

Community Impact Assessment Review – Isolation and Loneliness Health, Wellbeing and Finance Overview & Scrutiny Panel

Reason for review

The Community Impact Assessment and Resident's Survey highlighted a number of issues faced by residents who felt isolated and lonely during the Covid-19 pandemic. This review will focus on what services and support is currently being provided in order to reduce social isolation and loneliness; what works well and what could be improved in the future.

Objectives/scope

The review is looking to:

- Identify causal factors, services and support provision for people who feel socially isolated or lonely in the Borough, with a view to determining what works well and what requires improvement, with a focus specifically on four key issues highlighted in the Community Impact Assessment and Resident's Survey:
 - Digital access
 - Confidence reconnecting with communities and services
 - Volunteering engagement and the role of the Voluntary Community Sector
 - Wider factors such as unemployment and mental health
- Assess the work of health colleagues, specifically GP Surgeries, in ensuring residents are aware of how and when to contact them, particularly during the pandemic.

The review will do this by:

- Undertaking a desk top analysis of the Community Impact Assessment and the Residents' Survey.
- Understanding the impact of current services and support provided by the Council, health colleagues and the voluntary sector.
- Benchmarking against comparator authorities.
- Consulting residents about their experiences in these key areas using focus groups; social media campaigns; mystery shopper calls and 'walking a day in their shoes'.
- Consulting staff/volunteers about their experiences in these key areas using focus groups, testing forms/procedures used by staff, etc.
- Potentially, working with essential shops to find out what support they provide to people feeling isolated and lonely and if provision could be widened.
- Working with GP surgeries to identify good practice in communicating with their patients.

At the conclusion of this work the Panel will produce a report highlighting its findings and proposing recommendations to the Executive about how the Council, health colleagues, voluntary sector and private sector can tackle the key issues identified in the Community Impact Survey and Resident's Survey.

Delivery methods: Focus groups, social media campaigns, mystery shopper tests, 'walking a day in their shoes', testing forms/procedures.

Council theme: Strong, safe, supportive and self-reliant communities; active and healthy lifestyles

Council team: People

Review due: March 2021

Proposed by: Cllr Malcolm Tullett, Chair
Health, Wellbeing and Finance Panel

Equalities Impact Assessment

The Community Impact Assessment is one of the tools the Council uses to help show it has due regard in the exercise of its equality duty under the **Equality Act 2010**. During this review councillors will scrutinise if this tool ensures the policies, practices, projects and activities which shape the Council's work, and its work with partner organisations, are ensuring equal access to all services. The selection of witnesses to participate in the review will specifically and deliberately include representatives of groups working with and for people with protected characteristics. Overview and Scrutiny will offer facilities, such as language translation, as necessary to engage with 'hard to reach' residents.

Financial and legal implications

There are potentially legal and financial implications of any recommendations arising from this review which will be fully addressed in the review report. In addition, there may be a small cost required to ensure equality of engagement by 'hard to reach' residents i.e. translation services.

Climate Change implications

Part of the aim of a Community Impact Assessment is to reduce environmental impact where possible. In most cases the general impact for the community should be positive and delivering Council priorities. However, this is not always straightforward e.g. the Council may need to reduce a service to make savings which will ultimately benefit residents in terms of keeping Council Tax levels low, but the loss of the service itself could have a significant impact on climate change. In this case councillors may consider that, overall, the impact is negative and therefore will need to consider how to reduce or eliminate this impact e.g. by promoting alternatives to the service. Therefore, there is scope to assess the current practice of including climate change mitigation and adaptation into this review and councillors will escalate identified issues in relation to climate change to the O&S Commission as part of its review into Climate Change to avoid scope drift.