

Dublin City Council

Mid-Term Review of the Dublin City Age Friendly Strategy 2014-2019

Report on findings

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2017

Mid-Term Review of the Dublin City Council Age Friendly Strategy 2014-2019
Conducted November/December 2017

To: Mr. Brendan Kenny
Acting Chief Executive
Dublin City Council
Housing & Community Services

1.0 **Introduction**

1.1 The Dublin City Age Friendly Strategy 2014-2019 is a framework plan to make Dublin a great place to grow old, and a city in which everyone, regardless of age, is respected and valued. It was informed by an extensive consultation process with older people and service providers which took place throughout the City in 2013 and 2014. It is allied to the National Age Friendly Cities and Counties Programme. The Strategy details nine strategic goals which will contribute to the achievement of the Initiatives vision and mission.

1.2 The Strategy stresses the importance of monitoring, review and evaluation and notes that a mid-term review of the Strategy should be carried out in 2017 to include a city-wide consultation process involving all the Dublin City Age Friendly Area Alliances.

2.0 **Objectives**

2.1 To consult with each Dublin City Age Friendly Area Alliance to ascertain whether the goals and actions under the nine themes of the Strategy i.e. **1. Outdoor Space and Buildings, 2. Transport, 3. Home and Community, 4. Information, 5. Safety, 6. Learn, Develop and Work, 7. Social, Economic and Political Life, 8. Healthy and Active Living, 9. Value and Respect**, are being achieved and if not, to identify the barriers preventing their achievement.

2.2 To make recommendations from the consultations to enable the fulfilment of the goals and actions of the Dublin City Age Friendly Strategy to end 2019.

3.0 **Scope & Methodology**

- 3.1 Specially convened meetings took place in November and December 2017 with the 5 Age Friendly Area Alliances (Central Area, North Central Area, North West Area, South East Area & South Central Area) and the Dublin City Age Friendly Programme Co-ordination Unit to review the Strategy goal by goal.
- 3.2 Achievements were noted and barriers identified.

4.0 **Findings**

4.1 **Outdoor Space and Buildings:**

Consensus was that Service providers and businesses have not consulted with the Older Persons Councils or Alliances in relation to the development & redevelopment of their buildings & outdoor spaces. Lack of car parking spaces for older people close to facilities still remains an issue as is lack of on street seating, timing of pedestrian crossings and lack of public toilets. This is a major obstacle to the participation of older people in everyday community life. It was noted that Dublin City Council has carried out a lot of work in the public parks area aimed at encouraging older people to remain active and healthy. It was felt that Dublin City Council Departments should liaise with each other when carrying out works in the public domain to ensure Age Friendliness. While An Garda Síochána do work closely with the AF Area Alliances and have given talks on safety to older people no specific campaign on “Safer Roads for Older People” has been delivered.

4.2 **Transport**

There was dissatisfaction expressed across most of the Area Alliances with Transport issues in Dublin City. It is felt that the lack of a City Alliance has hampered the goal: “To ensure that public transport in Dublin City is appropriate for older people”. It was stated that Dublin Bus do not respond or address any complaints communicated to them by the AF Alliances. There was one exception to that in the North Central Area where Dublin Bus has been working with the AF Alliance to address transport issues. Getting to and from hospital appointments is a major issue for older people as is a fear of falling if a bus pulls away too quickly. There are also issues for older people with disabilities using public transport. Meetings at a high level between a City Wide Alliance and Transport providers such as the NTA need to take place.

4.3 **Home and Community**

Again the lack of a City Wide Alliance is preventing goals being achieved. It is felt that Dublin City Council is doing its best in all the Areas for older people. There is not enough funding or enough Home Carers to enable older people to remain living in their own homes and communities. More adaptable housing is needed.

4.4 **Information**

There is no Service Providers Forum again highlighting the fact that this was to be set up by a City Alliance. This City Alliance is needed to engage with businesses/Government Departments regarding Age Friendly business practises e.g automated telephone call routing systems which are all too often very difficult to navigate for older persons and the provision of information in appropriate formats and large print. Dublin City Libraries have adopted the Age Friendly Libraries Programme. It is also important to remember retired employees, either State or private sector, when changes occur in legislation which may affect their pensions and entitlements. Such information should always be communicated to them in a timely and appropriate manner.

4.5 **Safety**

Across all the Areas it was agreed that An Garda Siochana are working to their best ability with the AF Alliances to make communities safer places for older people. However the Garda representatives on the Age Friendly Alliances themselves acknowledge that the lack of manpower is a barrier to their efforts. One Garda Rep said he would be in favour of getting Gardai out of Patrol Cars and back on foot patrol on the streets. It was felt by Alliance members that there are not enough Community Gardai nor high visibility of a Garda presence in certain areas where gangland activity is prevalent and around Post Offices on pension day. Older people feel very vulnerable in these areas. OPC members in some Areas also mentioned that parking outside their homes was an issue especially in areas where there was a Hospital e.g (Childrens Hospital, Crumlin) or a University e.g (Dublin City University). In some cases exit from and entry to older persons homes have been blocked. Older Peoples Carers could not gain access to park on their clients road and had to walk quite a distance thus reducing the time they had to spend with the person in their care. It was suggested that sites should be found for park and ride facilities where there is a Hospital or University. It was agreed that Dublin City Council is promoting the development of safe, attractive public spaces for older people and this work is ongoing with more seating in public areas required.

4.6 **Learn, Develop and Work**

DCU previously offered computer classes for Older People free of charge but because funding was withdrawn these classes ceased in 2016. They are running other classes now but these must be paid for by the older person. It was felt by some OPC members that Universities are not for poor people or those on a State pension. Also the participation/attendance of those members from Educational Institutions on some of the

Age Friendly Area Alliances was very poor. There is a need to promote informal Adult Education in all communities. It was also felt that short modular courses might better suit older people. The non existence of a City Wide Alliance has led to some of the goals of the Strategy not being achieved.

4.7 **Social, Economic and Political Life**

Age Friendly Business Forums have not been set up in any Area because of the lack of a City Wide Alliance. The actions under this Goal were dependent on the action of the City Alliance which ceased to exist in December 2016. However Dublin City Council has been active in organising training in computers and technology such as The Over 55's Technology Day held in the Central Library in November 2017. The OPC and Alliance members voiced the opinion that the PPN (Public Participation Network) was not working. It was too cumbersome and it was easier to go to your local Councillor for information and resolution of problems. It was suggested that the PPN should be reviewed.

The Dublin City Council Age Friendly Co-ordinators and their Staff in all of the Areas has developed Age Friendly activities and initiatives aimed at encouraging the social engagement of older people in their communities including the development of Men's Sheds.

4.8 **Healthy and Active Living**

Once again many of the actions under this goal were to be carried out by a City Wide Alliance. However Dublin City Council in all of the 5 Areas has developed physical, social, cultural and artistic activities for older people across the city e.g. outdoor exercise equipment is available in parks throughout the city, Let's Walk and Talk, Tea Dances, Petanque, Bowling, Aqua Aerobics & Swimming, Art Exhibitions.

An Age Friendly GP Toolkit **has not** been developed. The Age Friendly Hospital project needs to be reviewed.

The last action under this goal that the HSE will engage the Dublin City Age Friendly Older Persons Councils as key stakeholders in relation to the provision and expansion of health – related services has come to fruition with the launch of the Integrated Care Programme for Older Persons in October 2017.

4.9 **Value and Respect**

Each Age Friendly Alliance has incorporated into its Action Plans the principles of the vision, mission and values of the Dublin City Age Friendly Strategy as have the Gardai and Alone.

It was felt that Service providers and businesses need to be more positive in their portrayal of Older People. This needs to be worked on.

Intergenerational activities take place across the five areas such as the Choir of Ages in Crumlin, Computer classes, Wizard of Words (Reading Programme) where older people assist children with their reading ability. It is important to acknowledge the significant contribution of older persons to Irish society and to utilise their experience.

5.0 **Conclusion**

While a significant amount of work is being carried out at Community level for older people by the Dublin City Age Friendly Co-ordinators , Area Managers and their staff, in the five Dublin City Areas, it is felt that to achieve the strategic goals as set out in the Dublin City Age Friendly Strategy 2014-2019 a Citywide Alliance is needed. This should consist of a Chairperson and persons at a sufficiently senior level from the Business, Health, Transport and Educational sectors who can work with the 5 Dublin City Area Alliances and the National Age Friendly Programme Lead to address National issues affecting older people such as human rights and equality issues, transport, hospital waiting times, pensions, Social Welfare entitlements, and sustainable, adaptable housing.

I would like to acknowledge and thank Ms. Beatrice Casserly, DCC Age Friendly Unit, the Age Friendly Co-ordinators, their Managers and the Alliance members for their participation in this review.

6.0 **Recommendations**

- 6.1 That a Citywide Age Friendly Alliance be re-formed as soon as possible.
- 6.2 That a publicity campaign be undertaken to let the public know of the Dublin City Age Friendly Programme and the existence of the Older Persons Councils which give older people a say on issues that affect them while they live in Dublin City.
- 6.3 That where necessary the Older Persons Councils in the 5 Dublin City Areas be re-invigorated with new members.
- 6.4 That where necessary the role of the Area Age Friendly Alliance Co-ordinator be rotated and shared especially in the larger Dublin areas.
- 6.5 That Dublin City Council should become an Age Friendly Workplace and roll out the Age Friendly Communications Training to all new Staff at induction and to existing staff who deal with the public on a daily basis.

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20th December 2017.

