

# Scrutiny Sub-Committee for the Development of Lifelong Learning

26 June 2006



## Scrutiny Report: Opportunity Age in County Durham? – Lifelong Learning for Over 50s.

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### Report of the Head of Overview and Scrutiny

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#### Purpose of Report

1. To explain the attached report from a working group of the Lifelong Learning Scrutiny Sub-Committee about opportunities for over 50s in County Durham.

#### Background

2. People in this country are living longer. This presents opportunities but also challenges. This project considered the way in which we seek to promote the well-being of people aged over 50 in County Durham.
3. Increasing choice and diversity in services for older people in County Durham is one of the Council's priorities for improvement. It is also important to bear in mind that population projections forecast a significant increase in the over 50s in the future in County Durham.
4. This investigation involved evidence from discussions with older people, Age Concern, and Better Government for Older People. Evidence was also submitted by Professor Jim Edwardson of the Institute of Ageing and Health, University of Newcastle. There were also discussions with the North East Forum on Ageing.
5. Key information from national reports assisted the working group including the House of Lords Select Committee Report on Ageing, the Audit Commission's Report on Older People, reports from the Social Exclusion Unit and a review about the National Service Framework for Older People.
6. There was considerable consensus that the factors which increase the well-being of older people are:-
  - Physical activity
  - Having a social role and function
  - Good nutrition
  - Absence of risk factors, such as smoking and drinking alcohol to excess
  - Good mental health and well-being.

7. The recommendations in the report suggest that the County Council should be seeking to promote the factors which increase the well-being of older people. There is also a broad consensus that older people should have much more involvement in determining and developing services. The investigation has highlighted the need to ensure that our main policies reflect the right balance to promote the interests of over 50s. It is also suggested that a section on the Council's website should be designed specifically to assist over 50s. Co-ordination of services is also an issue.
8. This report is also being reported to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee and Cabinet.

### **Recommendation**

9. The Scrutiny report is submitted for consideration and approval.

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