1 Background/Information

1.1 Dementia is one of the greatest challenges of the 21st century and over the coming years a lot of people accessing Council services will either have dementia or will know someone who does. If the Council is not geared towards the needs of people with dementia and their families we may be inadvertently excluding them from areas of our business.

1.2 There are currently 7100 people living with dementia in Warwickshire and this is expected to increase by 34% over the course of the next 10 years.

1.3 Being Dementia Friendly is about being aware of the impact that the condition has on a person and their everyday life. If someone experiences difficulty or confusion whilst accessing Council services it may suggest they have dementia but this may not necessarily be the case. However, if someone is suspected as having dementia they may need extra help, support, time and consideration. This would require good people skills, kindness, common sense, good communication skills and a culture of customer care.

1.4 On the 15 August 2013, Warwickshire County Council wrote to District and Borough Councils to announce their pledge to create Dementia Friendly Communities and to encourage each District and Borough Council to do the same.

1.5 This approach aligned with the Prime Minister’s Challenge on Dementia which was launched in March 2012 and in response to a nationwide drive to create Dementia Friendly Communities.

1.6 On the 19 May 2014 the Cabinet agreed, via the Leaders meeting that the Council should pledge to become a Dementia Friendly Organisation. In doing so the Council agreed to:

- Complete the National Dementia Action Alliance Plan outlining next steps to become a dementia friendly district and the actions the Council intended to take to achieve its goals. In doing so it also committed to the following core principles:
  - Enhanced public awareness and understanding of dementia
  - Physical environment being dementia friendly
  - Improved staff attitude and customer service skills
1.7 On the 30 July 2014 the Overview and Scrutiny Committee agreed to set up a Task and Finish Group comprising of, Councillor Kate Rolfe, Councillor Jenny Fradgley, Councillor Eric Payne, Councillor Justin Kerridge. At the inaugural meeting Councillor Kate Rolfe was nominated as chair of the group.

1.8 Officer support to the group was given by Jan Roberts (former Policy Officer for older people), Carol Roberts, Policy Officer Social Inclusion and Dave Webb, Head of Enterprise, Housing and Revenues.

2 Scope of work

2.1 At its inaugural meeting on the 29 September 2014, Councillor Kate Rolfe was appointed chair and members agreed a scoping paper which set out the following aims:

- To raise awareness amongst members and officers and fulfil the obligations as a dementia friendly organisation
  - To develop an action plan
  - To identify gaps in provision
  - To develop a partnership approach

2.2 This report sets out the findings of the group and presents an action plan which is aimed at helping the Council fulfil its pledge as a dementia friendly organisation.

3 Findings

3.1 The task and finish group met four times and accumulated a range of information and evidence to help formulate the action plan.

3.2 As part of fact finding and evidence gathering the group heard presentations by Councillor Mike Gittus, Jan Roberts (former employee), Carole Zambonini (Alcester Café) and Dr Sue Pritchard from Shipston on Stour. In addition, visits were arranged to Alcester café and St Andrews Dementia Café in Shottery.

3.3 To understand the current range of support, an audit of organisations providing dementia support across the district was carried out (attached as appendix 1 to this report).

3.5 The group agreed that in fulfilling its pledge to become a dementia friendly organisation, consideration should be given to:

- Environment
- Signage
- Information
- Services

3.6 In terms of the general approach the group agreed that following needs to be taken into account:

- Offer the person the opportunity to speak in a quieter space.
- Don’t talk about the person with dementia as if they are not there
- Use visual clues if required
- Encourage conversation and be comfortable with silence
- Ensure that body language and facial expressions match what is being said.

3.7 The group were aware of the Coventry and Warwickshire dementia portal and the strategy ‘Living well with dementia in Warwickshire.’ WCC viewed Alcester Café as a flagship for promoting dementia awareness and support for carers.

3.8 The group heard that the challenge was to coordinate dementia related information and ensure it is understood by everyone. The Coventry and Warwickshire Dementia Alliance were discussing ways in which information can be drawn together in hard copy format.

3.9 Warwickshire County Council (WCC) run ‘Leading by example’ training using learning modules and staff are invited to complete ‘living with dementia’ pages on the dementia portal. The incentive is a competition which has a £50 voucher prize attached.

3.10 There is also a National Navigator scheme where WCC are commissioning 4 specialists to operate across the county providing dementia information and support. This is due to be implemented in April/May 2015.

3.11 The group were advised of the work being undertaken in Shipston on Stour where the focus was to become a Dementia Friendly Community. An action plan had been formulated which included seeking views from local organisations on how they can contribute to making the community more dementia friendly. This includes awareness raising sessions, awareness events and an expansion on current activities i.e. health walks. The action plan includes:

- Liaison with local police on community safety issues
- Meeting local pharmacies
- Arranging educational activities
- Improving the promotion of local services
- Holding a progress meeting every three months

3.12 In Alcester, there had been difficulties in securing support for those living with dementia and their carers. Carole Zambonini had used her personal experience as the catalyst for the development of the Alcester Café. She had been successful in obtaining funding to reduce the reliance on other organisations and the café was now operating twice per week with a rota of around 50 volunteers. The café provides opportunities to share emotions in a safe environment and help prevent isolation and encourage peer support. It is free of charge and gives a choice of activities including, presentations, musical memories, a carers group for families and friends and the loan of a wide range of equipment. There is a whole community involvement with the café.

3.13 In terms of the future approach to dementia across the district, Carole advocated a standard café offer and the need to coordinate activities including the provision of leaflets, training support etc.

3.14 In fulfilling its pledge to become a Dementia Friendly organisation, the Council had to develop an action to be published on the Dementia Alliance website.
3.15 In advance of the plan being considered, the Council have been able to take advantage of a free Dementia Awareness workshop run by WCC. This was specifically made available to front line officers. Further workshops will be run in 2015/16.

3.16 The Task and Finish Group would like to extend its thanks to all of those who contributed to increase the groups awareness of the issues faced by those suffering from dementia and their carers and also help towards formulating the action plan.

4 Action plan

4.1 In pledging to become a Dementia Friendly organisation the Council agreed to develop an action plan which would be made available to the Dementia Action Alliance and uploaded to their website www.dementiaaction.org.uk

4.2 The evidence, information, advice and knowledge collated by the task and finish group has helped inform the actions contained in the plan which is attached as appendix 2 to this report. There are five main actions and within each of these a series of steps aimed at supporting delivery of the action. They are:

1. Training and awareness
2. Positive internal practice
3. Promoting and developing learning
4. Environment
5. Signage, information, customer service

4.3 The action plan also commits the Council to spread the word about its declaration to become a Dementia Friendly organisation.

4.4 The Action plan will provide the basis for coordinating a district wide approach to dementia including exploration to develop dementia friendly communities, working collaboratively with organisations in all sectors, sharing experiences, best practice and possibly resources.

4.5 In order to implement the action plan, the Council may need to consider making funding available, particularly if adaptations to Elizabeth House are required. At this stage it is difficult to provide a financial appraisal and therefore, if the action plan is supported an indicative budget of £10,000 for 2015/16 should be considered.

5 Conclusion

5.1 Dementia is a degenerative disease of the brain which over a long term can result in gradual loss of mental awareness, loss of memory, personality change and general communication and loss of skills to carry out daily activities. Through implementation of the action plan, the Council can make a positive contribution to help those living with dementia and their carers.
6 Recommendation

That the action plan attached as an Appendix to this report be presented to The Cabinet for approval.

Dave Webb
HEAD OF ENTERPRISE, HOUSING AND REVENUES