

# Reference Group on Older People

Tuesday, 12th December, 2018

## MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE REFERENCE GROUP ON OLDER PEOPLE

Members present: Aldermen Copeland (Chairperson); and  
L. Patterson.

In attendance: Mr. D. Connolly, Environmental Health Manager;  
Mrs. G. McEvoy, Senior Environmental Health Officer;  
Mrs. E. Greer, Healthy Ageing Coordinator;  
Ms. L. Wilson, Sports Development Officer;  
Ms. R. Anderson, Industrial Placement Student;  
Mr. G. Graham, Democratic Services Assistant.

### **Apologies**

An apology for inability to attend was reported from Councillor Groves.

### **Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting of 18th September, 2018 were taken as read and signed as correct.

### **Declarations of Interest**

No declarations of Interest were reported.

### **Walking Football - Danderball**

The Environmental Health Manager provided the Reference Group with a presentation on the work being undertaken by Age-friendly Belfast and supported by both the Belfast Community Sports Development Network and the Irish Football Association. She stated that the objective of Danderball was to increase older people's participation in physical activity and reduce the problem of social isolation. She highlighted the success of the Danderball programme and the impact it has had, to date, in achieving that objective.

The Reference Group was informed that the Danderball programme was being undertaken at Avoniel, Shankill and Olympia Leisure Centres and the Maureen Sheehan Centre. The Sports Development Officer referred to the set up of the Northern Ireland Walking Football Federation (N.I. W. F. F.) which had been established to promote the sport and which was affiliated to the Irish Football Association (I.F.A.) to provide an official competition structure for the sport.

The Chairperson suggested that the sport could be promoted further through other means, including the Men's Shed network and the G.P referral scheme. In response to the Chairperson's comments, the Senior Environmental Health Officer stated that all avenues, which would help in the promotion of the sport, would be explored.

Noted.

### **Age-friendly Belfast Convention and Launch of the Age- friendly Belfast Plan**

The Environmental Health Manager informed the Reference Group that the annual Age-friendly Belfast Convention had taken place on 1st October, 2018, and that it had been well attended and received by the delegates. He stated further that it had been encouraging that 24% of the delegates attending the convention had been represented for the first time. The Reference Group was informed that the convention had been attended by the Lord Mayor, Councillor Hargey, and an overview of the Plan had been provided by the Chairperson of the Reference Group, Alderman Copeland. The Members were informed of the thematic areas identified within the plan including:

- Partnership
- Infrastructure
- Social Inclusion
- Health and Wellbeing and
- Financial Security

The Environmental Manager referred to the cross cutting themes within the plan, aimed at addressing life inequalities, including the provision of support for dementia friendly communities. He stated that the Older People Commissioner for Northern Ireland had been in attendance and informed the delegates of his role in safeguarding and promoting the interests of older people. In particular, he referred to the efforts being made to address social isolation among older people. It was reported also that the chairperson of the Greater Belfast Seniors' Forum had provided an outline of the involvement of older people in the development of the plan and provided encouragement for older people to engage proactively in Positive Ageing Month.

Noted.

### **Korber Foundation Symposium On Demographic Change**

The Healthy Ageing Coordinator provided the Reference Group with background information in regard to the Korber Foundation. She stated that the foundation's objective was to address challenges in three areas of action, namely, innovation, international understanding and living civil society. She reminded the Reference Group that in September, 2018, members from the Foundation had visited Belfast and had requested that representatives from Age-friendly Belfast be invited to Hamburg to make a presentation on their work at the annual symposium. She stated that the topic under discussion, at the symposium, was the 'The Baby Boomers Retire'.

The Healthy Ageing Coordinator reported that delegates at the symposium were impressed with the strategic approach taken by Belfast in becoming Age-friendly however, they had expressed surprise at the levels of inequality within the city. She highlighted some of the issues which emanated from the symposium, including the disconnect between the concerns of younger people as opposed to those of government policy makers and older people. The Reference Group was informed that the final speaker, Mr. Charles Lundy had provided an outline of creative city life, including an overview of the work of Comedi which he had formed, comprising a network of individuals who had developed projects associated with city life

The Reference Group noted the information which had been provided.

### **Welcome Meeting Room**

The Senior Environmental Health Officer informed the Reference Group that the members of the Greater Belfast Seniors' Forum had requested the use of a city centre meeting area which they could use to as a discussion platform and as a means to coordinate their work and combat isolation. They had asked officers to explore the possibility of a room being available in City Hall for that purpose.

The Senior Environmental Officer agreed to discuss the matter with relevant personnel, once the terms of the request had been received from the Seniors' Forum and subject to the accommodation being available and the approval of the People and Communities Committee,

### **U.K. Network of Age-friendly Communities Steering Group**

The Senior Environmental Officer provided the Reference Group with an update on the work of the U.K. Network of Age-friendly Communities and its objectives to assist U.K. cities and communities to become increasingly Age-friendly. She pointed to the role of the Steering Group in advising the centre for ageing and the provision of secretariat support to the U.K. network. It was reported that in October, Belfast had hosted a meeting of the Steering Group. The Reference Group was informed that members of the Steering Group were represented from other cities including London, Manchester, Bristol, Leeds, Wales and Scotland and that they had been impressed with Age-friendly Belfast, the partnership work and the work of the Greater Belfast Senior's Forum.

The Steering Group was impressed with the fact that delegates at the meeting were open and transparent in regard to their collaborative working, particularly after exiting from a projected period of conflict. It was reported that the Steering Group meeting had been a considerable success and that delegates were impressed with Belfast as one of the leading Age-friendly Cities in the U.K.

Noted.

### **Age-friendly Belfast Positive Ageing Month 2018**

The Senior Environmental Health Manager provided the Members with information in respect of the success associated with the October Positive Ageing Month, with over 100 events organised throughout the city. She reported that the convention had been attended by over 180 delegates at which the Age-friendly Belfast Plan 2018-21 had been launched. She highlighted the range of events which had been held as part of the Positive Ageing Month and of the success attributed to the various activities, with particular reference to the popularity of the movie events.

Noted.

### **Age- friendly Belfast Events**

The Reference Group was provided with an update on the role of the Age-friendly Older Volunteer Awards and of their success in providing recognition to those groups, organisations and individuals in recognition of their contribution as older volunteers. She highlighted the wide range categories under which candidates had been entered including:

- Older Volunteer of the Year Award
- Marie Mathews Participation Award
- Making a Difference Award
- Good Neighbour Award
- Team or Group Award

She provided the Members with a list of the successful candidates under each category and referred specifically to the success of the tea dances and the 'be prepared' events.

Noted

### **Expression of Thanks**

The Chairperson, on behalf of the Reference Group, thanked the officers for their dedicated work throughout the year and for the success in respect of their contribution towards Belfast becoming an Age-friendly city.

### **Date of Next Meeting**

The Reference Group agreed that its next meeting would be held on Wednesday, 6th March, 2019 at 1.00 p.m.

Chairperson