

## Report to Later Years Partnership City Council proposal for a Senior Citizens Charter

### Introduction

1. The City Council Cabinet has decided that it will seek to introduce a Senior Citizens Charter over the coming months. This report describes the proposal in its early stages, and seeks the general view of Later Years Partners

### Process

2. The city council intends to develop the charter through discussion with the Seniors Council – arriving at a set of shared commitments. Once the outline charter is agreed and established, there will then be more detailed work, for example in reviewing existing practices, exploring customer care issues in detail, etc.

### Overall nature and aim of the charter

3. The charter will not describe a set of rights or entitlements for individuals. It will set out broad commitments that the council will make to senior citizens as whole. The charter will relate not only to the city council's services, but its governance role in the city. It will emphasise a commitment to both take a lead, and to work with senior citizens.
4. The headline commitment will be along the broad lines of : "Working together with Southampton's senior citizens to make Southampton a city that is good to grow old in – providing a decent quality of life and opportunities for happy later years."
5. The development of the charter will also involve describing the outcome – a city that is good to grow old in, using the hallmarks set out by the LYP in its initial partnership agreement as a starting point.

### Proposed topics for the Council to include in the charter

- *Leadership* - to take responsibility for driving forward our aspirations across the city, and wherever possible to lead by example.
- *Engagement* – a commitment that seniors will be engaged and listened to, including:-
  - full engagement of senior citizens in the affairs of the city council – across service development, consulting on plans etc;
  - championing engagement with seniors to other agencies and institutions in the city, and a commitment to promote the views of seniors citizens to others;
  - supporting seniors involvement in wider networks.
- *Information* - a commitment to improve access to city council information available to seniors on services, opportunities – and to work with seniors to achieve this.
- *Independence*- a commitment to support independence underpinned across all services;
- *Ageism* - a commitment to tackle ageism and promote and champion positive images of seniors and their contribution.
- *Inequality* - a commitment to seek to reduce the inequality between older people and the rest of the population;
- *Reviewing and re-aligning services and budgets to meet needs* - a commitment to make sure that Council services are appropriate, relevant and accessible, and contribute creatively to the new ageing population agenda.

- *The 'wicked' issues* - a commitment to take a lead where necessary on efforts that address the new issues that sit outside traditional responsibilities, services and budgets – such as falls, poverty, loneliness and social isolation, home safety, inter-generational activity and social networks.
- *Customer care* - a commitment about how senior citizens can expect to be treated by the council – and what it might champion to partners.

### **Timescale**

6. The council's Adult Social Care Scrutiny Panel will consider the proposal and make comments at its meeting in October. The proposal will be put to the Seniors Council following its launch. It is planned for the principles and outline of the charter to be approved by the Council's Cabinet before Christmas. This will then set in train discussions on more detailed aspects of the Charter, and hopefully discussions with Partners about its broader implications.

### **Charlie Hislop**

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