

Bolton Council

Report to: EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR ADULT AND COMMUNITY SERVICES

Date: 27 OCTOBER 2010

Report of: DIRECTOR OF ADULT AND COMMUNITY SERVICES

Report No:

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Report Title: Information and Advice Strategy

Confidential /
Non Confidential:
(delete as approp)

(Non-Confidential) This report does **not** contain information which warrants its consideration in the absence of the press or members of the public

Recommendations:

The Executive Member for Adult and Community Services is asked to approve the Information and Advice Strategy which sets out plans to improve access to universal information and advice as a fundamental part of more personalised and flexible services for local people.

Decision:

Signed:

Leader / Executive Member

Monitoring Officer

Date:

SUMMARY OF REPORT:

The national ***Putting People First*** programme has placed the duty on local councils to provide universal information and advice, to help people make choices and have greater control over their lives. By 2011, all councils are expected to have: “Universal, joined-up information and advice available for all individuals and carers, including those who self assess and fund, which enables people to access information from all strategic partners.”

Bolton’s Information and Advice Strategy sets out how the Council plans to work with local advice and information providers and citizens to bring about greater co-ordination and promotion of information and advice for local people, making information available in a wide range of ways to support our diverse local communities.

The Strategy sets out an Action Plan which is organised under the following 4 themes:

- Improving our infrastructure and delivery arrangements
- Improving the co-ordination of information and advice
- Improving the quality and consistency of information and advice
- Understanding people’s information needs and raising awareness of sources of information and advice

The Action Plan concentrates on actions for the next 12 months, with a review planned for the summer of 2011.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

1.0 BACKGROUND

- 1.1 The national Putting People First programme has placed a duty on local councils to provide universal information and advice, to help people make choices and have greater control over their lives. By 2011, all councils are expected to have: “Universal, joined-up information and advice available for all individuals and carers, including those who self assess and fund, which enables people to access information from all strategic partners.”
- 1.2 Adults and carers who require support, need advice and information about the services they may need; the choices they have; and finding out how to arrange and pay for care. Traditionally, information about social care has been produced for service users or potential service users and information about universal services has been a separate consideration of each organisation that provides a particular service. As part of Putting People First in Bolton we are changing this approach so that social care becomes part of universal information and advice for all local people, addressing the broader spectrum of people’s needs and circumstances and financial means beyond what is branded as ‘social care’.
- 1.3 Information and advice about activities and services that improve wellbeing; for example, leisure, housing, or local community activities need to be easy to access as these all have an important part to play in supporting people to remain active in their local community and independent in their own homes for longer. This is a fundamental change which helps in managing and reducing future demand for social care.
- 1.4 Bolton’s Information and Advice Strategy sets out how the Council plans to work with local advice and information providers and citizens to bring about greater co-ordination and promotion of information and advice for local people, making information available in a wide range of ways to support our diverse local communities.
- 1.5 The strategy emphasises the importance of improving and co-ordinating information provision to address the diverse needs of our local communities, available to everyone regardless of age, gender, sexuality, religion, disability, race or if they have caring responsibilities.

2.0 PROPOSALS

- 2.1 Access to universal advice is a fundamental part of the vision of more personalised and flexible services for local people. The aim of this strategy is to put in place a co-ordinated but flexible framework for information and advice provision that will serve local services and local people well for years to come and be adaptable in uncertain financial times. The proposed arrangements seek to make the most of good practice and specialist expertise, harness the benefits of technology and identify opportunities for finding efficient and innovative ways of service and citizen collaboration. Whatever changes lie ahead in how services are provided and who provides them, the framework is intended to provide a strong basis for future provision of information and advice in Bolton.
- 2.2 The Strategy sets out an Action Plan which is organised under the following 4 themes:
 - Improving our infrastructure and delivery arrangements
 - Improving the co-ordination of information and advice
 - Improving the quality and consistency of information and advice
 - Understanding people’s information needs and raising awareness of sources of information and advice

The Action Plan concentrates on actions for the next 12 months, with a review planned for the summer of 2011.

3.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

Development of the strategy is part of the Putting People First programme, and the actions proposed will be achieved via existing resources and partnerships, which may require some use of the Social Care Reform Grant to support web information development.

4.0 EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

An equality impact assessment is attached. Positively improving access to information and advice for different sections of the community is an integral part of the strategy's approach.

5.0 ENVIRONMENTAL STRATEGY SCREENING

Not applicable.

6.0 HUMAN RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

None identified.

7.0 COMMUNITY STRATEGY PRIORITIES/ADULT SERVICES OUTCOMES

The Strategy explains what the Council will do to deliver these.

8.0 PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT

The Plan draws together a wide range of things that have been consulted on separately, and extensively. Citizen involvement is a key part of the Action Plan.

9.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

The Executive Member for Adult Services is asked to approve the Information and Advice Strategy which sets out plans to improve access to universal information and advice as a fundamental part of more personalised and flexible services for local people.