

UPDATE ON THE HILLINGDON KHAT REVIEW

RESIDENTS' AND ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES POLICY OVERVIEW COMMITTEE'S UPDATE TO CABINET ON THE REVIEW OF PROBLEMS POSED TO HILLINGDON, AND BEYOND, BY KHAT AND HOW TO TACKLE THEM

Cabinet Member	Councillor Douglas Mills
Cabinet Portfolio	Improvements, Partnerships & Community Safety
Officer Contact	Natasha Dogra, Central Services
Papers with report	Appendix 1: Hillingdon Partners: Local Strategic Partnership (LSP) Executive Statement

HEADLINE INFORMATION

Purpose of report	To receive the update from the Residents' and Environmental Services Policy Overview Committee and note the progress made locally and nationally in tackling the problems posed by the legal stimulant khat.
Contribution to our plans and strategies	This report contributes to the Council's priorities for a safe borough.
Financial Cost	No direct costs are associated with the recommendations of this report.
Relevant Policy Overview Committee	Residents' and Environmental Services Policy Overview Committee
Ward(s) affected	All

RECOMMENDATIONS

That Cabinet welcome the update report from the Residents' and Environmental Services Policy Overview Committee and note the progress made in tackling the problems posed by the use of the legal stimulant khat within the London Borough of Hillingdon and on a national scale.

INFORMATION

Reasons for recommendations

The recommendation is aimed at providing Cabinet with a progress update following their decision to approve the Hillingdon Khat Report recommendations in June 2011.

Alternative options considered / risk management

The Cabinet could decide to reject or amend the Committee's recommendations.

Supporting Information

In May 2011 the Residents' & Environmental Policy Overview Committee (RESPOC) published the 'Hillingdon Khat Report' into the effects of the legal stimulant khat and the impact on local communities within Hillingdon.

The report recommended that the Local Strategic Partnership (LSP) progress the report with a view to:

- A more joined-up approach when dealing with issues of khat;
- A zero tolerance approach to khat related anti-social behaviour by the Council and Safer Neighbourhood Teams.

The LSP discussed the report at the Executive meeting on the 12 July 2011 and partners agreed that the Health & Wellbeing Board, the Safer Hillingdon Partnership and the Strong & Active Communities Partnership should review the report and advise how they can contribute to taking forward the action points within it and consider any implications for the partnership.

Partnership Activity & Response

Theme groups agreed that the report provided a valuable insight into the use of khat, its origins and the potential health and social effects of high misuse. The groups identified that the effects of high khat misuse are localised in Hillingdon, centred around Hayes and some of the surrounding areas. The view however, was that there was limited evidence on the real extent of these issues on Hillingdon's families and communities.

The Strong and Active Communities Partnership raised a concern that by isolating high khat misuse from wider drug and alcohol related issues, this could further widen the negative perception and alienation of communities in which there is high khat usage and potentially impact on community cohesion and tensions. The group agreed with the recommendation that there needs to be a more joined up approach to dealing with issues of high khat misuse, but that this should be integrated within the borough's wider drug and alcohol programme. The group suggested that issues around the effects of high khat misuse use should be included in mainstream community education and awareness raising activities.

The Safer Hillingdon Partnership reported that all anti-social behaviour in Hillingdon was dealt with in a robust manner. Whilst a "zero tolerance" approach to ASB solely related to high khat misuse was viewed to be out of proportion to other types of ASB, there is already a wide programme of work which is being undertaken across the partnership which is dealing directly and indirectly with the effects of high khat misuse. These include:

Enforcement

- Two Khat houses in Hayes have been closed by the Council's ASB Investigations Team and the local Police Safer Neighbourhood Team.

Community development and engagement

- There is ongoing work through the Hayes Town Partnership which includes the Somali Community Groups' Action Plan. The plan focuses on young people, crime and

education which were the key areas of concern raised by the Somali Community organisation.

- The work being undertaken through the Hayes Community Engagement Programme which is focussing on environment, young people, health and wellbeing and community cohesion. An event focussed around health and wellbeing was held on 3 December 2011 at Botwell Green Library and provided an opportunity to raise awareness of the effects of high khat misuse alongside other drug and alcohol messages.
- The Schools Community Cohesion Partnership work has improved communication and relationships between parents and schools to address social and educational issues and increase access to relevant support and mainstream services. Through this partnership, there is an opportunity for schools to include khat as part of their broader drug and alcohol education work within the Personal, Social and Health Education curriculum.

Prevention and support

- Hillingdon PCT commission support through Ethnic Alcohol Counselling Hounslow (EACH) to provide a service to khat users. This role is in two parts; outreach work in the khat café's and a counselling service for users and their carers and family members. The service is in its 3rd year of commissioning and it is monitored on a quarterly basis, with the specification being reviewed on an annual basis to ensure it reflects the priorities identified from the needs assessment.

Influencing National Policy

In September 2011 John Randall MP submitted the findings of the review on khat to the Home Secretary Theresa May and Minister for Crime Prevention and Anti-Social Behaviour Reduction, Baroness Browning. In October 2011, the Residents' and Environmental Services Policy Overview Committee received a letter from Baroness Browning stating that the Hillingdon Khat Report had been reported to the Advisory Council for the Misuse of Drugs (ACMD) as they had embarked on a review of legal stimulants, in particular khat, as requested by the Home Secretary.

On 11 January 2012 the House of Commons debated khat and commended the Hillingdon Khat report. MPs agreed the London Borough of Hillingdon had been forthright enough to make recommendations to the Government on matters ranging from classification to temporary bans. MPs agreed that an integrated solution would be needed to help tackle the issues posed by khat – an idea which was evident throughout RESPOC's review of khat.

James Brokenshire MP, Home Office Minister, stated during the debate that the Government was concerned about khat use, particularly among young people, and about the societal impact on the most affected communities, and they adopt a serious approach to their role in taking appropriate action to protect all sections of the community from harms caused by drugs. The Minister stated that since the ACMD's last review in 2005 there had been an advance in the evidence base, leading him to request the ACMD to undertake a comprehensive review to update its 2005 assessment. The Residents' and Environmental Services Policy Overview Committee will continue to support the work of the Advisory Council for the Misuse of Drugs and give evidence, where applicable, during their review of Khat.

EFFECT ON RESIDENTS, SERVICE USERS & COMMUNITIES

What will be the effect of the recommendations?

The Committee's recommendations will provide a springboard for the Council to take those steps necessary to tackle anti-social behaviour and health issues posed by using khat.

Consultation Carried Out or Required

None at this stage

CORPORATE IMPLICATIONS

Corporate Finance

Corporate Finance has reviewed this report and is satisfied that there are no direct financial implications associated with the recommendations of this report and that any subsequent costs associated with enforcement or monitoring will be contained within existing budgets.

Legal

The report has been prepared following input from Legal Services. It is confirmed that the recommendations comply with legal advice provided to the author of this report.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

Residents' & Environmental Services Policy Overview Committee's Review of problems posed to Hillingdon, and beyond, by khat and how to tackle them.