

# CHESHIRE EAST COUNCIL

## Adult Overview and Scrutiny Committee

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**Date of Meeting:** 22<sup>nd</sup> November 2011  
**Report of:** Liz Austin  
**Subject/Title:** Information and Communication Programme

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### **1.0 Report Summary**

- 1.1 This report is to inform Adults Overview and Scrutiny Panel members of the future plan of work being developed for Adults on the Information & Communication Programme.
- 1.2 The report will pull together work that has been completed in other departments to date and provides members with an opportunity to comment on progress so far.

### **2.0 Recommendation**

- 2.1 That members support the proposal to form a steering group to oversee the work required to develop the Adults Information and Communication Programme. This will be achieved by further investigation and review of all means of communication, making links across departments to include, health, children, adults and user groups, with the aim of providing a comprehensive range of communication materials with easy access for our customers.
- 2.2 That members support the work streams of the Information and Communication Steering group.
- 2.3 Members and user groups are invited to a demonstration of the Information Gateway, Digital TV and Demenshare.
- 2.4 That members comment on the draft Public Information and Communication Programme. (copy enclosed)

### **3.0 Reasons for Recommendations**

- 3.1 The Information and Communicaton Programme is a developing plan that will use new and existing media to form a comprehensive range of information for our customers. An Information and Communication Steering Group will be

developed by Cheshire East Council Adult Services, to oversee the work of the programme.

- 3.2 The principles of the programme are to communicate with our customers, carers and the wider public in a way that is understandable, comprehensive and keeps people safe. This will be achieved by developing assessable information and advice, that is timely and provides customers with more choice and control, while embracing the use of new channels and tools of communication.
- 3.3 The Information and Communication Programme plan will join up existing channels of communication which have already been developed and will investigate and progress other means of communication. These will include the Cheshire East Website; the Information Gateway and Resource Directory; Digital TV, Demenshare and written information in the form of Factsheets.
- 3.4 We need to recognise that we have an ageing population in Cheshire East and we need to provide information that is accessible to all user groups. The government is encouraging people to 'go on line' however we know that 30% of our customers are over 85 and probably do not have access to a computer, are housebound and their means of communicating with the outside world is via the telephone the written word or the television.
- 3.5 The Cheshire East Website; The website provides general information about the department but it is not able to provide a fully transactional site where social care clients can key in their requirement for services and direct them through to the required SMART (Skilled Multi-Agency Response Team) for assessment.  
The programme would ensure that information on the Website is up to date and accurate. It will also ensure the website contains key general information about the service and its performance.
- 3.6 The Information Gateway and the Resource Directory (CHOICE) are being developed through a programme of work currently funded by the Department of Health, up to the 31<sup>st</sup> March 2012, known as the Common Assessment Framework (CAF). A link to the CHOICE site will be incorporated into the Cheshire East Website; currently CHOICE is a demonstration site.  
CHOICE will enable individuals to find resources to meet their needs. The directory will provide a better service by supporting self funders, carers and others wanting to find out what services are available and potentially reducing the number of enquiries to front line SMART teams. It is also intended as a useful resource for front-line health and social care staff to help them support individuals and carers in finding appropriate care and support.  
A version of CHOICE will be available for consultation in the Crewe and Nantwich social care team area from October until December 2011 for feedback on content and usability of the site.
- 3.7 Demenshare is a social networking site which aims to give greater support to people living or caring for someone with dementia. It was created by Cheshire

East and has been developed in partnership with Age UK, with funding from the Local Government Improvement and Development Agency.

The site has been very successful and has helped people to accept the use of social media and new technology.

A bid for future funding for the continuation of the site has been made to Nesta. We should hear whether the bid has been got through the first round at the beginning of December.

- 3.8 Digital TV – We have recently seen a demonstration of the use of Digital TV from Kirklees Local Authority, called ‘Looking Local’ which provides access to online council information and services. There are currently 75 Local Authorities signed up to this product. Looking Local offers opportunities to target a larger range of people than is possible through web services. It is also very convenient for people to use who are housebound. Digital TV is used in many GP practices and this area of work needs further exploration as this could provide access to health and social care services.
- 3.9 Factsheets;- we need to make sure that we have available factsheets which can be printed from the website, with updated information and made available for customers. We have also investigated a specialist publisher to the care sector who provides regional directories to 35 Local Authorities. Further information from some of the local authorities has provided details about the difficulties in maintaining and updating the information contained in the directory.
- 3.10 Face to Face;- Support for some customers may be necessary to navigate the website or assist with interpretation of information. Customer Service Centres in Crewe and Macclesfield provide customers with a one stop shop service, including access to specialist staff. Libraries also provide an information point to provide information, signpost and help for customers to self serve. We are also exploring the Knowledge Transfer Partnership to train local business’s like shop keepers or hairdressers who could navigate the Website on behalf of our customers.
- 3.11 Reader’s Panel;- We have developed a readers panel within Cheshire East to evaluate the information that we provide for the customer. The readers panel will be part of the Information and Communication Programme. The reader’s panel consists of local user led organisations including a member from the Youth Parliament.
- 3.12 Training; We are undertaking a training programme within the Consultation and Participation team which will skill the workforce to provide accessible information for our customers. This type of service has been in place within the Learning Disabilities services for some time and we are wanting to extend these skills to other staff within the department. Further training will need to be developed for staff within the Customer Service Centers, Libraries and Social Care staff when the Information Gateway and Resource Directory, CHOICE, becomes a live website. Volunteers in other statutory Community, Voluntary and Faith organisations in the use and

benefits of CHOICE will also require training to assist the public and provide support and services at the point of contact.

#### **4.0 Wards and Local Members Affected**

4.1 All wards

#### **5.0 Policy Implications**

5.1 This initiative supports the following Corporate Objectives;

CP01: To give the people of Cheshire East more choice and control about services and resources

CP03: To improve life opportunities and health for everybody in Cheshire East

CP05: Being an excellent Council and working with others – to deliver for Cheshire East

5.2 The Information and Communication Programme supports the ICT Strategy, the Customer Services Strategy and the national policy of 'Think Local Act Personal'.

#### **6.0 Financial Implications**

6.1 The Information and Communication Steering Group would investigate future funding opportunities with partner organisations.

6.2 A bid has been made to Nesta for £86,000 for the continuation of the Demenshare site.

6.3 The Digital TV has a revenue cost of £21,000 a year. Within the set up costs there is an opportunity to train staff in other organisations which would recoup some of this cost.

6.4 The current funding for the Information Gateway and Resource Directory ceases on 31<sup>st</sup> March 2012.

## **7.0 Legal Implications**

- 7.1 We have a legal requirement to consult about changes to services. Providing updated information to our customers is also a requirement.

## **8.0 Risk Management**

- 8.1 Providing information to customers and self funders will decrease people's reliance on resources provided by Cheshire East and increase their independence, which will in turn reduce Cheshire East's costs.
- 8.2 Not providing information will therefore increase people's reliance on Cheshire East's resources and increase costs for the Council.

## **10.0 Background and Options**

- 10.1 The Information Gateway and the Resource directory were included in the report to Full Cabinet on 1st August 2011. The following was resolved;

### ***'Key decision 5 Think Local Act Personal - A national strategy for local implementation***

4. *That it be noted that most people accessing care in its area are not funded by the Council and that there is a requirement for the Director of Adults, Community, Health and Wellbeing to identify a strategy to provide advice, information and support to the wider public including self funders and their carers, to maximize independence and minimize reliance of Council funded-care.*
5. *That the development of an on-line citizen portal or information gateway, with a resource directory, recognizing the investment required to maintain this initiative, with the initial capital investment funded as part of the Department of Health funded Common Assessment Framework pathfinder project and the ongoing maintenance funded within existing Adults revenue budgets, be noted and supported.*

## 11.0 Access to Information

The following background papers relating to this report can be inspected by contacting the report writer:

### Appendices

#### Appendix 1 – Public Information and Communication Programme



Cheshire East Public  
Information Program

#### Appendix 2 – Customer Support Strategy 2011 – 2014



Cheshire East  
Customer Services St

#### Appendix 3 – ICT Strategy 2010 -2011

<http://centranet.ourcheshire.ccusers.com/ict/Policies%20and%20Stategy%20documents/ICT%20Strategy%202010-2011.pdf>

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