


Cabinet 3 September 2014	 TOWER HAMLETS
Report of: Stephen Halsey, Head of Paid Services and Corporate Director Communities, Localities and Culture	Classification: Unrestricted
Extension of Substance Misuse Strategy	

Lead Member	Councillor Ohid Ahmed, Cabinet Member for Community Safety
Originating Officer(s)	Andy Bamber, Rachael Sadegh
Wards affected	All wards
Community Plan Theme	Safe and Cohesive, Healthy and Supportive
Key Decision?	Yes

Executive Summary

- 1.1. On 8 December 2010 the government launched its new drug strategy, 'Reducing demand, restricting supply, building recovery: supporting people to live a drug-free life'. The strategy places emphasis on providing a more holistic approach to recovery, aims to reduce demand, takes an uncompromising approach to crack down on those involved in drugs supply, and puts power and accountability in the hands of local communities to tackle drugs and the harm they cause.
- 1.2. In 2012, Full Council adopted a local Substance Misuse Strategy for 2012-15 with 3 core work streams or 'pillars'. These are; prevention and behaviour change, treatment, enforcement and regulation.
- 1.3. The Council has an obligation under section 6 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 to formulate and implement strategies in conjunction with other specified responsible authorities for combating the misuse of drugs, alcohol and other substances. The substance misuse strategy contributes towards the Crime and Disorder Reduction Strategy in Tower Hamlets (the Community Safety Plan).
- 1.4. As a major re-procurement of drug / alcohol treatment services is currently underway, the outcome of which will drive changes to the way in which related services are delivered, the DAAT Board and the Community Safety Partnership have agreed a proposal (subject to Cabinet agreement) to extend the current strategy by a year. This will avoid the premature adoption of a revised strategy that would immediately have to be revisited. The current strategy would be extended to March 2016 and a new three year strategy from 2016-2019 would be developed during the course of 2015/16.

- 1.5. The Substance Misuse Strategy is closely linked to the Community Safety Plan and the Health and Wellbeing Strategy, both of which expire in March 2016. It is therefore logical that the term of the Substance Misuse Strategy be aligned to match the terms of these strategies to facilitate a more comprehensive and co-ordinated response to substance misuse.

Recommendations:

The Mayor in Cabinet is recommended to:

1. Endorse an extension of the current substance misuse strategy by one year to the end of March 2016.
2. Agree that the proposed extension may be presented to Full Council for agreement.

1. REASONS FOR THE DECISIONS

- 1.1 The current Substance Misuse Strategy is due to end in March 2015.
- 1.2 A major reprocurement of drug / alcohol treatment services is currently underway and will facilitate significant change in treatment services across the borough. The new treatment system will not be in place until Q1 2015/16 and should feature in an updated strategy.
- 1.3 The Health and Wellbeing Strategy and the Community Safety Plan both currently run until March 2016 and it would be beneficial to co-ordinate the development of a new Substance Misuse Strategy with the update of these strategies / plans.

2. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS

- 2.1 An agreement to extend the strategy for a year with a refreshed action plan for 2015/16 to be agreed by DAAT Board.
- 2.2 A new strategy could be developed to start in April 2015 though this is unlikely to be developed and adopted by Council in time for an April start. Due to the significant changes planned for the treatment system over the next year, this strategy would quickly become out of date and would not be congruent with a new Health and Wellbeing Strategy or Community Safety Plan.
- 2.3 The current strategy could be allowed to lapse without a new strategy in place. This would put the Council at risk due to its obligation under section 6 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 to formulate and implement strategies in conjunction with other specified responsible authorities for combating the

misuse of drugs, alcohol and other substances.

3. DETAILS OF REPORT

- 3.1 The Council has an obligation under section 6 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 to formulate and implement strategies in conjunction with other specified responsible authorities for combating the misuse of drugs, alcohol and other substances. The substance misuse strategy contributes towards the Crime and Disorder Reduction Strategy in Tower Hamlets (the Community Safety Plan).
- 3.2 The Substance Misuse Strategy 2012-15 is the first combined drug and alcohol strategy for Tower Hamlets. It is a 3 year partnership strategy and was developed in conjunction with all partners and other significant stakeholders. The strategy is divided into 3 'pillars': Prevention and behaviour change, treatment, enforcement and regulation.
- 3.3 Prevention and behaviour change commitments within the Strategy include: information, promotion and prevention activities, multi-agency communications plan, expansion of screening for alcohol problems, access to good quality education in schools.
- 3.4 Treatment commitments within the Strategy include improving access to and effectiveness of treatment, redesigning the drug / alcohol treatment system to improve outcomes and localise services, targeted outreach for difficult to engage drinkers and drug users, improving our response to parental substance misuse, embedding a recovery focus within treatment services.
- 3.5 Enforcement and regulation commitments within the strategy include actions to enforce law relating to alcohol and drugs and reduce associated antisocial behaviour and crime, implementation and enforcement of borough wide alcohol control zone, under age sales test purchases, operations to uncover illicit alcohol, dealer-a-day initiative, joint tasking approach to drug / alcohol related crime and ASB.
- 3.6 An action plan to accompany the Substance Misuse Strategy was developed and is provided in Appendix 1. The policy approach and priorities established by this strategy are still considered to be highly relevant to the effective tackling of drug and alcohol abuse in the Borough. The DAAT Board and the Community Safety Partnership have, therefore, agreed a proposal (subject to Cabinet agreement) to extend the current strategy by a year. The current strategy would be extended to March 2016 and a new three year strategy from 2016-2019 would be developed during the course of 2015/16.

Rationale for extension

- 3.7 The DAAT is currently in the process of re-procuring the entire drug / alcohol treatment system. This is already listed as an objective within the current strategy and links to many other objectives, particularly within the treatment and behaviour change and prevention pillars. A new strategy developed after this procurement has taken place would better be able to reflect the most up to date position and be utilised to embed the ongoing objectives for treatment services.
- 3.8 The Substance Misuse Strategy contributes towards the Crime and Disorder Reduction Strategy in Tower Hamlets (the Community Safety Plan). The current Community Safety Plan runs until March 2016 and it would be beneficial to develop a new substance misuse strategy in conjunction with the development of a new Community Safety Plan.
- 3.9 The LBTH Health and Wellbeing Strategy expires in 2016 and the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment is soon to be refreshed. It would be beneficial to develop a new Substance Misuse Strategy along the same timescale as these to ensure delivery of consistent messages.
- 3.10 An extension to the current strategy would also enable findings from the Community Alcohol Partnership to be incorporated into a new strategy and would ensure the relationships with, and objectives of, the newly structured Probation Service were embedded prior to strategy development.
- 3.11 Capacity within the DAAT is currently limited and it would not be possible to undertake development of a new strategy at the same time as undertaking the reprocurement process within current staffing levels.

4. COMMENTS OF THE CHIEF FINANCE OFFICER

- 4.1. There are no specific financial implications emanating from this report which seeks an extension to the current Substance Misuse Strategy by a year to March 2016.

5. LEGAL COMMENTS

- 5.1. The Council has an obligation under section 6 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 to formulate and implement strategies in conjunction with other specified responsible authorities for –
 - Reduction of crime and disorder
 - Combating the misuse of drugs, alcohol and other substances
 - Reduction of re-offending.

- 5.2. The Substance Misuse Strategy, which was adopted by Full Council in January 2012, is intended to fulfil the Council's obligation in relation to the second of the areas specified in paragraph 5.1. The Strategy may also be considered to be consistent with a number of the Council's other statutory functions, as outlined in more detail in the report to Full Council of 25 January 2012.
- 5.3. Pursuant to section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998, the Council is required, before adopting the strategy to have due regard to the likely effect of the strategy on, and the need to do all that it reasonably can to prevent, crime and disorder, misuse of drugs and alcohol and re-offending in Tower Hamlets. There is information in the report relevant to this consideration.
- 5.4. Before adopting the strategy, the Council must have due regard to the need to eliminate unlawful conduct under the Equality Act 2010, the need to advance equality of opportunity and the need to foster good relations between persons who share a protected characteristic and those who don't. The report indicates that the equality analysis carried out prior to adoption in 2012 of the existing strategy continues to apply.
- 5.5. The Local Authorities (Functions and Responsibilities) (England) Regulations 2000 ("the Functions Regulations") specify that the making of crime and disorder reduction strategies within the meaning of sections 5 and 6 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 is a function which is not to be the sole responsibility of the Council's executive. This requirement is reflected in the Council's Constitution, which includes a crime and disorder reduction strategy in Article 4 of the budget and policy framework.
- 5.6. Regulation 4 specifies actions which shall not be the responsibility of the executive and these include the following –
- The amendment of any draft plan or strategy submitted by the executive for the authority's consideration.
 - The adoption (with or without modification) of the plan or strategy.
- 5.7. As it is proposed that the existing Substance Misuse Strategy be adopted for a further year, this is a decision which will need to be taken by Full Council.

6. ONE TOWER HAMLETS CONSIDERATIONS

- 6.1. Equalities and diversity implications were considered fully during the development of the original strategy and an extension would represent no change to these implications. A full Equalities Impact assessment will be undertaken in conjunction with development of a new strategy.

7. SUSTAINABLE ACTION FOR A GREENER ENVIRONMENT

- 7.1 The extension of this strategy does not have any greener environment impacts.

8. RISK MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1. A lapse in the life of an LBTH Substance Misuse Strategy would put the Council at risk due to its obligation under section 6 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 to formulate and implement strategies in conjunction with other specified responsible authorities for combating the misuse of drugs, alcohol and other substances. A new strategy is unlikely to be developed and adopted by April 2015.

9. CRIME AND DISORDER REDUCTION IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1 The Substance Misuse Strategy contributes towards the Crime and Disorder Reduction Strategy in Tower Hamlets (the Community Safety Plan).

10. EFFICIENCY STATEMENT

- 10.1 An extension to the strategy would not alter proposed expenditure or service delivery.

Linked Reports, Appendices and Background Documents

Linked Report

- None

Appendices

- Substance Misuse Strategy Action Plan Update
- Equality Analysis Quality Assurance Checklist
- Tower Hamlets Substance Misuse Strategy 2012-2015

Background Documents – Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements)(Access to Information)(England) Regulations 2012

- None

Officer contact details for documents:

- Rachael Sadegh ext 0395, Rachael.sadegh@towerhamlets.gov.uk