dementia friendly activities is available at the tourist information centre.
- n) Encourages such organisations as the Devon Wildlife Trust and Active Exeter to adopt a dementia friendly approach in the provision of activities.
- o) Consider whether a similar review of other front line services within the Council should be undertaken at this stage and if so, to prioritise the order for review.

3. Reasons for the recommendation:

- To highlight that Exeter City Council is now a member of the Exeter Dementia Action Alliance and continues to take steps to improve the customer experience and delivery of Council services to those with dementia in accordance with its Action Plan.
- To help expand, update and improve upon the Exeter City Council's Alliance Action Plan.
- To recognise the many benefits and positive impact that various indoor and outdoor activities can have for people with dementia and to positively encourage external organisations to include dementia friendly activities where possible.
- To ensure that the City Council shares information on a cross departmental basis, to assist in communication and awareness when engaging with those with dementia.
- To ensure that front line staff, in particular, receive an appropriate level of dementia training so that they may engage more sympathetically and with an increased level of understanding.
- To ensure that external companies and individuals, who provide services for or on behalf of the Council, have an understanding of dementia, particularly where such services involve direct contact with the public.
- To improve the customer experience for those visiting the Customer Service Centre. Having trained staff, wearing dementia friendly badges and displaying a forget-me-not sign in the Customer Service Centre will provide reassurance and encourage openness and communication.
- To ensure that the toilet facility within the Customer Service Centre is more accessible and dementia friendly and to investigate whether a second toilet is achievable both in terms of location and cost.
- To encourage external organisations to provide dementia friendly activities for the benefit of the overall community.

4. What are the resource implications including non-financial resources:

There are no resource implications, save for recommendations set out in paragraph 2(i) and 2(j). Adaptations and/or improvements may only proceed provided that funds are available from the existing budget. Where this is not possible, specific Council approval for expenditure will be sought at a later date once costings are available.

5. Section 151 Officer Comments:

The recommendations are noted. Should there be a need for additional funding a further report to Full Council will be required to seek approval for the additional budget if funds are not available within existing resources.

6. What are the legal aspects?

None Identified

7. Monitoring officer Comments

This report raises no issues for the Monitoring Officer.

8. Report Details:

This topic was identified as a priority for Task and Finish Group investigation following the Annual Scrutiny Work Programme meeting in July 2016.

To set the context for this report, Dementia is arguably said to be the biggest health crisis facing the UK. Alzheimer's Society figures indicate that there are currently 850,000 people living with Dementia in the UK and this figure is predicted to rise to 2 million by 2051. Research suggests that individuals with dementia can often feel depressed, anxious, isolated, can often feel stigmatised and not part of the community.

Exeter City Council has recently become a member of the Exeter Dementia Action Alliance, reinforcing the initial steps towards the Council becoming a dementia friendly organisation, continuing to ensure that the services offered strive to reflect the needs of individuals.

A copy of Exeter City Council's existing Action Plan is attached to this report as additional background information for Members. The Action Plan is an ever evolving, aspirational document which is not prescriptive and can be updated at any time. The actions are minimal at present and concentrate upon Dementia Friends' Sessions, Dementia Champions and making the City Council car parks more dementia friendly. The work of this Task and Finish Group will provide useful additions and serve to enhance the existing Action Plan.

Being Dementia Friendly is about being aware of the impact that the condition has on a person and their life and how this might affect their behaviour and their ability to undertake everyday tasks. If someone experiences difficulty or confusion whilst accessing Council services it may suggest that they have dementia but this may not necessarily be the case. However, if someone is suspected as having dementia, they may need extra help, support, time and consideration. This requires good people skills, kindness, common sense, good communication skills and a culture of customer care.

Membership of the Group consisted of:-

Cllr Robson (Chair)
Cllr Bull
Cllr Foggin
Cllr Lyons
Cllr Morse
Cllr Newby

Council Officers:-

Bindu Arjoon, Assistant Director, Customer Access
Andrea Adey, Human Resources Business Partner
Melinda Pogue-Jackson, Policy Officer
Dawn Rivers, Programme Manager - Communities

The Scope

Key Objectives:-

To find out:-

- How the Council can improve provision of services to those with Dementia and their carers.
- What can be achieved?
- What are the resource implications and what funding could be available?

Anticipated Value of Work/Outcome:-

- Improving the quality of provision of the City Council's services to those with dementia and their carers, creating a more positive experience.
- Continuing to raise awareness of dementia.
- Improving the way in which front line Council staff may identify and assist those customers with dementia.

The Council's Core Strategy:-

The Council's Core Strategy (2.29) deals with the topic of diversity, stating that, "The population consists of many different groups with different needs. In particular, young people, older people, people with disabilities..... can all, at times, feel excluded from society, community life and the decisions that affect them. Exeter City Council continues to work with these groups to ensure their needs are met.

The Background

The Group met on four occasions. The first meeting focussed on agreeing the scope and identifying external guests to be invited to future meetings. It was quickly agreed that it would be critical for the Group to focus on a particular area, working out

constraints, ambitions and what the Council could realistically achieve, change or adapt. Initially, it was agreed that the work of this Group should focus upon the Customer Service Centre both in respect of delivery of service and current facilities. However, the Group appreciated that there are other front line services across the Council which may benefit from a similar review – an aspect which this Committee is invited to discuss.

Representatives from Exeter Dementia Action Alliance, The Alzheimer's Society, the Community Participation Officer from John Lewis (Exeter branch) and the Community Participation Officer from the RAMM, attended subsequent meetings and outlined their priorities, ongoing work and views and participated in Group discussions, answering Members' questions. Both RAMM and John Lewis are existing members of the Exeter Dementia Action Alliance and are successfully implementing dementia friendly training, engagement, and in the case of RAMM, dementia friendly activities. What became apparent was that our guests placed great emphasis on training front line staff, such as first aiders and security protection staff who were identified as a priority whilst also understanding the role and perspective of carers. Teamwork between departments was identified as crucial and the introduction of staff wearing dementia friendly badges had proven to be more successful than initially thought, creating a lot of interest with the general public and opening conversations with visitors.

A valuable insight was also provided by members of the Torbay Dementia Leadership Group who visited the Customer Service Centre to observe the front line service and facilities from the point of view of a person with dementia and to see if the Council could make any improvements to the existing customer experience.

It seems both necessary and appropriate to spend some time in this report relaying the observations of this Group.

Generally the feedback was very positive. Staff were described as "excellent, friendly and engaging". Our guests said that they were delighted by the modern, welcoming and friendly feel of the Service Centre. Access was perceived as good with a gradual slope and wide area with a good surface. Choice of colours for flooring/mats were good and they liked the idea of the seating areas and booths. Areas which could be improved upon were:-

- training for security staff;
- for trained staff to wear dementia friendly badges so that they could be easily identified and approached with confidence, providing a feeling of reassurance that specific needs would be understood;
- access to the existing toilet;
- signage to the existing toilet;
- the existing toilet requires some work to bring it up to a dementia friendly standard;
- provision of a second toilet in the Customer Service Centre

The recommendations contained within this report are a reflection of the observations, suggestions and considerations as to how Exeter City Council might become more dementia friendly and are designed to complement existing work by identifying further areas for improvement.

9 What is the impact of the decision on equality and diversity; health and wellbeing; safeguarding children, young people and vulnerable adults, Economy safety and the environment?

This work directly relates to the council's duties under the Equality Act 2010 and overall will impact positively both on this policy area as well as Safeguarding. However, each initiative will need to be screened for impact separately to ensure there is no negative impact on any other protected characteristics.

**Cllr Robson: Chair of the Dementia Friendly Council Task and Finish Group
Champion for Older People**

**Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1972 (as amended)
Background papers used in compiling this report:**

None

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