

The Assembly Times

Newsletter of the Older People's Assembly

Our Community
Our Voice

How deep are the cuts?

With severe financial constraints being imposed on all local authorities as a result of the Government's Comprehensive Spending Review, extremely tough decisions have had to be made regarding Southend Council's spending for the forthcoming financial year.

At a meeting on Thursday 3rd March members of this Council approved a budget for 2011/12 and this was passed by 27 votes to 18, with two abstentions, two 'no votes' (the Mayor and Deputy Mayor) and two councillors not present.

The Council may have done everything in its power to minimise the impact of the budget on front line services, but even tougher decisions will have to be made over the next three years.

Service provision has had to be reduced in some areas, but the huge amount of work carried out on realising efficiency savings has meant that the Council is not stopping any services and to help ease the burden on its residents the Council Tax for Southend, already one of the lowest in the country, has been frozen.

To balance its books for the forthcoming financial year the Council has identified £15.489m in efficiencies across its five spending areas including:

- Adult & Community Services - £6.436m
- Children & Learning - £3.362m
- Enterprise , Tourism & the Environment - £3.328m
- Support Services - £1.883m and
- Corporate Policy & Improvement - £0.48m.

Making such significant efficiencies will result in job losses. A total of 178 posts have been identified as being at risk, but 71 of these are currently vacant.

Despite the immense financial constraints placed on the Council it is pushing forward with a programme of investments which will further improve services and deliver savings in the future.

These include:

- the refurbishment of the Civic Centre, which will realize significant cost savings by leading to the eventual closure of the Council's four other town centre sites
- improvements to the Council's ICT infrastructure to allow more efficient working - such as mobile working, electronic document management and self-service through the website
- the joint replacement of Southend Central Library and the libraries at the University of Essex and South Essex College through the Elmer Square project and
- The £3m enhancement of Southend's world-famous Pier with a brand new cultural centre.

ED: *The area of cuts involving the Adult and Social care, being the highest, will undoubtedly be the biggest risk and we'll be at the forefront as losers particularly with key staff positions depleting through voluntary redundancy, our age will need strength to procure substantive results in the administration.*

It is imperative that the voice for such drastic changes be heard in Cabinet. There are more hard times to come

Thought for the day

"I don't want to brag or make anyone jealous or anything, but I can still fit into the earrings I wore in high school".



"Always keep your words soft and sweet, just in case you have to eat them"

Support for older carers...

Older carers often start caring as the result of a crisis or they can be pitched unexpectedly into very intense levels of caring and therefore need to be identified and supported quickly.

Many are caring for 24 hours a day, seven days a week. They are also more likely to provide personal care and carry out heavy nursing tasks. They share with other carers the general ill health and stress of caring, but this is often made worse by an age-related decline in their own health.

Spending cuts and the increasing number of older people in the UK mean that fewer and fewer are qualifying for local authority support. So more older people are becoming carers.

Local authorities must, as part of their carers' strategy, make support available to meet the very specific needs of older carers. It is imperative to ensure that older carers get the financial, emotional and practical support they need and deserve.

Nearly a million people in England over the age of 65 are carers. Unlike younger carers, they do not receive Carer's Allowance.

Gov't funding

The Government has allocated £2 billion in additional funding specifically to protect social care, and for many local authorities this should, provided that it is actually spent on care services, be enough to prevent cuts.

But analysis of the new Government funding allocations to councils, published in December, makes distressing reading. It shows that this additional funding is not going where it is most needed.

Each year, the Government allocates funding to all councils which is to be used to pay for essential services, such as social care. Analysis finds that the Government has not allocated more funding to councils who have a higher proportion of older people, or who have high numbers of

older people with high care needs.

Without this additional funding, the councils that support the highest numbers of older people will struggle to continue to provide the same level of care services.

It is therefore vital that we call on councils to make sure that older people get what they need by protecting their existing care budgets.

New members

Updating the membership from the AGM on the 2nd March, five new members have joined the committee:

These are:



David Brannon



Keith Purvis



Tony Carr



Derek Iles
(taking the Chair position)



Jean Forge
(as Secretary)

All bring new experiences to the Assembly and we welcome their involvement.

Details for contacting these members can be found on the Committee page of the website.

The election was conducted independently by Celia Clark from SAVS to whom we extend our thanks for administering this election.

"Re-organisation is a wonderful method for creating the illusion of progress while producing confusion, inefficiency and demoralisation." Petronius

Letters to the editor and updates.....

Bus services

The Assembly's invited guests, on March 2nd, included senior members from the local bus companies and various points were made about changes, such as the disruption of times surrounding road works.

The OPA, taking up this point ask that any residents who encounter difficulties which may be complaints, to contact the bus company concerned and raise their issues. Some felt drivers were discourteous.

If you have an issue of buses not stopping and abrupt starts, not turning up at the designated time, etc., then contact the bus company - only by making such calls will services see an improvement.

Molly Dennis

Council & Older People Champion

Since inception of the Assembly, we were graced with Cllr Mrs Gwen Horigan MBE and Cllr David Norman.

With David now in the role of deputy Mayor and from May this year, the Mayor, the chair will explore, following a request from the floor, the possibility of selecting its own champion as opposed to the Council making the choice.

The chair indicated that, until May this year, the champion for older people is the portfolio holder for adult care, Cllr Mrs Anna Waite.

Meeting proposal

The Chair indicated that a move to reduce the meetings of the Assembly would exercise more flexibility and asked the members to vote on a minimum of 4 meetings per year as opposed to the current minimum of 6.

The voting went in favour of this but an objection was placed from the floor airing that important issues maybe lost through delayed action of the Assembly to hear and react to providers making change without consultation.

Have your say.....you decide

The constitution of the Assembly spells out that the criteria for becoming an active committee member is that of 55 and you reside in Southend.

ED: *Do you have any views on reducing the age criteria to 50 or discounting an age altogether considering people as they grow older, so enabling a younger input to the remit?*

Development of two New Primary Care Centres in Westcliff gets go ahead!

Two brand new primary care centres have been given the go-ahead for Westcliff-on-Sea. These new developments will be in North Road and Valkyrie Road and it is planned that each of the new centres will include a range of services including GPs, a pharmacy, blood taking and community nursing services. It is also hoped that the centres will become a community hub that can be used by local groups and residents.

Your last request

Following on from the end of life care article, issue 9, I read about funerals in a national magazine. Then when the TV did a report on the excessive cost of funerals it seemed to me that it was never too soon, but maybe too late, to discuss all aspects with your family who will have to organise and live through it all.

It may sound morbid or be a taboo subject, but having gone through the trauma of having to organize the funerals for 3 elderly parents in quick succession it seemed to me looking back, that some kind of guidance as to what they wanted, while they were "*hale and hearty*" would have eased the way and helped us all.

If you want to be donated to medical research then your family needs to be aware of this so it can be done without too much stress. When we found out this was what one of them had wanted, we had to start from scratch in order to make this a reality. It was very stressful and this could have been avoided had they told us.

Perhaps we should all talk more about our wishes in this matter so that the end will be easy and smooth for all in the family.

Submitted by.....Pat Balls

What is meant by cohesion?

All too regularly we see groups and seminars endeavouring to secure an area of “pulling together” on issues that affect them parochially but frequently don’t talk to each other. Most have issues that run concurrent with other areas in Southend but the powers that be don’t seem to adhere to resolving these.

Being in the Older People’s Assembly has opened my eyes to this, so often an area of remiss, that in an attempt to bridge a widening gap – fouling keeps occurring and groups tend to want to retain the separation, feeling that if collusion were to happen, an identity will be lost.

Not so, each would be responsible to ensure the views and aspirations are met on a level playing field and endorsement from a substantial arena could make the service providers need for awareness and action paramount.

If we had a central platform for reviews and reformation, then surely it would be an airing for all matters that affect our way of life.

The gap between people is making an impact on how devolution could be made – establishing such a platform would be an enhancement for change to be open and transparent, something advocated by those we put into power.

Why then are we so cautious to form alliances with other groups? To take an immediate step onto this rung of the ladder only takes one and proving it can work will make others materialise from the woodwork. It’s worth a try isn’t it? Let’s see if the first move is made by a like minded organisation – setting up to form alliances will certainly make an impact!

Let’s face it, we have a coalition Government, why not a coalition organisation or is this too rational?

We need to start making much more noise about the lack of buses to and from various parts of the borough.



The bus companies cannot do anything about the few drivers that sail past us even though we have our hands out, unless we report them.

All it takes is a phone call, telling them the time and number of the bus that left you behind. They then know the driver and can do something as they too have an interest in this as it is loss of revenue for them.

The bus service is alas not a public service any more, it is a business and they will only run profitable routes. The council is committed to an Older Peoples Strategy which is supposed to have our welfare and well being as a core value. Sadly if there is no transport to get people to the sea front, the station, the library, the theatre, shops or the High Street our well being definitely suffers, people feel cut off and isolated. We need to phone or write to the council, so that they together with the bus companies can begin to address some of these discrepancies.

It is no good just moaning to one another we must pick up a pen or the phone and take some action. There are Bus User groups, and forums where you can have your say. We should all try to attend these, providing we can get there!

First Bus number is 01268 525251,
Arriva number is 08701 201088.

If “We all stood Alone”

If nobody smiled and nobody cheered,
And nobody helped us along,
If each every minute looked after himself,
And the good things all went to the strong:
If nobody cared just a little for you,
And nobody thought about me,
And we all stood alone to the battle of life
What a dreary old place this would be.

Brian Dillon

Southend Libraries:

"This is a brilliant service for anyone who loves books and reading but finds it difficult to get to their nearest library."

As Tony Treweek settles down to another good



read he has nothing but praise for a free service that makes it easy for him to enjoy library books and DVD's at home.

Several years ago, 58 year old Tony suffered a heart attack, making it difficult to stand and or

choose books from the Central Library shelves. Stuck for reading and with lots of spare time indoors, he asked about the **Home Library Service**.

A lifelong "Southender", Tony is fascinated by the history of his home town and looks forward to reading the new selection of local history books and DVD's brought by his two library volunteers who call once a fortnight.

"The visits also mean I have a friendly chat with my library volunteers and try out new reading ideas - something I would never have done before getting the service".

Do you know someone who might enjoy this FREE library service?

Please get in touch with the Library Community team on 01702 534125 (24 hours)

Ask staff at your local library or E-mail library-communityteam@southend.gov.uk

Hundreds of residents in Southend are housebound and can't easily access any of the town's seven libraries because of age, disability, ill- health, or caring responsibilities. That's why the free Home Library Service is such a blessing for many readers and their carers. Through this service, residents can also receive **large print books** and take full advantage of a wide range of resources, including **audio books, DVDs and music CDs**. Items can also be requested free of charge. The service has seventy fully trained library volunteers who visit 230 housebound readers and carers at home on a regular basis. It can help to reduce the sense of isolation often experienced by many housebound people and their carers.

The government wants to redesign how our public services are run to make them more cost-effective.

The decentralisation of powers heralded by the Localism Bill means that local authorities must engage with communities, social enterprise and the private sector more effectively.

The Chancellor has asked councils to question whether non-essential services can be provided by a third party, thus helping to sustain services and reduce costs. Outsourcing could achieve real results for the public sector.

With town halls facing tough choices about which services to keep, contracting some out to the private sector could be an efficient and effective option.

The social enterprise movement can also help councils to deliver innovative and pioneering services.

Value is key here; quick, short-term contracts, going for the lowest price, are not the answer.

Redesigning Local Services will need to look carefully at governance, management, design and the implications of a radical change in how local services are delivered.

Local Government Minister **Bob Neill** has sent a letter to all councils, urging greater openness in council meetings.

It calls on them to adopt a modern day approach as the growth of online film, social media and hyper-local online news, bloggers, tweeters, residents with their own websites and users of Facebook and YouTube are increasingly a part of today's world, blurring the lines between professional journalists and the public.

He also mentions the recent stories about people being ejected from council meetings for blogging, tweeting or filming and says, *This potentially is at odds with the fundamentals of democracy and I want to encourage all councils to take a welcoming approach to those who want to bring local news stories to a wider audience.*

NHS LAUNCHES MAJOR CAMPAIGN TO REDUCE £2.2 MILLION MEDICINE WASTAGE

A campaign aimed at reducing an estimated £2.2 million wasted on medicines has been launched by NHS South East Essex.

The campaign aims to raise awareness about correctly ordering repeat prescriptions and helping people get the best from their medicines.

The potential money wasted on medicines across South East Essex, could pay for;

- 593 hip replacements
- 743 knee replacements
- 86 community nurses
- 145 drug treatment courses for breast cancer
- 2,200 more drug treatment courses for Alzheimer's.

GPs and pharmacists across South East Essex have joined together in a bid to educate patients about their treatment and to help patients understand more about their medicines and the options they have.

One of the main concerns is medicines on repeat prescriptions, which are ordered and collected by patients but are not used. It is estimated that £90 million worth of unused prescription medicines are retained in individuals' homes, across the UK, at any one time. Between 40-50% of patients do not take or use their medicines as prescribed. This can occur for a number of reasons, including:

- patients not believing the medicine is necessary;
- possible side effects;
- fitting taking or using medicines into daily routines;
- choosing between medicines if patients feel they are taking too many, and
- cutting down or stopping medicines they have been taking for a long time.

The campaign will consist of bus advertising together with posters and leaflets that will be displayed in pharmacies and GP practices, to raise awareness of medicine waste among both patients and carers.

Further information may also be found on a new national website
www.medicinewaste.com

New rules for Household Waste Recycling Centres

As the spring cleaning and gardening season approaches, residents are urged to note new requirements for entry to Southend's Household Waste Recycling Centres.

All visitors to these Centres at Leigh Marshes and Stock Road must now produce a valid proof of address – either a driving licence or a current Council tax bill.

Previously, visitors were asked to show a waste disposal permit, but no permits of this kind will be issued in 2011.

Residents who use a commercial-type vehicle, or access the site with a trailer are urged to check new restrictions before visiting the sites. Certain categories must complete a Household **Waste Declaration Form** to hand in at the gate along with proof of their address.



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Email: info@securesittingservice.com

Website: www.securesittingservice.com



I rang up my local swimming baths. I said 'Is that the local swimming baths?' He said 'It depends where you're calling from.'

New discounted leisure cards



Keeping active is now even cheaper for the over 60s - thanks to a new discount card!

Southend-on-Sea Borough Council, in partnership with Parkwood Community Leisure, is launching a new leisure card to replace the existing Creating Leisure Card it currently administers.

As from the 1st December 2010, the new Parkwood Community Leisure Card will be available from Parkwood leisure centres across Southend.

The new card will be available to residents over the age of 60 and will work on a 'Pay as you Go' basis to enable users to receive up to 50 per cent discount on specific leisure activities. Existing Creating Leisure Card holders will have their card arrangements honoured until April 2011 when new fees and charges will be introduced.

The following activities involved in this scheme are shown below with the designated times:

Activity Group Time

Swimming Over 60s 6.30am to 5pm Monday to Friday

Table Tennis Over 60s 6.30am to 5pm Monday to Friday

Fitness Suite Over 60s 6.30am to 5pm Monday to Friday

Times of these activities may vary in accordance with opening times.

The card will cost £20.00 per annum, but there is the option of paying £5.00 per quarter to spread out the cost.

EXERCISE FOR PEOPLE OVER 50

Begin by standing on a comfortable surface, where you have plenty of room at each side.

With a 5kg potato bag in each hand, extend your arms straight out from your sides and hold them there as long as you can. Try to reach a full minute, and then relax.

Each day you'll find that you can hold this position for just a bit longer. After a couple of weeks, move up to 10kg potato bags.

Then try 50kg potato bags & then eventually get to lift a 100kg potato bag in each hand holding your arms straight for more than a full minute. (OH DEAR)

After you feel confident at that level, put a potato in each bag...

Papworth Trust is a leading disability charity. Our mission is to support disabled people to have equality, choice and independence in their lives. Papworth Trust is an expert in many areas of disability, from adapted housing through to personal budgets and employing disabled people.

In Southend, Papworth Trust can provide practical information and guidance, repairs, improvements and adaptations to your home. This service is provided for people with a disability, who are older or on a low income.

Papworth Trust have a list of Approved Contractors who can undertake any works required including adaptations, repairs, maintenance and improvements to your home, removing the worry of finding reliable contractors.

Other services offered include Home Safety Assessments, Accessing Funding and Benefits, Advice and Information. A Home Options Service is also offered which will assist you to find suitable alternative local accommodation to enable you to live independently.

The Papworth Handyman Service is one of the most popular services offered. Papworth's Handyman will carry out a variety of small jobs and repairs in your home, such as fixing leaking taps, putting up curtain poles, etc. There is a small charge of £12.50 per hour for this service with no call out charge or extra costs.

To find out more, call Papworth Trust Home Solutions on 01702 465182

The address is: Unit 1, 225 – 235 West Road, Westcliff on Sea, Essex, SS0 9DE

Email: homesolutionsouthend@papworth.org.uk

"I love everything that is old – old friends, old times, old manners, old books, old wines"

Useful Numbers

Southend Police	01702 431212	Traveline	0870 608 2608
Southend Community Action/SAVS	01702 356000	Arriva Southend	08701 201088
Southend Borough Council	01702 215000	First	01268 525251
South Essex Homes	0800 833160/161	National Express	08705 808080
Swan Housing	0845 6124700	Dial-a-Ride	01702 215666
The Guinness Trust	01245 496773	The Papworth Trust	01702 465182
Southend Hospital	01702 435555	HandyVan Scheme	01702 464199
Southend Primary Care Trust	01702 224600	RSPCA Cruelty Line	0870 5555 999
NHS Direct	0845 4647	Crimestoppers	0800 555 111
Carers Line	0808 808 7777	Consumer Direct	08454 040506
Help the Aged	0207 278 1114	NSPCC	0808 800 5000
Age Concern (Southend)	01702 215780	Victim Support Line	0845 30 30 900

Assembly Meetings in 2011 are all held in the Council Chamber, Civic Centre
1.00pm Registration
1.30pm - 3.30 pm

<p>2011 Meetings of the Assembly</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>22nd June 2011</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>21st September 2011</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>23rd November 2011</i></p>	<p>Your New Committee 2nd March 2011</p> <p><i>Patricia Balls; David Brannon; Tony Carr; Molly Dennis; Brian Dillon; Jean Forge; Alan Grubb; Vaughan Hartridge; Derek Iles; Lynda Mclernon; Simon Morton; Keith Purvis; Marlene Richardson; Victor Tassell.</i></p>
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Contacting the Older People's Assembly

Do you have a topic that might be of interest to others?
 Do you have a question for the Assembly to take up on your behalf?

Do you have an interest in volunteering?
 Do you have an anniversary or birthday to celebrate?

Send your questions, articles and letters to:
members@southendopa.org.uk

Visit our website at www.southendopa.org.uk



The Big EVENT

Sunday 19th June 2011 12.30pm - 5.30pm

At Southend High School for Boys
 Prittlewell Chase, Southend-on-Sea, SS0 0RG

Tel: John Barber 01702-616302, email:
jjandm.barber@blueyonder.co.uk

This Event is FREE and has something for everyone!