

Date: 12 February 2024

Our Ref: AFC

Contact: Councillor Vikki Slade

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To whom it may concern,

Re: BCP Council - Commitment to Age Friendly Communities

BCP Council aspires to lead and shape one of the best coastal places in the world in which to live, work, invest and play. We recognise that promoting good health and well-being within our communities plays a fundamental part in achieving that aim. BCP Council is therefore committed to joining the World Health Organisation's global network of Age-friendly communities.

Out of a population of 400,196, just under 22% are aged 65 and over, with this figure set to rise to 40% by 2040. Older residents are the foundation of our vibrant communities and as employees, volunteers, and active citizens, they bring a lifetime of skills and wealth of experience to Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole.

Our new Corporate Strategy and Local Plan, built on the views from the public consultation has the vision of a place "*where people, nature, coast and towns come together in sustainable, safe and healthy communities,*" with two key priorities and a set of ambitions for each:

- a) Our People and Communities – everyone leads a fulfilled life, maximising opportunity for all.
- b) Our Place and Environment – vibrant places where people and nature flourish, with a thriving economy in a healthy, natural environment.

This vision and our key priorities which underpin it support the aims of Age Friendly Communities to be places where people want to grow older, feel valued and foster healthy and active ageing.

Working with a range of partners is vital to bringing success and we are growing a network of Age Friendly organisations working collaboratively to build age friendly communities. There are already 80 local organisations and community groups that are part of this network and BCP Council has invested in a dedicated Age Friendly Communities coordinator who helps to facilitate this partnership working and relevant local activities. Councillor Millie Earl, Deputy Leader of the Council and Portfolio holder for Connected Communities is actively involved in the partnership, alongside our independently elected Chair from McCarthy and Stone

Foundation, and other committed partners as part of the steering group, such as local charities Prama, and Help and Care, which help older people and carers to lead fulfilled lives.

Our approach will be supported by the following principles:

- The direct involvement of older people in the process from the start. We will be developing several ways in which older people can share their aspirations, engage with the process, and directly participate.
- Ensuring that everyone in our communities feels able to be part of the age friendly communities initiative, including a diverse range of community groups.
- We will work with all partners from across the statutory, voluntary, faith and private sectors.
- We have already adopted an Asset Based Community Development approach to our work, and we value the skills and capacity all community members will be able to offer to help achieve Age-friendly community status.
- Emphasis will be on practical steps - we want people to see tangible successes as a result of this initiative.
- We are looking forward to learning from fellow Age-friendly communities and sharing our practice.

We are committed to developing a community in which all people can add years to their life and life to their years.

Yours faithfully



Cllr Vikki Slade
Leader



Graham Farrant
Chief Executive



Cllr Millie Earl
Deputy Leader and
Portfolio Holder for Connected Communities