

# **Committee: Health and Wellbeing Board**

**Date: 1 October 2013**

Agenda item: 14

Wards: All

## **Subject: Health Impact Assessment Policy**

Lead officer: Kay Eilbert, Director of Public Health

Lead member: Councillor Linda Kirby, Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care and Health

Forward Plan reference number:

Contact officer: Sangeeta Rana, Public Health

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### **Recommendations:**

A. To review and discuss the Health Impact Assessment Policy as approved by CMT for piloting

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## **1. PURPOSE OF REPORT AND EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

- 1.1 This report presents the Health Impact Assessment (HIA) policy proposal as approved by the Council's Corporate Management Team for piloting.
- 1.2 It sets out the benefits of the HIA and how it would work linking to the Equality Analysis (Equality Impact Assessment) within the Council.
- 1.3 It is presented for review and discussion by the Health and Wellbeing Board.

## **2. DETAILS**

This report on the proposed Health Impact Assessment is one part of the work programme which Public Health has been developing since transition. Health Impact Assessments are a tool for use in policy and project development to consider the potential impacts on health.

### **2.1 Rationale**

- 2.1.1 Based on the Merton Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA), the Health and Wellbeing Strategy highlights the importance of the wider social and economic environment for protecting and improving health and for reducing inequalities in health. The work of the Council, and its partners, has significant impacts on the health of residents.
- 2.1.2 Specifically use of local authority levers such as planning and licensing can contribute to reducing the significant inequalities in health that exist in Merton, with large differences in life expectancy between some of the most deprived

communities in the east of the borough compared to the communities in the west.

### **Background**

- 2.1.3 Many factors influence the health and wellbeing of individuals such as the environment in which people live, including the built environment, quality of housing, access to open spaces, transport infrastructure and access to services. Locally, the work of the Council impacts on many of these social determinants of health.
- 2.1.4 There is a strong relationship between health inequalities, deprivation and poverty that starts at conception and continues throughout life. A child's health is significantly influenced by the socioeconomic status of its parents and there is a wide gap in health status between the most affluent and deprived families.
- 2.1.5 Much work is clearly already in place which seeks to address these inequalities. Undertaking a Health Impact Assessment on new projects and policies will provide an opportunity to ensure that all Council work is assessed for its health impact and where negative impacts are identified, these are mitigated where possible.

### **Purpose of the Health Impact Assessment (HIA)**

- 2.1.6 The HIA is a tool to assess the health impacts of policies, plans and projects as part of their development, prior to their implementation. The HIA uses a range of methods to help identify the potential – or actual – health impacts on the local population. It ensures decision making at all levels considers the potential impacts of decisions on health and potential health inequalities.
- 2.1.7 The tool supports the Council in meeting its obligations as set out in The Health and Social Care Act 2012. Steps can then be taken to reduce the negative health effects and increase the positive health effects of policies. HIA helps decision-makers make choices about alternatives and improvements to prevent disease/injury and to promote health.

### **2.1.8 Aim of the HIA Policy**

To incorporate Health Impact Assessment as good practice at all levels in the planning process, from strategic to local developments to mitigate against any actions that impact negatively on health of Merton residents

### **Drivers**

- 2.1.9 Addressing health inequalities and promoting good health is a duty of Local Authority as set out in The Health and Social Care Act 2012. HIAs are one tool that can be used to support this

2.1.10 The Merton Community Plan 'Bridging the Gap' includes reducing health inequalities and improving health as one of the cross cutting themes of the Community Plan.

2.1.11 Health and Wellbeing Strategy.

### **3. Proposal**

The Health Impact Assessment proposal agreed as a pilot by the Council's Corporate Management Team sets out that:

- i. Health impact assessments will be integrated with the Equality Analysis (Equality Impact Assessment), which is well established in the Council.
- ii. At the beginning of the process, all policies and plans developed by the London Borough of Merton will be screened to identify those that may require a HIA.
- iii. In the screening stage, policies or plans that are felt to have an impact on health will be identified. Council officers responsible for developing these plans will work with public health to undertake a HIA.
- iv. A stakeholder group will meet once to agree recommendations from the HIA. These will then be used by the responsible officer to amend the work before it is finalised.
- v. The Public Health Team will monitor implementation of the recommendations for which a health impact assessment is carried out.

### **4. Next Steps**

4.1 Following agreement of the proposal for piloting, details of the HIA have been developed including how it will link to the Equality Impact Assessment and draft documentation.

This includes the following documents to support the HIA process:

- HIA guidance
- Screening tool
- HIA appraisal tool

4.2 Selected policies and plans will be screened and if appropriate, pilot HIAs will be undertaken.

4.3 Following piloting a full proposal will then be brought back to CMT to go forward to the Council's Cabinet for agreement.

## **5. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS**

5.1 None for the purpose of this report

## **6. CONSULTATION UNDERTAKEN**

6.1 Consultation with officers on the Equality Analysis (Equality Impact Assessment) has been conducted.

## **7. TIMETABLE**

The HIA will be developed in full following piloting and agreement from CMT.

## **8. FINANCIAL, RESOURCE AND PROPERTY IMPLICATIONS**

None for the purpose of this report.

## **9. LEGAL AND STATUTORY IMPLICATIONS**

There is recognition that in some areas, including planning and licensing, there are set grounds and criteria upon which a decision by the Council must be made. To take account of matters outside of the set criteria (such as those from a HIA) could have legal implications and this will be taken into consideration in developing the HIA.

## **10. HUMAN RIGHTS, EQUALITIES AND COMMUNITY COHESION IMPLICATIONS**

The proposed Health Impact Assessment is fundamentally concerned with addressing health inequalities.

## **11. CRIME AND DISORDER IMPLICATIONS**

None for the purpose of this report.

## **12. RISK MANAGEMENT AND HEALTH AND SAFETY IMPLICATIONS**

There are no risk management or health and safety implications arising from this information report.

## **13. APPENDICES**

None

## **14. BACKGROUND PAPERS**

Draft Health Impact Assessment Policy and Toolkit May 2013

## **14. CONTACT OFFICERS**

Kay Eilbert [kay.eilbert@merton.gov.uk](mailto:kay.eilbert@merton.gov.uk)

Sangeeta Rana, Public Health [sangeeta.rana@merton.gov.uk](mailto:sangeeta.rana@merton.gov.uk)