
GOLD - GROWING OLDER LIVING IN DARLINGTON

**Responsible Cabinet Member - Councillor Veronica Copeland,
Adult Social Care and Housing Portfolio**

Responsible Director - Murray Rose, Director of Commissioning

SUMMARY REPORT

Purpose of the Report

1. To inform Members of the outcome of the review of support and consultation with older adults, including the review of Growing Older Living in Darlington (GOLD) and other support for older people.
2. To seek Members' authorisation for officers to continue to work with GOLD members and the Darlington Citizen's Advice Bureau (CAB) to enable a 'business transfer' of 'GOLD' to Darlington CAB when Council funding ends in 31st March 2015, subject to the Darlington CAB being able to secure suitable alternative funding.

Summary

3. The Council's MTFP 2012-13 budget saving proposal identified a requirement to 'Review support and consultation with older adults'. This comprised a requirement to review GOLD and other support for older people to target the work more closely and to develop community and social networks in a more streamlined way. The new arrangements were intended to be self-financing within three years (i.e. Council funding for GOLD will cease as of 31 March 2015).
4. The EIA and DEIA completed in January 2012 identified a number of potential delivery options including:
 - (a) GOLD setting up as a totally independent organisation with its own funding
 - (b) Transferring the activities of GOLD to other providers or deliverers
 - (c) Encouraging members of GOLD to link to other groups in the area to strengthen the voice of older people

- (d) To use the expertise to develop prevention services through a sustainable Community Support Network
5. Since the MTFP 2012-2013 was agreed, a number of developments have taken place in relation to developing networks for older people (and others) to support one another. This includes a number of schemes run by Age UK Darlington and the commissioning of Healthwatch, including the re launch of the Darlington Ageing Well Network (DAWN).
 6. A Project Group of members from the GOLD Focus Group was set up in January 2014. Having considered the potential delivery options, Project Group members decided that they did not want to set up a totally independent organisation with its own funding but would prefer that the activities of GOLD be transferred to an alternative provider/deliverer in the absence of further Council funding.
 7. Discussions are currently ongoing with the Darlington CAB which has expressed an interest in continuing the work of GOLD, subject to being able to secure suitable funding in its own right. Rather than a transfer of a service, which will be run by Darlington CAB on behalf of the Council, it is proposed that this is a business/ asset transfer which will see Darlington CAB running GOLD and Darlington Borough Council having no further involvement.
 8. Should Darlington CAB be unable to obtain suitable funding to finance GOLD from 1st April 2015 then it is envisaged that GOLD will cease as of 31st March 2015.

Recommendation

9. It is recommended that :-
 - (a) Officers are authorised to continue to work with GOLD members and the Darlington CAB to enable the transfer of GOLD to it when Council funding ends on 31st March 2015.
 - (b) If the transfer to Darlington CAB is unsuccessful, that the GOLD service be terminated as of 31st March 2015 to achieve the budget savings set out in the MTFP 2012 - 2013.

Reason

10. To comply with the requirements of the MTFP 2012-13 – 2015-16.

Murray Rose
Director of Commissioning

Background Papers

MTFP 2012-13 – 2015-16

Lisa Holdsworth : Extension 2210

S17 Crime and Disorder	There are no crime and disorder implications in this report.
Health and Well Being	GOLD contributes to supporting the health and wellbeing of people aged 50+ in Darlington.
Carbon Impact	There are no carbon impact implications in this report.
Diversity	GOLD is accessible to all people aged 50+.
Wards Affected	All wards are equally affected
Groups Affected	People aged 50+ are the group primarily affected. (See paragraphs 29-37)
Budget and Policy Framework	This decision does not represent a change to the budget and policy framework.
Key Decision	This is a Key Decision
Urgent Decision	This is not an Urgent Decision
One Darlington: Perfectly Placed	GOLD contributes to supporting the 'One Darlington' Healthy Darlington theme.
Efficiency	The proposal to end Council funding for GOLD was identified as an efficiency saving in the MTFP 2012-13 - 2015-16.

MAIN REPORT

Information and Analysis

11. GOLD is a non-statutory service which was set up in February 2002 with joint funding from Darlington Primary Care Group and Darlington Borough Council as a 10 year project to implement the National Service Framework for Older People and Darlington's locally developed Later Life Strategy. It was designed to be innovative and to look at the whole lives of people as they get older and to take a citizenship approach. It was also intended to promote a positive image of ageing, as well as to make improvements in services and to address discrimination.

12. Over time, GOLD has developed a distinct identity. This includes:
 - (a) Providing a voice for older people in Darlington, including those who may be vulnerable, frail or lonely. This is achieved through active volunteers, who sit on a number of other bodies, including the Care Home Forum, the Darlington Ageing Well Network (DAWN), Health and Partnerships Scrutiny Committee and the Darlington Borough Council Equalities Group . Volunteers have also developed a 'Dignity in Care' training course (Dignity and Respect in Care: Theory and Practice) at Level 2 with the Open College Network, and have delivered this as 'experts by experience' to care home and extra care staff. GOLD members also run a monthly Health Group for information sharing and consultation.

 - (b) Promoting a positive image of ageing, through bringing people together. This includes arranging the annual Tea Dance and Christmas party, taking part in the Community Carnival to fundraise and to promote GOLD, and promoting the national Dignity Action Day, all coordinated by the Positive Images and

Publicity Group.

- (c) Providing an information channel to and from older people, via a quarterly newsletter, information on the GOLD website and Facebook account and by face to face contact.
13. The Council's MTFP 2012-13 budget saving proposal identified a requirement to 'Review support and consultation with older adults'. This comprised a requirement to review GOLD and other support for older people to target the work more closely, develop community and social networks in a more streamlined way. The new arrangements were intended to be self-financing within three years
14. The EIA and DEIA completed in January 2012 identified a number of potential delivery options including:
- (a) GOLD setting up as a totally independent organisation with its own funding
 - (b) Transferring the activities of GOLD to other providers or deliverers
 - (c) Encouraging members to link to other groups in the area to strengthen the voice of older people
 - (d) To use the expertise to develop prevention services through a sustainable Community Support Network
15. Since the MTFP was agreed, a number of developments have taken place in relation to developing networks for older people (and others) to support one another. This includes the following:
- (a) A number of schemes run by Age UK Darlington such as their Befriending Service and Good Friends Scheme (provided jointly with Neighbourhood Watch) to facilitate the provision of support for vulnerable and/or older people by volunteers and facilities for groups to meet on their premises.
 - (b) Healthwatch Darlington has been commissioned to provide health and social care oversight. Healthwatch provides a newsletter for all members and also facilitates DAWN.
 - (c) Work in relation to the Community Support Network will be progressed as part of the Council's response to the Care Act 2014.
16. A Project Group of members from the GOLD Focus Group was set up in January 2014 to consider the potential delivery options. Project Group members decided that they did not want to set up a totally independent organisation with their own funding but would prefer that the activities of GOLD be transferred to other providers/deliverers. The Project Group considered what they would want GOLD to be able to do in the future and decided to undertake an 'expressions of interest' process to enable external organisations to express an interest in taking GOLD forward in the future. This resulted in two 'expressions of interest' one from Age UK Darlington and one from the Darlington CAB.

17. Both expressions of interest were considered by members of the GOLD Project Group and RAG rated as 'Red', 'Amber' or 'Green' in respect of how well they answered the questions asked as part of the 'expressions of interest' process. Meetings also took place with representatives of Age UK Darlington and Darlington CAB. The CAB expression of interest received the highest RAG rating and was the GOLD members' preferred option.
18. There is currently one part time Community Development Worker employed by the Council working in the GOLD service and transfer of GOLD as an entity to another provider will give rise to the TUPE transfer of that member of staff.
19. Both expressions of interest highlighted issues with TUPE. The Age UK Darlington expression of interest stated that they would not be in a position to TUPE transfer staff, so could not proceed. The CAB bid indicated a willingness to accept TUPE transferred staff and requested an indemnity from the Council in respect of any future possible redundancy costs for the member of staff. This has been agreed in relation to redundancy costs accrued only up to the date of transfer (1st April 2015).
20. Discussions are therefore ongoing with the Darlington CAB which would like to take on GOLD, subject to being able to secure suitable funding.
21. If GOLD is able to continue, this would assist the Council to fulfil its responsibilities under the Care Act 2014 in relation to promoting wellbeing; preventing, reducing or delaying needs, and ensuring the availability of information and advice.

Financial Implications

22. Ending Council funding for GOLD will enable the MTFP budget saving of £27,000 per annum from 2015-16 to be realised.
23. By agreeing to the requested indemnity in respect of potential future redundancy costs, payment of redundancy pay to the current worker is deferred and may ultimately not be required.
24. It is expected that a formal agreement will be entered into with Darlington CAB to transfer the membership of GOLD, together with its assets and any associated intellectual property rights. This will effectively transfer any interest that the Council currently has in GOLD to Darlington CAB indefinitely.

HR Implications

25. A Community Development Worker is currently employed by the Council to run the GOLD service. Discontinuation of the service altogether will result in this worker being made redundant.
26. If Darlington CAB is successful in securing suitable alternative funding to allow the transfer of GOLD to it, TUPE will apply and the worker will have his/ her employment transferred.

Equalities Considerations

27. When making its decision, Members will be aware of the requirement to have 'due regard' to the Public Sector Equality Duty under section 149 Equality Act 2010. This duty requires the Council, when exercising its functions to have 'due regard' to the need to:
- (a) eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited under the Act;
 - (b) advance equality of opportunity between those who share a 'protected characteristic' and those who do not share that protected characteristic, and
 - (c) foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it (this involves having due regard, in particular, to the need to (a) tackle prejudice, and (b) promote understanding).
28. Section 149 (3) of the Act states in general terms that having 'due regard' to advancing equality of opportunity involves having due regard to:
- (a) the need to remove or minimise disadvantages;
 - (b) taking steps to meet the needs of people from protected groups;
 - (c) encouraging people from protected groups to participate in public life or other activities where their participation is disproportionately low.
29. The proposal to end Council funding for GOLD impacts primarily on people aged 50+. An Equalities Impact Assessment (EIA) (**Appendix 1**) has been undertaken. It should be noted that members are required to read the EIA attached before making any decision.
30. The EIA has identified both potential positive and negative impacts from the ending of Council funding for GOLD.
31. Potential positive impacts if Darlington CAB is successful in securing suitable funding and taking over GOLD include:
- (a) the opportunity for GOLD to grow and develop if it is no longer part of the Council, as this will give the organisation 'more freedom to express views/do more if we are not under DBC control'
 - (b) the potential to have 'more staff' and 'even to expand our current activities'.
32. Those completing the EIA forms also identified many positive impacts from being part of GOLD including the following:
- (a) being part of a community within GOLD, with a sense of purpose and wellbeing
 - (b) being part of the wider community in Darlington and being of benefit to it
 - (c) being able to receive and to disseminate information

'I feel like I am doing something worthwhile when involved with GOLD. Would feel worthless if it stopped. Gives me a reason for leaving the house'.

33. These positive impacts are likely to continue if GOLD is transferred to Darlington CAB.
34. Potential negative impacts of ending Council funding, particularly if Darlington CAB is not successful in securing suitable alternative funding include the following:
 - (a) Loss of 'an avenue of support, advice and information', including finding it 'more difficult to access information regarding health and healthcare'.
 - (b) Risk of loneliness and isolation - 'The effect on me and others will mean more despair and loneliness'
 - (c) People will 'miss' the various groups and activities provided by GOLD, including the Health Group and Tea Dance
 - (d) Loss of GOLD 'as a lobbying group'
 - (e) Older people in Darlington 'will no longer have a voice, consultation, engagement with DBC and Social Services'
35. The positive impacts identified from being part of GOLD are also likely to become negative impacts if Council funding for GOLD stops and GOLD ceases to operate.

Consultation

36. GOLD members have been involved from the outset, through the Focus Group, Project Group and the GOLD newsletter. Consultation was undertaken alongside the EIA process and numerous comments were made which have been recorded separately (**Appendix 2**).

Outcome of Consultation

37. Some of those commenting expressed concern at the ending of GOLD and its effect on older people in Darlington; others felt that it would have very little or no impact on them as individuals. Many of those responding indicated that they would like to see GOLD continue to operate and supported a move to a third party.