

AGEING TOGETHER STRATEGY**JUNE 2009**

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1. Foreword

Hutt City Council has agreed to establish an “Ageing Together Strategy” (ATS). This is the first time such a document has been written and the ATS will continue to evolve and develop over time. The purpose of this document is to:

- outline the terms of reference for the Ageing Together Working Group,
- outline the process used to develop the first ATS,
- note the issues the Working Group plan to address in 2009/10 via specific projects to be undertaken during that year or beyond. NB: For each project a separate Action Plan will be developed.

2. Background

2.1 The Vision - Positive Ageing Strategy

In 2001 the Government established the Positive Ageing Strategy. The Positive Ageing Strategy has established a framework of ten Positive Ageing Goals to guide the development of initiatives and policies to help improve the quality of life of older people. These ten goals are:

1. Secure and adequate income for older people.
2. Equitable, timely, affordable and accessible health services for older people.
3. Affordable and appropriate housing options for older people.
4. Affordable and accessible transport options for older people.
5. Older people feel safe and secure and can age in the community.
6. A range of culturally appropriate services allows choices for older people.
7. Older people living in rural communities are not disadvantaged when accessing services.
8. People of all ages have positive attitudes to ageing and to older people.
9. Elimination of ageism and promotion of flexible work options.
10. Increasing opportunities for personal growth and community participation.

The Strategy also highlighted the importance of partnerships involving local authorities, community groups, key organisations and businesses and older people themselves.

Hutt City Council wishes to contribute to the New Zealand Positive Ageing Strategy 2001 by developing an “Ageing Together Strategy” for Hutt City. The ATS will be developed to align with the Positive Ageing Strategy.

2.2 Ageing Together Strategy

Council wants to develop a good understanding of the issues that affect older people in Hutt City and then work with the community via this strategy to facilitate and support projects or actions that can address issues raised. The Council will never be in a position to address all the issues that affect older people. However it is keen to help and support a strategy that creates a framework that brings individuals and agencies together, to address issues affecting older people.

Council has facilitated the development of an ATS by establishing an “Ageing Together Working Group”. This group comprises key agencies and individuals with knowledge and experience concerning older persons.

The Council wishes to take a lead role to support the work of the Working Group. Council will be responsible for appointing members to the Working Group.

2.3 Ageing Together Working Group

Following a public call for nominations, Council established the Working Group early 2009.

This Working Group will be the 'engine room' that drives the Strategy and will identify gaps in community services and look to address them.

Attached as Appendix One is a diagram that outlines the ATS framework.

2.3.1 Role and responsibilities of Working Group

Establishment of Strategy

- The Working Group conducted a survey of the community early 2009, to help establish what the issues are for older people in Hutt City and what their priorities are.
- Based on the information gathered via the survey and the knowledge and expertise of the Working Group the ATS was established.

The results of the survey are outlined below.

The Working Group has agreed there are two levels to the ATS. There is a strategic level where bigger and high level issues are addressed. There is also a more immediate practical or day-to-day level of issues the ATS can address. The projects proposed for 2009/10 are a compilation of these two levels.

Ongoing development of Strategy

The Working Group will call a meeting four times a year of the "Ageing Together Forum". This forum will be a public meeting open to all those individuals and organisations with an interest in being informed on progress concerning the ATS. This Forum will be used as an opportunity for Forum members to provide feedback and input on matters or issues relevant to them. It will also enable the Working Group to discuss matters or issues with those present. The first meeting of the Forum was held in February 2009.

3. Summary of Ageing Together survey results

The Ageing Together survey closed on 31 March 2009 and it was very pleasing to note that over 500 responses were received. It was noted that there was a high percentage of respondents' in the 75+ age bracket, which seemed to slant some of the survey results.

The following main issues came out of the survey, listed under subject headings. NB: Main issues being defined as anything with a 20%+ survey response, unless otherwise noted.

Health

- Good services
- Comments about waiting times/lists
- Comments about capacity of health system – getting into the system

Safety

- Comments re safety at night
- General comments about insecurity – avoid certain areas, actual experience or perceptions of safety.
- Generally feel safe – including good neighbourhood watch

Transport – public transport

- Inconvenient (timetable, routes, stops), unreliable, expensive
- Use alternatives (e.g. own car) or rarely use public transport
- Convenient, reliable, affordable

Transport – SuperGold Card

- 76% of survey respondents have one. Of these 76% respondents 81% of them use it on public transport.

Transport – other

- Footpaths and access ways need upgrading, repairs, or more pedestrian friendly
- Generally positive comments – especially about walking

Social, recreation and leisure

- Generally positive comments about library service.
- Various barriers – transport, lack of facilities, quality of local events
- A lot on offer

Housing

- The cost of rates
- Help with maintenance – while this aspect generated a 15% response, it was the second highest issue commented on by respondents.

Information

- Positive comments about the Hutt News
- Generally find out what they need to
- Requests or ideas for better or more information received from 19%

Paid and voluntary work

- 60% of respondents do voluntary work/plenty of opportunities
- Comments about costs as barrier to volunteering was noted by 10%

4. ATS Projects

Following an analysis of the survey results the following projects were agreed by the Working Group for 2009/10, unless otherwise stated.

4.1 Public transport

UHCC ran a public transport forum early 2009 which was well received and it was suggested then that this could be done in Lower Hutt some time in the future. This forum could be used to address the issues raised in the survey.

- A Transport Forum project be established to further research holding a transport forum to be undertaken in 2010.
- A Bus Driver Awareness project be established to further research and then work with the appropriate parties to improve bus drivers awareness and assistance with older persons getting access to buses and getting on and off buses safely.

4.2 Transport – SuperGold Card

- A SuperGold Card project be established. The Working Group act in a facilitation role to lobby for change so SuperGold Card holders in Lower Hutt, who currently get free public transport in off-peak times (9am-3pm) weekday and weekends, get the same 24/7 benefits as people living in Christchurch and Auckland.

4.3 Transport – other

- A Mobility project be established to further research and develop a project concerning “pedestrian/walking mobility” whereby the Working Group acts as a facilitator with other agencies or groups to inform the Council of issues in this area.

4.4 Housing

- A Home Maintenance project be established in 2010/11 to research further the idea of a voluntary group providing help with home maintenance.

4.5 Information

- An Information project be established to research and facilitate a process to identify ways of improving older people’s ability to access the information they want, when they need it, in a manner that suits them. As a first step, the Working Group will call a “Summit” meeting of the existing owners and operators of significant community databases to identify opportunities to improve access.

4.6 Social connectedness

- **Health, Wealth & Wellbeing Expo** – This should be seen as the major event the Working Group will support on an ongoing basis. This has been an annual event held in the Lower Hutt Town Hall and adjoining Horticultural Hall. Organised by Age Concern, this has been a popular event which enables service providers to provide information, network etc with older persons. The next Expo is to be held on 1 October 2009 on World Older Day. The Working Group will approach Age Concern to seek a partnership with them to ensure the continuing viability of the Expo. The Working Group will use the event to network and develop relationships with people and businesses. The identification of potential projects or research around specific issues by the Working Group could be undertaken as part of the Expo.
- **PODS** – A POD is a small group of older people who meet at a POD members home, on a regular basis for companionship etc, who live within a neighbourhood - so ideally would be able to walk or get to the meeting place without needing transport. This would create the opportunity for people to meet and will help to foster social connectedness. This is an idea that would need further research and development but the Working Group have agreed to establish a PODS project subject to the following conditions:

- i) As a first step, await the development of the “Chill & Chat” initiative currently underway, which will develop a number of social gatherings using library and other facilities around the city during “off peak” times.
- ii) The development of PODS (which is a smaller group, home based concept) can then be discussed and piloted with “Chill & Chat” participants on a case by case basis.

4.7 Other issues

The Ageing Together Forum will be used as an opportunity for Forum members to provide feedback and input on matters or issues relevant to them. It will also enable the Working Group to discuss matters or issues with those present.
