

SOCIAL AND HEALTH CARE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Date of Meeting	Thursday 6 th June 2024
Report Subject	Age Friendly Communities
Cabinet Member	Cabinet Member for Social Services and Wellbeing
Report Author	Chief Officer (Social Services)
Type of Report	Operational

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report provides an update on the development of age-friendly communities in Flintshire and seeks commitment for ongoing support across portfolio areas.

The Welsh Government 'Strategy for an Ageing Society' sets out the actions needed to enable people in Wales to age well and to live within age-friendly communities. To support this strategy, Welsh Government funding is provided to all local authorities to support them to apply for and maintain membership of the World Health Organisation (WHO) Global Network of Age-Friendly Cities and Communities.

In May 2023, Flintshire County Council received confirmation of its successful application to join the WHO Age-friendly Network having demonstrated the breadth of engagement with older people and range of age-friendly services and initiatives in the county.

As members of the WHO Network, Flintshire has developed an age-friendly plan to outline the actions needed for communities in Flintshire to become more age-friendly. This plan is based on local and national policy and strategies, and on priorities and needs identified through community engagement. The plan is a working document and will evolve in line with changing priorities and new and emerging strategies.

Flintshire is meeting commitments to provide online information hubs and to share best practice examples across Wales and globally. This has included contributions to the Welsh Government's Age-friendly Wales newsletter. In addition, a presentation was made by citizens from Flintshire community groups, supported by the Social Services' team, at the Older People's Commissioner's Age-Friendly Wales Conference on 8th November 2023. This work was very well received and is described further in the detail section of this report.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1	That Scrutiny note the progress made to develop age friendly communities in Flintshire including the successful application for membership of the World Health Organisation Global Network.
2	That Scrutiny commit to the continued support and collaboration of all portfolio service teams to help develop Flintshire as a great place to live for the ageing population.

REPORT DETAILS

1.00	EXPLAINING AGE FRIENDLY COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT
1.01	<p><u>Global Network of Age-Friendly Communities membership</u></p> <p>In February 2023, Flintshire County Council applied to join the World Health Organisation (WHO)'s Global Network of Age-Friendly Cities and Communities. The application demonstrated existing age-friendly projects and initiatives that are taking place across Flintshire and highlighted opportunities for future age-friendly development identified through planning processes, wellbeing assessments and ongoing engagement with older people and older people's groups.</p> <p>In May 2023, the Council was notified that Flintshire's membership application had been successful, the second local authority in Wales to join the Global Network. Flintshire is now part of a growing global movement of communities that are striving to better meet the needs of older residents.</p> <p>As members of the Global Network, Flintshire commits to sharing and promoting the values and principles central to the WHO's age-friendly approach and actively participating in the Network, including sharing experiences with other members.</p> <p>A public profile page for Flintshire has been created on 'Age-friendly World,' with an online portal for global network members to share information and experiences. This portal will increase the visibility of Flintshire's work and inspire change in other areas. All network members are asked to submit at least one "Age-friendly practice" per year. The Digital Flintshire Hub, which supports people to use the internet in a safe and effective way, was recently shared as a good practice example for increasing digital inclusion for those seeking support to access online services and activities. Planning is in progress for the sharing of best practice examples in the future.</p>
1.02	<p><u>National Age-friendly Networks</u></p> <p>As a member of the Global Network, Flintshire is eligible to join the UK Network of Age-friendly Communities. Supported by the Centre for Ageing Better, the UK Network aims to inspire change across the UK by sharing good practice, connecting communities to share information, knowledge, and experience, and providing support for identifying evidence-based solutions. Regular peer calls provide an opportunity for leads of UK Network member communities to connect with one another, problem-</p>

	<p>solve, and learn about effective age-friendly practice. UK Network membership also enabled community groups in Flintshire to apply for grant funding which supported an event to mark Ageism Awareness Day in March 2024.</p> <p>To support the growth of the age-friendly communities in Wales, Welsh Government has established a network of participating counties. Quarterly meetings are held with age-friendly leads in each county to provide opportunities for good practices to be shared, and to highlight common issues that might benefit from collaboration. This forum contributes to the production of an Age-Friendly Wales quarterly newsletter to showcase good practice across Wales. Flintshire provided an article for the July 2023 issue marking the county's membership of the WHO Network and highlighting examples of developments in progress. This article is provided in the appendices for information.</p>
1.03	<p><u>Age-friendly Flintshire Hub</u></p> <p>A requirement of Age-friendly Network membership is the development of web-based content to provide information and support to communities in relation to age-friendly activities and services. The Age-friendly Flintshire Hub provides background information and will be developed to raise awareness of age-friendly services and good practice that is being developed in communities across Flintshire.</p>
1.04	<p><u>Age-friendly Wales Conference</u></p> <p>On 8th November 2023, the Older People's Commissioner for Wales held a conference to celebrate the action underway to make Wales an age-friendly nation and explore ways of working together to ensure communities support everyone to age well.</p> <p>Flintshire was one of four local authorities invited to share examples of good practice through citizen presentations. Representatives from Age & dementia-friendly Holywell and Age-Friendly Leeswood and Pontblyddyn delivered short presentations on the projects and initiatives taking place in their communities.</p> <p>Positive feedback about Flintshire's presentation was received from the Older People's Commissioner for Wales. Letter attached in appendices for information. The Chairperson of Cymru Older People's Alliance also commended the Flintshire presentation, saying "It was great to hear the Flintshire presentation at the Age Friendly Communities Conference in Cardiff today. The examples showed how older people have been involved from the outset and at a grass roots community level. Well done to the team."</p>
1.05	<p><u>Community Engagement</u></p> <p>Community engagement is a key driver for the implementation of Flintshire's age-friendly development plans. The Social Services Transformation, Integration and Ageing Well Team lead this engagement, with valuable support from colleagues across all Council portfolio teams. A</p>

	<p>summary of the key engagement and development activities in 2023, is provided here for information.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ School-based lunch clubs in collaboration with Newydd catering to provide healthy affordable food, social interaction, and opportunities for intergenerational activities. ▪ Dementia awareness school projects incorporating the arts to enable primary school children to raise awareness and understanding of dementia in local communities. ▪ Community hubs to increase awareness of information and support services that can improve wellbeing for older people. ▪ Weekly information sharing to provide a ‘what’s on’ view and highlight community activities for older people. ▪ Collaborative community work to increase digital inclusion through digital tablet courses and equipment loans. ▪ A partnership approach with officers from Access & the Natural Environment and Streetscene & Transportation made access improvements and developed local community walking routes to support increased physical activity for older people. ▪ Community based strength and balance sessions to provide a physical and mental wellbeing approach to encourage older people to re-engage with their community. This included partnership working with Aura 60+ Active Leisure, who provide weekly exercise sessions in leisure centres across the county for people of all ages and abilities. This partnership development enabled the strength and balance class to be delivered in a community setting in Hope. ▪ Support to the Flintshire 50+ Action Group to identify priorities for action and to help plan and promote the annual International Day for Older People celebration event held on 30th September 2023. This popular event was attended by more than a hundred people who socialised, had access to information from a range of health, social care, public service and third sector providers and celebrated the positive work in the county. ▪ Ageism Action Day Event in Holywell on 18th March 2024 provided opportunities for older adults from the local community to engage with pupils from Ysgol Maes y Felin to share their skills and experiences and talk about positive aspects of ageing.
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2.00	RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS
2.01	Revenue: There are no direct revenue implications highlighted by this report. A Welsh Government grant wholly funds the post of Ageing Well Engagement Officer and activities to support community engagement.

	<p>Welsh Government has confirmed ongoing funding into 2024/25 to support local authorities to appoint an age-friendly lead and undertake projects and activities that help to develop and maintain age friendly communities as part of the Global Network membership commitment.</p> <p>Capital: There are no capital resource implications.</p> <p>Human Resources: An Ageing Well Engagement Officer post has been recruited for a fixed term period. This post will be reviewed if Welsh Government funding is reduced or ceased beyond 2024/25.</p> <p>Support from all Council portfolio teams is essential to develop age friendly communities and maintain successful membership of the network. This includes the provision of information regarding age-friendly good practices on the World Health Organisation’s website. This will not require additional resources as the scope and objectives align closely to the Council’s current policies and commitments to older residents. Social Services will lead the project and seek information and support from other teams as required.</p>
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3.00	IMPACT ASSESSMENT AND RISK MANAGEMENT
3.01	<p>The development of age friendly communities and membership of the WHO Age-friendly Network has a positive impact on the lives of older people and other residents and community groups. Developing age friendly, safe, and accessible communities positively influences the wellbeing of residents, and communities benefit through sharing good practice locally, across Wales and the global network.</p> <p>The development of age-friendly communities is not a finite project but is an ongoing process, and the needs and aims of people over fifty are varied. The implementation of the ‘Age-friendly Flintshire Plan’ will evolve and adapt to provide appropriate solutions to reflect the diversity of the community and to changing priorities and new and emerging policies.</p>

4.00	CONSULTATIONS REQUIRED/CARRIED OUT
4.01	<p>The Social Services Transformation, Integration and Ageing Well Team undertake continuous engagement with older people to identify priorities and actions for inclusion in the Age-friendly Flintshire Plan.</p> <p>The team works closely with internal and external partners on related programmes that influence the age-friendliness of communities. This includes contributions to the Place Making planning process to shape the future of town centres in Flintshire; working with Flintshire Local Voluntary Council (FLVC) to develop more Connected Communities to reduce the risk of loneliness and social isolation; developing Dementia Friendly services and amenities in partnership with North-East Wales Carers Information Service (NEWCIS).</p>

	The team co-ordinated a response to the Local Authority recommendations highlighted in the Older People’s Commissioner for Wales’s ‘Access Denied’ report on Digital exclusion published February 2024. This response was supported by policy and governance officers and highlights the impact that advances in technology and digital information have on people who are digitally excluded or have limited digital skills. The report and Council response are attached in appendices for information.
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5.00	APPENDICES
5.01	Age Friendly Wales Newsletter Article – July 2023
5.02	Older People’s Commissioner Letter of Thanks
5.03	Older People’s Commissioner Access Denied report and Local Authority response.

6.00	LIST OF ACCESSIBLE BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS
6.01	<p>Link to Welsh Government ‘Age friendly Wales: our strategy for an Ageing Society’: https://www.gov.wales/age-friendly-wales-our-strategy-ageing-society</p> <p>Link to the World Health Organisation Global Network of Age-Friendly Cities and Communities profile page for Flintshire: https://extranet.who.int/agefriendlyworld/network/flintshire/</p> <p>Link to the Digital Flintshire Hub good practice example on the World Health Organisation Global Network of Age-Friendly Cities and Communities Age-friendly practices (Age-Friendly world website): https://extranet.who.int/agefriendlyworld/afp/digital-flintshire-hub/</p> <p>Link to the UK Network of Age-friendly Communities: https://ageing-better.org.uk/uk-network-age-friendly-communities</p> <p>Link to the Age-Friendly Flintshire Hub webpages: https://flintshire.gov.uk/en/Resident/Social-Services/Age-Friendly-Flintshire/Age-Friendly-Flintshire.aspx</p> <p>Link to Age-friendly Flintshire Plan summary: https://flintshire.gov.uk/en/PDFFiles/Social-Services/Age-Friendly-Flintshire/Plan-for-developing-age-friendly-communities-in-Flintshire.pdf</p>

7.00	CONTACT OFFICER DETAILS
7.01	<p>Contact Officer: Michael Jones, Wellbeing and Partnership Lead Telephone: 01352 702546 E-mail: michael.jones@flintshire.gov.uk</p>

8.00 GLOSSARY OF TERMS

8.01 Age-friendly Community

An age-friendly community is defined by the World Health organisation as “a community where everyone, regardless of age can stay healthy and active and participate in the community, and where everyone is treated with respect.”

Aura 60+ Active Leisure

The 60+ Active Leisure scheme, provided in leisure centres across the county, supports people in Flintshire to live longer, better, and healthier lives by improving physical activity levels, confidence, strength, and balance.

Cymru Older People’s Alliance (COPA)

A small charity run by older people for older people so that local Older People’s Forums and groups can have their voices heard at the national level to Welsh Government and other Public Bodies.

Flintshire 50+ Action Group

A diverse group of older people from across Flintshire who provide a voice for citizens aged fifty and over. The group seeks to ensure that the views of older people are engaged in decisions and policies affecting them. The group also provide regular communications to people across the county through regular meetings, events, and newsletters.

Flintshire Local Voluntary Council (FLVC)

FLVC is the umbrella and support organisation for over twelve hundred voluntary and community groups in Flintshire.

Global Network of Age Friendly Communities

The WHO Global Network for Age-friendly Cities and Communities was established in 2010 to connect cities, communities, and organisations worldwide with the common vision of making their community a great place to grow old in. The mission of the Network is to stimulate and enable cities and communities around the world to become increasingly age-friendly.

NEWCIS

NEWCIS is one of the largest providers of carer services in Wales – delivering information, one to one support, training and counselling to carers who provide unpaid support to family or friends living in North East Wales.

NEWYDD Catering

Newydd Catering provides locally sourced sustainable catering services to schools and care homes in North Wales.

Older People's Commissioner for Wales

The Older People's Commissioner for Wales protects and promotes the rights of older people throughout Wales, scrutinising and influencing a wide range of policy and practice to improve their lives. The Commissioner's role is underpinned by a set of unique legal powers to review the work of public bodies and to hold them to account when necessary.

Transformation, Integration and Ageing Well Team

The Social Services project team for the development and implementation of age-friendly plans in Flintshire. The team is comprised of an Older People's strategy Co-ordinator and Ageing Well Engagement Officer, reporting to the Wellbeing and Partnership Lead within Adults Social Services.

World Health Organisation (WHO)

The WHO is the United Nations agency that connects nations, partners, and people to promote health, keep the world safe and serve the vulnerable. So, everyone, everywhere can attain the highest level of health and wellbeing.