

REPORT FOR: HEALTH AND WELLBEING BOARD

Date of Meeting: 12 January 2017

Subject: **INFORMATION REPORT –
Consultation on Smoking
Cessation Service**

Responsible Officer: Carol Yarde – Business Manger Joint
Public Health Service - Harrow Council

Exempt: No

Wards affected: All

Enclosures: Appendix 1 Consultation Document
Appendix 2 Supporting information

Section 1 – Summary

This report sets out to inform the Board on the Council's budget consultation in relation to the proposal to end the Smoking Cessation Service on 1 April 2017.

FOR INFORMATION

Section 2 – Report Context

As part of the Council's Budget Consultation for 2017/18, on 7 Sept 2016 a service consultation was launched in relation to the proposal to remove the Smoking Cessation Service. The consultation will run until 3 November 2016.

This consultation presents one of our proposals to make savings in Harrow Council services over the 2017-2018 financial year and future years. It is part of an on-going series of consultations across the Council's service areas – all of which are making savings and looking for ways to increase income.

Over the last few years, the Government has reduced its funding for councils, as part of its nationwide austerity programme. Those funding cuts, increased demand for services and cost inflation mean that Harrow Council will have £83 million less money to spend in 2018 compared with 2014. Harrow Council does not have large cash reserves, and spending them is not a responsible way to offset lost revenue. To be responsible and balance the books, Harrow Council has to make savings.

Harrow Council's budget is £589m, but most of that must be spent on housing benefit, schools and other services. The Government has strict rules about how that money should be spent and it cannot be used for anything else. The Council controls how to spend about £189m. This is where all our savings must be found.

Smoking across the UK accounts for more premature deaths than alcoholism, obesity and road traffic accidents combined. Harrow's Service is accredited by the National Centre for Smoking Cessation Training and uses the most effective evidence-based methods to help Harrow residents stop smoking. It has helped 1,751 people successfully quit smoking since April 2013.

Consultation

A consultation questionnaire (appendix 1) has been made available online and in hard copy and has been circulated widely. Three focus groups have been held on different days of the week and at different times. The consultation has also been presented at the CCG Board and a meeting of the Local Medical Council. A special focus group has been organised for local pharmacies.

The Council proposes to end the following Smoking Cessation programmes by 31st March 2017 to deliver the agreed savings:

- Commissioned and Specialist Stop Smoking Services

- Training on Tobacco and Smoking Cessation
- Campaigns to raise awareness of the harm of smoking; to promote attempts to quit smoking; and to stop young people from smoking
- Stop Smoking expertise for businesses, professionals and partners
- Work to tackle the proliferation of illegal tobacco and the growth of shisha

As a result, there would be no stop smoking service provided locally and the saving from this would be £279,000. People wishing to find help to stop smoking would need to find alternative resources either through GPs, who are able (if willing) to provide advice, support and prescriptions; through Pharmacies, who are able (if willing) to provide advice, support and over-the-counter drugs; or through national, charitable or commercial stop-smoking resources.

The Stop Smoking team is made up of the following permanent posts (3FTE):

- 2 Smoking Cessation Practitioners
- 1 Co-ordinator
- 1 As-and-when Smoking Cessation Practitioner (non-contractual commitment)

These post holders will potentially be at risk of redundancy. The Council's Protocol for the Management of Change will be used in managing the change around removing these posts. Opportunities for suitable redeployment will be sought for all individuals in these posts.

Not surprisingly the consultation has generated quite a bit of interest, which has included, a letter from Bob Blackman MP to raise his strong objections to the potential withdrawal of funding for the service. A petition has also been started by Dr Tara Sathyamoorthy, Locum Consultant in Respiratory Medicine Northwick Park Hospital.

Next Steps

The proposals in this consultation have not been decided on. In February, they were identified by the Council Cabinet as potential savings in the Council's medium-term financial strategy. This consultation will help decide whether the proposals are included in the Council's full draft Budget this December.

The consultation is designed to help the Council to understand what the potential impact of these proposals, how they will affect individuals and stakeholders and to find out if there are any better or fairer ways to make these essential savings.

Section 3 – Further Information

Following the launch of the consultation comments were received from local medics that there was insufficient information on the web pages about exactly what the services does.

In response to this concern a supporting document was produced and put online (Appendix 2).

On completion of the consultation a report will be prepared and the draft EqIA finalised in time to inform the December draft budget report to Cabinet.

Section 4 – Financial Implications

The Council, in February 2016, approved the final revenue budget for 2016/17 and Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) for 2016/17 to 2019/20. Over the term of the MTFS savings of £52.4m were required to enable a balanced budget to be agreed.

In agreeing the MTFS, Cabinet agreed that the Tobacco Control / Stop Smoking budget would cease at the end of March 2017. As a result, there will be no further tobacco control and the stop smoking activities after this date and enable savings of £279k to be delivered within the Public Health grant allocation to be redirected to deliver wider Public Health outcomes.

The approved proposal represents a reduction of £112k in relation to staffing costs (3 FTE) and expenditure of £167k representing payments to GP's, pharmacies and other promotional activity in relation to the Stop Smoking Service.

If the agreed saving cannot be delivered via the cessation of this service, compensatory savings and/or alternative reductions in expenditure will need to be identified to mitigate the shortfall in the Council's 2017/18 budget.

Section 5 - Equalities implications

Prior to this proposal being consulted on a draft EqIA was prepared.

Following the consultation this document will be updated and finalised and will include views from stakeholders on all potential impacts.

Section 6 – Council Priorities

The Council's vision:

Working Together to Make a Difference for Harrow

Tobacco control addresses the following Council priorities.

- Making a difference for the vulnerable: Smoking and tobacco disproportionately affects children.

- Making a difference for communities: the impact of smoking affects not only smokers and their families but the wider health of the borough
- Making a difference for families: Smoking affects families both in terms of health and wellbeing but also financially. Reducing smoking rates in the most disadvantaged families would lift families out of poverty.

STATUTORY OFFICER CLEARANCE (Council and Joint Reports)

Name: Donna Edwards	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	on behalf of the Chief Financial Officer
Date: 25 October 2016.		

Ward Councillors notified:	YES
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Section 7 - Contact Details and Background Papers

Contact: Carol Yarde, Business Manager Joint Public Health Service,
0208 420 9660.

Background Papers: none