

SUBJECT: THE OLDER PERSON'S COMMISSIONER GUIDANCE FOR SCRUTINY COMMITTEES

MEETING: ADULTS SELECT COMMITTEE

DATE: 26th April 2016

DIVISION/WARDS AFFECTED: All

1. PURPOSE:

- 1.1** To consider the guidance for Scrutiny produced by the Older Person's Commissioner in relation to Scrutinising Changes to Community Services and Scrutinising Equalities and Human Rights Impact Assessments.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS:

2.1 That the Committee:

- i) Draw formal conclusions to be included in a Council response to the Older Person's Commissioner;
- ii) Consider how it can embed the principles outlined in each guidance paper into scrutiny practice; whether through the scrutiny of the 'Equalities Impact Assessments', or through lines of questioning and/or other scrutiny activity.

3. KEY ISSUES:

- 3.1** The Older Person's Commissioner has written to local authorities to present the work that has been undertaken to produce guidance for Councils on how to scrutinise Changes to Community Services and 'Equalities and Human Rights Impact Assessments'.
- 3.2** The Commissioner recognises that challenging financial times will present difficult decisions for Councils as to how to provide quality locally accessible services to communities and has produced guidance for local government scrutineers to assist them in their consideration of key decisions and policy affecting older people. The guidance advocates the need for careful consideration of the implications of decisions in order to protect society's most vulnerable people.
- 3.3** The guidance provides a useful outline for scrutineers in terms of how to apply the principles of the 'Equalities and Human Rights Impact Assessments' to decisions and policy affecting older people, given the increasing ageing population.

3.4 Scrutiny Members may wish to consider how they can embed such principles into their scrutiny approach; possibly through developing a questioning strategy to be applied to scrutiny of relevant subjects, or through considering the robustness of of 'Equalities and Human Rights Impact Assessments' together with the validity of evidence provided in such assessments to support decision-making.

4. REASONS:

4.1 The guidance has been produced to assist scrutineers to perform their 'critical friend' role effectively and thereby assist Councils to make better decisions.

5. RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS:

5.1 None identified as a result of this report.

6. SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT AND EQUALITY IMPLICATIONS:

6.1 None identified as a result of this report.

7. SAFEGUARDING AND CORPORATE PARENTING IMPLICATIONS

7.1 None identified as a result of this report.

8. CONSULTEES:

8.1 The Equalities Officer.

9. BACKGROUND PAPERS:

9.1 Letter from the Older Person's Commissioner (Appendix A)
Guidance on Scrutinising Changes to Community Services (Appendix B)
Guidance on Scrutinising Equalities and Human Rights Impact Assessments (Appendix C)

10. AUTHOR:

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