

OPTIONS FOR THE SECOND REVIEW TOPIC - 2011/12

Contact Officer: Charles Francis

Telephone: **01895 556454**

REASON FOR ITEM

To enable the Committee to agree the second review it wishes to undertake in the 2011/12 Council year.

OPTIONS OPEN TO THE COMMITTEE

Agree a topic for an in-depth review in 2011/12

INFORMATION

1. The Committee is responsible for undertaking the 'policy overview' role in relation to the services provided by the Social Services, Health and Housing. The full range of services under the Committee's remit is outlined in the terms of reference attached as Appendix 1.
2. Previous experience from both Hillingdon and other Councils indicates that the Committee can have the greatest impact by focusing on a work programme agreed at the start of the Council year. Similarly, focusing upon one or two items at each meeting can help Members engage with the major issues and encourage stakeholder engagement.
3. In selecting topics, Members are reminded of the Committee's work from 2007 to 2010/11, which included reviews of:

2007/8

Caring for the Carers - A review of the Council's support for Carers
Customer Engagement

2008/9

Safeguarding Vulnerable Adults in Hillingdon
The Private Rented Sector in Hillingdon

2009/10

Hillingdon Centre for Independent Living
The Transformation Agenda and Direct Payments in Hillingdon

2010/11

To examine the use of Assistive Technology by Adult Social Care to support Independent Living
Hillingdon Centre for Independent Living

Possible Review Topics

1. End of Life Care - In the health sector, end-of-life care refers to medical care not only of patients in the final hours or days of their lives, but more broadly, the medical care of all those with a terminal illness or terminal condition that has become advanced, progressive and incurable

Approximately 500,000 people die each year in England, about 99% of which are adults over the age of 18 and almost two thirds of which are adults over the age of 75. Most deaths follow a period of chronic illness. The common causes of chronic illnesses and death are those resulting from: circulatory disease, cancer, respiratory disease, neurological disease and dementia. Most deaths occur in hospital (58%), the remainder occurring at home (18%), in care homes (17%) and in hospices (4%). There is some evidence that indicates that most people would prefer to die in their own homes.

A “good death” is described as one that would involve:

- Being treated as an individual with dignity and respect;
- Being without pain and other symptoms;
- Being in familiar surroundings; and
- Being in the company of close family/friends.

In Hillingdon, there are around 2,000 deaths a year; approximately 35% deaths are due to circulatory diseases (strokes, heart attacks etc), 25% to cancer, 17% to respiratory diseases, 3% to neurological disease and the remaining 20% to a variety of other diagnoses. The causes, as well as the place of death, are comparable to those in London and reflect national trends.

Key Issues include

- Access to advice and support and crisis management.
- Patient pathways for accessing palliative care.
- Staff training.
- Joint working arrangements.
- Choice of place to die.
- Information and communications for patients and their families.
- Access to respite.
- Care planning and support.

A review could consider the following areas:

1. establishing what skills currently exist amongst health and social care staff with regard to identifying individuals that are approaching the end of life and identify any skills gaps;
2. reviewing the care planning process and make suggestions for improvements;
3. reviewing the current coordination of care across sectors and make suggestions for improvement;

4. establishing whether appropriate high quality services are delivered in all locations;
5. ensuring that a care of the dying pathway, which can be used in all care settings, is available; and
6. the availability and access to bereavement services.

2. Tenancy Strategy - The Localism Act requires each Local Housing Authority to publish a “Tenancy Strategy” by the start of 2013. This means that local authorities can carry out a fundamental review of social housing in their area. In carrying out that review, a Local Authority may wish to consider whether:

- To continue to operate in the same way as now
- To offer fixed term tenancies
- To enter into the ‘affordable rent’ market
- To limit who will qualify to join the waiting list
- To use the private rented sector to discharge the homelessness duty
- To be more proactive in holding each social housing provider to account for decisions and action

All of these choices are up for discussion and debate with all stakeholders and the process of developing the tenancy strategy should enable this. In order to provide direction to registered providers working in this authority (including LB Hillingdon as a landlord), the Council need to consider the opportunities and threats offered by these choices. The basic considerations are:

- An understanding of the affordable housing market in our area (e.g., how big is it, who manages it, where is it?) and the role of the market – who is it for and what does it contribute?
- The challenges to achieving our local ambitions e.g., lack of affordable housing, ageing population, rising homelessness etc,
- Knowledge about prospective tenants: who is seeking affordable housing now, and who is likely to need and secure this in the next years based on past trends?
- The current framework we have in place locally to direct housing activity e.g., allocations policy, homelessness strategy. Will these need to change?
- Responsibilities under the Equalities Act 2010.

What we are already doing?

- The Council have an established Local Housing Partnership, with whom the Council have already worked with to develop and deliver Area Based Housing Plans (2009 and 2010) specifically to reduce homelessness and make better use of housing across the Borough. This work has enabled a deeper understanding of the local housing

market. The Council's partnership approach is therefore well established and this will facilitate further joint work on the tenancy strategy.

- The Registered Providers working in the area have told the Council their plans in respect of tenure and affordable rents. The Authorities landlord approach is not yet determined, but it is anticipated this will be guided by the process of the tenancy strategy. Business decisions have been taken to participate in affordable rent and the process of implementing this provides an opportunity for the council to influence decision making by other providers.
- The Council are working on a definition of affordability, based on the GLA definition but taking into consideration the local impacts of this. This is expected to be in place by early December.
- Ongoing work on the housing strategy to date has identified three strategic priorities primarily focussed:
 1. on prevention
 2. care
 3. and support

There is a need to widen the scope to recognise the contribution to other Hillingdon ambitions e.g., economic growth and resilience. The tenancy strategy will also need to reflect these wider ambitions.

- The Council already have a better-than-average knowledge of current tenants and applicants for housing, but acknowledge the need to improve knowledge of tenants' financial circumstances and occupancy levels so that this can be used to inform choices around affordable rents and tenure length.
- Some work has also been undertaken to understand the impact of welfare reform, particularly proposals relating to under-occupation in the social housing sector. The welfare reform 'goal posts' continue to move; it will necessary to consider the impacts throughout the tenancy strategy development process.
- The Council has reviewed its allocations policy and the housing register within the last few months, so the Council's knowledge of people seeking housing is up-to-date. There is some concern that the pan-London mobility CBL model will make it difficult to achieve local objectives but as yet there is no real clarity about how this will work out.

Affordable housing as a contributor to health and wellbeing is particularly important.

Suggestions on how POC could inform discussions

POC may wish to review a selection of the following key issues:

- Assess the 'freedoms and flexibilities' on offer in terms of achieving the housing strategy outcomes and overcoming the defined challenges
- Carry out scenario planning to understand the possible effects of different scenarios for different households and housing types
- Understand the impact of potential decisions on diversity and equality so that the process and eventual strategy are thoroughly impact-assessed in line with the Equality Act 2010

The information collected from the POC review will feed directly into the consultation exercise on the Council's Tenancy Strategy, including the final recommendations to Cabinet during 2012.

SUGGESTED COMMITTEE ACTIVITY

Members agree one topic for in-depth review.

The Constitution defines the terms of reference for Policy Overview Committees as:

The Following Terms of Reference are Common to all Policy Overview Committees (referred to below as “The overview role”):

1. To conduct reviews of policy, services or aspects of service which have either been referred by Cabinet, relate to the Cabinet Forward Plan, or have been chosen by the Committee according to the agreed criteria for selecting such reviews;
2. To monitor the performance of the Council services within their remit (including the management of finances and risk);
3. To comment on the proposed annual service and budget plans for the Council services within their remit before final approval by Cabinet and Council;
4. To consider the Forward Plan and comment as appropriate to the decision maker on Key Decisions which relate to services within their remit (before they are taken by the Cabinet);
5. To review or scrutinise decisions made or actions taken by the Cabinet, a Cabinet Member, a Council Committee or an officer.
6. To make reports and recommendations to the Council, the Leader, the Cabinet, a Policy Overview Committee or any other Council Committee arising from the exercise of the preceding terms of reference.

This Committee performs the policy overview role outlined above in relation to:

1. social care services for elderly people, people with physical disabilities, people with mental health problems and people with learning difficulties;
2. provision of meals to vulnerable and elderly members of the community;
3. Healthy Hillingdon and any other health promotion work undertaken by the Council and partners to improve the health and well-being of Hillingdon residents;
4. asylum seekers;
5. the Council’s Housing functions including: landlord services (currently provided by Hillingdon Homes), private sector housing, the ‘Supporting People’ programme, benefits, housing needs, tenancy allocations and homelessness and to recommend to the Cabinet any conditions to be placed on the exercise of the delegations by Hillingdon Homes.

Policy Overview Committees will not investigate individual complaints.