

Division(s):

## **CABINET – 25 FEBRUARY 2020**

### **BECOMING A DEMENTIA FRIENDLY COUNCIL**

**Report by Corporate Director Adults & Housing Services**

#### **RECOMMENDATION**

1. **The Cabinet is RECOMMENDED to:**
  - (a) **approve the council working towards becoming a dementia friendly organisation and developing dementia friendly communities; and**
  - (b) **endorse the funding for Dementia Friendly Community Coordinators to develop and deliver a programme for dementia friendly communities.**

#### **Executive Summary**

2. Dementia is a condition which is increasingly common; it can have a profound impact on an individual and their family and friends. There has been a shift in focus, away from treatments and care services, towards enabling people who have been diagnosed with dementia to live as full a life as possible and encouraging communities to work together to help people to stay healthier for longer. Councils have a key role in developing inclusive dementia friendly communities and it is proposed that the council considers working towards becoming a dementia friendly organisation and develops and supports dementia friendly communities. This supports the council's vision and will help the council to develop further awareness, understanding and support for people in the community who are impacted by dementia. The council could also receive a 'working towards being dementia friendly' status logo once working with dementia friendly community groups which could be used on websites.

#### **Introduction**

3. It is proposed that the council considers working towards becoming a dementia friendly organisation and helps to create and support dementia friendly communities. The number of people with dementia in the UK is expected to rise to 1 million by 2021. This will have a direct impact on the council through its residents, and also its workforce as more people will develop dementia whilst still in employment. Many others will seek to combine being a carer for a person with dementia with working.
4. Becoming a dementia friendly organisation is about developing further awareness, understanding and support for residents and staff impacted by

dementia. It means being able to help people to continue to do the things they want to do, whilst being supported to do so for as long as possible.

5. Many people living with dementia feel that the support they need to participate in their community is not available and they are not able to do the everyday things they want to, for example, shopping, socialising or using public transport. Many become isolated and do not feel that they are a part of their local communities. The creation of dementia friendly communities is an attempt to meet this need.
6. Enabling people with dementia to take part in 'everyday activities' – to meet up with friends, take part in sporting activities, enjoy green spaces, go shopping – is key not only to enabling them to live healthier and more fulfilling lives, but to reducing and delaying their dependence on health and social care services.

### **Dementia friendly communities**

7. Enabling and supporting the development of dementia friendly communities provides the council and partners with a vehicle to work in new ways with local communities and to support the development of more responsive services that enable people living with dementia to live well within their local communities for as long as they are able.
8. The Alzheimer's Society and Dementia Action Alliance outline ten characteristics of a dementia friendly community. They suggest that becoming dementia friendly means:
  - Shaping communities around the views of people with dementia and their carers
  - Challenging stigma and building awareness
  - Ensuring that activities include people with dementia
  - Empowering people with dementia and recognising their contribution
  - Ensuring early diagnosis, personalised and integrated care is the norm
  - Befrienders helping people with dementia engage in community life
  - Maintaining independence by delivering community-based solutions
  - Appropriate transport
  - Easy to navigate physical environments
  - Businesses and services that respond to resident with dementia.
9. **The role of the council**

The council acts as a leader, commissioner, planner, regulator and service provider. Therefore, the council has a key role in supporting, facilitating and leading the development of sustainable, responsive and community led approaches that enable people living with dementia to overcome these barriers and to live well in their communities for as long as possible.
10. The benefits of becoming dementia friendly are:
  - For the community:
    - Helping people to live with dementia

- Helping people stay independent
- Improving accessibility for the whole community
- Reducing isolation
- Awareness raising

For the organisation

- Improved customer service
- Enhance brand reputation
- Future proofing
- Complying with the law.

## Steps for becoming dementia friendly

11. The project would be initially led by Strategic Commissioning in Adult Social Care and other directorates would be invited to participate in order for the organisation as a whole to become more dementia friendly.
12. The council would need to follow a number of steps:

### Step 1:

- Register the council with Dementia Friends via the Alzheimer's Society Programme Partnerships team.
  - This has already been completed and the council has a unique code.

### Step 2:

- Increase the number of Dementia Friends in the council.
  - Becoming a Dementia Friend entails watching a video or attending a presentation to learn 5 key messages about dementia.
  - There are currently 27 Dementia Friends in the council. This number needs to vastly increase before we can further pursue the council becoming a dementia friendly organisation.
  - A representative from Alzheimer's Society will be holding a session on Dementia Friends following Cabinet on 25 February for councillors and staff. This will be a springboard for further Dementia Friends sessions across the county.

### Step 3:

- **Explore** how to become **dementia-friendly by helping and developing dementia friendly communities** and **create an action plan** (*step 4*).
- Development of dementia friendly communities  
The Alzheimer's Society initially recommended that the council should explore the Dementia-friendly business guide which provided a toolkit and actions for working towards becoming a dementia-friendly organisation. Following a conversation with Alzheimer's Society, they have now recommended that we use the LGA Dementia friendly

communities (2015)<sup>1</sup> as a more relevant guide for councils. Therefore, we are recommending helping and developing dementia friendly communities in Oxfordshire.

The Alzheimer's Society defines a dementia friendly community as a city, town or village 'where people with dementia are understood, respected and supported, and confident that they can contribute to community life. In a dementia friendly community people will be aware of and understand dementia, and people with dementia will feel included and involved, and have choice and control over their day to day lives<sup>2</sup>'.

People living with dementia have described a dementia friendly community as one that enables them to:

- Find their way around and be safe
- Access the local facilities that they are used to and where they are known (such as banks, shops, cafes, cinemas and post offices)
- Maintain their social networks so they feel they continue to belong.

The LGA Dementia Friendly Communities guidance for councils outlines the importance of councils of creating local dementia friendly communities in supporting people living with dementia. The development of effective community-based responses to enable people living with dementia to live well within their communities is a cross-cutting issue at ward level, district level and county level. The council can embrace and help deliver dementia friendly communities by working differently and in partnership with community organisations. For example:

- Planning officers can involve people with dementia in advising on new developments and make others aware of the issues that people with dementia face in accessing the built environment.
- Transport providers can consider the needs of people living with dementia in the development of their services, so that they have the confidence to travel and can ask for help when required.

The Dementia Friendly communities programme encourages everyone to share responsibility for ensuring that people with dementia feel understood, valued and able to contribute to their community. In Oxfordshire there are currently two dementia-friendly communities, as recognised by Alzheimer's Society, in Witney and Abingdon.

#### **Step 4:**

- Create an **action plan** for becoming **dementia-friendly by helping and creating dementia friendly communities**.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.local.gov.uk/dementia-friendly-communities-guidance-councils>

<sup>2</sup> [Code of practice for the recognition of dementia-friendly communities in England](#)

- There are five domains for the action plan, based on recommendations from the LGA guidance for councils. There is a full action plan which will need to be considered when planning, developing or assessing the dementia friendliness of any given community, organisation or process. The five domains are summarised with examples below:
  - **The voices of people with dementia and their carers**
    - Consultation
      - Looking at the accessibility of the engagement, consultation and co-production process the council uses; and feeding back to people
      - Involving people with dementia and their carers in the planning and delivery of services
    - Beyond consultation
      - Walking the patch – spending time with people with dementia on the streets, in cinemas and shops and anywhere else they may want to go, to experience it through their eyes.
  - **The Place**
    - The built environment
      - Auditing public-facing premises to ensure they are accessible for people living with dementia
      - Encouraging developers to consider how design can support dementia friendly communities through good lighting, wide pavements with clearly defined edges, adequate and legible signage etc.
    - Transport
      - Training for public-facing transport staff
    - Housing
      - Use of assistive technology to help people retain their independence for longer
    - The importance of written and published information
      - Using plain English, with the end user in mind
      - Avoiding language such as ‘sufferers’ or victims’ of dementia
  - **The People**
    - Council as an employer
      - Training all staff and councillors as dementia friends
      - Having dementia friends champions
      - Raising awareness
  - **The resources**
    - Supporting people to obtain a timely diagnosis
    - Enabling access to good quality post-diagnostic support
    - Supporting people to stay connected
      - One to one and peer group support
  - **The networks**
    - Using strategic drivers as levers to reinforce the needs of people living with dementia

- Support and encourage local businesses to ensure they are enabling people living with dementia to access their services and activities
13. As part of the action plan there will be a media campaign including personal stories from people both living with and impacted by dementia. The campaign plan involves meeting with the chairperson of the Witney Dementia Action Alliance, working with AgeUK Oxfordshire on any awareness raising events they are planning, and visiting Witney Library and organisations in Abingdon with someone who lives with dementia to talk to staff about what is different in Witney and Abingdon for people with dementia.

### **Local Dementia Profile for Oxfordshire**

14. Alzheimer's Society has created a **Local Dementia Profile for Oxfordshire** (Annex 1) which outlines steps and measures, summarised in the five categories below, which the council can take to make the lives of people living with dementia a bit easier:
- **Preventing well**
    - Ensuring our healthy living messaging references dementia
    - Develop an action plan to increase the invitation and take-up rates of NHS Health Checks year on year (*currently monitored through HIB*)
    - Develop a dementia strategy mapping current and future needs and tangible actions
  - **Diagnosing well**
    - Monitoring the time taken for dementia diagnosis
    - Adopting an ambitious diagnosis rate target accompanied by a robust delivery strategy
  - **Living well**
    - Alongside local health providers, the council should set out an accessible local offer for people with a dementia diagnosis that covers services and support available plus any entitlements (the current support service commissioned by the council is in the process of being recommissioned)
    - Ensuring all direct and commissioned services staff working with people living with dementia are trained to Tier 2 of Dementia Training Standards Framework
  - **Supporting well**
    - Regularly reviewing use and rates of anti-psychotic medication for the treatment of dementia
    - Carer strategy including a specific focus on dementia
  - **Dying well**
    - Ensuring all care plans include advanced decisions
    - Ensuring all delivered or commissioned care homes meet the National Gold Standards Framework end of life care
15. These measures in the profile have been shared with Strategic Commissioning and representatives in Adult Social Care and Public Health

and can be explored further as part of the work of the above action plan once the work of becoming more dementia-friendly is underway.

### **Sustainability**

16. Making our communities more dementia friendly can have a positive impact on sustainability. For example, if public transport is made more dementia-friendly, this would allow people with dementia to use buses rather than private, personal transport such as taxis or the carer's car etc. which will cut down on emissions and have an impact on the environment.

### **Financial and Staff Implications**

17. It is not anticipated that any additional funding will be required to increase the number of dementia friends within the council as staff participation in training will be managed within existing resources.
18. Any changes to signage for premises, for example, would need to be considered through the relevant process.
19. The council will further explore the costs for ongoing training if the council wishes to ensure that all direct and commissioned services staff working with people living with dementia are trained to Tier 2 of Dementia Training Standards Framework, as recommended in the Alzheimer's Society Local Dementia Profile for Oxfordshire (point 14 above). This will be costed in conjunction with HR colleagues.
20. The provision of support for people with dementia will be considered through the review and recommissioning of the OCC/OCCG funded dementia support service, the review of support for carers and the development of informal support networks.
21. The Alzheimer's Society is offering to work with OCC to develop a fixed term Coordinator post which would help us to develop a programme for dementia friendly communities.

### **Equalities Implications**

22. Anyone can undergo the simple training that enables them to become a Dementia Friend and so other than a positive impact on people with dementia, we do not believe there are any equality or inclusion implications in becoming a Dementia Friendly Council.

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Background papers:

Annex 1: Local Dementia Profile

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