



# Report of the May 26, 2009 meeting of the Older People's Forum in Tynepark Resource Centre.

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**The meeting** provided the opportunity for Forum members to meet members of the Older People's Joint Planning Group soon after East Lothian's Older People's Strategy was published.



Presenting the strategy were Gerry Power, General Manager of East Lothian Community Health Partnership, and Gordon Miller, Chair of the JPG and Acting Head of East Lothian Council Adult Social Care.

As a consequence, the meeting was exceptionally well attended, and voices were heard representing North Berwick Community Council, Dunbar Community Council, the Friends of Edington Hospital, GPs, day centre coordinators and many others. In attendance were Cllr Ruth Currie and Cllr Stuart MacKinnon.

## East Lothian Older People's Strategy

The presentation was opened by Vanessa Strong, Respite Services Manager with ELC, who has the task of leading on the consultation phase of the strategy, and is responsible for gathering views from the public. Gordon Miller briefly described elements of the strategy.

Gordon said: "When I say this is the most important document the council and its partners will produce within the next ten years, I believe that to be the case because I think it will genuinely transform the shape of health and social care services."

Key to the policy would be NHS Lothian and the local authority helping older people live independently at home where it was a safe alternative and that was their choice.

The strategy was based on the delivery of an network of jointly provided, jointly funded, jointly managed social care and health services.

Gordon sketched out how the strategy came about and how it fitted in with the Scottish Government's national strategy. With the publication of the strategy documents, the work is now at the beginning of a 4-5 month consultation period which would take in responses from a wide group of people.

He said that although the ageing population in East Lothian is growing, resources will not grow accordingly. There are difficult years for finance ahead. £11m for the strategy will come from cost release on current services.

There are hard decisions to be made, but he emphasised: "There's nothing in this strategy that's a done deal."

Gerry Power pointed out that although the Easy Read A5 Guide to the strategy said no more beds were to be provided at the Edington and Belhaven hospitals, no firm decisions had yet been taken.

However, he stated that providing the same service on GP beds in Edington and Belhaven was a question that had to be addressed. A review on the service provided by GP beds in Belhaven is due in August. If beds are to be lost, they will be reprovided elsewhere.



Gerry stressed the strategy's thrust to have people cared for in their own home in the community, therefore the number of current beds to new reprovided beds could not be compared. The aim was for a better service all round.

He said: "Nothing will change until I can assure the communities in North Berwick and Dunbar that we're not actually taking anything away in terms of services."

"The idea isn't about either you provide GP beds, or you don't - GP beds clearly provide a service, regardless of what it is, and you can't take that away without making sure that service is provided for that community, maybe in a different way, but is provided."

### Questions from the forum.

**Q:** Why, as is in the strategy, have three 60 bedded new care homes for East Lothian rather than any other combination which would give a better geographical spread?

**A:** Gordon: Costs have to be met within the OPS budget, and while each community might want its own care home as close by as possible, a balance must be struck between quality of care and economy. Sixty beds is an optimum number.



Vanessa Strong opens the presentation.

**Q:** What's the future of beds in Fa'side Lodge?

**A:** Fa'side Lodge services will be reprovided in a new older people's centre by 2011/12. The Care Commission is concerned at the physical standard at Fa'side.

**Q:** Doesn't the new community hospital to be sited in Haddington present transport difficulties from North Berwick and Dunbar.

**A:** Haddington is as central in East Lothian as it gets, although transport continues to be an appreciable difficulty.

**Q:** Any provision in the strategy for older people with learning disability who are getting older and have many complex needs?

**A:** Gordon: Over the past ten years and more it has been national strategy to close long term institutions in favour of placing within the community and independent living. East Lothian has a good record in this.

The authorities had not been as good at anticipating the shift in population of these older people 60-65 and in serving their specialist needs. But a workforce must be developed at a big investment.

Gerry said he would take the issue of how to deal with an ageing population of people with learning disabilities back to strategic planners at NHS Lothian.

**Q:** Could we have a breakdown of the figures of Cost Release and Investments - £11m will not pay for even one 30-bed care home.

**A:** £11m is revenue, running costs, not capital costs. The capital costs come from NHS Lothian's capital programme and a number of different sources. Gerry promised to provide the figures, and those of the running costs of the Edington.

East Lothian Community Hospital is likely to be a Private Finance Initiative scheme.

ELC has a rolling capital programme, running until 2013/14. The funding for the first of the older people's homes, in

Tranent, is already in the programme; the other two homes will be built in to the programme.

**Q:** What would it cost for the five hospitals currently in East Lothian to work?

**A:** Provision will change. Edenhall will eventually close as services are reprovided, Roodlands and Herdmanflat will be merged into one facility. The future of Edington and Belhaven will be decided after discussion with stakeholders. Continuing care beds at Belhaven will likely be reprovided at a new 60-bedded unit. The units will contain continuing care and NHS beds.

**Q:** Where will these new units be, taking into account the demographics of the communities?

**A:** Gordon: Tranent was the only planned site so far, replacing Fa'side Lodge, which does not come up to Care Commission standards. No decision has been made on the siting of any unit in the North Berwick and Dunbar areas.

One voice from the forum pointed out that, understandable though it was that the supporters of Edington hospital feel aggrieved at the possible loss of the services, maintaining them as is would be at the cost of people from Tranent, Musselburgh, Elphinstone, Garvald, Humbie and other places.

**Q:** Given that public spending is likely to be cut over the next few years, what's the priority?

**A:** Gordon: To develop a 24 hour response service to meet the planned and unplanned care needs of a growing number of older people and other people with a high level of dependency.



Gordon Miller and Gerry Power field questions from the forum.

This will link in with the community rehabilitation service that needs to be developed to support the balance of care.

With any hold or reduction in public spending, the impact of what finance and resources there are must be maximised. That means rethinking how things are done; reviewing a reprovision of resources.

Gerry: "That is not an easy conversation to have with people... I'm not saying that I'm not going to take an unpopular decision. If an unpopular decision needs to be taken then it needs to be taken for the benefit of the whole county.

"What I have said is that I will enter into asking those difficult questions and putting those difficult proposals to different communities and with individuals themselves but at the end of the day I think we all want what's best for everybody given the fact there is not going to be significant growth in health and care services within the next five years."

**Q:** If we in East Lothian feel the best model for care homes is perhaps four 45 bedded units, who would end up paying the difference in cost?

**A:** Gordon: "We would all end up paying. I have a fixed budget, so if I pay more out of that budget to staff care homes, I'm investing less in care at home and community based services.

"As a community what we'd be doing by going that route is making a conscious choice to invest more in a buildings-based service, knowing that less will be invested in the services we're talking about developing as part of this strategy - there would be lower levels of care at home, less investment in telecare, less support for carers, less respite."

Raising the community charge is no answer; severe restraints are in place.

**Q:** You're asking day centres to do more and more but nobody's coming to speak to the day centre team.

**A:** Gordon: The role of day centres is pivotal. There's work to be done to discuss the implications of the strategy with day centres. Discussions are being held with day centre committees, users, and community councils with council staff.

**Q:** Will any new buildings be environmentally friendly with low power costs?

**A:** Gerry: Yes, the architects are even going for an environmental award for one of the buildings which will be the first of its kind in Scotland.

**Q:** How, once the responses to the strategy have been made, will decisions be taken?

**A:** Gordon: "Ultimately, the Council and the NHS will have to take the decisions which have to be taken about the strategy but that will be connected back to the Older People's JPG and there will be a transparency about how we will do that."

Consultations will end by the end of August/ beginning September, but design work on some services is already on the go.

**Q:** What's the assurance on actual implementation?

**A:** Gerry gave his personal commitment to push things ahead, but it would be up to he and Gordon to convince their respective authorities to move on the strategy.

Gordon: "I haven't invested the amount of time and effort in it if I don't think it's deliverable."

One forum member made the point that the forum itself works to engage with authorities and planners, and acts as a platform for comment and user experience of services. Thus, members of interest groups and individuals wishing their voices to be heard have a channel of communication.

Phyllis volunteered to explain how ELCCF and its Forums link in to the planning process at any meetings of groups which may be interested.

Lesley called the meeting to a close and thanked all for taking part.

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## Consultations

The next meeting of East Lothian Older People's Forum is yet to be confirmed. We're holding off until the consultations for the East Lothian Older People's Strategy are over.

The consultation period, originally scheduled to end by the end of August, has been extended to allow a greater response. Further **consultation events** (*click for website details*) are detailed below. If you can, please try and make it along to one of the meetings.



**The events run from 11am-6pm with four presentations/ workshops on each day, at 11am, 1pm, 3pm and 5pm.**

**Haddington** - Thursday, 3 September 2009 at Aubigny Sports Centre, Mill Wynd, Haddington.

**Musselburgh** - Tuesday, 8 September 2009 Conference Rooms 1 & 2, Brunton Hall, Musselburgh.

**North Berwick** - Wednesday, 16 September 2009 at North Berwick Sports Centre, Grange Road, North Berwick.

**Dunbar** - Wednesday 23 September 2009 at Dunbar Leisure Pool, Castle Park, Dunbar.