

<b>Committee(s)</b>	<b>Dated:</b>
Community and Children's Services	9 September 2016
<b>Subject:</b> Social Wellbeing Commission	<b>Public</b>
<b>Report of:</b> Director of Community and Children's Services	<b>For Decision</b>
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### Summary

The City of London Corporation has identified the reduction of social isolation and loneliness as a strategic priority. Research from Goldsmiths University has provided valuable insights into social isolation within the City of London and has also suggested areas where extra investigation could prove beneficial.

It is proposed that a Social Wellbeing Commission should be established to investigate these areas further, hearing evidence from a range of expert witnesses including residents, academics, other local authorities and the voluntary sector. The evidence heard will be used to refine the City Corporation's Social Wellbeing Strategy and to produce guidance which can be shared with other commissioning authorities as well as informing the national policy debate.

### Recommendation(s)

Members are asked to:

- Approve the establishment of a Social Wellbeing Commission.

### Main Report

#### Background

1. The City of London Corporation and Healthwatch hosted a series of 'Ageing Well in the City' workshops in 2014. A common theme raised during the events was the need to do more to tackle social isolation and loneliness.
2. Tackling social isolation has subsequently been identified as a priority in the City Corporation's Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy, in the Mental Health Strategy and by the Adult Advisory Group.
3. The City Corporation commissioned Dr Roger Green of Goldsmiths University to carry out community ethnographic research into social isolation in the City. In July 2016, this Committee received a presentation on his research, *The Voices of Older People: Exploring Social Isolation and Loneliness in the City of London*.

This research provided valuable insights into social isolation in the City of London and also suggested areas where extra investigation could prove beneficial.

### **Current Position**

4. Officers have been developing a Social Wellbeing Strategy to take forward this work and to start to address the social isolation issues faced by residents. A public consultation is currently being held on the proposals.

### **Social Wellbeing Commission**

5. It is proposed that a Social Wellbeing Commission should be established to examine the issues, themes and suggested approaches that have emerged from the research and engagement undertaken to date, focusing on areas that are especially relevant to reducing social isolation in the City of London.
6. The Commission would hear evidence and explore the relevant issues in detail. It would make policy recommendations for local, regional and national audiences and propose specific actions to be taken by the City Corporation as part of its Social Wellbeing Strategy and Action Plan.
7. The areas examined by the Commission would be themed around the needs of specific groups. The Commission would also consider opportunities and approaches that have the potential to significantly reduce social isolation. Officers would propose a long list of potential issues, themes and suggested approaches to the Chairman of the Commission who would agree the final programme.
8. The Commission would be chaired by the Community and Children's Services (CCS) Grand Committee Chairman (or his/her representative). It would include three elected Members (one Alderman and two Common Councilmen), the DCCS Director, the Health and Wellbeing Board Chairman (or his/her representative), the Director of Public Health and one City and Hackney Safeguarding Adults Board representative. Any additional members identified (from specialist or national bodies, for instance) would be proposed to the Chairman for approval. DCCS would provide policy support and act as the secretariat of the Commission.
9. The Commission would convene evidence sessions, hearing from expert witnesses from other local authorities, innovative projects working in the field and national charities. The sessions would seek to learn from best practice and establish recommendations for reducing social isolation both in the City of London and in a national context.
10. A series of public workshops with City residents would also be held, to explore their views, experiences and ideas for change in each area of focus. A member of the Commission would attend each public workshop and a report capturing the output of the workshop would be presented to the Commission as part of the evidence sessions.

11. The evidence sessions and public workshops would be held between November 2016 and January 2017. The Commission's final report would be published in spring 2017.

12. The Commission would produce:

- a Social Wellbeing Report, with a chapter on each of the chosen areas of focus
- recommended actions for the City of London Corporation's Social Wellbeing Strategy, refining and adapting its approach
- guidance in a pan-London context, to be shared with other commissioning authorities and informing the national policy debate on social isolation
- policy recommendations for local, regional and national audiences.

13. The Commission may identify additional outputs or events during the course of its work. These would be proposed to the Chairman for approval.

### **Corporate & Strategic Implications**

14. The second priority in the CCS Business Plan 2015–17 is to promote health and wellbeing so that people in the City feel safe, are socially connected and supported, and feel a sense of pride and satisfaction in where they live and in their community. Reducing social isolation and loneliness supports this objective.

### **Conclusion**

15. Reducing social isolation and loneliness has been identified as an important way to improve the health and wellbeing of City residents. A Social Wellbeing Commission, tasked with investigating issues of particular relevance to reducing social isolation in the City of London, would make an important contribution towards this.

### **Appendices**

- Appendix 1 – Social Wellbeing Commission Diagram

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