



Constitution

Statement of Purpose:-

The purpose of the Seniors Council is to represent the interests of people in their later years in Southampton, influence and achieve changes in the services provided, and ensure that Southampton is a good city to grow older in.

The Seniors Council needs to demonstrate accountability and openness, and build trust in its work in order to retain support, interest and credibility.

Aims:-

- The Seniors Council is committed to improving life for senior citizens in Southampton by making sure that our voices are heard and our needs and opinions are taken into account by those who make decisions and run services in the city.
- At present, the Seniors Council is made up of representatives of senior's groups and individuals who are committed to increasing the influence and voice of seniors in the city, both collectively and as individuals, and will continuously look for means to further the aims of the Seniors Council.
- Senior Citizens reflect the population as a whole, share its diversity, and are able to contribute to society the wisdom, experience, and history that accumulate through life. We want to live in a city that involves us, offers us opportunities and where we can continue to take part.
- We are not needy, helpless or disabled simply because of our age. We like to be independent, but need to know where to turn to for the right services to remain so, and have the same rights as everyone else to choose services without discrimination.
- The Seniors Council ethos is not political and is not religious. It brings together a wide range of groups and interests and seeks to support and reflect that diversity.

Methods of Working:-

The Seniors Council will:-

- a) Gather views and information in order to properly represent the interests of seniors.
- b) Carry out some of its work through task groups. These may involve Seniors Councillors, members of affiliated groups and supporters who are interested in the particular task or issue. The task group will be led by a member of the Seniors Council, and the group will be accountable and report to the full Seniors Council.
- c) Delegate and involve others in dealing with particular issues whilst maintaining its responsibility and accountability.
- d) Co-opt to the Seniors Council, temporarily to assist it, those expressing an interest in a particular issue at an open meeting or other event.

City Councillors will be invited to the Seniors Council meeting as observers.

External Support

The Seniors Council is supported by Southampton City Council which provides administrative and other support, and by Age Concern (Southampton). The purpose of this support is to facilitate and enable the Seniors Council and its members to concentrate on those issues that concern senior citizens. Any funding for the Seniors Council might be channelled through either organisation.

Accountability:-

The Seniors Council will endeavour to be as accountable as possible through:-

- a) The involvement of as broad a number of people acting under the auspices of the Seniors Council.
- b) An open structure where it is clear how the membership of the Seniors Council is established.
- c) Making sure that the Seniors Council Members are properly briefed on people's views by holding open or local meetings to gather information.
- d) Good feedback, from those who have attended briefing meetings, and to the wider population through newsletters, minutes of meetings and a web-site.
- e) Producing an annual report of its activities and holding an Annual General Meeting.

Code of Conduct

Every member of the Seniors Council shall be bound by the agreed Code of Conduct. Seniors Council members may only express the previously agreed views of the Seniors Council in the media when representing the Seniors Council.

Affiliated Groups

Appropriate senior, community, and other voluntary groups may affiliate to the Seniors Council, at no cost. Requests for affiliation will be at the approval of the Management Committee. Affiliated groups will be fully informed of Seniors Council activities, and their views canvassed in order to inform the Seniors Council in its activities. Members of affiliated groups may become members of task groups.

Supporters

The success of the Seniors Council depends on its ability to represent the interests of senior citizens and the extent of support that it enjoys. Seniors citizens in Southampton and surrounding areas may become supporters of the Seniors Council, at no cost. Supporters will be provided with information about the Seniors Council, their views canvassed where appropriate, and they will be invited to take part in Seniors Council activities. They may also become members of task groups.

Representation

Three members will represent the Seniors Council on the Later Years partnership, at least one of which will be the Chair or Vice Chair person.

Where the Seniors Council is invited to take part in or be represented on other bodies in line with its purpose and aims, it will agree its representative at a full meeting. Representatives do not need to be a member of the Seniors Council, but if they do so in accordance with the Constitution, as if they were a member in terms of conduct, policy and accountability.

It is the duty of any person representing the Seniors Council on any body to fairly reflect the views of the Seniors Council where appropriate, and to report back to the Seniors Council, or appropriate task group at the earliest opportunity.

Casual Vacancies in Membership of the Committee:-

A casual vacancy occurs in office of a committee member and that office becomes vacant if the committee member:-

- Resigns by notice in writing delivered to the chairperson or, if the committee member is the Chairperson, to the Vice-Chairperson, and that resignation is accepted by resolution of the committee.
- Is convicted of an offence
- Is permanently incapacitated by mental or physical ill health or dies
- Is absent from more than three consecutive committee meetings in the same financial year without tendering an apology to the person presiding at each of the committee meetings.

The number of members will be limited to 30 with a review of this in June 2010

A casual vacancy on the Seniors Council will be advertised to affiliated groups and supporters. Where there is more than one expression of interest made, the Management Committee shall submit the names for decision to the full council, and the Council shall also bear in mind its power to co-opt as well as fill vacancies.

Election of a Chairperson

The Council will elect a Chair and two Vice-Chairs from amongst its members on an annual basis.

Officer roles

- **Chairperson**
The Chairperson will chair meetings of the Seniors Council and General meetings.
- **Vice Chair**
The Vice Chairs will chair meetings in the absence of the Chair.
- **The Management Committee**
This will consist of the three elected officers, and will be responsible for organising the business of the Seniors Council.

Chairing the meeting:-

The Chairperson must preside at all general meetings and committee meetings.

In the event of the absence from a general meeting of either,

- a) The Chairperson or the Vice-Chairperson
- b) Both the Chairperson and the Vice-Chairperson.

A member elected by other members present at the general meeting must preside at the general meeting.

Meetings:-

The Seniors Council shall meet monthly or as it decides.

Minutes of Meetings:-

The Chairperson must ensure that the minutes taken are checked and signed as correct by the Chairperson of the general meeting or Committee meeting, as the case requires.

Annual General Meeting (AGM)

- a) The Agenda will be issued 14 days prior to the meeting
- b) Every member has a vote
- c) The Chairperson will present an annual report
- d) Any member may stand for election as Chairperson and Vice Chairperson
- e) The AGM will be an open meeting

Proxies of members

A member (this rule is called “the appointing member”) may appoint in writing another member to attend, and vote on behalf of the appointing member at any general meeting.

Vacancies

If a vacancy remains on the Seniors Council, additional nominations of committee members may be accepted from the floor at the AGM. Where the number of nominations from the floor exceeds the remaining number of vacancies, election for those positions must be conducted.

Quorum:-

Eleven members will constitute a quorum.

Changes to the Constitution or Dissolving the Group

An extraordinary general meeting must be called, with 14 days notice to members.

Inspection of Records;-

A member may at any reasonable time inspect the records.