

RESIDENTS' AND ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES POLICY OVERVIEW COMMITTEE:

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

HEADLINE INFORMATION

Purpose of report	To receive the Residents' and Environmental Services Policy Overview Committee's report providing recommendations which seek to help Hillingdon deal with the problems associated with the legal high khat.
Contribution to our plans and strategies	This report contributes to the Council's priorities for 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 report from the Residents' and Environmental Services Policy Overview Committee and agree the local and national recommendations to tackle problems posed by khat to Hillingdon and beyond.

INFORMATION

Reasons for recommendations

The recommendations are aimed at allowing Cabinet to take forward the POC's recommendations made in the khat report.

Alternative options considered / risk management

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

Supporting Information

The Committee decided to review issues posed by khat to Hillingdon and beyond in June 2010. The review provided an opportunity to examine the social, health, national and local aspects of khat and how users and others were affected by khat use. Members thought it would be timely to discuss khat, with the recent closure of khat houses in areas in the South of the borough. Members were aware of some women's associations located within the borough who were facing difficulties at home due to problems related to khat use.

Khat had been associated solely with the Somali community; however the recent spread of use to various communities has made the issue of khat very prominent. With the age range of users lowering in recent years the Committee believed this major review has enabled the London Borough of Hillingdon to thoroughly analyse the current situation and what can be done to tackle the problem while working together with external agencies and residents of Hillingdon.

Recommendations

The review proposed the following three recommendations. Comments from officers regarding the recommendations are provided for Cabinet's information.

Recommendation 1

That the London Borough of Hillingdon present this report to Home Secretary Theresa May, the Minister for Crime Prevention James Brokenshire, and the Mayor of London Boris Johnson requesting that consideration be given to implementing national recommendations which follow:

- i. That khat is not banned but that it continues to be an offence to isolate cathonine and cathine from the plant
- ii. That the Minister for Crime Prevention requests the Kenyan authorities to check all khat consignments exported via its airports to ensure they do not contain pesticides or other harmful substances
- iii. That the Home Secretary requests the UK Border Agency to identify the levels of cathonine and cathine in khat products and, if at dangerous levels that such imports be destroyed
- iv. That the Mayor of London instigates a pro-active public information programme that highlights the dangers of overuse of khat complete with information on help and support services available
- v. That a national information programme be introduced by Government targeted at GPs, A&E departments, police and ambulance services to highlight the dangers of khat overuse in relation to mental health
- vi. That the sale of khat in unlicensed properties is prohibited and that police or trading standards officers undertake spot-checks of outlets in which khat is sold to ensure it is as safe as possible; if caught to be breaching rules fines should ensue

Recommendation 2

That Cabinet ask officers to feed Hillingdon's Khat Report into the Advisory Council on the Misuse of Drug's consultation regarding khat. In the event that the Advisory Council on the Misuse of Drug find that there is a need to regulate Khat, Public Health Regulations may be introduced to enable Port Health Authorities carry out a range of health controls at border entry points.

Recommendation 3

That Cabinet ask officers and Hillingdon Council partners to progress the following local recommendations:

- i. That Cabinet agrees that there is a need for a more joined up approach when dealing with issues of khat and asks the Chief Executive to progress the issue with the Local Strategic Partnership.
- ii. That the Council and Safer Neighbourhood Teams take a zero tolerance approach to khat related anti-social behaviour
- iii. That the Committee present an update report is presented to Cabinet in six months time to monitor the progress made with tackling the issues posed by 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

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

Financial Implications

CORPORATE IMPLICATIONS

Corporate Financial Implication

There are no direct financial implications arising from the recommendations of this report. It is anticipated that any enforcement or monitoring implications can be managed within existing resources.

Legal Implications

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. Cabinet is advised that in the event that a zero tolerance approach is taken to khat related anti-social behaviour, a test case will need to be litigated to determine whether the Courts will permit injunctive action against specified offenders for Khat related anti-social behaviour.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

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