

CHILDREN & FAMILIES OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**27TH FEBRUARY 2019**

REPORT TITLE	Tackling Obesity
REPORT OF	Julie Webster Acting Director for Health and Wellbeing Rebecca Mellor, Senior Public Health Manager

REPORT SUMMARY

Obesity is one of the most serious health challenges of the 21st century – it is a complex issue with several different but often interlinked causes. No single measure is likely to be effective on its own in tackling obesity it requires action across agencies, sectors and with local people.

The purpose of this report is to provide members of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee further detail on the key challenges that Wirral faces in relation to overweight and obesity and opportunities to help local people maintain a healthy weight; outlining a series of recommendations for action.

This report affects all wards within the Borough; it does not contain any key decisions.

RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that The Overview and Scrutiny Committee

- i) establish a working group to develop via a series of workshops an action plan to identify key areas of work to support local people maintain a healthy weight
- ii) note the opportunities identified within this report to promote healthy weight
- iii) endorse the proposed development and commitment to the Local Government Declaration on Healthy Weight for Wirral.

SUPPORTING INFORMATION

1.0 REASON/S FOR RECOMMENDATION/S

The causes of obesity are complex and the journey to becoming overweight is a highly personal one. For some there may be a biological susceptibility to weight gain, but for all of us a crucial factor is our environment and how far that helps or hinders us to make healthy food choices and build activity into our everyday lives. What this means is that achieving a healthy weight is not just the responsibility of the individual, and to make a difference at a population level we will require a collaborative approach that creates system wide change.

In seeking to tackle obesity, we are addressing changes in the way that we live our lives that have evolved over decades. There are no quick wins. To stop the rise in obesity we will require collaborative effort from across the public, private and voluntary sectors and amongst individuals, families and communities.

The Overview and Scrutiny Committee is uniquely positioned to lead this work.

2.0 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

Tackling overweight and obesity is a key strand of the Wirral 2020 Plan pledge “*Wirral Residents Live Healthier Lives*” and sits within a much broader set of actions designed to address obesity. However tackling obesity is everybody’s business

A report was taken to the Children and Families Overview and Scrutiny Committee in January 2019. This report provided an update on; local obesity statistics (with the inclusion of data on the prevalence of diabetes); ‘Eat Well Wirral’ programme and takeaway licensing. Members asked for further clarification on the key challenges that Wirral faces around tackling obesity and a set of recommendations on further action.

3.0 BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Almost two thirds of local people are either overweight or obese. The impact of this is far reaching and the causes multiple. There is no single effective solution. **Without action across agencies, sectors and with local people** the health of individuals will continue to suffer, health inequalities associated with obesity will remain and the economic and social costs will increase to unsustainable levels.

A number of actions will require national policy. Councils are well placed to lobby national government on behalf of local people e.g. The UK Government has committed to consult on TV and online advertising to children of products high in fat, sugar and salt, we need to be prepared to respond to the consultation including the views of local people.

At a local level, there is the opportunity to go beyond educating people about healthy eating to tackling key local environmental drivers of obesity and supporting people who are already overweight. A whole systems approach to obesity provides local authorities with

the process to do this. It epitomises 'Health in All Policies'¹, drawing on the local authority's strengths, fitting with its business priorities and recognising that councils can achieve better and more effective results by engaging their community and local assets.

4.0 PROPOSAL

It is proposed that the Children and Families Overview and Scrutiny Committee support a whole system approach to tackling obesity by working with stakeholders to develop an understanding of the reality of the challenge, consider how the system is operating and where there are the greatest opportunities for change.

The Overview and Scrutiny Committee is well placed to lead this approach which can be challenging in the current environment of significant financial constraints which dictate that, for many Councils and partners, jobs, local prosperity and statutory services take priority.

There are several issues that could be explored via this approach that could lead to local action. These include:

- The role of physical regeneration in promoting safe spaces for cycling and walking
- The potential levers of the Council's statutory responsibilities e.g. planning and licensing.
- The role of business in developing innovative solutions
- Engaging residents in the development of solutions
- The development of transport plans including the provision, access and affordability of public transport, safe environments and infrastructure for walking, cycling and recreation
- Addressing the availability of assets in communities to support healthy weight for example; access to affordable fruit and vegetables, concentration of 'unhealthy' food and approaches to food and fuel poverty locally
- The role of health and care providers to address overweight and obesity
- The opportunities for nurseries, schools and colleges to increase physical activity and facilitate healthy eating
- Adoption of the Local Government Declaration on Healthy Weight. This has been successfully employed in fifteen North West Councils and is designed to support Councils to exercise their responsibility in developing, implementing and enforcing policies which promote healthy weight

Support is available from Public Health England to work with the Council to develop a systems approach to promoting healthy weight.

5.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no financial implications arising directly from this report

6.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no additional legal implications arising directly from this report

¹ Health in All Policies (HiAP) is an approach to policies that systematically and explicitly takes into account the health implications of the decisions made; targets the key social determinants of health; looks for synergies between health and other core objectives of Councils and the work we do with partners; and tries to avoid causing harm with the aim of improving the health of the population and reducing inequity.

7.0 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS: ICT, STAFFING AND ASSETS

There are no resource implication arising directly from this report

8.0 RELEVANT RISKS

If the action outlined in this report does not progress it is highly likely that the trends, we are observing in increasing levels of people who are overweight and obese will continue.

9.0 ENGAGEMENT/CONSULTATION

Engagement has taken place with local people via the Healthy High Street insight work and work to develop a local food plan.

10.0 EQUALITY IMPLICATION

An equality impact assessment has not been completed due to the nature of this report.

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APPENDICES

REFERENCE MATERIAL

Report to Children and families Overview and Scrutiny Committee, 24 January 2019 – Local Action to Tackle Obesity - <http://democracy.wirral.gov.uk/documents/s50055110/Tackling%20Obesity%20Report.pdf>

Healthy Weight Declaration (appended)

SUBJECT HISTORY (last 3 years)

Council Meeting	Date
As above	