



BEDFORD BOROUGH COUNCIL

Minutes

Title of Meeting	Older People's Partnership Board
Date/Time	Friday 26 August 2022 @ 9:00am
Venue	Hybrid meeting - Council Chamber, Borough Hall, Cauldwell Street, Bedford or Microsoft Teams (link within meeting invite)

No	Item	Action
1	Welcome and apologies	
2	<p>Sustainable Warmth</p> <p>An Environment Officer for the Council attended, who is involved in assisting Council departments to help to achieve net zero by 2030. The officer provided a presentation to the Board on Sustainable Warmth, a new council scheme, which crosses over between Environment and Public Health. The presentation slides will be circulated with the minute of the meeting and is summarised as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- In light of the current energy crisis, the Council has been awarded a funding grant of £1,181,000 from Central Government to assist with energy costs for residents. The scheme consists of two strands, support for low-income households heated by mains gas and also low-income households off the gas grid. The aim of the scheme is to tackle fuel poverty, ensure homes are heated comfortably, as well as progress towards the UK's target for net zero by 2050.- Funding should cover all households in UK. The eligibility criteria is shown within the presentation.- Residents will apply for the funding via an online platform, which will be available in the next few weeks. If successful, a visit will be arranged to carry out an assessment to look at what can be improved.- In terms of timescales, the scheme is due to finish in March 2023. Therefore, it is important to get everybody signed up by end of December. If people don't have access to the internet, they can make contact by phone to go through the registration process.- The officer advised that the team are currently in the process of getting everything set up, and can send out more information when available if Board members would like more information.- The chair thanked the officer for the presentation. <p>The following comments were received:</p>	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - A representative from Beds Fire advised that the Fire Service have been looking at different ways to offer fuel support, and found the information really interesting. There has been an increase of people using candles and open flames, which particularly in hoarders homes carries an increased fire risk. The Fire Service are looking to set up a fuel support volunteer to help with this support. If people are vulnerable in respect of fire or fuel support, the Fire Service would like to offer a fuel support visit to homes, ask any relevant questions, which can then supported with the relevant pathways. The fire service officer commented further that he would be keen to work together on this and would liaise with the council officer separately. - Age UK reiterated the Fire Service's comments above. Age UK cover the same geographical areas and said it would be great to link in with the Environment officer, particularly around older people who live rurally, who may only be on oil and help that is available. Age UK has had some contact with the Fire Service in this regard. Age UK also advised that they will be hosting the Ageing Well event at the Corn Exchange in Bedford on 19th October, which would provide a good opportunity to get the message out to people over age of 50 in respect of fuel support. - All attendees above would have a separate discussion on the best ways to support each other's work. 	
3	<p>Open discussion about the impact of COVID 19 and how this has impacted on people</p> <p>The following comments were made:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Age UK commented that face to face interaction is increasing as we are coming out of COVID. However, it has become apparent that confidence of older people is lacking following the pandemic. Age UK continue to do a lot of work via telephone and online, and have done throughout COVID. Age UK managed to safely deliver 60,000 hours of household support during this time, whilst taking advice from government locally and nationally. Following the pandemic, some people are desperate to get out but want to do so in a safe way. Age UK advised that they are continuing to encourage people of an older age to get boosters and flu jabs. Age UK believes there is still a lot of work to be done on the ground regarding loneliness and isolation of older people and raised a plea for all agencies to join together and ensure older people aren't left behind. - A representative from Mentaur commented that she had a lot of experience with this and agreed that we do need to take a more proactive role for older people, especially those involved in community groups. We need to look into keeping people safe, particularly those who aren't able to have the COVID vaccines. The chair agreed that this is important to take forward and believed this should be discussed at the next meeting. - A representative from Tibbs Dementia commented that she believes Tibbs Dementia adapted quite well to COVID and very quickly discovered zoom and phone calls, door step visits, park walks. Now coming back, we're struggling as people with dementia have lost cognitive skills, as well as their confidence. Tibbs Dementia used to be able to offer a strong schedule of activities, however, people now struggle to leave the safety of their homes. The hot weather has also had an impact during the summer. Going into winter, The representative believes that people will be looking at their incomes and will feel that they can't afford to go out. The chair believed it would be beneficial to add Winter Planning to the next agenda. - A representative from Carers in Beds commented, from a carers perspective, we also adapted very quickly during the pandemic. For many older people, zoom wasn't helpful to those who don't have the technology or confidence to use it. Also commented that generally the older generation 	

do not want to come back to groups, therefore the service try to stay in touch by phone. We have also had many carers who became formers carers during the pandemic, where grieving has been difficult for those who have become bereaved. Before COVID, people used to pop into the hubs, however there is very little footfall at present and it feels like we are starting again.

- Mentaur commented, often people are sitting at home and the council needs to be looking at that, also other issues like doctors, they do try hard, however is aware of waiting time on the phone is half an hour or more which is not acceptable.
- Co Chair commented that there does not appear to be coordination and we need some clear guidance for older people in a way that the confidence of older people can be improved. The chair responded that the council are continuing to work hard to provide as much guidance as possible in this regard. Also continued to comment and proposed that the council need some clear actions to undertake in order to help with this. The BBC chair responded that there will be actions from this meeting to look back on and to provide updates at next meeting.
- An issue was raised of older people having access to prescriptions and what about those people who aren't able to get out to collect their prescriptions.
- Co Chair commented on the importance that Councillors should also ensure they are representing older people in the community.
- Portfolio Holder for Adult Services and Ward Councillor for Kingsbrook Ward responded and confirmed that the first contact for any issues should be the resident's Ward Councillor, whether it be an environmental, health, town or planning issue. If a resident has issue with access to services, their Ward Councillor will be able to raise the issue on their behalf. Also agreed that communication could be better, there are services there but it's unclear as to whether people know where to go. Also commented that he is the new Portfolio Holder for Adult Services and is here to listen to take on the views of the Board.
- Mentaur commented that we need to engage with this again and said that her experience of Councillors is that they engage very actively with us and we need to know that Councillors will continue to engage and that we will be listened to. Maybe we need more Councillors to attend the Partnership Board meetings.
- Mentaur commented that he doesn't believe we have enough of this to express our opinions. The BBC chair said there is a commitment to older people and reiterated that this is your meeting and it's about us finding out the reality, listening to voices from the community. Also commented that Adult Services Overview & Scrutiny Committee is another arena where members of the public can attend and ask questions to hold services to account.
- Another comment was made in respect of the bus company as this is one of the biggest things for older people. Also the safety of older people. The BBC chair said in terms of the council, we have a Community Safety Partnership Board. Also believes Community Safety could be a general agenda item.
- Co Chair commented that older people find communication much easier face to face and it is up to the council to reformat the Older People's Partnership Board to ensure all various points raised are explored, to concentrate on those issues and ensure they are being looked at. Co Chair asked to meet with the chair to look at going ahead with confidence that this board is doing something. The Chair said he is happy to meet and we can then do a communication to members of board to ask for views for future meetings' format.

4	<p>Future meetings and the agenda</p> <p>The BBC chair advised that we will plan to send out a communication to all members of the board in respect of future meetings.</p>	
5	<p>AOB</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The chair apologised for the technical issues during the meeting. - Age UK apologised if anything had been missed due to sound difficulties. Also reiterated that Bedford Borough have funded the Ageing Well event again this year, that Age UK are hosting on 19th October. We hope to focus a lot on the cost of living crisis and support available. Age UK asked members of the board to contact her with any issues or if they would like a stall for the event. - An issue was raised regarding Guild House and queried the future plans for the building. The Chair said he isn't aware of future plans but believes the building is owned by the Council. - There were a number of points noted during discussion that members of the board would like to take forward; community safety, health service availability, transport issues and it was agreed that the chairs would meet on 9th September to look at options for future meetings and the best way to take the actions forward. - The chairs thanked all attendees for joining the meeting. 	
6	Date of next meeting – December 2022 – Date to be confirmed	