

MAJOR SCRUTINY REVIEW: *THE EFFECT OF OVERCROWDING ON EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT AND CHILDREN'S DEVELOPMENT*

Cabinet Member	Councillor David Simmonds Councillor Philip Corthorne
Cabinet Portfolio	Education and Children's Services Social Services, Health and Housing
Officer Contact	Nikki Stubbs, Deputy Chief Executive's Office
Papers with report	Appendix A: Health Inequalities Working Group Final Report

HEADLINE INFORMATION

Purpose of report	To receive the Health Inequalities Working Group's report providing recommendations which seek to build upon the Borough's approach and strategy to dealing the effects of overcrowding on educational attainment and children's development.
Contribution to our plans and strategies	Putting our residents first: Our People
Financial Cost	There are no direct costs implications arising from this report.
Relevant Scrutiny Committee(s)	External Services Scrutiny Committee, Education & Children's Services and Social Services, Health and Housing
Ward(s) affected	All

RECOMMENDATIONS

That Cabinet:

1. Welcomes the report of the Health Inequalities Working Group; and
2. Accepts the recommendations of the Working Group report as reflected below:
 - i. endorses the Working Group's view that the effect of overcrowding on educational attainment and children's development is an issue of great concern and that failure to tackle this will have a significant impact on many families in the Borough.
 - ii. recognises the concerns of the Working Group regarding the legislative definition of statutory overcrowding.

- iii. **supports the proposal that officers identify what provision currently exists within the Borough in terms of primary and secondary school breakfast clubs and after school clubs. Once the current provision has been established, officers will look at the development of similar clubs at schools in other parts of the Borough where the need is greatest and where they would be most effective.**
- iv. **supports the proposal to include policies on issues relating to overcrowding in the Development Management Policies Document.**
- v. **supports the proposal that regular housing / overcrowding drop-in sessions be held in Children's Centres within the Wards that have the highest levels of overcrowding, together with housing / overcrowding information leaflets being made available at all Children's Centres in the Borough.**
- vi. **should there be future change in legislation, asks officers to review the phasing out of secure tenancies so that larger under-occupied homes can be freed up for overcrowded families.**

INFORMATION

Reasons for recommendation

The recommendations are aimed at building upon the work currently undertaken by the Council and partner agencies in relation to those children whose educational attainment and development has been hindered by overcrowding. An improved service will contribute to improvements in residents' health and wellbeing.

Alternative options considered / risk management

The Cabinet could decide to reject or amend one or more of the Working Group's recommendations.

Supporting Information

1. Seven of the eight North West London Boroughs (Hounslow, Hillingdon, Ealing, Brent, Hammersmith & Fulham, Westminster and Kensington & Chelsea) put in a successful joint bid to the Centre for Public Scrutiny to become one of four Scrutiny Development Areas (SDAs) that would look at health inequalities. Each of the SDAs was given a budget of £5,000 by Local Government Improvement and Development (LGID - formerly IDeA) for innovative work during the reviews. Following the conclusion of the North West London SDA reviews, the CfPS is proposing to use the experiences of the Scrutiny Committees involved in the SDAs to produce a Scrutiny Resource Kit to encourage councils to undertake their own review of health inequalities.
2. The Health Inequalities Working Group was set up by the External Services Scrutiny Committee to review and recommend measures to address/mitigate the effect of overcrowding on educational attainment and children's development.
3. The aim of this review was to look at the Council's arrangements for addressing the effect that overcrowding had on educational attainment and children's development in the Borough. The Working Group also sought to clarify the links between overcrowding and educational attainment. It is hoped that this work will act as a catalyst to the work that must

be undertaken to tackle the effects of overcrowding in Hillingdon. This may be a long process and the impact may not be immediately clear, but the Working Group believes that the effect of overcrowding on educational attainment and children's development is an issue that must be addressed.

4. Working Group Members were acutely aware of the need to not raise expectations too high. This, along with suggestions for improving the support currently available, were considered when producing the recommendations.
5. The review took place between August 2010 and October 2010 and was presented to the External Services Scrutiny Committee on 28 October 2010 for its endorsement before submission to the Cabinet.
6. The Committee's report (attached) gives full details of the review.

Financial Implications

At this stage, there are no financial implications relating to this report. Any further developments of this service will have to apply for funding through the appropriate methods.

EFFECT ON RESIDENTS, SERVICE USERS & COMMUNITIES

What will be the effect of the recommendation?

The Committee's recommendations will provide a springboard for the Council to take those steps necessary to improve support offered to children living in overcrowded homes which affects their development and educational attainment.

Consultation Carried Out or Required

The Committee took evidence from residents, officers and experts as described in the attached report.

CORPORATE IMPLICATIONS

Corporate Finance

Corporate Finance has reviewed this report and is satisfied that there are no direct financial implications arising from this report. Any further developments of this service will have to apply for funding through the appropriate methods.

Legal

Under the Council's Constitution, the Cabinet has the appropriate powers to agree the recommendations proposed at the outset of this report. There are no other significant legal implications arising out of this report to bring to Cabinet's attention.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

NIL