Summary:
This report outlines plans for Member and volunteer visits to care homes in Barking and Dagenham based on peer reviews of two other boroughs. The aims of the visits are:

- To increase Member familiarity with care homes;
- To complement the quality assurance of the Council and Care Quality Commission (CQC), to help ensure residents are getting good quality care, in particular for Members to contribute to improving the dignity and respect that residents of care homes receive;
- For Councillors to meet residents, carers and resident’s families.

HASSC is asked to consider the proposals and provide a view on the proposals for Member visits in this report.

Recommendation(s)

1. That Members review the report, and comment on the proposals for a programme of Member visits to care homes.

2. That Members agree to establishing the programme from the new municipal year.
1. **What are Member Visits to Care Homes?**

1.1. Council officers have observed a programme of ‘reality checking’ visits to care homes for older people and people with learning disabilities in two London boroughs. The visits were announced and homes were asked to put up a notice a week or so in advance so that relatives and carers can meet with Members to discuss any issues they might have. The information gathered by Members was used to try and improve services.

1.2. The visits did not replace the visits undertaken council officers as part of quality assurance. Members have brought a welcome focus on dignity and respect, picking up on issues about the way care is delivered, the meals provided, activities that are offered, and about the care home environment, resulting in suggested improvements to enhance service delivery. Members have been asked back to social functions and fundraisers and have developed good links with the care homes.

2. **Member Visits in Barking and Dagenham**

2.1. It is proposed that Members undertake visits every six weeks/two months to care homes in the borough starting early in the new municipal year in 2014. Initially Members could visit residential and nursing care homes for older people. Barking and Dagenham has ten homes in the borough for older people, including the Council-run residential care home, Kallar Lodge. Adequate notice will be given to the care home and residents so residents’ families can attend if they wish.

2.2. **Fig. 1 - Care Homes in Barking and Dagenham**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Care Home</th>
<th>Type of home</th>
<th>Address</th>
<th>No. of beds</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Abbey Care Home</td>
<td>Residential</td>
<td>Collier Row Road, RM5 2BH</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alexander Court</td>
<td>Nursing</td>
<td>320 Rainham Road South, RM10 7UU</td>
<td>82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bennetts Castle</td>
<td>Nursing</td>
<td>Bennetts Castle Lane, RM8 3UU</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chaseview</td>
<td>Nursing</td>
<td>Off Dagenham Road, RM7 0XY</td>
<td>120</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cherry Orchard</td>
<td>Nursing</td>
<td>Dagenham Avenue, RM9 6LG</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chestnut Court</td>
<td>Nursing</td>
<td>Frizlands Lane, RM10 7YD</td>
<td>62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>George Brooker House</td>
<td>Residential</td>
<td>100 Dagenham Avenue, RM9 6LH</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hanbury Court</td>
<td>Nursing</td>
<td>Dagmar Road, RM10 8XP</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kallar Lodge</td>
<td>Residential</td>
<td>75 Gregory Road, RM6 5RU</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parkview</td>
<td>Nursing</td>
<td>1-2 Morland Road, RM10 9WH</td>
<td>108</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2.3. Members could be accompanied by a council officer and volunteers. In one London borough, the volunteers brought valuable insight into the reality checking process with their views about what services and support should be like for vulnerable people.
2.4. The volunteers, called quality checkers, will have experience of using health and social care services or caring for someone who has used services. They can relate to the experiences of the people they visit. The volunteers will be recruited and undertake training necessary so they can confidently visit the care settings.

2.5. Members and volunteer quality checkers attending the care homes will be given information packs on the particular home to be visited. The information packs will include general information on the home and details from the last Care Quality Commission (CQC) report.

2.6. After the visit, feedback will be provided from Members and volunteers on three questions:
   - What impressed them?
   - What would they say are areas for improvement?
   - Would you want to use the service for themselves or a member of their family?

2.7. The simple framework of three questions will be used to help learning be transferred from one visit to the next.

2.8. As mentioned, the Member visits will not replace the existing announced and unannounced visits undertaken by Adult Commissioning. Healthwatch, the independent health and social care consumer champion, also conduct enter and view visits to care homes in the borough. Their programme of visits will be carried out independently of these visits.

3. Next Steps

3.1. If the format of the visits is agreed by HASSC, the following steps will happen in order for the Member visits to be scheduled in the new municipal year:
   - The proposed programme of visits will be discussed with care home managers at the Provider Forum on 17 October
   - A pool of volunteers (quality checkers) will be recruited and trained
   - The Group Manager, Adult Commissioning, will liaise with Scrutiny Officer to arrange a programme of visits at times of day and dates convenient for Members who wish to take part

3.2. Members may also wish to note that care homes are holding open days on Sunday, 6 October 2013, as part of Older People’s Week. Members who are interested in attending should contact the Group Manager, Adult Commissioning, for further details.