



**Elders Council of Newcastle**  
**[www.elderscouncil.org.uk](http://www.elderscouncil.org.uk)**  
**Strategic Plan Update**

**1. Introduction**

The Elders Council of Newcastle was established in 2001 as a forum for older people in the city. It is a membership organisation with c 2000 members drawn from all parts of the city. Membership is free. Further information on the organisation is available on [www.elderscouncil.org.uk](http://www.elderscouncil.org.uk).

The Elders Council is run by and for older people. All its members are volunteers. The organisation plays a unique strategic role in the city as the authentic voice of older people in Newcastle and by demonstrating the active contribution of older people to the life of the city. The Elders Council works in partnership with other organisations in the city to meet the city's ambition to become an age-friendly city. The Elders Council complements other organisations in the city that provide services for older people through its active participation in policy and service development; enabling organisations to fulfil their statutory duty to engage older people in service developments and by promoting services to older people through a variety of mechanisms.

Members benefit from being part of the organisation through the opportunities it provides for participation in local and national forums and meetings, exchanges and sharing of information and expertise on key issues e.g. home care and housing. Members become part of an active network of older people and become active citizens in their local communities and life in the city. They can develop new skills and talents by participation in the Elders Council activities e.g. writing and advocacy. They can become well informed about the opportunities available to older people in the city, and can join in activities which help them to develop and maintain social connections.

We have evidence that older people value being a part of the Elders Council and enjoy the opportunities it provides for them to make a contribution to the life of the city and to develop new interests and connections. We also have evidence of the impact of the work of the Elders Council. A recent example is the work done to engage older people in developing improved quality criteria for home care providers and the subsequent active involvement of EC members in the provider selection process by the local council.

Since its foundation, the Elders Council has been provided with an office base and staff support through the Quality of Life Partnership, which is hosted by Age UK Newcastle. Up until the end of 2017/18, the Elders Council will receive its funding from Newcastle City Council and the Newcastle Gateshead Clinical Commissioning Group. In 2018/19 Elders Council will continue to receive a grant from Newcastle City Council (via Age UK Newcastle) to cover its core costs including staff support. Elders Council is aware that it cannot rely on the current arrangements, and is seeking to put in place a plan for the organisation to operate independently and secure its own funding.

In 2016 the Elders Council commissioned an independent review of the organisation which involved members of the organisation and external partners. The Board worked on the recommendations from the review to develop a strategic plan setting out its priorities.

This paper is a draft of the strategic plan which sets out the proposed activities of the organisation against its strategic objectives and Manifesto (see separate document).

## **2. Strategic Objectives**

The Strategic Objectives of the organisation are:

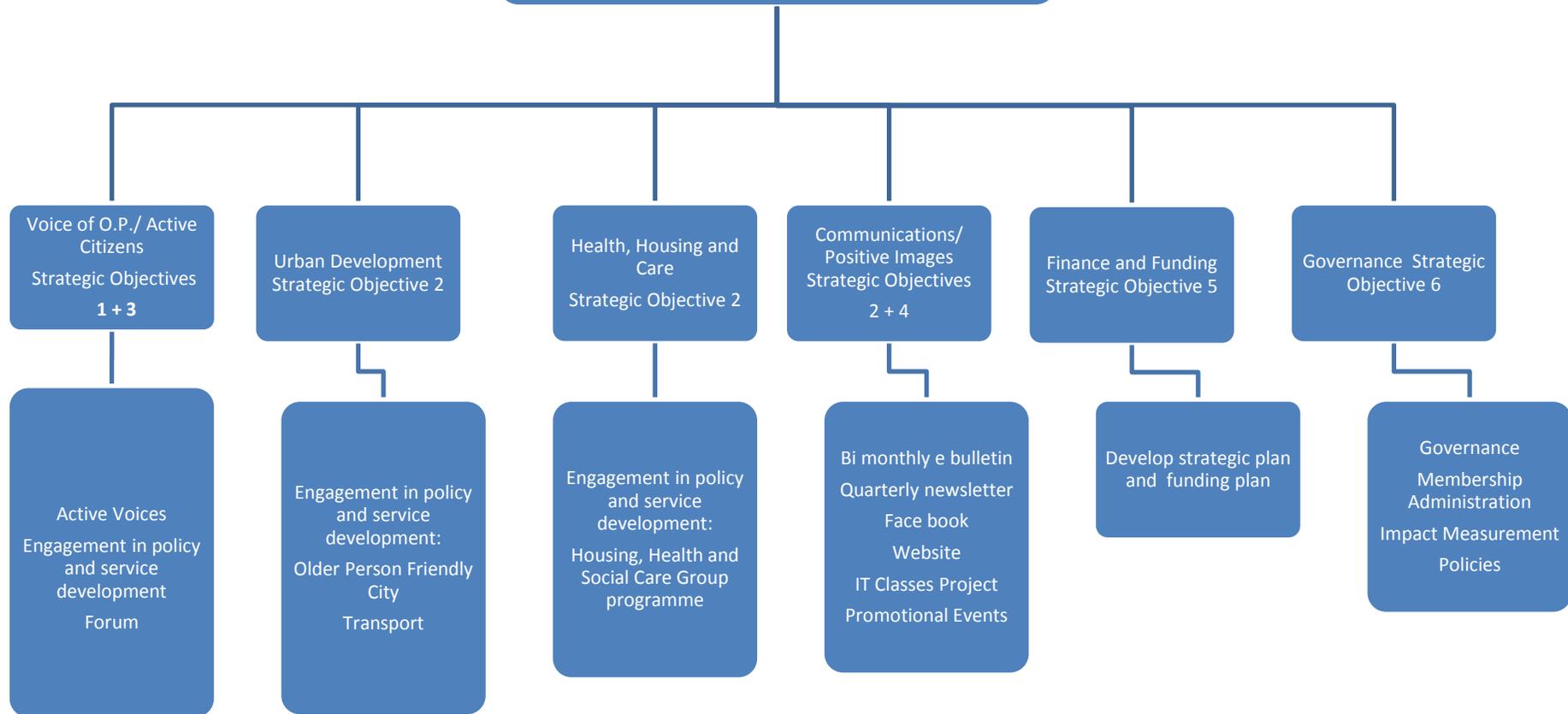
- Supporting older people individually and collectively to have a voice;
- Increasing older people's knowledge and understanding of the issues that affect them such as health, wellbeing, housing, learning and transport;
- Promoting the active contribution of older people to our society;
- Promoting positive attitudes towards older people;
- Work to achieve financial sustainability;
- Maintain effective governance and management of the Elders Council as a membership organisation.

## **3. Delivering the Elders Council's Strategic Objectives**

### **3.1 Overview**

Diagram 1 is a summary of the Elders Council's Strategic Plan and sets out the key areas of work aligned to the most relevant strategic objective. Most areas of work align to more than one of the strategic objectives. To ensure continuity and build capacity in the organisation, each area of work will have 2 nominated leads.

# Board of Trustees



## **3.2 Supporting older people individually and collectively to have a voice**

### **Promoting the active contribution of older people to our society**

We deliver these objectives through the following core activity:

Board members play a strategic role in the city, ensuring that the voices of older people are well represented in policy and service development. Examples of activity include: a formal response to Newcastle City Council's budget proposals; participation in Age Friendly Newcastle; regular participation in Policy Cabinets.

A core activity of the organisation is to provide opportunities for older people to engage in discussion on key issues by:

- Creating opportunities for older people to exchange ideas and experiences
- Providing a platform for policy makers, service providers and researchers to engage with older people
- Identifying mechanisms for influencing policy and service development
- Developing key principles which set out the Elders Council position in relation to key issues, which form the basis of responses to consultations
- Engaging in key consultations where capacity and timescales allow
- Supporting member participation in local and national forums and meetings
- Including regular updates on the Elders Council website; e bulletin and newsletter

### **Priorities 2018/19**

**Active Voices:** The development and piloting of 'Active Voices' a civic engagement programme being delivered in partnership with WEA and Newcastle University. The first pilot took place in March 2017.

**Education and student support:** The Elders Council regularly participates in education programmes for medical and social work students; University challenge events and offers individual support to student research projects. Elders Council is reviewing its participation in these programmes.

**Connected People:** The Elders Council has tested a variety of approaches to enabling older people to build stronger social connections. These include 'Bridging the Gaps', 'Staying Connected' and 'Community Conversations'. The Elders Council also runs the regular Milecastle informal coffee morning and supports the Jesmond Wellbeing for Life sessions. The Elders Council will continue to build on this expertise.

**Arts and Culture:** Elders Council will continue to promote opportunities for older people to engage in arts and cultural activity and to work with partners to create new opportunities.

**Wellbeing:** Ensuring that the Five Ways to Wellbeing are embedded across the work of the Elders Council.

### **3.2 Increasing older people's knowledge and understanding of the issues that affect them such as health, wellbeing, housing, learning and transport**

We deliver this objective through the core activities outlined in 3.1

The priority areas for action emerging from the development of the Strategic Plan are:

#### **3.2.1 Urban Development**

Elders Council will continue to engage in regular consultation with transport providers. Elders Council will actively engage in key consultations e.g. Parks Trust; Planning Policy

### **3.2.2 Housing, Health and Social Care**

Elders Council is engaged in a number of strands of work under the umbrella of Housing, Health and Social Care:

#### **Future Homes**

Elders Council is a partner in 'Future Homes' project led by Newcastle University. The project is researching and developing attractive affordable homes. There will initially be four pilot units with a second stage of a further 30 units on the Science Central site. Elders Council has particular responsibility for the engagement of older people in the design and development of Future Homes. Elders Council earned a fee for managing citizen engagement in the co-design phase of the project.

Elders Council will be a founder member of the Future Homes community interest company (CIC) that will be formed in 2018 for holding the project's intellectual property and participation in the next 30 unit phase.

#### **Lived experiences of home adaptations**

Northumbria University was commissioned by the Centre for Ageing Better Commissioned to conduct research into people's experiences of home adaptations. Elders Council is a partner in the project and has earned a fee for its participation in the project steering group and its work on recruiting participants.

#### **Fairer Housing Unit – Specialist Housing Strategy**

Elders Council hosted a consultation session with Fairer Housing Unit on the Specialist Housing Delivery Plan. It is continuing to support the delivery of the plan, in particular in relation to adaptations (see above) and housing options information and advice.

### **Housing Voices**

Elders Council is working in partnership with Care and Repair England, University of Northumbria and Skimstone Arts to engage older people whose voices are seldom heard in discussions about housing. Elders Council will receive a small grant towards the direct costs of this work.

### **Home Care**

Following on from its consultation work on Home Care, Elders Council is currently conducting research into alternative models of home care. This work is in its early stages.

### **Consultations: Urgent Care and Great North Care Record**

Elders Council hosted workshops for members on both these issues.

Members of the Housing, Health and Social Care Group represent the Elders Council on a range of forums including Wellbeing and Health Forum; CCG Involvement Forum; HAREF Forum.

### **3.2.2 Communications**

Ensuring that older people are informed about services and opportunities has always been a core activity of the Elders Council. This activity absorbs a significant percentage of the Elders Council's income. Currently this activity includes:

E bulletin (fortnightly)  
Newsletter (hard copy and email) distributed quarterly  
Radio programme (monthly)  
Website  
Facebook (in development)

### **3.4 Promoting positive attitudes towards older people**

By demonstrating the active contribution of older people to the life of the city through its work, the Elders Council is promoting positive attitudes towards older people.

### **3.5 Work to achieve financial sustainability**

Elders Council Board sets an annual budget and receives quarterly financial reports through which they monitor the financial position of the organisation. A priority for 2018/19 is to develop and implement a funding strategy to put the organisation on a more sustainable footing.

### **3.6 Maintain effective governance and management of the Elders Council as a membership organisation**

Minutes are taken of all Elders Council meetings. All project groups report regularly to the Board on their activities and produce regular reports in the newsletter for the membership. Elders Council actively encourages members to participate in the work of the organisation and offers a wide range of opportunities to do so. The Elders Council holds an annual general meeting to which all members are invited.

1.3.17

Updated 10.1.18