

LONDON BOROUGH OF RICHMOND UPON THAMES**CABINET****DATE: 10 MAY 2011****REPORT OF: STRATEGIC CABINET MEMBER FOR
COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT****LEAD
OFFICER: ASSISTANT DIRECTOR,
COMMISSIONING, CORPORATE
POLICY AND STRATEGY****SUBJECT: RESPONSE TO THE REPORT OF THE DRUG MISUSE TASK
GROUP****WARDS: ALL****KEY DECISION?: NO****IN FORWARD PLAN: YES****For general release****1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT**

1.1 This report sets out the initial response of the Executive to the report of the Drug Misuse Scrutiny Task Group, which was agreed by the Environment, Sustainability and Community Overview and Scrutiny Committee at its meeting on 24 March 2011. The report of the Drug Misuse Scrutiny Task Group is attached in **Appendix A**.

2. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1.2 During the nine months of the Drug Misuse Scrutiny Task Group there have been three significant changes to national drugs policy:

- the abolition of inappropriate drug targets;
- a new National Drug Strategy launched and
- the introduction locally of powers to test for drugs on arrest.

Despite the rapidly changing backdrop, the report remains a timely and helpful contribution to the issue of addressing the considerable harms caused by illegal drug use. Funding issues are also more acute than before, so it is even more important that the Council obtains the best results from diminishing resources.

1.3. The Government published its National Drug Strategy in December 2010. The long term goal of this strategy is to reduce illicit and other harmful drug use and to increase the numbers of individuals recovering from their dependency on drugs or alcohol. The major changes are the

inclusion of alcohol and the emphasis on recovery, defined as including abstinence, settled accommodation and employment.

- 1.4 Five months before the publication of the Strategy it was agreed by the Environment, Sustainability and Community Overview and Scrutiny Committee to establish the Drug Misuse Scrutiny Task Group to examine why the Community Safety Partnership was not meeting centrally imposed targets for getting problematic drug users into treatment. There was concern not only about the loss of funding but also that the targets were based on poor data and did not reflect the local picture. In examining the issue the Task Group focused on:
- Understanding the problems associated with drug use in Richmond upon Thames;
 - The controls, treatments and remedies that could be used in Richmond to help minimise the health harms, violence and anti-social behaviour associated with drug misuse;
 - Making recommendations to ensure the Council and its partners is doing everything it can to reduce drug misuse.
- 1.5. This report gives the Executive's initial response to the report published by the Drug Misuse Scrutiny Task Group and outlines the next steps with regard to the recommendations in the report. The Cabinet is asked to note the report and the next steps outlined below.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1. That Cabinet agree the next steps outlined at paragraphs 3.4 and 3.5 of the report.**
- 2.2. That a full response to the report is presented to Cabinet at its meeting in July 2011.**
- 2.3. That the Strategic Cabinet Member for Community Development reports back to the Environment, Sustainability and Community Overview and Scrutiny Committee in September 2011 with the Executive response.**

3. DETAIL

- 3.1. The Cabinet welcomes the report of the task group on what is a key issue both nationally and locally. However, the breadth of the recommendations made in the report (attached at Appendix A) makes it difficult to respond in full within the timescale given. Therefore, it is proposed that a more detailed response be presented to a later Cabinet meeting following consultation with key partners.
- 3.2 The Community Safety Partnership Strategy group recognises that the recommendations fall within four key themes. These are:
- The social and economic cost of drug use;

- The need to focus on early intervention, focusing on resource intensive families and the service provided for young people;
- Reviewing the progress of intensive Drug Intervention Programme (DIP) and the effects on wider services;
- The support of drug users by considering diverse needs, staff training and awareness of services, community activities and outreach work.

3.3 It is these issues that are key and which have been highlighted within the Community Safety Partnership Plan and Drug Treatment Plan. There are clear commitments within the Plans to look at the cost of drug use, resource intensive families, reviewing the progress of intensive DIP. Work has been started on these issues, but there is still considerable work to do in order to reduce the negative impacts of drug use.

3.4. The following steps will be taken to ensure that a full response can be provided to the Task Group:

- The Task Group's report will be sent to each Council department asking them to respond to specific recommendations within the report;
- A report will be made to the next Community Safety Partnership in May responding to the recommendations and the Partnership will monitor progress with the response at its meetings in July and September;
- A report will be made to the Substance Misuse Joint Commissioning Group in June 2011 on the proposed response to the recommendations;
- A report will be made to the Richmond upon Thames Partnership to allow them to consider the recommendations and to task the relevant bodies to take forward appropriate actions;
- A further report responding in detail to the recommendations will be brought to Cabinet in July 2011. .

4. CONSULTATION

4.1 As set out above

5 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

5.1 There are no financial implications of this report. Any financial implications as a result of the response to the recommendations will be identified in the substantive response..

6. POLICY IMPLICATIONS/CONSIDERATIONS

- 6.1 There are no policy implications at this stage. The Drug Treatment Plan has already been agreed which picks up some of the issues in the report. It is expected that any recommendations taken forward will feed into policy decisions during 2011/12; or into the 2012/13 Plan.

7. RISK ASSESSMENT

- 7.1 In its response to the Drug Misuse Scrutiny Task Group, Cabinet will take account of the risks relating to the recommendations in the report.

8. EQUALITY IMPACT/CONSIDERATIONS

- 8.1 The Council has a duty to identify the impact of any changes in service made as a result of the Task Group and its impact on local people.

9. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1 There are no legal implications from this report. However, Legal Services will be consulted on the implications of the recommendations made in the Task Group report.

10. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT

- 10.1 There are no environmental impacts from this report.

11. BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS:

- Drug Misuse Scrutiny Task Group Report March 2011;
- Richmond upon Thames Community Safety Partnership Plan 20011-14;
- Richmond Community Safety Partnership Adult Drug Treatment Plan 2011/12.

12. CONTACTS

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