The Health and Adult Services Select Committee (HASSC), has undertaken an in-depth scrutiny review of awareness and early diagnosis. The findings of the Review, in line with the terms of reference and work plan, are in the report.

Recommendations of HASSC as an outcome of the scrutiny review are key to changes leading to improved cancer outcomes in Barking and Dagenham. This paper focuses on recommendations that the members of HASSC may want to consider.

Recommendation(s)
The HASSC is recommended to review the report, and discuss and agree recommendations based on the report.

Reason(s)
The topic of Cancer Prevention, Awareness and Early Detection relates to the Council’s priority to ‘Enable Social Responsibility’ and the objectives to ‘protect the most vulnerable, keeping adults and children healthy and safe’ and ‘ensure everyone can access good quality healthcare when they need it’.

1. Introduction and Background

1.1 Every year each of the Council’s Select Committees agrees a work programme which lists the areas it wishes to scrutinise in the current municipal year. As well as one-off agenda items, the work programme often includes a more-in-depth investigation into an area of concern that is relevant to the committee’s remit, which usually involves members attending sessions outside of the standard evening meetings scheduled for the year.
1.2 For 2016/17, the HASSC agreed Cancer would be the topic on which to undertake a scrutiny review due to the scale of the issue locally, and the serious implications on public health. It was felt that an in-depth review into this topic adds value.

2. **Proposal and Issues**

2.1 From the evidence Members will want to consider recommendations that support HASSC to hold providers and commissioners in the borough to account:

- Improve lifestyle in Barking and Dagenham, particularly smoking and being a healthy weight.
- Increase confidence to seek help early by increasing knowledge and awareness of signs and symptoms of cancer in:
  - Residents, particularly Black-African residents
  - healthcare staff
  - other staff who are customer-facing
- Assure that screening uptake is increased, bowel, breast and cervical, through screening services being appropriately commissioned.
- Assure that screening services are accessible to residents.
- Assure that primary care staff who are key to early diagnosis are facilitating screening of residents, and have appropriate skills and knowledge to ensure timely access to the local cancer pathways and early diagnosis.

2.2 An action plan will be written from the recommendations and the accountable organisation/agency/board engaged on behalf of the population of Barking and Dagenham. Accountable organisations/agencies/boards include the Health and Wellbeing Board; Barking and Dagenham, Havering, and Redbridge CCG; NHS England; and other partners.

3. **Title and Terms of Reference**

3.1 Due to restrictions on time and resources, the focus of the review has been on factors that may help prevent cancer and increase early detection. The title of the Scrutiny Review is “Cancer Prevention, Awareness and Early Detection” and the following three key questions formed the Terms of Reference for the scrutiny review:

1. Why are residents of Barking and Dagenham more likely to develop cancer and less likely to survive cancer than residents in other London boroughs?
2. What is the reason that residents are less likely to respond to requests to screen for cancer than in other London boroughs?
3. What is the reason that residents are not as aware of the signs and symptoms of cancer as residents in other London boroughs?

4. Why are residents of Barking and Dagenham more likely to develop cancer and less likely to survive cancer than residents in other London boroughs?

4.2 In summary, the reasons why residents are more likely to develop cancer and less likely to survive are, that they tend to have less healthy lifestyles, and are less
aware of cancer signs and symptoms. This means that cancer is more likely to develop and less likely to be identified early.

4.3 Lifestyle accounts for 4 out of 10 preventable deaths from cancer and, for many reasons, residents of Barking and Dagenham have less healthy lifestyles than in many other London boroughs. (Report sections 4.1 – 4.7, 7). This suggests that more action is needed to improve lifestyle in the borough.

4.4 As well as residents often having less healthy lifestyles, the evidence indicates that people in the borough are also less likely to be aware of the signs and symptoms of cancer when these do occur. (Report section 7). This suggests that more action is needed to raise awareness so that residents are more aware of signs and symptoms of cancer.

4.5 Rates of diagnosis of cancer through emergency routes in Barking and Dagenham are decreasing but are higher than the England average. To improve this situation, it is essential that we have improved screening rates (see 5) and effective routes to diagnosis (see 6).

5. **What is the reason that residents are less likely to respond to requests to screen for cancer than in other London boroughs?**

5.2 In summary, there are many reasons why residents are less likely to present for screening, and to an extent the reason depends on the type of screening, and may be as simple as the resident not understanding the importance of being screened. In the review, we address breast and bowel screening. The reasons why residents do not always respond are presented below (also see, Section 7 for the report):

5.2.1 Emotional – residents worry, or are scared about what the screening might find.

5.2.2 Cultural – residents are not always able to understand the information that they are sent. For some residents, the process of screening can be culturally offensive, one example is bowel screening, as residents need to handle their own faeces.

5.2.3 Practical – difficulty in making an appointment with the GP surgery can be barrier as can be getting to a surgery appointment, or to a screening unit.

5.3 These findings suggest that more action is needed to be assured that the providers of screening services communicate effectively, and regularly, with residents in Barking and Dagenham, using appropriate languages and cultural approaches. The service commissioners can most effectively facilitate this approach, BHR CCG.

5.4 Assurance can also be provided, from NHSE, through the Director of Public Health’s, Health Protection, assurance process.

6. **What is the reason that residents are not as aware of the signs and symptoms of cancer as residents in other London Boroughs?**

6.2 In summary, Barking and Dagenham residents are not as knowledgeable about signs and symptoms of cancer as people in other London boroughs. We know that in 2009 residents in Barking and Dagenham were less aware of common signs and symptoms of cancer, such as lumps and swellings; and even less aware of less common symptoms like a long-term cough.

6.3 A small survey of residents in 2016 found that awareness of signs and symptoms amongst residents has improved slightly but the question still stands, why to
Residents present so often, with cancer, at the accident and emergency department?

6.4 These findings suggest that more action is needed to assure improved uptake of screening (see 5); to support people to be aware of signs and symptoms through campaigns and face-to-face activities; to be assured that the ability of those working in primary care to recognise signs and symptoms is being maintained and enhanced; to be assured that healthcare staff facilitate timely access to the local cancer pathways; to be assured of the ability of healthcare staff, who are not routinely in touch with people who develop cancer, to recognise potential signs and symptoms and to signpost to services.

7. **Cancer survival**

7.2 Members learnt that cancer is a serious disease that can impact on life in the short term, because of treatment, and in the long term, because of disability. They were also assured that the risk of cancer can be reduced through changes in lifestyle; and the worst consequences of cancer can be reduced through early diagnosis and treatment. (Case study: report p35).

8. **Reading List**

8.1 Officers and members will draw on the following papers throughout the review to inform the report and assist with producing recommendations:

Achieving World Class Cancer Outcomes: A strategy for England  


London Borough of Barking and Dagenham, Joint Strategic Needs Assessment; cancer.  

9. **Financial Implications**

Implications completed by: (name and title of senior Finance Officer)

9.1 (This section only to be completed by a senior Finance Officer (i.e. the Corporate Director, Divisional Director, or Group Manager)

10. **Legal Implications**

Implications completed by: (name and title of senior Legal Officer)

10.1 (This section only to be completed by a senior Legal Officer (i.e. Head of Legal, Legal Group Manager or Senior Lawyer)
Background Papers Used in the Preparation of the Report:
None.

List of appendices:

HASSC DRAFT Cancer Scrutiny Report