

**CORPORATE SERVICES & PARTNERSHIPS  
POLICY OVERVIEW COMMITTEE**

**2009/10**

**REVIEW SCOPING REPORT**

**Proposed review title:**

**THE IMPACT OF A PANDEMIC IN HILLINGDON AND THE EFFECTS ON  
COUNCIL SERVICES**

**Aim of the review**

To review how the Council has prepared for a pandemic in terms of the effects on Council services, including schools and further education establishments.

**Proposed outcome**

A report summarising the Committee's findings would be completed and presented to the Council's Cabinet. The report will present recommendations on the Council's individual and multi-agency resilience and response plans for a potential pandemic in relation to the impact on Council services.

**Terms of reference**

1. To examine the local resilience and response plans which are in place for this Council to respond to a pandemic.
2. To examine how the Council could mitigate the impact of a pandemic on Council staff and the services provided.
3. To examine the multi-agency planning for a pandemic and looking at any gaps which may exist in the delivery of services?
4. To examine the working practices that the Council will require during a pandemic to ensure a minimum disruption to Council services.
5. To examine the priority services which the Council and its partners will need during a pandemic to vulnerable people in conjunction with its partners.
6. To make recommendations from the above investigations, in relation to the resilience and planning processes for this Council's response to a

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pandemic.

### **Reasons for the review**

It has been widely reported that the World Health Organisation has raised the alert over swine flu to pandemic status. Swine flu originated in Mexico and has spread rapidly to other parts of the world, including this country.

As the Port Authority for Heathrow Airport, the Council already has well developed plans in place for this type of issue and the Council works with the Health Protection Agency and other partners to put necessary measures in place. This review is therefore timely in that it will seek to examine whether the Council could do more to mitigate the effects of a pandemic on Council services and residents.

Part of the review will examine the existing arrangements the Council has in place for dealing with pandemic Influenza as detailed in the London Regional Resilience Flu Pandemic Response Plan and the work carried out by the Council's Civil Protection Service. The review will contribute to ensuring preparations are in place to enable the Council to provide essential services to residents, particularly the most vulnerable, during a pandemic.

### **Key issues**

1. What business continuity and contingency plans have the Council in place to ensure that critical services and outputs continue to be delivered throughout a pandemic?
2. What is the multi-agency approach to a pandemic, particularly in relation to the provision of essential services to residents?
3. What will the effects of a pandemic be on Hillingdon PCT' budget? How will providing both Tamiflu and/or vaccines to patients affect the financial deficit of the PCT?
4. What operational plans will the Council have in place should a pandemic widely affect the Council's workforce? What advice would be given to staff who meet the public face-to-face and what safeguards would be put in place? How would staff commute to work if public transport is affected?
5. Are the command structures, roles and responsibilities during a pandemic clear?
6. Would flexible working be encouraged such as home or remote working and would the Council have the IT infrastructure to enable this to happen?
7. To some extent the level of staff absence during a pandemic depends on the demographics of the Council's work teams and the numbers who have childcare or family responsibilities. What estimates can be made of the likely numbers of the Council's workforce this will include?

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### Methodology

A review of the relevant literature and websites including:

- Cabinet Office – London Resilience preparing for emergencies  
<http://www.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/ukresilience.aspx>
- Health Protection Agency - <http://www.hpa.org.uk/>
- Department of Health - <http://www.dh.gov.uk/en/index.htm>
- London Borough of Hillingdon – Council’s response to swine flu -  
<http://www.hillingdon.gov.uk/index.jsp?articleid=17634>
- Australian Government – Department of the Prime Minister and the Cabinet – National Action Plan for Human Influenza Pandemic  
<http://www.dPMC.gov.au/publications/pandemic/docs/NAP.doc>
- Improvement and Development Agency – Swine Flu Information for Elected Members
- Department of Health: Swine Flu- UK Planning Assumptions
- Improvement and Development Agency – Swine Flu: crisis management

Witness sessions to potentially include:

- Mike Price, Civil Protection Manager, London Borough of Hillingdon
- Amanda Marsh – Head of HR, London Borough of Hillingdon
- Claude Seng, Health Protection Agency
- Kevin Mullins, Hillingdon Primary Care Trust
- Steve Palmer, Head of Information and Communications Technology, London Borough of Hillingdon
- Lloyd White, Head of Democratic Services, London Borough of Hillingdon
- Emma Marsh, Deputy Head of Corporate Communications, London Borough of Hillingdon
- An officer from Education and Children’s Services, London Borough of Hillingdon
- Representative from Uxbridge College
- Steve Smith, Head of Facilities Management, London Borough of Hillingdon
- Paul Whaymand, Head of Accounting Services, London Borough of Hillingdon
- John Purcell, Bereavement Manager, London Borough of Hillingdon
- Other local authorities
- Business Continuity specialist
- Officer from the London Resilience Team – Government Office for London

### Stakeholders and consultation plan

As many stakeholders as possible would be invited to give evidence to the Committee in person. In addition to those outlined above, further stakeholders could be invited to give written evidence to the review. For example, the Council’s Corporate Communications Team could be used to undertake consultations for the review. In addition the Council’s website and/or *Hillingdon People* could be used to engage with stakeholders and to invite views on the review.

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### Connected work (recently completed, planned or ongoing)

In undertaking their work on the effects of a pandemic, the Committee will need to be aware of the work the Head of Business Services has already carried out in relation to the Council's response to a pandemic.

In addition this Council is part of the London Regional Resilience Forum which was required by the Cabinet Office in 2005, to oversee the development of individual and multi-agency resilience and response plans for a potential influenza pandemic. The London Regional Resilience Flu Pandemic Response Plan was approved at the Forum in May 2006, and was last updated in March 2009.

Hillingdon PCT in their role as the lead NHS Organisation are also involved in the planning process for responding to the effects of a pandemic. More information will be obtained from the PCT from witness sessions.

### Proposed timeframe & milestones

Meeting	Action	Comments
7 July 2009	Consider draft scoping report and to give consideration to the witnesses the Committee would like to invite to give evidence	Comment on the draft scope for the review and discuss preferred witnesses. Background information on pandemics and its impact on the public and on Council services.
23 July 2009	Finalisation of scoping report and consideration of potential witness sessions First witness session	Members to set the parameters for the review and to hear what this Council already has prepared in the event of a pandemic. Also to decide on witness sessions <b>Potential witnesses: Mike Price, Civil Protection Manager, LBH, Steve Palmer, Head of Information and Communications Technology LBH, John Purcell Bereavement Manager at LBH, Amanda Marsh, Head of Human Resources and Lloyd White, Head of Democratic Services, LBH</b>
8 September 2009	Second witness session	Session to focus on the work the Council's partners have already undertaken in relation to planning for a pandemic. <b>Potential witnesses:</b>

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		<b>Representative from Hillingdon PCT, Emma Marsh, Deputy Head of Corporate Communications, LBH, An officer from Facilities Management, LBH, an officer from Education and Children's, LBH and a representative from Uxbridge College</b>
14 October 2009	Third witness session	Session to look at the work of London Resilience and other local authorities as well as to hear from a Business Continuity specialist <b>Potential witnesses: Officer from the London Resilience Team – Government Office for London, officers from other local authorities and a Business Continuity specialist</b>
12 November 2009	Fourth witness session	Final Session to finish off the review and to draft the review's recommendations <b>Potential witnesses – To be decided</b>
20 January 2009	Agree report	Sign off final report.

### **Risk assessment**

This is a broad topic and it will therefore be important to ensure that the Committee remain focused on areas within the remit of this Policy Overview Committee. The Committee will note that Emergency Planning falls within the remit of Residents and Environmental Services Policy Overview Committee so it will be important for Members to look at areas it can influence.

### **Information Updates**

As there is currently a Worldwide pandemic alert in operation, coupled with emergency procedures active in the UK, it is important that the POC receive regular updates on the progress of the pandemic. It is proposed that in addition to reports to the Policy Overview Committee, email bulletins on a monthly basis are provided to Members, bringing together global, national and local information on this issue.