

Subject: Tuberculosis in London

Report to: Health Committee

Report of: Executive Director of Secretariat

Date: 24 June 2015

This report will be considered in public

1. Summary

- 1.1 This report sets out a proposed investigation into tuberculosis (TB) in London, and asks the Committee to recommend the commissioning of external technical advice and support for the investigation.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 **That the Committee notes the recent action taken by the Chair, in consultation with the Deputy Chair, under delegated authority, namely to agree the scope and terms of reference of an investigation into tuberculosis in London, as set out in Appendix 1 to this report.**
- 2.2 **That the Committee puts questions to invited guests on tuberculosis in London and notes the subsequent discussion.**
- 2.3 **That the Committee recommends to the GLA Oversight Committee that expenditure of up to £5,000 be authorised from the Scrutiny Team's 2015/16 External Services Budget to commission a survey by an external contractor for this investigation.**
- 2.4 **That the Committee notes that the Executive Director of Secretariat, in consultation with the Chair, will commission the external contractor to carry out the technical advice and support, subject to the decision above and a further decision by the GLA Oversight Committee.**

3. Background

- 3.1 The Committee has agreed to use its meetings in June and July 2015 for an investigation into TB in London. The terms of reference for this investigation are:
- To examine how the new national TB Strategy will be implemented in London; and
 - To consider how the Mayor and the GLA could further support the reduction of TB in London.

- 3.2 On 4 March, Members of the Committee visited the TB Centre at the Whittington Hospital in preparation for the launch of an investigation into TB in London. Members toured the facilities and met with clinical and nursing staff to talk about the current challenges around managing and controlling TB in London. Members also had an opportunity to meet patients currently undergoing treatment at the centre to discuss their experiences. The visit highlighted a number of areas of focus for the Committee's forthcoming investigation.

4. Issues for Consideration

Scope of the investigation into TB in London

- 4.1 The paper agreed by the Chair, in consultation with the Deputy Chair, containing the proposal, scope and terms of reference for the Committee's investigation into TB in London is attached at **Appendix 1**. The Committee will use its meetings in June and July 2015 to gather information for this investigation and will seek to produce findings by October 2015.
- 4.2 The Committee's investigation will focus on practical steps that can be taken by the Mayor and other agencies in London to support and improve the prevention, diagnosis, and treatment of TB across London. This relates both to the Mayor's statutory duty to reduce health inequalities in London, and the acknowledgement in the national TB strategy¹ that local government has an increasingly crucial role to play in TB control. The investigation will seek to identify the particular elements of the strategy which would benefit from a pan-London strategic focus, and how the Mayorality can further use its influence and existing policy levers to tackle TB in the capital.

Remit of the discussion

- 4.3 This first evidence session will set out the broad issues relating to TB prevention, diagnosis and treatment, the specific challenges around delivering the national strategy in London, and identify areas in which the Mayor and other agencies can support better control and management of TB in London.

Invited guests

- 4.4 The following guests have been invited to attend the discussion on TB:
- Lynn Altass, National TB Strategy Implementation Manager, NHS London;
 - Yvonne Doyle, Regional Director, London, Public Health England;
 - Dr Marc Lipman, Consultant Physician, Royal Free Hospital; and
 - Jacqui White, Lead Nurse, North Central London TB Service.

Proposal for external survey support for the investigation into TB in London

- 4.5 It is proposed that the Committee's investigation should include a population-wide survey of London residents, to establish current levels of awareness of, and attitudes towards, TB as a public health issue for London. The survey will seek to examine potential attitudinal barriers to prevention and diagnosis. This will identify areas to develop communications strategies for challenging misconceptions about TB which can delay diagnosis and affect treatment outcomes.

¹ Collaborative Tuberculosis Strategy for England, Public Health England, January 2015.

- 4.6 It would not be possible to undertake this work in-house due to a lack of expertise and resources. An external contractor would have the relevant expertise and experience to design, conduct and analyse critically a properly weighted survey in order to produce findings for the Committee to pursue in its investigation.
- 4.7 Discussions with TB researchers in London, and a literature review of existing work, have indicated that there are few examples of population-based surveys on awareness and attitudes to TB on a city-wide level. Studies on awareness and stigma have tended to be small scale, qualitative studies, focusing on specific national or community groups. By contrast, there have been population-based (national) comparative surveys on attitudes to, and awareness, of HIV dating back to at least 2000.²
- 4.8 Undertaking a statistically representative survey will allow the Committee to gauge the level of understanding of TB at a city wide level, while also allowing for more granular analysis at borough level and within specific population groups. This could potentially inform future targeted awareness-raising activity, supporting the outcomes of the national TB strategy.
- 4.9 The Assembly has recently used external contractors to conduct surveys for its investigation on taxi and private hire, which worked well. This proposal has been developed in light of that experience. In summary, the external contractor would be required to:
- Design and conduct a survey of Londoners' attitudes to, and awareness of, TB;
 - Set out the findings from the analysis of data in a written report; and
 - Present the findings from the analysis of data to the Committee.
- 4.10 Subject to the Committee's approval, the GLA Oversight Committee would be asked to approve expenditure for the external work at its meeting on 30 June 2015, and the tender process would begin thereafter. The external contractor would be appointed from July 2015, with the survey conducted over the summer so findings could be produced to inform the Committee's output from the investigation in the autumn.
- 4.11 The Assembly's Decision Making Framework includes a requirement that all four of the following criteria be considered by committees in deciding whether external technical assistance is required and appropriate on any given project:
- That the proposed project requiring technical assistance is clearly and tightly defined. This would ordinarily mean that the consultant would be used for a discrete piece of technical analysis or research rather than simply as an adviser for the whole of a scrutiny;
 - That the proposed project cannot be readily undertaken by in-house staff, either because of a lack of necessary expertise or because of a lack of capacity;
 - That the analysis required from consultants is not readily available and cannot be acquired elsewhere; and
 - That the information required from consultants would be a significant contribution to the aims of the scrutiny.

² See: www.nat.org.uk/media/files/publications/jan-2011-hiv-public-knowledge-and-attitudes.pdf

- 4.12 Paragraphs 4.5 to 4.9 of this report are designed to demonstrate that all four of the criteria set out in the previous paragraph have been addressed and that the proposed external support is necessary and appropriate.

5. Legal Implications

- 5.1 The Mayor of London's statutory responsibilities in relation to health matters, as set out in the Greater London Authority (GLA) Act 1999, are to develop a strategy which sets out "proposals and policies for promoting the reduction of health inequalities between persons living in Greater London". The GLA Act 1999 defines health inequalities as inequalities between persons living in Greater London "in respect of life expectancy or general state of health which are wholly or partly a result of differences in respect of general health determinants" and also goes on to define "health determinants". The Mayor of London has no statutory role in the commissioning of any health services or health service provision.

6. Financial Implications

- 6.1 All costs arising from the appointment of an external contractor to provide technical advice and support for the Health Committee's investigation into TB in London would be met from the 2015/16 scrutiny programme budget. Subject to approval, there is provision of £5,000 for commissioning this external support during 2015/16.
- 6.2 The contract would be let and managed in accordance with relevant GLA policies and procedures. As this project is consultancy based, the requirements of the GLA's Expenses and Benefits Framework and the Financial Regulations would also be adhered to.

List of appendices to this report:

Appendix 1 – Scoping paper for investigation into tuberculosis in London

Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985
List of Background Papers: Member's Delegated Authority Form 583
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