

Cabinet

9 November 2017

Loneliness Advisory Group – Terms of Reference

Recommendation

That Cabinet agrees the terms of reference for the Loneliness Advisory Group as set out in the appendix and agrees the Group's size and constitution.

1.0 Background

- 1.1 In his 2017 Annual Report the Director of Public Health offers a definition of loneliness. Having highlighted the link between loneliness and social isolation (LSI) he states, "Loneliness is a psychological state. It is a subjective, negative feeling associated with lack or loss of companionship". He goes on to say that, "loneliness is often associated with increasing age, however, both loneliness and social isolation occur across all age groups. Prevention and early intervention is vital to enable people to live well, remain as independent as possible and reduce the demand on health and social care".
- 1.2 There is now a growing awareness of the factors that can lead to a sense of loneliness. These include personality and cognitive variables, life stages (e.g. retirement, widowhood, diminishing health) social environment, the level and quality of interpersonal engagement and wider social factors such as poverty and access to transport. In older people loneliness is most common amongst:
 - Widows/widowers
 - People with limited contact with family and friends
 - People with low self-esteem
 - People on low income
 - Informal Carers
 - Males
- 1.3 For most people, feelings of LSI are short lived. However, long term LSI can affect health in many ways and can reduce life expectancy. The impact of a lack of social relationships on the risk of mortality is comparable with smoking and alcohol misuse, and exceeds that of physical inactivity and obesity.
- 1.4 Nationally almost 1 in 3 (31%) of the population aged 65 and over are estimated to be lonely 'some of the time' and 7% 'all of the time or often'. In

Warwickshire, this equates to over 43,000 people experiencing some degree of LSI in this age group.

- 1.5 Age UK and The Campaign to End Loneliness (campaigntoendloneliness.org) have proposed a framework to tackle LSI and the challenges of reaching lonely individuals, understanding the nature of their loneliness and developing a personalised response and supporting individuals to access appropriate services. It sets out the full range of interventions needed from stakeholders across the community, beyond the health and social care sector, to support people experiencing, or at risk of experiencing, LSI.

2.0 Motion to Council

- 2.1 At its meeting of 21 September 2017 Council considered a motion on loneliness tabled by Councillor Jerry Roodhouse (Leader of the Liberal Democrat Group). Following a debate in which the significance of loneliness, the efforts being made by various agencies and the positive and negative impact of the way council services are delivered on levels of loneliness were discussed the following resolution was agreed.

“That, in light of the Director of Public Health’s Annual Report 2017, which highlights the impact of loneliness and isolation on people’s health and wellbeing, Council agrees to the establishment of a cross party member group by Cabinet to consider and recommend to Cabinet what steps could be taken to reduce social isolation and loneliness including how we work with partners and the voluntary and community sector on targeted initiatives and the role that public transport plays in this context”

3.0 Terms of Reference for the Loneliness Advisory Group

- 3.1 For the Loneliness Advisory Group to be effective it requires terms of reference that it can work to. These serve to inform others of the form and purpose of the group whilst helping it to maintain its focus.
- 3.2 The, role of the Advisory Group will be to recommend to Cabinet the practical steps that should be taken to reduce LSI. The draft terms of reference are attached as an Appendix.
- 3.3 As a Cabinet advisory group it is suggested that the Portfolio Holder for Adult Social Care and Health would be the appropriate lead and Chair. The Political balance rules do not apply to Cabinet bodies, however if Cabinet wished to appoint in accordance with those rules options would be:

5 members (3 Conservative, 1 Labour, 1 Liberal Democrat)

6 members (4 Conservative, 1 Labour, 1 Liberal Democrat)

7 members (4 Conservative, 1 Labour, 1 Liberal Democrat, 1 Independent or Green)

4.0 Background papers

None

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This report was circulated to the following elected members prior to publication.

Local Members: N/A

Other Members: Councillors Caborn, Redford, Golby, Parsons and Rolfe

Loneliness Advisory Group Terms of Reference

To recommend to Cabinet the practical steps that should be taken to reduce LSI in Warwickshire recognising the financial restraints that the Council is working to and taking into account the OOP2020 savings targets.

In formulating those recommendations the Advisory Group should:-

- I. Review the extent of LSI across Warwickshire with a view to identifying those areas where this is a particular issue.
- II. Develop an understanding of the factors that lead to LSI with particular reference to Warwickshire including the role of public transport in reducing LSI .
- III. Review initiatives being undertaken nationally and locally aimed at tackling LSI.
- IV. Identify opportunities to:
 - Raise awareness amongst WCC staff, councillors and other public sector agencies of LSI.
 - Identify opportunities available within the County Council and across the public sector (District and Borough Councils, NHS etc) to reduce LSI.
 - Seek ways in which partner agencies including those in the voluntary and community sector can assist in reducing LSI.