

What problems are posed to Hillingdon, and beyond, by the legal high Khat and what can we do to tackle them?

Witness Session 1: Importation and Distribution

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REASON FOR ITEM

To enable the Committee to gather the evidence for their in-depth review of the legal high Khat

OPTIONS OPEN TO THE COMMITTEE

1. Question witnesses on the importation and distribution of Khat, making use of the suggested questions and asking additional questions as required.
2. Identify issues for further investigation at later witness sessions.
3. Highlight potential issues for the Committee's recommendations in the final report.

Background

This is the first meeting that Residents' and Environmental Services POC has considered the topic of Khat. At its meeting of 8 June 2010 the Committee considered a scoping report for the review of Khat. Members agreed that the aim of the review would be:

"A review into the problems caused by Khat leading to recommendations to help Hillingdon deal with the problems associated with the legal high."

Terms of Reference

1. Members also agreed that the terms of reference for the review should be:
2. To learn about the production of Khat: where it is grown, who grows it and how much it costs to produce it;
3. To examine the importation of Khat: how the UK Border Agency deal with Khat dealers at Heathrow Airport;
4. To analyse the distribution patterns in the borough: where is it sold and the cost;
5. To examine the usage of Khat: the profile of the average user, social effects, health side effects;
6. To investigate the link, if any, between Khat use and anti-social behaviour;
7. To analyse whether the use of Khat is spreading in the UK and what can be done to discourage this in the future: would it be possible to grow Khat in the

UK and could this lead to expansion of use not only within communities renowned for consuming Khat now but more wide-spread usage;

8. To investigate how the London Borough of Hillingdon could work with external agencies to tackle the problem of Khat in the future;
9. To identify ways in which the London Borough of Hillingdon can raise awareness of the problem.
10. To report to Cabinet recommendations based upon comprehensive evidence.

Witnesses

Date of RESPOC meeting	Witnesses Invited
22 nd September 2010	<u>Importation & Distribution</u> Viv Pullha, UKBA Joanne Kingham, UKBA Shabeg Nagra, Health Control Officer, Heathrow
7 th October 2008	<u>Social</u>
16 th November 2008	<u>Health</u>
14 December 2010	<u>Crime & Anti-Social Behavior</u>
14 January 2011	<u>National</u>

Suggested Questions / Lines of Enquiry for Witness Session 1

General

1. Who owns / controls production – individuals, private firms, government controlled organisations, criminal gangs, terrorist groups?
2. What is the value of the Khat market in the UK?
3. How many users are there in UK and in Hillingdon?
4. How much does Khat cost per user?
5. Is it / could it be classified as a food stuff i.e. vegetable and, thus, be subject to existing food safety / hygiene regulations?
6. Khat requires similar environments to cannabis to grow in the UK. Have customs / police found any growing in this country and, if so, where and how much?

Importation

7. How much comes in and from where?
8. What happens to the cargo after it leaves the aircraft?

9. Where is it stored and by whom?
10. Is it checked and, if so, by whom, where and how?
11. How does it leave the airport and where does it go?
12. How do imported alternatives i.e. plants, pills, seeds, alcoholic drinks, tea etc get into UK and are there any checks on them?
13. Heathrow is said to be used as base for smuggling out of the UK – how is this done, what controls and checks are there and how much is smuggled out and to where?
14. Are there any relationships with customs / police in other countries i.e. USA?

Distribution

15. Does it go to a central distribution point?
16. Who sells it, to whom and how much is it sold for - 'trade' and 'retail'?
17. What type of outlet sells it?
18. What regulations are relevant and are they acted upon – if not, why not?

SUGGESTED COMMITTEE ACTIVITY

Members question the witnesses and use this information to formulate recommendations for their final report.