

Report to Cabinet

Subject: Gedling Seniors Council

Date: 27/07/17

Author: Community Investment Manager

Wards Affected

All

Purpose

To inform Cabinet of progress of the Gedling Seniors Council, share Terms of Reference and seek approval for a programme of support in line with an ongoing Seniors Council Action Plan.

Key Decision

No

Background

The Council Plan sets out the intention to establish a Seniors Council for Gedling Borough. The Public Protection Team undertook initial development work on the proposal in 2015. Meetings were held with representatives of key grass roots community and voluntary organisations providing activities for older citizens. Consultation was undertaken on the role, remit and model of the proposed organisation and a set of draft terms of reference was produced. Following reorganisation, the project now sits within the Community Relations Team.

A database of over 60 representatives of Gedling grass roots community and voluntary organisations serving the older community has been compiled. On 31st March 2017 Gedling Borough Council hosted a joint Age UK Nottinghamshire 'Aging Well' event and meeting of the Nottinghamshire Older Person's Advisory Group (OPAG) in the Council Chamber, to which Gedling representatives were invited.

The aim of the event was to observe and learn more about the range and work of older peoples' Fora across the County and the role of the Nottinghamshire OPAG

itself, to gain an overview from Age UK and other partners of the key issues facing the older community in Nottinghamshire, and the various initiatives underway to address these. The afternoon session focussed upon relaunching the proposal of a Seniors Council for Gedling. This was very positively received, and a number of key principles and priorities for the development of the organisation were proposed.

Seniors Council Terms of Reference and Draft Action Plan

A meeting of the new Gedling Seniors Council was convened on Friday 16th June and was attended by around 25 delegates, including representation from local U3A divisions, Asian Elders, Caribbean Elders, Colwick and Netherfield Senior Citizens Group, social housing charities, Age UK, Age Concern and Gedling based arts organisations. A Chair was nominated who will sit on the Nottinghamshire OPAG and act as the conduit to the wider network.

Members reviewed, amended and adopted the Terms of Reference (**attached: Appendix 1**) and agreed an action plan for the Seniors Council to take forward for the period 2017 – 2019 (**attached: Appendix 2**).

The aims in the action plan reflect the key priorities set out in the Terms of Reference, and the plan sets out to strengthen the organisation, widen its sphere of influence, act as a communication hub within the older community and build a programme of guest speakers and community networking projects that help to extend the reach of services to older residents. Above all, the intention is to provide a forum for older citizens to engage, gain confidence and develop a championing role for the older community.

Proposal

It is proposed that Cabinet Members review the Seniors Council Terms of Reference and Action Plan and approve a programme of support for the Seniors Council in line with both documents for the period 2017 – 2019.

Alternative Options

Alternative options would be:

- i) Not to develop a Seniors Council

Gedling has a significant aging population and recognised issues of urban, suburban and rural isolation in that community. The positive benefits of older person's advisory groups have been demonstrated by similar models across the county as evidenced by the thriving Nottinghamshire OPAG.

Within Gedling, the Arnold Golden Eagles, whilst recently having been wound up, nevertheless for many years provided a strong voice for the older community that

had a positive influence on the lives of local residents and on Council policy and services for older, often vulnerable citizens. Additionally the Gedling Youth Council, a similar interest group and independent advisory body to the Council, has been recognised as a model of good practice to others across the County.

- ii) To explore alternative models for delivering a forum for engagement with older residents and community groups

In developing the Seniors Council, the pros and cons of a range of best practice models from across the country were considered, and in depth consultation with local representatives during the early development stages yielded a clear preference for an independent but supported organisation with a defined focus upon membership from local grass roots older services organisations operating within Gedling.

Financial Implications

Whilst there are no specific budget implications other than officer time from within the Community Relations Team, the action plan sets out an intention to apply to the Members Community Initiatives fund for a small activities budget.

The longer term aim is for the organisation to have a constitution and bank account, and to be enabled to access external funding independently from the Council.

Appendices

Appendix 1: Seniors Council Terms of Reference

Appendix 2: Draft Seniors Council Action Plan

Background Papers

N/A

Recommendation(s)

It is recommended that Cabinet

Review and comment upon the Seniors Council Terms of Reference and draft Action Plan and approve a programme of support for the Gedling Seniors Council in line with both documents.

Reasons for Recommendations

To enable a programme of support and development to be initiated in respect of the new Gedling Seniors Council.