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**To:** Corporate Policy Overview Committee 8<sup>th</sup> July 2009

**Subject:** Kent's Policy Framework for Later Life

**Classification:** Unrestricted

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**Summary** To ask Corporate Policy Overview Committee Members to consider Kent's Policy Framework for Later Life – '*Living Later Life to the Full*' and identify the strategic actions to be taken to deliver the aspirations.

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## 1. Introduction

- 1.1 The Vision for Kent identifies seven key challenges, of which the ageing population is one. Demographic changes in Kent (and most of Western Europe) bring enormous opportunities as well as significant challenges. Older people are often the volunteers, carers, mentors and activists that provide the backbone of communities and Kent will benefit from having proportionately more of these people. In late 2007 Kent County Council ran a series of workshops with older citizens and partners to establish what people thought were the key issues and concerns relating to later life which needed action. This resulted in an embryonic Strategy for Later Life (February 2008) which has been further consulted upon. ASSPOC has taken the lead within the County Council on this work although the issues are far broader than social care and health, encompassing transport, leisure, housing, community safety and community planning and design.
- 1.2 Although KCC has initiated and driven this work, only by working in partnership across organisations in Kent can real improvements be made to the lives of older people. From the start, therefore, the Later Life work has been undertaken in partnership. Within the Kent Partnership, the Public Health Board agreed to take the lead, but recognised that the issues relating to older people cut across all the Kent Partnership Boards.
- 1.3 The Policy Framework (which will continue to evolve) is the result of these discussions and conferences – including the successful conference in the Council Chamber in May last year. It represents the aspirations set out by those older people who contributed to the consultation, and the representatives of partner organisations, as well as KCC Members. On 10<sup>th</sup> February the Kent Partnership endorsed the Policy Framework, subject to it being considered by individual organisations, and asked that reports should be brought back in a year on the action that would be taken to achieve the aspirations set out in the Framework. Cabinet endorsed the Framework on 30<sup>th</sup> March and asked that all the July Policy Overview Committees consider what they will do to deliver this.

## **2. Kent's Policy Framework for Later Life – Living Later Life to the Full**

- 2.1 This sets out the strategic priorities and high-level targets that older people themselves, along with KCC and its partners, have identified. It has been a collectively shaped and developed document, focussing on the cross-cutting issues facing older people in order to focus attention on the challenges and opportunities the ageing population brings. Annex 1 summarises the priorities, and the full document is set out in Annex 2.
- 2.2 The Framework looks at how older people want to live their lives, and is deliberately aspirational and positive, emphasising the benefits that the ageing population brings, and promoting a positive image of old age because this was an important message from the consultation. Transport was the biggest concern for those who no longer drove cars. Access to good quality health and social care was very important, but so was access to a wide variety of social and leisure activities. Employment of older people has taken on even more significance since the depth of the recession has become apparent, and will be an essential component of our strategy to respond to the changing age profile of the workforce. Planning for the future – in terms of living healthy lifestyles, financial planning and living in an age-friendly home and community – was another key issue, which applies to people of all ages. The role of older people within families, and the importance of inter-generational activities also came through strongly. Community Safety and protection of more vulnerable older people was another key theme. The issues raised thus cut across all aspects of County Council service delivery and that of our partners.
- 2.3 The Policy Framework document sets out the overarching ambitions that KCC and its partners have in improving the quality of life for older people. It will play an important role in ensuring that there is an ongoing focus on preventative activities that will enable people to live their later lives to the full. Work is now going on across KCC directorates with Districts & Boroughs, Health, Police and Fire & Rescue and the voluntary sector to map out activities already underway which support these priorities and targets. This will enable us to more effectively publicise the examples of excellence already underway, or planned, of which people may not be aware. This process will also enable us to see if there are any gaps in current service provision and decide whether further action should be taken.
- 2.4 The Regeneration Framework has a chapter entitled 'Embracing a Growing and Ageing Population' which identifies a number of actions that KCC wish to promote. These all fall within the strategic framework set out within the Policy Framework for Later Life. The ensuing mapping exercise and action plan will therefore provide a vehicle for taking this element of the Regeneration Framework forwards, and producing a KCC Strategy for Later Life that sits beneath the over-arching Policy Framework.
- 2.5 It is important that by creating a Policy Framework for Later Life we do not establish a new 'silo' for older people but build consideration of older people's interests into the planning of existing services, organisations and partnerships. All aspects of public service and policy development should take account of the interests of older people as well as younger people. It is also important that we prepare younger people for their futures and encourage people to plan for their later lives at a much younger age.

### **3. What is already happening as a result of the Policy Framework?**

- 3.1 The process of consulting on and developing this document has already started to drive changes in how organisations approach older people's issues. It has placed the ageing population higher on different agenda and sparked interesting debate about the challenges and potential solutions. Central to driving this process forward has been the success we have had in engaging with all the Kent Districts, Borough and City Councils as well as Health, Police and Fire and Rescue. The profile of Older People's Champions has been raised, spearheaded by Mike Angell who now meets regularly with representatives of older people and is establishing an Older People's Champion Board. More older people's forums are being established, particularly in the West of the county, and within KCC at officer level an Older People's Strategic Network has been created to drive the Policy Framework and KCC action plan forward.

### **4. Connections between the Policy Framework for Later Life and Chief Executive's Department**

- 4.1 At Annex 3, just for reference (not for reading line by line!) is the KCC action plan which maps out actions already underway and identifies aspirations for the future. This has been included to give Members a feel for the comprehensiveness of actions already underway, most of which relate to direct service provision, but CED actions are highlighted. Action plans to the same template are being produced by Districts, Health, Police and Fire & Rescue, to evidence how each organisation is supporting the Later Life agenda. Corporate POC Members are asked to consider how we can ensure that all we do takes sufficient and proportionate account of the needs and views of the older population given the demographic changes ahead. Part of this is about setting a direction that supports individuals – whatever their age and needs – to identify how they want to lead their lives and to find their own solutions to the challenges they face. A few examples of strategic action which CED could implement include:

- Adjust employment policy to further strengthen recruitment and retention of older people, and facilitate similar action amongst Kent employers. This brings benefits for the employers because they continue to utilise the skills and experience of their older workers, as well as enabling older people to continue having some paid employment and the social and mental wellbeing that employment can bring.
- Promote strong design principles around spatial planning, infrastructure and community development which encompasses being age friendly as set out in the World Health Organisation's 'Age-friendly Cities' projects (which are equally applicable to towns).
- Develop projects that build resilience in communities, helping people to help themselves and their community, and fostering greater levels of volunteering. Older people are a major source of 'social capital'.
- Ensuring that all policy development/public engagement/consumer research and so on takes proportionate account of the needs of the older population. This should happen automatically through the equalities impact assessment process, but the KCC officers' Older People's Strategic Network provides further assurance that this will happen.
- Build on the best international research and practical examples of good practice. For example, a seminar was organised in Brussels at the end of March in partnership with the University of Kent to discuss the issue of intergenerational cohesion which has stimulated further work and the possibility of tapping into European funding.

- Through KCC's response to Digital Britain, work to enable older people to have the skills and the technology to participate in social networking and all the benefits that the internet provides.
- Promote a positive image of older people in Kent through featuring and involving them in media campaigns and Kent TV.
- Encourage KCC staff to look after their own health in preparation for the future, through innovative approaches such as being able to access telehealth on blackberries.

4.2 Corporate POC Members are asked to use the bullet points above and the action plan at Annex 3 as a basis for considering whether there are further strategic actions that Chief Executive's Directorate should take in order to support the delivery of the priorities set out in Annex 1.

#### **4. Recommendations**

Members of Corporate Policy Overview Committee are asked to:

- (i) Comment on and endorse Kent's Policy Framework for Later Life
- (ii) Give views on strategic actions to be taken to deliver the aspirations set out within the Framework

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**1) To ensure communities are designed to be ‘age proof’, stronger, safer and sustainable, by:**

- Working with developers to make sure that new developments are designed to be sustainable and age-proof.
- Actively tackling housing disrepair and supporting older people in maintaining and adapting their own homes.
- Developing and designing existing communities to be more “age friendly”, in respect both of physical infrastructure and social inclusion
- Helping older people feel safe and secure within their own homes and community
- Preparing for changes in the environment and climate-proofing communities to make them sustainable for the future

**2) To improve transport and accessibility, by:**

- Increasing transport options for older people, including services for those who are disabled or live in rural areas.
- Making people more aware of the transport options already available to them

**3) To enable older people to lead healthier lives and have better access to healthcare, by:**

- Focussing on the prevention of health problems
- Enabling the older people of Kent to participate in regular exercise and live an active life
- Developing better integrated health and social care services
- Assisting people to manage their own health and independence in order to keep living in the community for as long as possible

**4) To support older people’s citizenship, learning and participation in community life, by:**

- Encouraging older people’s participation and inclusion in community activity, raising social capital
- Ensuring older people have a voice and are able to exert their influence over policy making
- Enabling older people to have the opportunity and ability to participate in life-long learning
- Making sure older people in Kent have employment opportunities if they want them.
- Helping older people have access to new technology as well as the ability to use it

**5) To ensure those older people who need support to live independently have choice, control and good quality care, by:**

- Ensuring service provision is based upon a person centred approach
- Working to remove the barriers that can impair the quality of older people’s lives
- Making sure individuals have access to ‘joined up’ information when they need it
- Supporting carers in having a life apart from caring

**6) To encourage people to plan for a secure later life, by:**

- Making older people in Kent more aware of the services and support available including access to financial information and advice.
- Reducing fuel poverty by increasing the take-up of energy saving initiatives and increasing awareness of affordable warmth.
- Improving the economic well-being of older people within Kent

**7) To promote a positive image of later life and dignity and respect for older people, by:**

- Promoting the value of later life and changing attitudes towards older members of society
- Encouraging inter-generational activities and community cohesion