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The Time of Our Lives!

**Developing a strategic approach
to improving older people's quality
of life in East Sussex
2007 – 2010**

50+

Consultation draft

50+

Contents

| | |
|---|---------|
| 1. A vision for older people in East Sussex..... | page 3 |
| 2. What is the draft Time of Our Lives Strategy?..... | page 4 |
| 3. Who has been involved in producing it?..... | page 5 |
| 4. Guiding themes..... | page 6 |
| 5. What do 'quality of life', independence and wellbeing mean for older people in East Sussex?..... | page 7 |
| 6. Access to activities that promote a healthy old age..... | page 8 |
| 7. Opportunities to continue to learn and develop in later life..... | page 9 |
| 8. The ability to get out and about..... | page 10 |
| 9. Healthy finances..... | page 11 |
| 10. Feeling safe and secure..... | page 12 |
| 11. Health, social care and housing support services that promote older people's quality of life and wellbeing..... | page 13 |
| 12. Playing an active part in community life and having a strong collective voice..... | page 14 |

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| | |
|---------------------------------------|---------|
| 13. Your views..... | page 15 |
| 14. What will happen next..... | page 15 |
| 15. Contact details for comments..... | page 16 |
| 16. Consultation questionnaire..... | page 17 |

1. A vision for older people in East Sussex

East Sussex has the highest percentage of people over the age of 85 in any county in the UK and we expect this number to grow even faster after 2010. The county also has higher than average numbers of all people aged over 65 and this is also set to increase over the next ten years. In response to these circumstances, as well as views expressed by older people about accessing a range of services - from support with enjoying a healthy active life to receiving more specialist help when needed - partners in health, housing and social care have recently developed a Joint Commissioning Strategy for Older People (2007 – 2010). As part of that Strategy, this document is designed to provide the first stage of developing the strategic action we need to take to make sure people can have a healthy and active old age for as long as possible. It is responding to what older people have told us, over the last eighteen months in a variety of settings, about their priorities for old age. In keeping with the agenda set by older people themselves, it begins thinking about later life from the age of fifty onwards.

East Sussex is a county of both urban and rural characteristics. Within the county there are also very strong and distinct communities. This strategy is looking at ways that we can improve quality of life for older people living in East Sussex, through an approach that places older people at the heart of villages and towns and allows them to make a contribution to the sustainability of their local communities. Older people are a huge asset to the county due to the wealth of knowledge, experience and skills that they have. This strategy acknowledges this as well as recognising that improvements can only be achieved through a partnership between older people and the organisations and agencies that work in the communities where they live.

Social well-being is the satisfaction people experience when they see themselves as part of a community they have helped create – a community in which all have an opportunity to live a satisfying life.
(Abridged from Community Action Network. Texas)

Our vision for older people in East Sussex

We want East Sussex to be a county that:

- **Values the contribution that older people make to our community.**
- **Ensures that people are able to make a contribution for as long as they want to by providing services that keep people healthy, independent and active.**
- **Provides extra help and support to people when they need it through services that have been designed and developed with the input of older people.**

2. What is the draft Time of Our Lives Strategy?

The aim of this document is to make a start at bringing together and guiding our work over the next three years for supporting a healthy and active later life in East Sussex. It is also to help to raise interest in our common vision for what quality of life and wellbeing should mean as people get older. It makes some suggestions about the way we can improve older people's quality of life in the county by working in partnership as organisations, forums and groups working with older people.

It is widely recognised - internationally, nationally and locally - that older people's quality of life is an important factor in the sustainability of communities. In East Sussex we have taken the view that a wide range of public services have a role to play in improved quality of life and wellbeing for older people. In response to both of these agendas the Time of Our Lives Strategy aims to:

- Reflect the priorities of older people in East Sussex, as identified by older people themselves.
- Bring together key agencies that can help deliver those priorities.
- Support partnership action with older people in their communities across the county.

Why a quality of life strategy for older people?

Various types of health, social care and housing support services are specifically planned to meet the increased needs some people have as they grow older. However, other services that impact on older people's quality of life aren't actually targeted at people because they are 'older'. Services such as learning opportunities and transport are more general or universal, meaning that they are available to people whatever their age. We must ensure that we get the most out of these resources for the benefit of older people to improve their quality of life. Care and support services for older people in East Sussex are covered in detail in planning documents such as the **Joint Commissioning Strategy for Older People**. By providing a stronger focus on the quality of life issues which older people prioritise, the Time of Our Lives strategy will link to these other plans to allow more detail on developments in these areas.

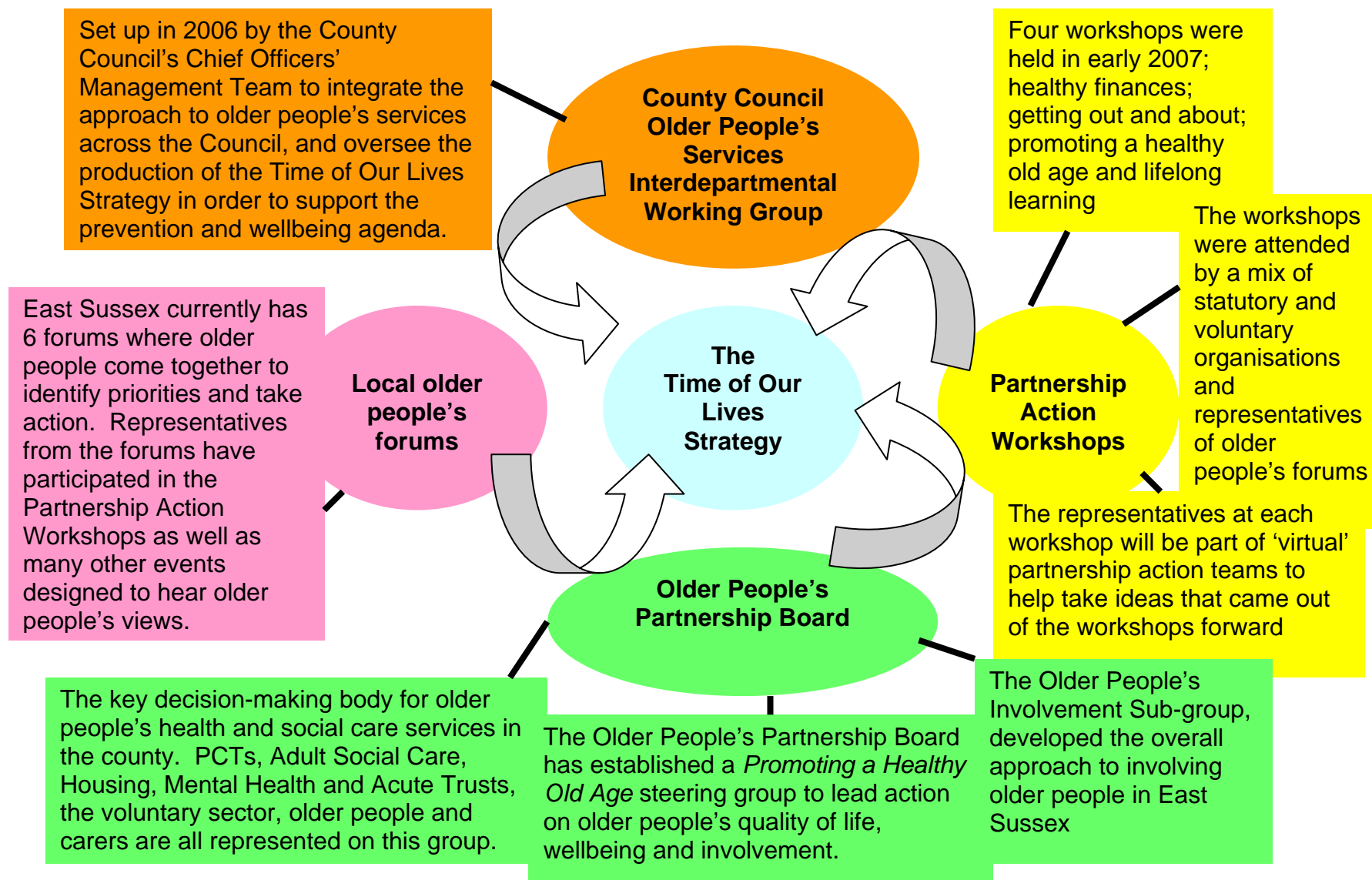
It has also been recognised that some sections of the older community are more likely to experience increased social exclusion in terms of their access to some universal services due to the fact that they are older. This document seeks to outline an approach to ensuring that there is a balance in the way that public services of all types are planned and delivered with the older age group in mind.

This strategy has been produced as a result of listening to both the views of older people, and the organisations that work with them, given in a variety of ways over the last eighteen months.

This draft is a consultation document, which makes suggestions for the way forward, and also where the focus for partnership work should be.

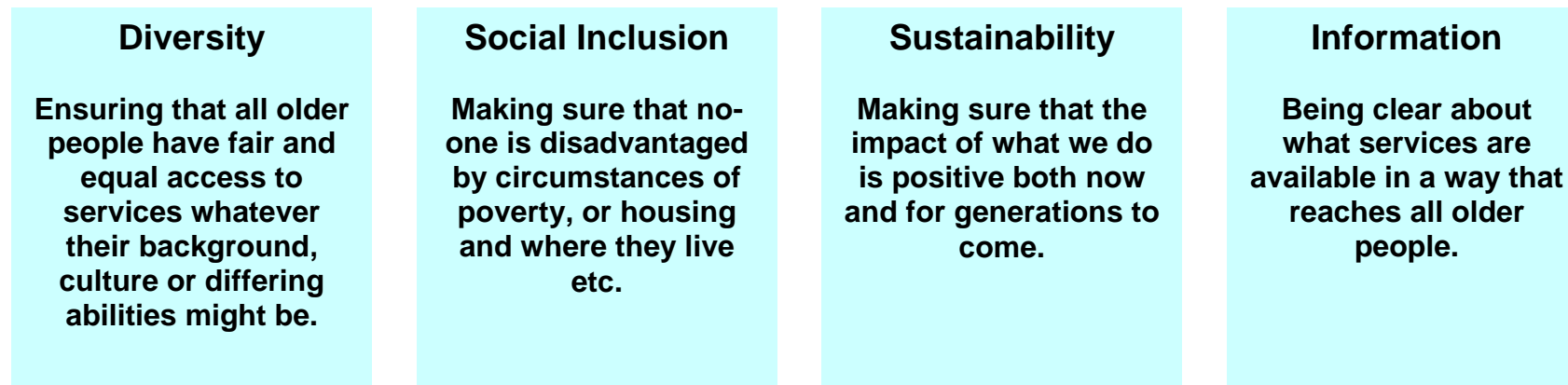
Consultation will take place between July and October 2007. We will use comments to further refine the strategic vision and approach to older people's quality of life in East Sussex.

3. Who has been involved in producing the draft Time of Our Lives Strategy?



4. Guiding themes for improving quality of life and wellbeing for older people in East Sussex

These themes are important to the whole of the Time of Our Lives Strategy and its work with older people:



We will apply these themes throughout the production of this strategy and its later implementation by testing our ideas and suggestions to see what impact they have in terms of diversity, social inclusion, sustainability and information. Some projects and schemes will be specifically designed to take forward these themes; other projects will need to take the themes into consideration as part of their implementation. Because we need to avoid taking any action that undermines these themes, it is important to be aware of them from the very beginning of this work.

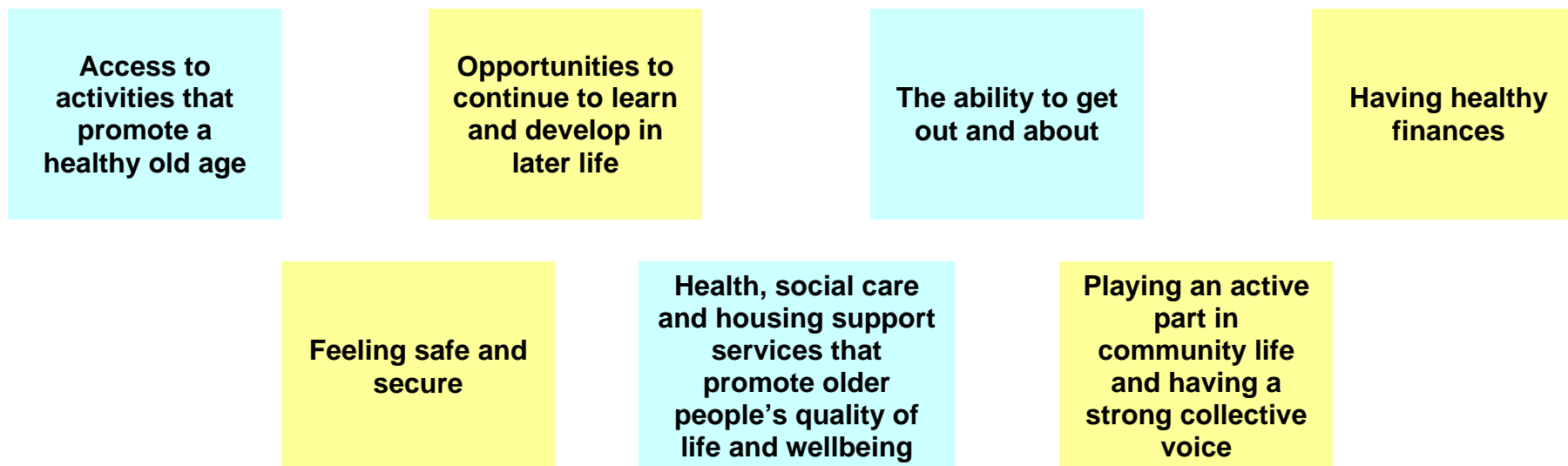
Themes into action:

When complaints were received about the quality of written requests for information to do with charges for social care services volunteers from older people's forums formed a one-off 'reading group'. The group worked with Adult Social Care to simplify the letters making them easier to understand and therefore more user-friendly.

✓ *This resulted in both an improved service for older people **and** better information*

5. What do 'quality of life', independence and wellbeing mean for older people in East Sussex?

Older people in East Sussex have told us that good quality of life cuts across the following seven areas:



Most of these areas are part of wider planning processes that take into account the needs of the whole community in East Sussex. In some areas there are leading partnerships in existence that have a wealth of information about needs and issues that need to be addressed, gained through consulting and working with communities in their own right. These partnerships may also have to produce their own plans and strategies, covering all members of the community, showing how they will meet these needs.

- In taking forward action to improve *older people's* quality of life we will make links with the appropriate lead planning partnerships and bodies in each of these areas and ensure that older people's priorities are taken into account as part of action planning and strategy development.
- As part of this consultation process we will also identify the kinds of projects that will help us to deliver older people's priorities in the next 12 – 36 months.

6. Access to activities that promote a healthy old age

A proactive culture of health and fitness in the widest sense should be a key part of later life and there are clear benefits that this can bring for both physical and mental wellbeing into old age and preventing the onset of ill health.

Key partnerships and planning bodies that have a role to play in leading the promotion of a healthy old age

- Older People's Partnership Board – Promoting a healthy old age steering group
- Local health planning groups

Key local strategies and action plans

- Joint Commissioning Strategy for Older People 2007 – 2010
- Local Area Agreement Healthier Communities and Older People Block (LAA HCOP)
- National Service Framework for Older People
- Adult Social Care Three Year Plan 2007 - 2010
- Local Health Action Plans
- Choosing Health
- District and Borough-based community strategies
- Strategy for library and information services for older people

Ideas that we would like to explore to promote a healthy old age:

- Planning a rolling programme of quality of life or wellbeing days around the county in partnership with local older people's forums.
- Developing peer mentoring schemes to support returning to regular exercise.
- Joint learning projects with European communities to investigate different approaches to longevity, disability and illness-free old age and active citizenship.
- Intergenerational projects such as joint work with students and youth groups to enhance shared understanding and wellbeing.
- Offering support to people to make the transition through key life changes, such as moving to a new area, losing a life-partner and retirement, in the form of short courses and workshops. Perhaps linking this with a peer-mentoring model.
- Building on LAA HCOP work to enable more access to healthy walks and structured programmes for physical exercise indoors, through partnerships with and between older people's forums, the U3A, Extend, Age Concern and the County Council.

7. Opportunities to continue to learn and develop in later life

Keeping an active, healthy mind is an important part of growing older. People also continue to need fresh opportunities to learn new skills, take on new roles and to renew, stretch and change on a personal level. Although the desire for learning will vary widely in the post-fifty age group generally learning needs in later life fall into two areas:

- **Learning for life** – sometimes known as cultural, personal or leisure learning.
- **Learning for work** – both for the pre-retirement post-fifty age group as well as older retired people who would like to be economically active.

Key partnerships and planning bodies that have a role to play in leading lifelong learning

- East Sussex Adult Learning and Skills Strategy Partnership Board
- East Sussex Arts Partnership

Key local strategies and action plans

- District and borough-based community strategies
- Pride of Place, the East Sussex Community Strategy
- East Sussex Adult Learning and Skills Strategy (to be developed)
- East Sussex County Council Cultural Strategy
- Strategy for library and information services for older people

Ideas that we would like to explore to promote learning in later life:

- Providing information in innovative ways about the learning opportunities that are available in local areas. For example through supporting older people to become holders of knowledge about learning opportunities in their local areas and using ‘time-banks’ style approaches to the resources of knowledge, sign-posting and mentoring skills that exist in communities.
- Developing courses in ‘handy-skills’ to help people to continue to live independently.
- Mapping availability of community buildings and facilities where informal learning opportunities can be provided at low cost by community groups such as the U3A.
- Developing the relationship between owners of community buildings and small learning groups to share resources.
- Learning from the outcomes of pilots and other schemes to support small business and social enterprise for the over-fifties.
- Supporting care and support providers to deliver learning opportunities and replicate existing good practice across the county, through partnerships with the voluntary sector and older people’s forums.
- Integrating older people’s views into the planning processes for adult learning – both for skills and cultural or leisure learning.
- Enabling socially excluded younger people to benefit from to older people through mentoring opportunities.
- Providing opportunities for older people to contribute to arts and culture in East Sussex to create an ‘age-positive’ county.

8. The ability to get out and about

The ability to get out and about has a key impact on people's lives as they get older. In some cases a lack of adequate transport can be the main factor in causing social exclusion, and the provision of easily accessible passenger transport can increase older people's quality of life in urban as well as rural areas. Transport needs tend to fall into three areas for older people:

- Enabling access to health and social care services
- Visiting shops and general services to maintain independence
- Ensuring people can participate in social, leisure, cultural and educational opportunities

All of these aspects of getting out and about affect the level of independence and control older people have over their lives - independence, flexibility and choice lead to increased wellbeing and overall quality of life

Key partnerships and planning bodies that have a role to play in transport planning

- Local Accessibility Forums
- Local Quality Bus Partnerships
- East Sussex Rural Transport Partnership

Key local strategies and action plans

- Local Transport Plan 2
- Local Area Transport Strategies
- Accessibility Strategy
- Outcomes of the Executive Review of Passenger Transport
- District and Borough Council Local Development Frameworks

Ideas that we would like to explore to help support older people to get out and about in East Sussex:

- Co-ordinating sustainable approaches to empowering rural communities to come up with their own small-scale transport solutions e.g. volunteer driving schemes.
- Integrating older people's views into transport planning at a strategic and operational level across the county with all partners (County Council, NHS, public and community transport operators, and other representatives of transport users), replicating good practice where it already exists, to ensure that all transport resources can be utilised to the maximum benefit of local communities.
- Ensuring that older people in East Sussex benefit from the roll out of national initiatives like the 'Concessionary Fares Scheme' in April 2008 (an extension of the County Card Scheme for people over 60 and those registered with a disability).
- Making links with safer communities and falls prevention initiatives so that people can use public spaces safely.

9. Healthy finances

Adequate levels of income are a crucial factor in ensuring that older people can enjoy the benefits of old age. Lack of money prevents people from being able to take part in activities that can enhance their overall quality of life. Poverty in old age can also mean going without things like repairs to homes, warmth and a balanced diet, all basic things that make a fundamental contribution to preventing ill-health.

Key partnerships and planning bodies that have a role to play in healthy finances

- Older People's Partnership Board
- Local Strategic Partnerships
- East Sussex Joint Team Project Board

Key local strategies and action plans

- Joint Commissioning Strategy for Older People 2007 - 2010
- Local Area Agreement Healthier Communities and Older People Block (LAA HCOP)

Ideas that we would like to explore to make sure older people do not live below the poverty line.

- Taking forward County Connect – a joined up referral system for all agencies to make sure that older people are receiving all the support that they are entitled to help them to live safely and independently in the community.
- Increased joint planning and working between all the agencies that have a role in providing individuals with access to benefits, advice and advocacy to make the best use of these resources.
- Streamlining financial information across organisational boundaries by only asking people to provide details once.
- Developing courses to enable older people to become holders of vital signposting information in their villages and communities, and identifying informal ways of passing on that information.
- Ensuring that systems and processes are in place to enable help to be accessed at the earliest opportunity e.g. the Joint Team's hospital based advice worker supporting with disability benefits claims to help people return home successfully.

10. Feeling safe and secure

Whilst levels of crime in East Sussex are generally low compared to some areas of the UK, fear of crime and general levels of personal safety can often prevent older people from feeling safe and secure in their own homes which in turn impacts on quality of life and wellbeing. This feeling can also be a barrier to participating in activities outside of the home, leading to people becoming socially isolated. In addition to the perception about the threat of general crime feeling safe and secure can specifically impact on older people in the following ways:

- Having the confidence to answer the door to strangers calling to sell or promote things. This can especially affect older people who live on their own.
- Feeling safe in public spaces, including being able to walk and drive safely.

Key partnerships and planning bodies that have a role to play in feeling safe and secure

- East Sussex Safer Communities Steering Group
- District and Borough Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnerships
- Local Action Teams (LATS)

Key local strategies and action plans

- District and Borough Crime and Disorder Reduction Delivery Plans
- County-wide safer communities plan (timetabled to be produced in June 2007)
- Local Area Agreement Safer and Stronger Communities Block
- Local Area Transport Strategies

Ideas that we would like to explore to make sure older people feel safe and secure

- Specific projects aimed at increasing understanding and cohesion between younger and older generations, as well as amongst older people who are part of other communities within East Sussex, e.g. gypsies and travellers and asylum seekers.
- Continuing action to reduce doorstep crime, such as distraction burglaries.
- Learning from local good practice such as the Crime and Safety Special Interest Group of the Hastings and St Leonards Seniors' Forum's work to promote pedestrian awareness in partnership with the Police, Fire Service, Primary Care Trust, schools and voluntary organisations and Borough and County Councils.
- Further developing our understanding with older communities about their perception of crime in East Sussex.
- Looking at ways to further enhance communication at the local level to reassure older people about crime.

11. Health, social care and housing support services that promote older people's quality of life and wellbeing

The planning and provision of health, social care and housing support services for people when they need extra help should incorporate outcomes that lead to increased quality of life. At a very basic level this can mean ensuring that people are treated with dignity, respect and feel in control of their circumstances. Specialist health, social care and housing support services that are provided to people with low, medium and high levels of need can also proactively promote wellbeing and prevent decline. The Joint Commissioning Strategy for Older People sets the direction for these specialist services and this document aims to build on this work by further developing the ways that care and support services can contribute to quality of life, independence and wellbeing.

Key partnerships and planning bodies that have a role to play in promoting quality of life and wellbeing in care settings.

- Older People's Partnership Board
- Primary Care Trust locality groups
- County Housing Support Group for older people
- Locality Housing Support Groups

Key local strategies and action plans

- Joint Commissioning Strategy for Older People 2007 - 2010
- Older People's National Service Framework
- Joint Commissioning Strategy for Carers' Services 2007 - 2010
- Local Area Agreement Healthier Communities and Older People Block
- Local Health Action Plans
- Supporting People Strategy 2005 - 2010
- Area Housing and Support strategies
- Outcomes of the Scrutiny Review into Preventative Services

Ideas that we would like to explore to make sure health, social care and housing support services promote prevention and wellbeing.

- Continuing to target projects at people who have low to medium levels of identified need to prevent situations becoming worse, such as those being piloted under the Independence First programme e.g. the Navigator Service and Community Hub models.
- Using telecare technologies for people identified as having particular support needs such as increased risk of falling or vulnerability due to memory loss.
- Ensuring that services provided to people with high levels of need in settings such as day care, residential care, respite care, community hospitals and supported housing accommodation promote quality of life and wellbeing, through enabling access to learning /cultural activities and physical exercise, and through specifying outcomes in these areas as part of the commissioning and contract monitoring process.
- Developing opportunities to enable older people to become lay inspectors of health and social care services.
- Working with people in the fifty-plus age group to assist with understanding and planning around housing options in later life.

12. Playing an active part in community life and having a strong collective voice

Older people are one of the most active groups of volunteers in the county, whether this is as informal volunteers, for example in a caring role, or as part of organised activity with voluntary organisations and community groups. This symbolises a massive resource within the county contributing on an economic level as well as to the social fabric and cohesion of local communities. In East Sussex we have interpreted the participation and involvement of older people as being fundamental to improving their quality of life. Because there are over 110,000 people over the age of 65 living in East Sussex we have developed a structured way to relate directly to older people through the older people's forums. These are independent local forums led by older people which can help the following things to happen:

- Allow a broad spectrum of older people's views about public services and their priorities to be heard.
- Ensure that older people living in East Sussex can have a direct voice in strategic service planning and decision-making.
- Provide a focus for bringing older people together in their local communities to take forward ideas and projects in partnership with like-minded agencies and organisations.

Key partnerships and planning bodies that have a role to play promoting older people's involvement

- Older People's Involvement Group
- Older People's Partnership Board Promoting a Healthy Old Age Steering Group
- The Local Involvement Network (LINK) as it develops

Key local strategies and action plans

- Strategy to ensure older people's involvement in the improvement of public services
- Local Involvement Network (LINK) implementation
- Joint Commissioning Strategy for Older People 2007 - 2010
- Older People's National Service Framework
- Local Area Agreement Healthier Communities and Older People Block and Safer and Stronger Communities Block
- Strategy for library services for older people

Ideas that we would like to explore to make sure that older people can play an active part in their communities

- Continue to support the ongoing development of the local older people's forums to enable them to achieve their aims and be a key partner in delivering the Time of Our Lives strategy.
- Work with the new East Sussex Seniors' Association of older people's forums to strengthen the collective voice of older people across the county and ensure that involvement is a process designed and led by older people about the services that affect them.
- Establish a county-wide framework for engaging with older people so that the impact of involvement in decision-making can be linked to changes and improvement across the range of services that impact on quality of life.

13. Your views

A wide range of organisations and agencies in the voluntary, statutory and independent sectors have a role to play in delivering the final strategy, as do older people themselves through their participation in local forums and other types of community action. We would like to know what you think about our proposed approach to improving and supporting older people's quality of life and wellbeing in East Sussex.

We have attached a short questionnaire to find out your views about the strategy, our vision and what you think of the approach we are proposing. If you have anything further to say about the draft strategy that isn't covered in the questionnaire please include your comments on a separate sheet of paper. The deadline for the consultation is **31st October 2007**.

14. What will happen next?

By October 2007

We will collect your views on this document.

We will talk further with the lead planning bodies about older people's priorities.

We will further refine the vision outlined in this document and the strategic action that underpins it into a final strategy.

July to December 2007

We will make a start with developing some of the key partnership projects that have come out of the partnership action workshops.

We will continue to implement some of the priority pilots and initiatives that have been referred to in this document.

Early 2008

We will bring people together to launch the final document, plan action for the next steps and be clear about future arrangements for monitoring the progress with this strategy.

We will also use the opportunity to feedback together about progress made with key projects over the summer.

15. Please detach and return the consultation questionnaire and any other comments that you have about the *Time of Our Lives Strategy* to:

Address: Older People's Involvement Manager
FREEPOST
Adult Social Care
East Sussex County Council
North A, County Hall
St Anne's Crescent
Lewes
East Sussex
BN7 1SF

Email: timeofourlives@eastsussex.gov.uk

Deadline: 31st October 2007

The Time of Our Lives Strategy

What do you think about the approach we are taking?

Q1. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements about the draft Time of Our Lives strategy?

| | <i>strongly agree</i> | <i>agree</i> | <i>neither agree nor disagree</i> | <i>disagree</i> | <i>strongly disagree</i> |
|--|--------------------------|--------------------------|-----------------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| I am happy with the strategy overall. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| The vision will help to improve the quality of life for older people living in East Sussex. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| The approach outlined in the draft document will help to meet my personal needs as an older person or the needs of the older person/people I am representing in this survey. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| The document is easy to read and understand | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

Q2. Is there anything else that should be covered? If yes, please describe

Q3. Are there any other comments or suggestions you would like to make about this strategy?

Delivering the Strategy

Q4. Is there anything that you individually, your organisation, forum or group would be interested in contributing in relation to the strategy?

Yes (please go to Q4a).... No

Q4a. If you answered yes, please provide your contact details in the box below and a brief description of the area that interests you.

About you

The following questions help us to understand more about the make up of our community which in turn helps us make decisions and target our services where they are needed. We have a statutory duty to collect this information to show that we are eliminating unlawful discrimination, promoting equality of opportunity and good race relations. You do not have to complete this section of the survey but it helps us if you do. Any responses you give will be treated in the strictest confidence.

Q9. Are you.....? Male..... Female.....

Q10. How old were you on your last birthday?

Q11. To which of these ethnic groups do you feel you belong?

Please mark an 'x' in one box only. If your ethnic group is not included in this list please tick the 'other' box in the relevant section and write it in the space provided.

White

British Irish Gypsy/Romany Irish Traveller
 Any other White background (*please specify*)

Mixed

White and Black Caribbean White and Black African White and Asian
 Any other mixed background (*please specify*)

Black or Black British

Caribbean African
 Any other Black background (*please specify*)

Asian or Asian British

Pakistani Indian Bangladeshi
 Any other Asian background (*please specify*)

Chinese and other

Chinese Any other ethnic group (*please specify*)

The Disability Discrimination Act considers a person disabled if they have a longstanding physical or mental condition that has lasted or is likely to last at least 12 months; and this condition has a substantial adverse effect on their ability to carry out normal day to day activities.

Q12. Do you consider yourself to be disabled as set out in the Disability Discrimination Act?

Yes..... No.....

Q13. What is your postcode?

| | | | | | | | |
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| | | | | | | | |
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Thank you very much for taking part in this survey, your views are important to us. All responses received will be treated in the strictest confidence and a summary of the collective responses from this survey will be used to inform the Time of Our Lives Strategy.