

**LOOKING FORWARD TO THE
FUTURE**

**A STRATEGY FOR THE 50+
POPULATION OF SUNDERLAND
2008-2025**

DRAFT

Contents

Foreword by Alan Patchett, Chair of Older People's Partnership Action Group

Sunderland is changing, with older people forming an ever increasing proportion of our population. Demographic predictions suggest that by 2029 almost half of the population of Sunderland will be aged over 50. Therefore, we need a strategy that recognises and promotes the contribution that this age group can make to the health, social and economic well-being of the city. A strategy that recognises the changing lifestyles and expectations of this age group and responds to them in a positive way to enable people to continue living a full and active life and one that fulfils their potential and aspirations.

Through this strategy we aim to address the issues people over 50 encounter, including the inequality and discrimination that they experience because of their age and to challenge and change the perception that older people are a burden to society and instead see them as a source of wisdom, experience and talent. We need a positive vision for the longer term and we need to plan and influence the agenda for Sunderland's changing demographic population for all our futures.

This is the first strategy to set out a citywide approach to responding to the needs and aspirations of our 50+ citizens. The emphasis and thrust of this strategy is placed on the 50+ age group, not because we have now socially constructed this as the start of 'old age', but it is at this point that people find themselves at a crossroad in their life for a number of reasons – children may have moved on; people may be taking on caring roles – of relatives, friends or grandchildren; people may be retiring from employment or planning for retirement; people may be developing long term health conditions; people may be engaging in new interests or engaging in community/civic life; many people, but not all, may be moving into a time of greater economic security and well-being.

It is also vital that the diversity within the 50+ group and the significant sub populations within this age group is understood in terms of wellness; long term illness; disabilities; socially active; those who are socially isolated or excluded; those who are economically secure and those who are economically disadvantaged. These inequalities within the 50+ population are unacceptable and need to be addressed. It is only when these complexities are embraced and understood will the city develop the strategies that can respond appropriately to the challenges and opportunities of optimising opportunities for active and healthy ageing in Sunderland.

It is the aim that **all** our 50+ citizens of today and tomorrow are valued and respected, that they can contribute to and take advantage of a prosperous age friendly city, that they can enjoy the benefits of healthy ageing and a fulfilling quality of life and that they are empowered to influence decisions in the city.

The purpose of the Strategy

Looking Forward to the Future: A Strategy for the 50+ Population of Sunderland follows on from Phase 1: Looking Forward to the Future – A Strategy for People Aged 50+. Phase 1 set out the Council's contribution to the 50+ agenda, as a community leader, as a deliverer and commissioner of services and as a major employer. This strategy builds on Phase 1 and presents a citywide approach to responding to the needs of people aged over 50.

Looking Forward to the Future: A Strategy for the 50+ Population of Sunderland sets out an ambitious vision that will be achieved over the next 15 years. By 2025 Sunderland will be an age friendly city where all people aged over 50 are valued, respected and empowered. They will have the opportunity to contribute to the social, cultural and economic life of the city and to fulfil their aspirations for a full, healthy, safe and prosperous life. Later life will be a time of opportunity, even for the most vulnerable, where people can exercise choice and control to live a full and happy life.

The purpose of the strategy is to provide a framework for partners to work together achieve the vision and to recognise and respond to the demographic and social changes taking place within the city and ensure that Sunderland is a city where people can age positively. It forms an important and integral part of the Sunderland Strategy by ensuring that older people are central to achieving the vision for Sunderland. It challenges all partners to meet the identified needs and aspirations of those aged 50+ and rise to the challenges and grasp the opportunities of an ageing population.

The philosophical approach underpinning this strategy arises out of the World Health Organisation (WHO) which promotes '*active ageing is the process of optimising opportunities for health, participation and security in order to enhance quality of life as people age*' (WHO, 2002). Active ageing refers to the continuing participation in social, economic, cultural, spiritual and civic affairs, not just the ability to be physically active or to participate in the labour force. Active ageing aims to extend healthy life expectancy and quality of life for all people as they age.

To achieve this, all partners need to work together including the public sector, the Third sector, the 50+ population and younger people to ensure that the strategy is a success and that it delivers a sustainable and successful future for older people and the city. By signing up to this strategy, partners will commit to working together to improve the lives of people aged 50+ in Sunderland.

The strategy has a 15 year implementation period, with 3 yearly action plans that will be reviewed and updated to ensure the strategy is responsive to the changing world.

Who are our 50+ citizens?

Older people are not a homogenous group and therefore age itself is not a useful indicator of people's needs and aspirations. To overcome this, three stages of ageing have been identified:

Approaching later life (3rd Age): this group of people may have completed their time in paid employment and/or child rearing or be nearing completion. They may be actively involved in community engagement and volunteering and many, but not all, are active and independent and remain so into late old age. Some may have caring responsibilities of relatives or grandchildren.

Transitional phase: this group of older people may be in transition between healthy, active life and frailty. This transition often occurs in the seventh or eighth decades but can occur at any stage of older age. People from this group may have continued to be actively involved in community engagement and volunteering. Many may have taken on or have continued caring responsibilities for relatives.

Vulnerable older people (4th Age): this group may be moving from self-reliance to increasing reliance on others, including care services. An individual is vulnerable when support is required to enable or promote independent living and safe and active participation in the community. Vulnerability is not always permanent, but for those older people who have significant health problems and therefore care needs, their vulnerability is evident and present.

The dependent time in older life can vary enormously from individual to individual and one of the main aims of this strategy is to enable people to take control of their own lives and ensure they remain fit, healthy, independent and in control for as long as possible. Through the promotion of active ageing it is aimed that the 4th age of dependency will be compressed and the 3rd age of independence and personal achievement be expanded. Ageing, frailty and disability are not the only factors that can result in vulnerability. There are many wider determinants that this strategy addresses, including poverty (including fuel poverty); poor housing; fear of crime; access to leisure; access to learning opportunities; access to healthcare and access to transport that can make people vulnerable or disadvantaged.

It is the intention that the strategy is inclusive of all people aged 50+ in Sunderland. However, the strategy does acknowledge and seeks to address the inequalities that exist between the diverse groups that make up the 50+ population in Sunderland, such as people from an ethnic minority group, people who are lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender or people who have disabilities.

Older People in Sunderland

- In 2008 there are around 99,500 people aged 50+ in the city. By 2025, it is estimated that this will increase to 117,500 – an increase of almost half (2004 based Sub national population projections, Crown Copyright, 2006)
- By 2025 the number of people aged 65-74 will rise from around 25,000 in 2008 to an estimated 31,800 (www.poppi.org.uk)
- It is expected that over the same period the number of people aged over 75 will rise from 20,800 in 2008 to 29,000 in 2025 (www.poppi.org.uk)
- In 2005, there were 630 people aged over 55 from a minority ethnic background (www.poppi.org.uk)
- According to the 2001 Census, 26,952 people aged over 50 reported a life limiting condition.
- On average, life expectancy for men is 79 years and for women 81 years. Adults in Sunderland die on average almost 2 years earlier than the average for England (The Sunderland Strategy 2008-2025, 2008)
- The prevalence of dementia in 2005 was estimated to be around 2,963 people aged over 65 years. By 2025 it is estimated that prevalence of dementia will increase by about half to around 4,433 people aged over 65 years (Dementia in Sunderland: A Health Needs Assessment, 2007)
- In a recent report by the British Lung Foundation (Invisible Lives, 2007) Sunderland faces the 5th greatest challenge from Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (COPD) in the UK. According to the data published in the report, Sunderland has a 51% higher risk of future hospital admission with COPD than the UK average.
- The contribution that people aged over 50 make to the city can not be underestimated:
 - 25,291 people aged over 50 were economically active in 2001
 - The 2001 Census reported that there were around 15,300 carers aged over 50, of which around 5,000 provided care for 50 or more hours per week
 - The 2007 Sunderland Residents Survey estimated that around 17% of people aged over 50 volunteer on a regular basis and another 8% of people volunteered as a 'one off'

Principles of the Strategy

Reflecting what older people say is important to them, this Strategy has been developed based on the following principles:

Sunderland's 50+ citizens of today and tomorrow:

- Are valued citizens who have a contribution to make to the health, social and economic well-being of the city
- Will not be discriminated against or experience inequality or inequity on any grounds, including age
- Will have equality of opportunity to reach their full potential and achieve their aspirations
- Will have access to the same opportunities as other age groups in the city
- Will have access to opportunities and services that promote their independence, well-being, choice and dignity
- Will be consulted, listened to and heard and will be empowered to influence decision making
- Will have choice and control over their lives and the services they use
- Our most vulnerable older people will receive appropriate, high quality support when they need it
- When reaching the end of their life will be treated with compassion and dignity and their needs and wishes will be respected

Policy Context

International

World Health Organisation – Healthy City Status

Sunderland is a member of the World Health Organisation (WHO) and in 2004 was awarded Healthy City Status. The current WHO model addresses three core themes, including Healthy Ageing.

The overall objective of the Healthy Ageing theme is “to generate strong political commitment and to introduce policies and planning processes that will ensure a holistic and well balanced approach to the health, development and care needs of older people”. This is delivered through four key objectives:

- To raise awareness and create a common understanding of the concept of healthy ageing, raising awareness and visibility of age issues within cities and generating debate in relation to policies and plans for improved health
- To actively engage and involve older people in influencing, advising and monitoring city sector policies, initiatives and service provision
- To create health enhancing living environments that support healthy ageing outcomes, by being well designed, accessible and safe, taking into account the functional capacity of the ageing and disadvantaged groups
- To promote accessible health and social care services that support independence whilst providing where needed, formal care for older people and support to their families and carers. Attention should also be paid on rebalancing preventative and public health services with health and social care services.

Healthy Ageing Profile

As a result of the city’s Healthy City status a Healthy Ageing Profile (G Green, 2008) has been produced. Taking an Active Ageing approach, as recommended by WHO, the profile provides an overview of both economic and social issues, centrally addressing the issue of how the city’s growing number of older people can contribute to the economic performance and social life of the city. It aims to discredit the myth of a ‘demographic time bomb’ through demonstrating that if older people are properly counted as a resource to society their longevity will be matched by more years free of disease and disability.

The key message from the profile is that if the first challenge of active ageing is to ensure that healthy older people remain a resource to their families, communities and the economy, then it is necessary to involve not only health and social care services, but also planning departments; housing providers; transport authorities; community safety partnerships; employers, local business and commerce.

Sunderland as an Age Friendly City

We know that the number of older people is set to increase and that by 2029 almost half of the population of Sunderland will be aged over 50. At the same time our world is a growing city, with over half of the global population now living in cities, including increasing numbers of older people. Cities are the centre of cultural, social and political activity, yet to be sustainable, they must provide the structures and services to support residents' well-being and productivity. Older people require supportive and enabling environments to compensate for the physical and social changes that can come with ageing. Making cities more friendly is a logical and necessary response to promote the well-being and contributions of older urban residents and keep cities thriving. (Global Age Friendly Cities: A Guide, WHO 2007).

Active refers to the continuing participation in social, economic, cultural, spiritual and civic affairs, not just the ability to be physically active or to participate in the labour force. Active ageing aims to extend the healthy life expectancy and quality of life for all people as they age. If ageing is to be a positive experience, longer life must be accompanied by opportunities for health, participation and security:

Health: when the risk factors for chronic diseases and functional decline are kept low, while the protective factors are kept high, people will enjoy both a longer quantity and quality of life. They will remain healthy and able to manage their own lives as they grow old. Fewer adults will need costly medical treatment and care services.

Participation: when labour market, employment, education, health and social policies and programmes support their full participation in socioeconomic, cultural and spiritual activities, people will continue to make a productive contribution to society in both paid and unpaid activities as they age.

Security: when policies and programmes address the social, financial and physical security needs and rights of people as they age, older people are ensured of protection, dignity and care in the event that they are no longer able to support and protect themselves. Families and communities are supported in efforts to care for their older members.

In an age friendly city, policies, services, settings and structures support and enable people to age actively by:

- Recognising the capacity of older people
- Anticipating and responding to ageing related needs and preferences
- Respecting decisions and lifestyle choices
- Promoting the needs of the most vulnerable
- Promoting their inclusion and contribution in all areas of community life

The strategy aims to create an environment where people can grow older in a city that is age friendly.

National

Since 2001, there has been a range of policy drivers aimed at improving older people's lives. Many of the publications have been directed at the role of health and social care services in supporting older people, however government is changing - it is now recognising the growing proportion of older people and the importance of responding to the challenges of an ageing population.

Government policy and a stronger voice from older people themselves are coming together to shift the approach we adopt towards older people from managing of illnesses towards a more positive emphasis on well-being and engagement with the wider community, through preventative interventions. Strategies no longer focus solely on health and social care services to support older people, but on integrated approaches that take account of the role of many other public services and the ways in which they need to shift in order to respond to the changing demographics and the impact that this will have on society.

Key documents include:

National Service Framework for Older People (Department of Health, 2001) – Standard 8: The Promotion of Health and Active Life in Older Age aims to extend the healthy life expectancy of older people through health promotion and disease prevention programmes.

All Our Tomorrows – Inverting the Triangle of Care (Local Government Association and the Association of Directors of Social Services, 2003) – advocates that society should:

- Recognise the vital role that older people play in our society and improve the participation and engagement of older people in policy and service issues;
- Encourage healthy lifestyles for older people; break down the barriers to employment and ensure that they can access general services provided for all of use – with the aim of promoting independence;
- Have a joined up partnership approach to how services are delivered and ensure integration of key services such as health, housing, social services, transport, leisure and lifelong learning, planning, regeneration and the environment;
- Ensure specialist services are responsive, flexible, integrated and of high quality

Older People – independence and well-being: the challenge for public services (Audit Commission and Better Government for Older People, 2004) – the report is designed to assist public bodies to develop a framework for local approaches to older people. It outlines that the challenge for communities and councils is to be inclusive, to help older people to stay healthy and active and encourage their contribution to the community, through creating an environment that older people can shape, thrive and live life to the full for as long as possible. Older people should be seen as full citizens and a resource to society, rather than as dependent on it. Those whose health has begun to fail also deserve to enjoy life as fully as possible through identifying new ways that will support them to do so. A fundamental shift in

the way society thinks about older people is required, from dependency and deficit towards independence and well-being. Older people value having choice and control over how they live their lives. They require comfortable, secure homes, safe neighbourhoods, friendships and opportunities for learning and leisure, the ability to get out and about, an adequate income, good relevant information and the ability to keep active and healthy. Older people want to be involved in making decisions about the questions that affect their lives and the communities in which they live. Public services have a critical role to play in responding to the agenda for older people. Local strategic approaches to older people and later life must go beyond care services to tackle the factors that older people view as central to their lives.

Choosing Health (Department of Health, 2004) is a public health white paper that outlines the government's proposals on how to support the population to make healthy choices. The paper concentrates on:

- Health inequalities
- Drugs and alcohol
- Smoking
- Obesity (including physical activity and nutrition)
- Mental health

The white paper emphasised the importance of personalised support and strong communities in supporting people to live healthier lifestyles.

Opportunity Age – Meeting the challenges of ageing in the 21st century (HM Government, 2005) – the first cross government strategy that begins to chart the way forward in meeting the future needs of an older society, in order to deliver the kind of life people want as they grow older and ensure that later life is a time of opportunity, not vulnerability. The ageing of our society demands a new response from Government, a response which cannot be delivered through departments working in isolation. Opportunity Age adopts new approaches and relationships that will meet the future needs of an ageing society. The strategy aims to develop a coherent approach to manage the demographic change whilst helping individuals to achieve their aspirations for better later lives for themselves and their families, now and in the future. It advocates policies that address not only issues relating to income, but other issues that enable older people, whatever their age, to live a full life and play their full role in the community. Opportunity Age identifies three priority areas for action to achieve this:

- To achieve higher employment rates overall and greater flexibility for the over 50s in continuing careers, managing any health conditions and combining work, family and other commitments
- To enable older people to play a full and active role in society, with an adequate income and decent housing
- To allow us all to keep independence and control over our lives as we grow older, even if we are constrained by the health problems which can occur in old age

A Sure Start to Later Life: Ending Inequalities for Older People (Office of the Deputy Prime Minister, 2006) – a joint publication by the Department of Health and the Department for Work and Pensions following on from Opportunity Age. It aims to

prevent social exclusion and promote well-being in later life by addressing poverty, unemployment, poor housing, ill health and discrimination, with effective joined up services at key times. This will be achieved through preventative, joined up local services and creating a cycle of well-being through participation, leisure, education, improved health and ensuring older people are valued in families, the workplace and communities.

A New Ambition for Old Age: next steps in implementing the NSF for Older People (Department of Health, 2006) – Building on standard 8 of the original NSF, the aim of this programme is:

- To improve physical fitness of older people
- To overcome barriers to active life
- To improve access to health care and health promotion services vulnerable, excluded and disadvantaged groups
- To extend healthy active life expectancy through disease prevention

In the wider policy context, the White Paper **Our health, our care, our say** (HM Government and Department of Health, 2006) sets out an ambition for:

- Better prevention for improved health and well-being
- Giving people greater choice and control over the care they receive
- Providing care closer to home
- Supporting people with long term needs

The White Paper sets out 7 outcomes for individuals:

- Improved health
- Improved quality of life
- Making a positive contribution
- Exercise of choice and control
- Freedom from discrimination of harassment:
- Economic well-being
- Personal dignity

Although a White Paper for health and social care services, many of the outcomes cannot be achieved for individuals without the co-operation and commitment from wider partners, as it focuses on shifting the balance to prevention.

Putting People First: A shared vision and commitment to the transformation of Adult Social Care (HM Government, 2008) – a landmark protocol that sets out and supports the Government's commitment to independent living and outlining shared aims and values to guide the transformation of adult social care. Ultimately, there should be a single community based support system focussed on the health and well-being of the local population. Binding together local Government, primary care, community based health provision, public health, social care the wider issues of housing, employment, benefits advice and education/training.

Lifetime Homes, Lifetime Neighbourhoods: A national strategy for housing in an ageing society (DoH and DWP, 2008) – building on the work of Opportunity Age the strategy sets out a vision to 'futureproof' our communities for the multiple

changes we will face, so that society does not alienate or exclude and to allow everybody, regardless of age, to participate and enjoy their home and their environment for as long as possible. It outlines plans for making sure that there is enough appropriate housing available in the future to relieve the forecasted unsustainable pressures on homes, health and social care services. Chapter 8, sets out the concept of Lifetime Neighbourhoods that are sustainable through transport services, housing, public services, civic space and amenities that make it possible for people to have a full life and take part in the life of the community around them, an idea that is linked to Age Friendly Cities.

Regional

The **Regional Housing Strategy** sets out the North East Housing Board's strategic aims and priorities for all housing in the region. It provides a framework that encourages the development of appropriate housing solutions at regional, sub-regional and local levels. One of the key objectives of the strategy is:

'To promote good management and targeted housing investment to address specific community and social needs, including an ageing population and the needs of minority communities; this will be integrated with the Supporting People Programme and promote greater community involvement'.

Better Health, Fairer Health (Public Health North East, 2008) is a strategy for 21st Century health and wellbeing in the North East of England. The strategy's vision is that the North East will have the best and fairest health and well-being, and will be recognised for its outstanding and sustainable quality of life. The themes highlighted in the strategy span the life course, from preconception to death.

Local

The Sunderland Strategy 2008-2025 has been developed to provide the framework for members of the Sunderland Partnership and all organisations, groups of people and individuals to work together to improve quality of life in Sunderland. It sets out a collective vision for the city and its residents and how the vision will be achieved.

The shared vision for Sunderland is:

Creating a better future for everyone in Sunderland: Sunderland will be a welcoming, internationally recognised city where people have the opportunity to fulfil their aspirations for a healthy, safe and prosperous future

Five strategic aims have been developed to achieve the vision:

Aim 1: By 2025 Sunderland will be an enterprising and productive global city with a strong and diverse economy providing jobs and careers for generations to come, where everyone has the opportunity to contribute to and benefit from the regional economy, to fulfil their potential to be skilled, motivated and wealth creating without losing the special characteristic of Sunderland's balanced way of life

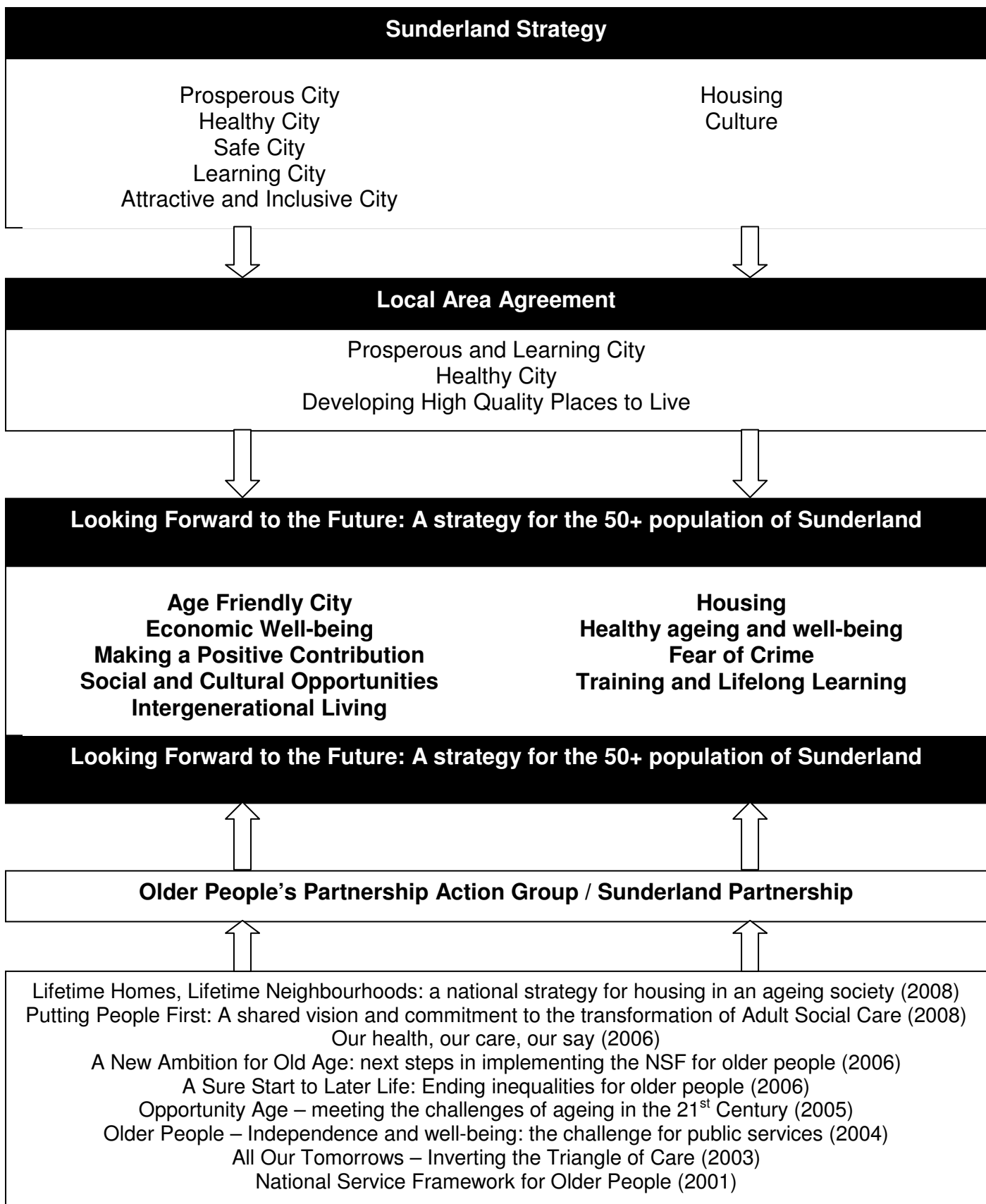
Aim 2: By 2025 Sunderland will be a city where everyone can be supported to make healthy life and lifestyle choices – a city that provides excellent health and social care services for all who need them. Everyone in Sunderland will have the opportunity to live long, healthy, happy and independent lives

Aim 3: By 2025 Sunderland will be a place where everyone feels welcome and can be part of a safe, inclusive community where people will feel safe and secure and can enjoy life

Aim 4: By 2025 Sunderland will be a city with a thriving learning culture where everyone can be involved in learning in a cohesive, inclusive city that is committed to social justice, equality and prosperity where creativity flourishes and where individuals can have all they need to thrive in the global economy

Aim 5: By 2025 Sunderland will be a clean, green city with a strong culture of sustainability, protecting and nurturing both its built heritage and future development and ensuring that both the built and natural environments will be welcoming, accessible, attractive and of high quality

Looking Forward to the Future: A Strategy for the 50+ population of Sunderland is key to ensuring that older people are integral to achieving the vision for Sunderland.



Involving and Empowering Our 50+ Citizens

Older people value having choice and control over how they live their lives – it is a right that all older people should be able to exercise. They want to be involved in making decisions about the questions that affect their lives and the communities in which they live. New approaches that focus on well-being, independence and citizenship must be based on the involvement of older people as central partners and contributors. It is important to develop longer term structured processes to include older people in the life of the community and in gathering views on specific service issues.

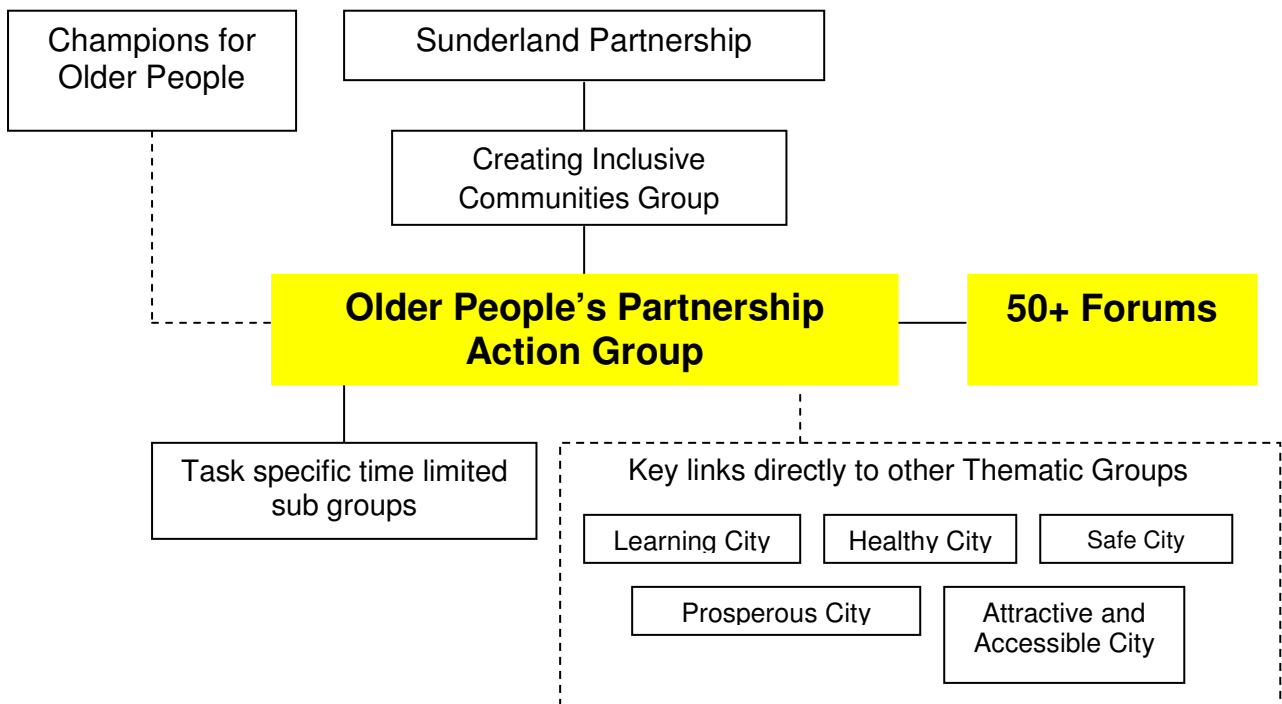
The empowerment of older people offers the opportunity for individuals to build their power from within and for communities of interest to collectively gain more access to the decisions and resources that influence their health and its determinants. Empowering people is the key to achieving success in adopting a life course approach to ageing and in ensuring that the vision outlined in this strategy is achieved. Adopting a life course approach to ageing in Sunderland means:

Looking at ageing on a personal and individual level and ensuring that all people, whatever their age receive information and education and have opportunities and equality of access to quality services to enable them to lead a full and happy life, exercise informed choice over their own life and make a significant contribution to the life of the city (Older People's Partnership Action Group)

Consultation and involvement are different from empowerment and all partners in Sunderland need to make a decision that they will give power to people to exercise over their own lives and over the provision of services in the city. With a focus on well-being and improving quality of life, the Older People's Partnership Action Group is the mechanism in Sunderland for giving older people a voice in the development of the city and the issues that are important to them.

Older People's Partnership Action Group

?? structure



The multi agency Action Group was established in April 2006 to:

- Provide a forum to raise and address older people's issues in Sunderland at a strategic level
- Maintain an overview of strategic planning and development of services that older people access
- Promote the positive contribution older people can make within society
- Enable full and active participation in decision-making processes
- Be a vehicle to challenge and influence partners of the Sunderland Partnership

Through a partnership approach and with a focus on preventing social exclusion and promoting well-being in later life by addressing poverty, unemployment, poor housing, ill health and discrimination, the outcomes to be achieved for older people are:

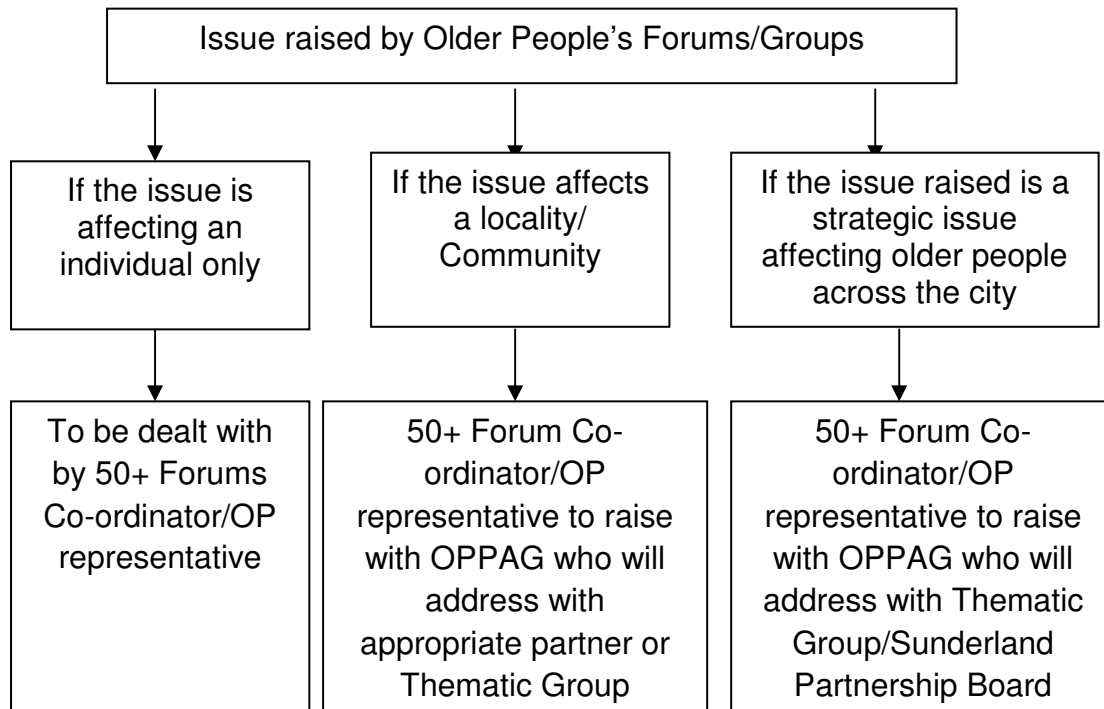
- Older people feel valued citizens of Sunderland
- Older people live independent lives
- Older people live safe lives
- Older people live healthy and active lives
- Older people will have access to a good income to enable them to be healthy and have a good quality of life
- Older people will have access to high quality accessible transport
- Older people will have access to a range of housing options to meet their aspirations

- Social exclusion and isolation are addressed and older people will be engaged in community life
- Older people will be consulted, listened to and heard
- Inequalities are reduced
- Older people will have equality of opportunity to reach their full potential
- There will be increased opportunities for older people to participate in leisure and cultural activities
- There will be easy and equitable access to services, support, advice and information
- Discrimination on the basis of age is tackled

Central to the philosophy of OPPAG is the involvement of older people within decision making processes. Older people are empowered to do this and have a voice within the development of the City through the six 50+ Forums that exist geographically located across the city. The forums provide the opportunity for older people to come together to raise issues that affect their community and to be involved in the development of the city's policies and plans. The forums are represented on OPPAG where their issues are raised and addressed, either by OPPAG, the relevant Thematic Group or at a higher strategic level, by the Sunderland Partnership. This structure has been recognised in a report to the WHO European Healthy Ageing Network as an example of good practice and one that should be built upon as a vehicle to achieve real empowerment of older people. Older people have been key to informing the development of this strategy and identifying the priorities that this strategy addresses.

In addition to the 50+ Forums, older people with mental health needs are represented on OPPAG through the Alzheimer's Society and carers are represented through Sunderland Carers Centre and the Alzheimer's Society.

OPPAG provides a structured process for the ongoing involvement and empowerment of older people and the diagram below shows how older people's views and issues are progressed:



Local Involvement Networks (LINKs) were established in April 2008 through The Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007, to give citizens a stronger local voice in how health and social care services are planned and delivered. A LINK is a network of organisations, groups and local people who want to improve care services and they give citizens, including older people the opportunity to think and suggest ideas to help improve services. LINKs encourage and support local people to get involved in how local care services are planned and run and they listen to local people about their needs and about experiences of services.

Communities in Control: real people, real power (Communities and Local Government 2008) – the White Paper aims to enhance the power of communities by strengthening local democracy and increasing participation, through giving active citizens real control over local decisions and services. The White Paper addresses seven key issues: being active in your community; access to information; having an influence; challenge; redress; standing for office and ownership and control.

How the Strategy has been developed

This Strategy has been developed with a range of stakeholders. This includes members of the Older People's Partnership Action Group; members of the Sunderland Partnership and importantly people aged 50+.

People aged 50+ have been central to informing and influencing the strategy's priorities. This was achieved through ongoing involvement of, and consultation with people to ensure that the strategy reflected the issues that:

- are important to them
- would improve their quality of life and well-being, and
- would ensure equality for them as citizens of Sunderland

Our Priorities

The response to an ageing society should be positive, and one that celebrates the fact that people are living longer. However, this requires a fundamental cultural shift in the way society thinks about older people. Older people should be seen in terms of independence and well-being, rather than dependency and deficit.

When asked, older people are clear about what independence and well-being means for them and what factors help to maintain it. Older people value having choice and control over how they live their lives and they want to be involved in making decisions about the questions that affect their lives and the communities in which they live. Interdependence is a central component of older people's well-being; to contribute to the life of the community and for that contribution to be valued and recognised. Older people require comfortable, secure homes, safe neighbourhoods, friendships and opportunities for leisure and learning, the ability to get out and about, an adequate income, good relevant information and the ability to keep healthy and active.

Looking Forward to the Future Strategy reflects the 5 strategic aims of the Sunderland Strategy, however the priorities that are important to older people have been identified within each strategic aim. These are:

Sunderland Strategy Aim	Looking Forward to the Future Strategy Priorities
Aim 1: Prosperous City	Economic well-being
Aim 2: Healthy City	Healthy ageing and well-being Housing
Aim 3: Safe City	Fear of Crime
Aim 4: Learning City	Training and Lifelong Learning
Aim 5: Attractive and Inclusive City	Age Friendly City Intergenerational living Social and cultural opportunities Making a positive contribution

Aim 1: Prosperous City

By 2025 Sunderland will be an enterprising and productive global city with a strong and diverse economy providing jobs and careers for generations to come, where everyone has the opportunity to contribute to and benefit from the regional economy, to fulfil their potential to be skilled, motivated and wealth creating without losing the special characteristic of Sunderland's balanced way of life

Priority: Economic Wellbeing

Outcome: People will have access to advice and information to maximise their income and they will have the opportunity to contribute to the economy of the city

Context

Employment

Increasing numbers of people are leaving work before standard retirement ages. This is as a result of a combination of factors including, choice, redundancy, health problems and increased care commitments, however some older people leave work involuntarily due to discrimination. Evidence suggests that age discrimination in the workplace and early withdrawal from work has a number of negative effects, including isolation, social exclusion and stigma; increased levels of poverty; reduced physical and mental health (Excluded Older People, Social Exclusion Unit Interim Report, ODPM, 2005).

Many employers are beginning to face difficulties in recruiting enough people from younger age groups, however, the potential gain of encouraging older people to work longer is not yet being fully realised. As the number of people aged between 16 and 49 declines up to 2021, these problems are likely to become more acute; therefore employers are turning to older workers to solve recruitment problems. The potential of the over 50s to contribute to the workforce can not be underestimated. In 2001 there were 6.7 million people over 50 in paid work, contributing £201 billion to national economic output. For the national economy to prosper over the 15-20 years around one in ten of the 50-69 year olds who would otherwise be out of work would need to have jobs. (The Economy and Older People, Age Concern Policy Unit, 2004). In Sunderland in 2001, there were 74,096 people aged 50-74 years, of which only 23,343 were in paid employment (Census 2001).

As people grow older, their priorities change and they often want to balance work with other interests and obligations. A more flexible range of work opportunities in later life would help older people reorient their work commitments to meet their aspirations, without having to exit the workforce completely (Crossroads after 50: improving choices in work and retirement, JRF, 2003).

Income Maximisation

Income varies between older people and later life brings with it an increased vulnerability to poverty, yet having an adequate income is key to independence. It is

estimated that over one fifth of older people are living in poverty, with older women, black and minority ethnic older people and older pensioners being particularly vulnerable. Living on a low income can mean cutting back on basic items such as food and household utilities. Figures from National Energy Action suggest that there 1 in 3 households in the North East are fuel poor. A household is fuel poor if it needs to spend more than 10% of its income to maintain a satisfactory heating regime. In Sunderland, in the winter of 2006/07 there were an estimated 114 excess winter deaths and of these 97 were people aged 65 and over.

In Sunderland in 2001 there were, 29,534 people retired. By 2006 19,570 were receiving pension credit. Of these, around 12,000 were women and 14,700 were single person claimants (Census, 2001). Many benefits go unclaimed, for a number of reasons including the complexity of the benefits system, lack of information and advice and stigma (Excluded Older People Social Exclusion Unit Interim Report, OPDM, 2005). Maximisation of income requires good information to ensure that older people are accessing the benefits they are entitled to.

What have older people told us?

'Support leading up to retirement would be beneficial on issues such as how to manage your money, financial planning, how to stay healthy after retirement, how to maintain social contacts after retirement'

'People 50+ have lots of skills and experience to offer employers, they are more reliable, show more loyalty and have a better work ethic'

'Employers giving people close to retirement the opportunity to go from full time to part time so they can see the impact it will have on their financial and social life'

'People find it hard to know where to get the best advice from'

Where are we now?

- According to the 2001 Census, 25,291 people aged over 50 were economically active
- Sunderland City Council's Business Improvement and Advice Services are heavily involved in income maximisation and take up. This includes services provided by:
 - Benefits and Assessment Team who provide advice and assistance with benefit claims/issues. This activity has resulted in approximately £1.6 million in benefits gains and back payments from over 600 separately identified claims in 2007-08. It is estimated that 80-90% of this activity and consequent outcomes are for people aged 50+

- Welfare Rights Service who provides advice and representation to Sunderland residents in relation to welfare benefits, debt and employment law. Over 4,500 issues were handled in 2007-08 and almost 2,000 of these were on behalf of people aged over 50. The main issues recorded for people over 50 relate to benefits including Disability Living Allowance, Attendance Allowance and Pension queries
- The Council has recently reviewed its contract arrangements with external welfare rights advice providers and increased this investment to ensure maximum city coverage, available at a local level for people with welfare rights advice needs (welfare benefits, debt, housing, employment).
- Age Concern Sunderland provide advice to people through their welfare benefits service and since May 2005, they have assisted 5,513 older people to claim £10,180,985 in benefits that would otherwise have been unclaimed. Age Concern also provides advice and information about debt management and gas and electricity issues.
- The national Warm Front scheme is proving successful in Sunderland and includes a benefits services to maximise household income. In addition householders are supported through the Council approved home insulation scheme to receive benefits advice. This approach helps to alleviate fuel poverty in a time of rising energy prices.

Where do we want to be?

The aim of this priority is to improve the economic well-being of those aged over 50. This can be achieved through creating opportunities to increase the number of people over 50 who are in work through addressing the barriers they encounter to employment. For those older people who are unable to work or who have retired, the strategy will aim to ensure that they have sufficient income to maximise their quality of life and improve or maintain their health and well-being. The following priorities have been identified to achieve this:

- To promote with employers the positive contribution that older workers can make to their workforce and to gain commitment from employers to tackle age discrimination in the work place
- To ensure that older people have a range of choices available to them when approaching retirement through the provision of information and advice and by encouraging employers to develop flexible retirement policies
- To encourage an enterprising culture amongst the over 50s through the promotion of social enterprise and self employment possibilities
- To improve the health and well-being of older people by addressing fuel poverty, through setting out the strategic direction to ensure a co-ordinated approach across agencies to address the problems of fuel poverty and achieving affordable warmth.

- To improve the information and support available to older people about the benefits that they are entitled to through:
 - Further develop welfare benefits maximisation services through the Council's Benefits and Assessment Team and to strengthen its Joint Working Partnership with the Pension, Disability & Carers Service to increase access to effective benefits advice for people aged 50+
 - Ensuring delivery of the Strategic Plan for Welfare Rights Advice
 - Developing capacity within the Third Sector to provide benefits advice, information and advice services



Courtesy of Northeast Press

Aim 2: Healthy City

By 2025 Sunderland will be a city where everyone can be supported to make healthy life and lifestyle choices – a city that provides excellent health and social care services for all who need them. Everyone in Sunderland will have the opportunity to live long, healthy, happy and independent lives

Priority: Healthy ageing and well-being

Outcome: People will be supported and encouraged to make healthy life and lifestyle choices that promote their physical, mental and emotional well-being. There will be good quality accessible health and social care services for those who need them, so that healthy life expectancy across the City mirrors that achieved in more affluent parts of the country.

Context

The ageing population of Sunderland has significant implications for the overall health of the City. Although the risks to health accumulate throughout life (for example one of the most effective ways to improve the health of those aged 50+ is to reduce risks to health in men aged 40+) there is still much that can be done from the age of 50 to improve health in older age. It is important that as part of this strategy we take account of the health needs of older people as well as recognising the significant resource that older people offer the city if they are supported to remain healthy and independent.

Older People's Health Needs

There is no doubt that as people get older their health needs change. Generally, as people age they experience more health and social care needs that often increase with age. This was reflected in the findings of the 2004 Sunderland Health and Lifestyle Survey which found that the percentage of people describing their health as good or better falls with increasing age while the percentage of people with a long-term health problem or disability increases as people get older.

Older people are also less likely to be physically active. Again the 2004 survey showed that 87% of people aged 65 and over not taking the recommended level of physical activity, significantly more than younger adults in the City. It is known that physical activity has an important impact on health in later life. This impact relates not only to chronic diseases but also to other health risks for older people such as general ill-health, disability, dependence and falls as well as mortality.

There are a number of health issues which impact on older people more than other members of the community. Included in this are falls which not only impact significantly on the health and well-being of older people but are also the major cause of death from injury in the over 75s. Similarly, dementia is a disease which occurs predominantly in later life. As people live longer we can expect that the number of people suffering from dementia will increase by about half between 2005 and 2025. This has implications for how we support not only those with dementia

but also those who care for them. Other chronic disease, particularly stroke and COPD also have a greater impact as people get older and can impact on quality as well as length of life.

Although as people age they are more vulnerable to ill health the causes of this poorer health are not very different from the majority of the adult population. The physical aging of the body through time does have an impact but this combines with many other factors throughout life to lead to an individual's health status as they reach older age. These factors continue to exist throughout old age and so it is important that we continue to prevent or slow down the development of poorer health through effective interventions which impact on these risks or hazards to health. Table 1 below details some of the hazards or vulnerabilities to poor health that have been identified in relation to older people.

Table 1: Factors that make older people more vulnerable to poor health

Individual Factors	Wider/Social Factors
Social class	Poverty (including fuel poverty)
Sex/gender	Poor housing
Social isolation	Fear of crime
Physical ill-health	Age discrimination
Physical disability	Availability of and access to cheap, nutritious food
Learning disability	Access to healthcare
Ethnicity	Access to leisure
Mental ill-health e.g. depression, bereavement	Access to transport
Mental disability e.g. dementia	Social and cultural norms and values
Lifestyle issues e.g. lack of exercise, smoking, poor nutrition etc	Social networks/social support
Caring responsibilities	

None of these issues relate only to older people and so by addressing these hazards across the city we can impact not only on the health of older people but also on the wider population. Some older people, however, are more likely to suffer from multiple threats to their health which will cause vulnerability and poor health to the individual. This can be best tackled by considering the ways in which we can improve the resilience of older people to these threats to their health so making them less vulnerable as coping improves.

Although this approach will delay the period of dependence in people's lives, it is inevitable that there will come a time when some older people will need greater support. The total number of older people (aged over 65) receiving a service from Adult Services in February 2008 was 6,268, of which 5,046 were supported to live at home through a range of services and direct payments. Even assuming that the health of the population improves over the next 15 years, the number of people with functional dependencies amongst the older population in Sunderland is projected to

increase by 28% to 22,400 older people by 2022, with 10,100 with significant/very significant dependencies.

Older People as a Health Resource

In spite of the greater vulnerability to poorer health experienced by many older people, as people age they can also become a health resource within the community. By supporting people to remain independent we can increase the years during which they provide this resource.

Sunderland has more people providing unpaid care than the national average. According to the 2001 Census there were around 15,300 carers aged over 50, of which around 5,000 provided care for 50 or more hours per week. The report *Healthy Ageing in the City of Sunderland* estimated that the value of this care is over £150 million per year. One impact of the ageing population, however, is that increasingly the partners of those requiring care will also age. For example a recent health needs assessment focusing on dementia projected that the number of people with dementia in Sunderland aged 85 and over would increase from 1033 in 2005 to 1947 in 2025 increasing the proportion of people with dementia who are in this older age group from 35% to 44%. This will mean that unless we support older people to remain healthy and independent there will be fewer people needing care who will receive it from informal carers. It is also important that carers are supported to enable them to access opportunities to lead a normal life.

Many older people also provide a valuable resource in caring for their grandchildren. A safe and secure start to life has a major impact on the health of an individual. A small number of grandparents take on this role fulltime. Many more support parents who go out to work, reducing the impact of child poverty on the health of children.

What have older people told us?

'Carers needs should be considered as there are older people looking after older people – this creates isolation'

'Good health and quality of life are very important to older people'

'Rehabilitation is important – should not give up on people who have a chronic condition but should support them to live as full a life as possible'

'Carers should be given a reason to carry on after the person they care for dies – advertise bereavement support'

'Very important to keep people independent for as long as possible'

Where are we now?

There have been many achievements in supporting the health of older people in recent years.

- The development of an integrated pathway for falls prevention in older people building on the successes of the Healthy Communities Collaborative
- The annual Influenza Immunization campaign in Sunderland continues to achieve good results – in 2006/07 77% of those aged 65 or over living in Sunderland were vaccinated, compared with only 74% nationally
- Sunderland City Council continues to assess for social care needs across all for Fair Access to Care Services (FACS) bands: low, moderate, substantial and critical at a time when many councils increasingly only help those with 'substantial' or 'critical' needs
- Age Concern, the Alzheimer's Society and the Carers' Centre are very active in the City, supporting older people to remain active and healthy and to access the support and care they may need as their own health or the health of those they care for begins to fail
- A range of voluntary and community sector organisations offer support to people with various conditions and disabilities. Many of these organisations also ensure that people have a voice in the development of health and social care services
- There are a number of organisations providing support to carers in the city, many of whom are part of the collective group Voice for Carers. In partnership with Health, Housing and Adult Services, the Council and Health, Voice for Carers have developed a multi-agency carers strategy which sets out how carers can be better supported within their caring role and the support they need to have a life of their own outside of their caring responsibilities.
- The state of older people's homes is known to have an impact on their risk of falling as well as developing a number of diseases and has even been linked to increased deaths during the winter. Sunderland Home Improvement Agency, established in 2007, incorporates a Handyperson Service as well as providing energy efficiency advice both of which will have a positive impact on the health of older people
- Community Mental Health Teams for older people have been developed to support older people with mental health needs within the community
- Two recent pilot projects provided by Age Concern Sunderland: a social inclusion worker and a hospital discharge project have explored new ways of supporting the health of older people by reaching those most vulnerable and those recently discharged from hospital to provide non clinical advice and support which will benefit their health

- The development and implementation of Telecare in the City is leading to increased support for more independent living amongst older people in Sunderland
- There are 7 Wellness Centres across the city providing exercise and physical activity facilities. For people over 50, facilities range from group training classes, to individual training programmes, as well as more specialised sessions for those referred to programmes of physical activity. The Wellness Centres can also offer lifestyle services and programmes to assist with healthy eating and weight management advice, smoking cessation support and general wellbeing and lifestyle advice. Technogym Easyline circuits are mobile units which will be sited in the community for older people to access (sheltered accommodation, nursing homes, libraries, churches, community schools, Primary Care Centres, GP practices and hospital sites)
- The Healthy Exercise and Lifestyle Programme (HELP) is an exercise referral system that is delivered from the Wellness Centres by staff who specialise in exercise provision for individuals with a variety of health risks. Approximately 58% of referred clients are over the age of 50.
- Sunderland's Wellness Service is working closely with a range of voluntary and community sector organisations including Age Concern, the Alzheimer's Society and the Carers Centre to ensure opportunities for older adults to be physically active are available across the city.
- Sunderland has a successful Intermediate Care Service for people over 65 who require convalescence or rehabilitation following an accident or illness.
- Health, Housing and Adult Services support people to remain living independently in their own homes for as long as possible through a range support provided by a team of Social and Health Care Assistants, including specialist workers for people with dementia and people with palliative care needs
- To safeguard people from harm and abuse, agencies across the city work together through the Safeguarding Adults Partnership Board. Through the use of the Multi-Agency Policy and Procedural Framework it is aimed to raise awareness of abuse; ensure preventative measures are in place to minimise the risk of abuse and to respond to abuse when it is reported or suspected.

Where do we want to be?

The aim of this strand of the strategy is to ensure that the closing of the health gap between Sunderland and the rest of the country benefits those who are aged 50+ at least as much as the rest of the population. We want to ensure that people are supported to have active and healthy and independent lives well into older age and that healthy life expectancy will mirror that achieved in more affluent areas of the country. We want the ageing population in our City to be viewed as an opportunity rather than just a burden. This will be achieved by ensuring that each person aged

50 and over achieves the best physical, mental and emotional health that they can and encouraging them to be active members of the community.

In spite of our wish to ensure that the added years of life to be gained by the older people of Sunderland are happy and healthy years, it is inevitable that for some older people there will come a time when they need greater support. For these people, we want to ensure that they receive the support and care they need having choice and control over how they are supported, including control over the monies spent on meeting their needs. We want to enable them to remain safe and as independent as possible, living in the home of their choice. We also want to ensure that those who are providing informal care are supported in this critical role, not only in relation to their caring responsibilities but also to enable them to live an ordinary life. Finally, we would like to see all older people achieving a good death, receiving optimal standards and organisation of care at the end of life and dying with dignity in a setting of their own choice. To achieve this, the following priorities have been identified:

Approaching Later Life

Those approaching later life are currently active and independent. The challenge for this group of the population is to support them to remain at this stage in the ageing process for as long as possible. Priorities are to:

- Ensure that the health of those approaching later life is optimised by detecting the diseases of older age at an early stage so that they can be managed appropriately;
- Help people to remain active and set down good habits to support them throughout their retired life. This will include a spectrum of opportunities for not only physical activity, but also the development of social networks which can also be supportive of the achievement of good health as well as quality of life
- Facilitate the development of older people as a resource for the health of Sunderland leading to improved health for themselves and others and the opportunity for them to contribute to the future of the City
- To enable people to access a range of early and preventative interventions that prevent or delay decreasing dependence

Transitional Phase

People in this phase of life can continue to contribute but we need to also consider the increasing vulnerability that they may experience as they age.

- As services are developed to improve the health of the people of Sunderland ensure they take account of the needs of older people and are accessible and attractive to them
- Facilitate people to remain as independent as possible as they age, ensuring they have a choice of supportive services

- Ensure that even the most vulnerable older people are supported to improve their health through the adoption of healthier lifestyles and other practices that impact on health
- To empower people to identify, choose and control the support or care they need to live life as they want

Vulnerable Older People

This is the stage at which people need support, often as a result of their failing health. It is important, however, that they remain as active as possible and continue to have the opportunity to contribute to the lives of others.

- Develop appropriate rehabilitation and care for those in the later stages of a number of chronic conditions including all cardiovascular disease, COPD and dementia as well for those who have fallen
- Ensure that as those who are housebound remain as engaged as possible through supporting them to be physically, mentally and socially active at home
- Support people as they approach death so that they are supported to have a dignified end to their life in the setting they want
- To focus on the prevention of abuse for older people ensuring the risks of abuse are minimised through the promotion and use of the Safeguarding Adults Procedural Framework
- To empower people to identify, choose and control the support or care they need to live life as they want

Await P Allen comments

Priority: Housing

Outcome: People will have decent quality housing and homes will be 'homes for life'

Context

A home is not just a physical building, it is an important part of a person's identity and plays a key role in determining and maintaining a person's quality of life in the community in which they live. This becomes an issue for older people in terms of suitable access to housing, the suitability of available properties and appropriate support services which when taken together help maintain older people's independence in the community. A number of issues may prevent older people enjoying the standard of housing they deserve and affect their quality of life including; access to information; difficulties with maintenance and repair of existing housing; housing options; joining up and preventative services (A Sure Start to Later Life: Ending Inequalities for Older People, Office of the Deputy Prime Minister, 2006).

Sunderland has 123,982 households, of which 72.2% of these are in the private sector and the remaining 27.8% are socially rented. According to the 2001 Census, older persons households made up 23.7% of all households and within 15.1% of these households, older people were living alone. 55% of older people own their own home and 42% of the socially rented accommodation was older people households. Older people are crucial to the workings of the housing market and their choices will have an impact upon the market they live in and create part of the 'churn effect' so crucial to the development of the market. Housing in the future should be designed so that it reflects the changes that occur over a lifetime, and so that people are not excluded by design as they grow older and more frail.

What have older people told us?

Research undertaken in the Housing Market Assessment in 2007 to identify the requirements of older people now or in the next 5 years showed that:

Support requirements:

- 32.7 required help with gardening
- 28% required help with repair and maintenance of home
- 22.7% required help with cleaning their home

Aids and adaptations requirements:

- 13.7% required better heating
- 13.3% required double-glazing
- 12.9% required better insulation

Housing options:

- 85.2% want to continue living in their current home with support if needed
- 21.7% would choose sheltered accommodation

'If people want to stay in their homes for their whole life they should be able to do this'

Where are we now?

A range of housing options and support are provided:

Sunderland City Council

- The first extra care housing development is now underway in Silksworth with an expected completion date of March 2009. The development will provide 40 units of 2 bedroom apartments, of which 20 will be for rent, 10 for shared ownership and 10 for outright sale
- Specialist Home Care Teams directly provided by Health, Housing and Adult Services to support people to remain living in their own home, through the provision of a variety of assistance including personal care, rehabilitation and basic nursing support, including a telecare and overnight service; a support service for people with dementia and their carers; a prevention service and a specialist evening service
- The Meals at Home Service directly provides older people with around 130,000 meals each year
- The Home Improvement Agency (HIA) provides a joined up service enabling vulnerable people to live independently in the home of their choice for as possible, through the provision of practical support and advice e.g. major and minor alterations, assistance to contribute towards decent homes in the private sector, energy efficiency advice and information and a handyman service.
- A major review of the Disabled Facilities Grant (DFG) process has taken place resulting in more effective procedures aimed at improving the customer journey
- A new Financial Assistance Policy has introduced a shift from grants to loans, enabling homeowners to use the equity in their properties to achieve hazard free, decent homes.
- A range of voluntary sector services are grant funded by Health, Housing and Adult Services' Services for Older People including:
 - Advice and support services
 - Luncheon clubs
 - Befriending services
 - Carer support services

Care Contracted Services

- Health, Housing and Adult Services' Services commission:
 - 12 home care providers
 - 5 day care providers
 - 4 companionship service providers
 - 59 care homes
- The council contracts with two providers who manage 15 schemes, including 831 units, with floating support

Supporting People Programme

- Supporting People currently contracts with 7 Registered Social Landlord (RSLs) providers of ordinary supported housing with 52 schemes. These provide 2430 units of supported accommodation for older people. This is a split between 37 schemes of sheltered accommodation delivering 1508 units and 17 floating support schemes delivering 922 units. The Floating Support provided to older people in their own homes to enable them to remain living in their own home and to be independent for as long as possible in their own community.

Where do we want to be?

The aim of this priority is to ensure that people live in decent quality homes, that maximise opportunities for independent living. For those older people who need it, they will be provided with support to enable them to live independently in their own homes for as long as possible. To achieve this, the following priorities have been identified:

- To understand and develop a range of accommodation types to better suit the needs of older people, including
 - Developing a robust methodology to determine its 'Homes for Life' target population that could access and utilise this type of provision if it were available in the city
 - Completing the first three extra care schemes in Silksworth, Washington and Hetton
- To maximise independent living and enable people to remain in their own homes by:
 - Supporting people through the use of Telecare enabled solutions
 - Supporting people through the repair, adaptation and improvement process via the Home Improvement Agency
- To ensure that the future regeneration of the city is informed by older people so that their needs will be taken into consideration and developments will be safe and accessible for older people
- To ensure that by 2013 all new homes will be being built to Lifetime Homes Standards, in line with the Lifetime Homes, Lifetime Neighbourhood Strategy

Aim 3: Safe City

By 2025 Sunderland will be a place where everyone feels welcome and can be part of a safe, inclusive community where people will feel safe and secure and can enjoy life

Priority: Fear of Crime

Outcome: People will feel safe and secure inside and outside of their home and they can enjoy life without fear of becoming a victim of crime

Context

Many older people have lived in the same place for a long time and identify strongly with their neighbourhoods. Safe neighbourhoods enable older people to maintain their contacts within their community and participate in the life of that community. Crime and the fear of crime can profoundly affect the quality of people's lives can be a cause of mental distress, where older people are too frightened to engage in social activities leading to isolation. Sunderland's crime rate is now lower than the national average and it is one of the safest big cities in the North. According to the 2007 Fear of Crime Survey respondents aged over 75 years were generally much less worried about crimes than other groups, however many older people still worry about becoming a victim of crime.

What have older people told us?

Comments given during the Fear of Crime Survey about what makes people feel unsafe included:

- *I live in sheltered accommodation. Nearly everyone stays in at night. We are too frightened to go out*
- *I've run a Senior Citizens group for 20 years and we all feel very vulnerable*
- *Getting older makes one more worried!*
- *I do not feel safe if I am out alone. I have been mugged twice and being older I feel criminals take the easy option*

Where are we now?

- Sunderland is one of the safest cities in the north. From 2002 / 2003 to 2006/2007 there has been a 37% reduction in total crime, which equates to over 14,000 fewer victims of crime.
- The city's crime rate has been lower than the national average since 2005/2006.

- Worry about crime has seen a significant improvement in Sunderland. In 2004, almost half of all residents said they were less worried about crime than they were the year before.
- Every community is now patrolled by its own dedicated Neighbourhood Policing Team comprising of Police Officers, Community Support Officers and Special Constables, a significant achievement that will allow us to further increase peoples' safety and feelings of safety.

Where do we want to be?

The aim of this priority is to ensure that older people feel, safe and secure where they can enjoy life without the concerns of being a victim of crime or being harmed and that older people's perceptions and fears of crime are addressed. To achieve this, the following priorities have been identified:

- To work with the Safer Sunderland Partnership to address the fear of crime and develop targeted work to address issues particularly affecting older people
- To improve feelings of safety it is necessary to raise awareness and understanding of the truth behind improvements in crime, disorder and substance misuse reinforced by visible improvements in local neighbourhoods
- To work to design out crime by changing the physical environment of our streets and neighbourhoods including CCTV and secured car parks
- To continue the Safer Homes Initiative which provides a swift response to vulnerable people living in fear of crime and victims of house burglary, hate crime and domestic violence
- To encourage more proactive engagement of the police with people aged over 50 to encourage feelings of safety in this age group



Courtesy of Northeast Press

Aim 4: Learning City

By 2025 Sunderland will be a city with a thriving learning culture where everyone can be involved in learning in a cohesive, inclusive city that is committed to social justice, equality and prosperity where creativity flourishes and where individuals can have all they need to thrive in the global economy

50+ Strategy Priority: Training and Lifelong Learning

Outcome: People will have access to local training and lifelong learning opportunities and they will be supported and encouraged to use them

Context

Older people say that learning helps to keep their brains active, that it stimulates their intellect and gives them pleasure and is a way of ensuring good health. They are interested in a wide variety of topics and subjects and continue to learn in a range of diverse ways, from attending formal classes to more informal self directed learning around specific interests through TV and radio programmes, reading, voluntary work and social activities. Older people are less likely to require 'vocational' accredited activities, and are more likely to consider activities that primarily satisfy a social need, allow opportunities for reflection and understanding of their life's achievements and satisfy curiosity of the new – particularly IT. However, some older people will want accreditation, in many instances particularly employment related, this will be highly relevant. People should have access to a wide range of training and learning opportunities, whether to gain qualifications to assist them in employment or to engage in stimulating activity that will improve their quality of life.

What have older people told us?

In 2006 a survey of readers who were housebound was commissioned by the Public Library Services. The survey was carried out with the library's Books on Wheels customers and there was a positive return with:

- *A 93.3% satisfaction rate and*
- *83.9% of people describing the service as a lifeline*

'If you don't use it you lose it!'

Where are we now?

- Bunny Hill Customer Service Centre provides access to a range of services including Family, Adult and Community Learning, library facilities; wellness facilities and an electronic village hall

- Partners, including Age Concern deliver adult and family learning opportunities for people across the city, including computer classes; foreign languages; calligraphy; crafts; creative writing and local history. These classes are funded by Sunderland City Council Family, Adult and Community Learning.
- £3.5 million investment has been brought into the city through Digital Challenge which will enable the development of technology to promote learning and social inclusion
- There are 20 libraries in the city and two mobile libraries, all providing a range of activities for older people. Sunderland Libraries can meet the requirements of older people for access and services, including formal and informal learning, a wide range of reading and audio materials, mobile services to housebound and geographically isolated people. Other library services include:
 - Operating a mobile Lifelong Learning/Customer Service Centre vehicle
 - Providing a Local Studies Centre
 - Working in partnership with the Women's Royal Voluntary Service to provide a 'Books on Wheels' service
 - Operate a hospital and schools library service
 - Family learning activities take place to enable parents, grandparents or carers to learn alongside children
 - Author events
 - Reading and Writers Groups
 - Local history talks
 - 'Drop in' IT facilities
- Learndirect has been piloted at Washington Town Centre and Hetton Libraries, with courses being aimed at learning new skills on computers. The service will aim to set up another 50+ readers' group at a community library, develop another Visual Impaired Readers' Group and look at how the 'books on wheels' service can be improved
- There are several Reading Groups throughout the city, with one being hosted by U3A (University of the Third Age), and these are all open to older people. One reading group is specifically for Visually Impaired People (VIPs) and currently all the participants are older people
- The 'Nifty'Fifties' group have been running for several years in the City Library and Arts Centre. Open to those aged 50 and over, speakers are invited to talk on a number of subjects, craft activities are offered and visits to other places are available
- 20% of students attending Sunderland University are aged over 40. The University have a Mature Student Society, which provides a focus for older students to meet socially to discuss areas of common interest.

Where do we want to be?

The aim of the priority is to ensure that people aged over 50 can access training and learning opportunities to improve their skills to enable them to return to or remain in employment or to engage in stimulating informal learning activities. The priorities identified to achieve this are:

- To engage and empower older people so they can identify what training and learning activities they would like to take part in
- To develop a comprehensive range of training and learning opportunities across the city that:
 - Improve people's opportunities for employment
 - Improve the health and well-being of older people
 - Are physically and financially accessible to people aged over 50
- To build capacity within the Third Sector to provide informal learning opportunities
- To develop high quality information about the training and learning opportunities that are available to older people

Case Study

Ken Watts a self-taught 75-year-old artist, was awarded a First Class degree in Fine Art in 2007. Ken was among the graduates of 2007 after completing the BA (Hons) course alongside students of many ages. "It's been a marvellous experience, very refreshing" said Ken. "People have been so helpful and friendly. I've encountered no ageism. I've made new friends and have gained more insight into the younger generation".



Aim 5: Attractive and Inclusive City

By 2025 Sunderland will be a clean, green city with a strong culture of sustainability, protecting and nurturing both its built heritage and future development and ensuring that both the built and natural environments will be welcoming, accessible, attractive and of high quality

50+ Strategy Priority: Age Friendly City

Outcome: Sunderland will be an age friendly city that encourages active ageing, by optimising opportunities for health, participation and security to enhance quality of life as people age

Context

We know that the number of older people is set to increase and that by 2029 almost half of the population of Sunderland will be aged over 50. At the same time our world is growing city, with over half of the global population now living in cities, including increasing numbers of older people. Cities are the centre of cultural, social and political activity, yet to be sustainable, they must provide the structures and services to support residents' well-being and productivity. Being able to get around outside of the home is important to older people. The ability of older people to travel is important for the purposes of entertainment, participation, independence and social interaction. Physical environments that are age friendly can make the difference between independence and dependence for all individuals, but are of particular importance for those growing older. For example, older people who live in unsafe environments or areas with multiple physical barriers are less likely to get out and there are more prone to isolation, depression, reduced fitness and increased mobility problems. Therefore, older people require supportive and enabling environments to compensate for the physical and social changes that come with ageing. Making cities more friendly is a logical and necessary response to promote the well-being and contributions of older urban residents and keep cities thriving. (Global Age Friendly Cities: A Guide, WHO 2007). In an age friendly city, policies, services, settings and structures support and enable people to age actively by:

- Recognising the wide range of capacities and resources amongst older people
- Anticipating and responding flexibly to ageing related needs and preferences
- Respecting decisions and lifestyle choices
- Protecting those who are most vulnerable
- Promoting their inclusion and contribution in all areas of community life

What have older people told us?

'By making services accessible to older people they become accessible to many others – making services age-friendly should be seen as an opportunity'

'Parks are good venues for older people, however some don't have toilets and the ones that do need to be improved'

Where are we now?

The city working towards becoming an Age Friendly City. It is necessary to raise awareness among citizens and partners of the Age Friendly Cities programme and engage them in understanding how they can contribute to improvements of the programme.

Where do we want to be?

The aim of the priority is to support the achievement of Age Friendly City status to ensure that Sunderland becomes a City where people can age positively. The physical environment of the city will accommodate the needs of older people so that they can get out and about easily and age discrimination will be reduced. Structures and services will be accessible to, and inclusive of, older people with varying needs and capacities. The priorities identified to achieve this are:

- To raise awareness among citizens and partners of the Age Friendly Cities programme and engage them in understanding how they can contribute to improvements of the Age Friendly Cities programme.
- To the future regeneration of the city takes in to account the needs of older people. The outside environment and public buildings will maximise quality of life and social inclusion and they will be welcoming, safe and accessible for older people
- To engage partners in the development of a programme to reduce age discrimination and negative stereotypes of older people within their organisations
- To ensure that the 50+ population have access to affordable transport that enables them to play a full an active part in all aspects of city life
- To ensure implementation of the 50+ Strategy



50+ Strategy Priority: Intergenerational Living

Outcome: Generations will understand and support each other. Skills, knowledge and expertise will be shared across generations

Context

Ageing takes place within the context of others, this is why interdependence as well as intergenerational solidarity are important tenants of active ageing. Many older people report a lack of understanding from younger generations about their lives and needs, with many older people being afraid of younger people. All too often, older people are viewed in negative terms, of being a burden, with little acknowledgement of the reality of increased health and vitality they now enjoy and the contribution they can offer to society. Intergenerational programmes are described as 'vehicles for the purposeful and ongoing exchange of resources and learning amongst older and younger generations for individual and social benefit'. Facilitating opportunities for generations to come together will enable them to understand each other and share cultural values that promote the worth of all ages. An intergenerational mindset in our strategic thinking and policy planning can contribute towards achievement of other government objectives - in tackling ageism, as a means for promoting community cohesion, neighbourhood renewal, promoting citizenship, addressing social exclusion, lifelong learning and healthier living. Such an approach within the context of policy making will provide a significant step forward for the Sunderland Strategy, releasing the generational skills and knowledge of one generation with other generations by placing more emphasis upon generations learning together and generations working together in community and civic activities.

What have older people told us?

'Neighbour support is important. There feels a loss of community spirit and young people tend not to support older people as was maybe anticipated. Respect for older people has disappeared, particularly from young people'

'Need people to meet and talk – encourage communities to support engaging older people'

'Contact with other people is important, peers die and younger people are not interested'

Where are we now?

Currently, there is no structured approach to intergenerational opportunities in the city, however some organisations are involved in intergenerational projects:

- Sunderland University is working with Age Concern on a student volunteering scheme which links younger students to older members of the community, with a view to increasing mutual understanding and awareness
- Family learning activities take place within Libraries to enable parents, grandparents or carers to learn alongside children

Case Study: Positive Futures Programme

The Positive Futures Programme worked with disaffected young people in the Southwick area, bringing them together with older people to try to break down barriers and create a better understanding between the two groups. Older people have shared stories and skills from the past, such as "clippie mat" making and given young people a greater insight into what life was like when they were young. This resulted in better relationships between the two groups and reduced the older people's fears and feelings of intimidation around young people. As a result of the Positive Futures Programme, young disorder reduced by 59% in the Southwick area of Sunderland.

Where do we want to be?

The aim of this priority is to encourage opportunities for intergenerational living. If planning for the future is to take account of older people's changing needs, expectations and the contributions they can provide for all generations, then it is vital to establish a forum to enable older people to become more engaged, exert influence and shape local policies. OPPAG will continue to provide the framework to raise older people's issues, however OPPAG, the Looking Forward to the Future Strategy and the policies of our partner agencies must place more emphasis on intergenerational initiatives. Adopting an intergenerational mindset will be crucial to the success of this Strategy and one, which requires support from all partners and citizens across the city. This approach is not a single agency approach, but a form of thinking and working that requires many different approaches in order to develop community capacity, build social and intellectual capital through creating networks and support systems. Within this framework, opportunities whereby generations can enjoy a shared experience in a purposeful and mutually beneficial way, should be increased.

To promote community cohesion through the development of intergenerational projects, the following priorities have been identified:

- To develop a plan for intergenerational projects to ensure that there is a co-ordinated approach within the city and to embed an intergenerational mindset in strategy and policy planning and development, so that all developments proactively consider opportunities for intergenerational activities
- To explore the possibility of establishing an Intergenerational Forum, which will bring together members of the Youth Parliament and the 50+ Forums on a regular basis to listen and respond to each others concerns and issues
- To engage partners within Education, to encourage schools to develop more opportunities for older people to help in schools
- To increase the number of older people engaging in intergenerational projects, through publicity and promotion and to establish a resource to support people who become intergenerational volunteers

- To map current intergenerational projects using the Sunderland Partnership toolkit

(await comments from M Elsy)



50+ Strategy Priority: Social and Cultural Opportunities

Outcome: There will be increased opportunities for all older people to access social and cultural activities

Context

Older people want social activities, to maintain networks of friends to see family members and to participate in leisure and learning opportunities. These activities help to promote and maintain older people's mental health and quality of life. Social activities such as shopping, visits to the cinema or theatre, restaurants and sporting events are central to what makes a good life in older age and they are as effective as fitness activities in lowering the risk of death and may help to increase quality and length of life. Today, people aged over 65 spend almost three hours a week more engaging in hobbies and sports than their counterparts did 50 years ago and there has been a fourfold increase in time spent on sport and exercise by the over 50s in the past 50 years. People over retirement age spend more time shopping than 16 to 24 year olds, with 43% of over 50s regularly buying and selling goods on the internet (www.fiftyforward.co.uk). Older people can use mainstream facilities and most do not necessarily require 'specialist' services, however, older people who are frail or who have chronic conditions, might need extra support to maintain those aspects of their lives that are most important to them.

What have older people told us?

'The venues in which the activities are held need to be accessible. Parks are good venues to hold activities, but toilets are an issue. Some parks don't have toilets and the ones that do need to be improved'

'There is a lack of information about what activities are available and where they take place – more information is needed'

'Local community centres should be used more, however they need to be clean, safe and accessible'

'There is too much emphasis on physical activities. Sometimes older people want to go to a group where they can just talk to someone – have social stimulation and interaction. Not all older people want to go to a gym and do physical activity'

'The timings of the activities need to be suitable for older people i.e. during the day'

'Information is needed about where older people can get support to set up local community groups i.e. advice about transport etc.'

Where are we now?

- 6 Wellness Centres, the Aquatic Centre and a range of community venues provide facilities for people to participate in social activities, through physical activity and sport
- Capital developments made to the Sunderland Empire have enabled the theatre to create the biggest stage in the region and as a result it has seen an increase in visitor numbers and satisfaction
- There are 20 libraries in the city and two mobile libraries, all providing a range of activities for older people. Sunderland Libraries go some way to meeting requirements of older people for access and services, including formal and informal learning, a wide range of reading and audio materials, mobile services to housebound and geographically isolated people. Other library services include:
 - Operating a mobile Lifelong Learning/Customer Service Centre vehicle
 - Providing a Local Studies Centre
 - Working in partnership with the Women's Royal Voluntary Service to provide a 'Books on Wheels' service
 - Operating a hospital and schools library service
 - Family learning activities take place to enable parents, grandparents or carers to learn alongside children
- There are several Reading Groups throughout the city, with one being hosted by U3A (University of the Third Age), and these are all open to older people
- Many local libraries have drop-in sessions on a regular basis, either in the form of coffee mornings or general social gatherings
- The 'Nifty'Fifties' group, have been running for several years in the City Library and Arts Centre. Open to those aged 50 and over, speakers are invited to talk on a number of subjects, craft activities are offered and visits to other places are available
- Sunderland was awarded with Beacon Status for 'Culture and Sport for Hard to Reach Groups' in 2006. This award demonstrated how Sunderland are delivering key services to hard to reach groups such as, young people, women, BME groups, those with disabilities and older people. Sunderland was awarded Beacon status for Tackling Health Inequalities in 2008
- Health, Housing and Adult Services work with a range of organisations within local communities to provide day opportunities for older people and commission a range of formal day care services for the most vulnerable older people in the city

Where do we want to be?

The aim of this priority is to increase the number of social and cultural opportunities for people aged over 50 and increase the number of people accessing them. Through this priority older people will be able to enjoy a thriving and vibrant environment that enables them to live healthy, fulfilling lives and that promotes social inclusion. To achieve this, the following priorities have been identified:

- To ensure that the future regeneration of the city is informed by older people to ensure that developments are welcoming, safe and accessible for older people. Developments will promote a good quality of life, equality in accessing services and social inclusion.
- To develop sport and wellness activities that are targeted at the over 50s
- To develop local older people's community groups using community development methodology so they that can become self sustainable and run by local older people (Links to Community Development Plan and Code of Practice for Voluntary and Community Groups – VM to advise)
- Health, Housing and Adult Services to continue to work with organisations to provide day opportunities and to commission formal day care services for older people who require social care services

50+ Strategy Priority: Making a Positive Contribution

Outcome: The city will recognise the contribution that people 50+ make to the city, both through volunteering and active citizenship and encourage more older people will be involved in these activities. Older people will feel valued and respected citizens through the positive contribution they make to the city

Context

Approximately five million people over 50 take part in unpaid voluntary work (www.ageconcern.org.uk). Volunteering can play a significant role in people's lives and it can offer a structured way of making a meaningful contribution in society, once people are no longer in paid employment. Older people volunteer for a number of reasons, for some it is an opportunity to put something back into society, for others it provides a chance to continue learning new skills and trying new experiences. Volunteering has significant benefits for older people including the opportunity to meet people, to undertake a challenge and to keep the brain and body active, gain new skills, get jobs or just feel good about themselves. The benefits that older volunteers bring to organisations include a greater commitment to the organisation and its work, long term involvement and a greater contribution of time, experience, knowledge and skills and greater flexibility and versatility. According to the 2007 Sunderland resident's survey, it is estimated that around 17% of people aged over 50 volunteer on a regular basis and another 8% of people volunteered as a 'one off'. The contribution that older people make on a daily basis must also be recognised, whether it be looking after grandchildren, supporting their neighbours, or whatever else of the many things they do.

Volunteering is only one way that older people make a positive contribution. Many people aged over 50 are actively involved in shaping their community and their local services through a range of forums and groups that exist across the city. Through the Older People's Partnership Action Group, the 50+ Forums, ran by Age Concern Sunderland, provide one route for older people in the city to be involved in and influence the decisions that affect their lives. In 2008, membership of the 50+ Forums totalled 1121.

What have older people told us?

'Support is needed for older people who want to volunteer – support with access, costs and knowing that someone will support you in what you are doing'

'There needs to be more recognition about the informal contributions people make. It is not just about formal volunteering but about the daily neighbourhood support that older people contribute'

'It depends on how 'active' individuals are in their local community as to how involved local people are in local community activities'

'Some people put off getting involved because they feel things never get done or it takes months for any action'

Where are we now?

- During 2006-07 Sunderland Volunteer Centre had 187 people aged over 50 registered with them as volunteers
- Many people aged 50+ are involved in volunteering activities including: examples – **DC/JF to provide examples**
- The value of volunteering has been recognised across the city and there are plans within the Primary Care Trust to commission the Community and Voluntary Sector to use volunteers in promoting physical activity and supporting vulnerable and isolated older people.
- A range of mechanisms exist that enable people over 50 to be involved in local decision making including:
 - 50+ Forums through the Older People's Partnership Action Group
 - Voluntary and community groups
 - Area Forums
 - Housing Forums and Residents Associations
 - Community Spirit
 - Police and Community Forums
 - Local Involvement Networks (health and social care)
 - Sunderland Community Sports Network
 - Local Engagement Boards (Sunderland TPCT)
 - Sunderland City Council
 - City Hospitals Sunderland Foundation Community
 - Independent Advisory Groups
 - School Governors

Where do we want to be?

The aim of this priority is to promote the positive contribution that older people make to the life of the city and for their contribution to be recognised and valued. Older people will be encouraged to be involved in local decision making processes and volunteering activities. To achieve this, the following priorities have been identified:

- To ensure that volunteering opportunities for people over 50 are developed in line with the Sunderland Compact: Volunteering Code of Practice
- To encourage people aged 50+ to become involved in volunteering through promoting the benefits that volunteering can bring
- To create more opportunities for volunteering through promoting the benefits of older volunteers with partners in the city
- To formally recognise and celebrate the informal contributions that older people make on a daily basis within their communities
- To develop the skills and capacity of older people to engage in decision making processes

- To increase the number of older people who feel they have a voice and can influence decisions, through promoting the 50+ Forums and other mechanisms for involvement

Case Study: Sports Centre Development

Strategic alliances with the community are vital to empower local residents. The £5million lottery funded Raich Carter Centre operates with a Board of Directors and as part of the construction process older people were engaged by the Directors to act as consultants in the design and internal finishes. An Older People's User Group was established from organisations such as, Age Concern, local Senior Citizen groups, Sunderland University Third Age Group and a local Church Group.

The User Group influenced many aspects of the building including, input into its design features, such as:

- Installation of cubicles
- Modesty screens
- Floor coverings
- Installation of hand rails
- Disabled hoist for the pool
- Location of family changing accommodation

The User Group also influenced centre programming and contributed to many issues such as:

- Timing of sessions
- Access
- Pricing of activities
- Types of activities to be made available

The effect of this work is reflected in a strong programme currently available at the Centre for Older People. Activities currently available include:

- Casual and coached swimming 5 day per week (60 participants daily).
- Tea dancing (attracting 40 participants weekly)
- 'Nifty 50' - gentle fitness sessions (30 participants weekly)
- Visually impaired exercise sessions (15 participants weekly)
- The Centre has an outreach programme and visits two nursing homes and provides "armchair aerobics" sessions.

Implementation, Governance and Monitoring

The vision and aims of the Strategy set out what the city will be like in 2025 for people aged 50+ and the 10 priorities set out how this will be achieved. The vision can only be realised by all partners working together to progress the actions that this strategy identifies. The delivery plans, which are 3 yearly, identify key areas for action, along with lead agencies and timescales for completion.

To monitor progress, the Older People's Partnership Action Group will review the delivery plans on a 6 monthly basis and report progress to the Sunderland Partnership, including where progress is going well and where it is not. OPPAG will challenge and address with partners the areas where improvements need to be made. – *How will this happen in reality – how can OPPAG make the LSP accountable and ensure commitment to the delivery of the strategy?? Is there a role for the Adult Social Care Partnership Board and what?*

OPPAG will undertake a review of the delivery plans on a 3 yearly basis to review progress and identify actions for the subsequent 3 years to ensure that the strategy remains responsive to the changing world and that it reflects local and national developments.

Appendix 1 – Consultation

Consultation took place between July and October 2008 and where possible, comments received were incorporated into the final Strategy. The consultation included an open public event at Crowtree Leisure Centre held in July at which 25 people attended.

People/groups consulted were:

50+ Forums
Sunderland Partnership
Older People's Partnership Action Group
Health and Well-being Review Committee
Sunderland City Council
Adult Social Care Partnership Board
Sunderland Champions for Older People
Youth Parliament
Community Network
Age Concern Sunderland
Alzheimer's Society
Children's Services