

## **Cabinet – 8 June 2011**

### **Child Obesity Scrutiny Working Group**

**Portfolio:** Councillor R Andrew, Children's Services  
Councillor A Harris, Leisure, Culture & Environment

**Services:** Children's Services  
Neighbourhood Services

**Wards:** All

**Key Decision:** No

**Forward Plan:** No

#### **1.0 Summary of Report**

- 1.1 This report is a response to the recommendations of the Children and Young People's Scrutiny and Performance Panel.

#### **2.0 Recommendations**

- 2.1 That Cabinet note the actions that have been implemented in response to the recommendations of the Children & Young People's Scrutiny Panel as set out in paragraph 3.4.

#### **3.0 Background Information**

- 3.1 Members were concerned regarding the alarming rise in the numbers of overweight children in Walsall, together with a rise in associated health issues, including an increase in the incidents of type 2 diabetes (NHS Walsall December 2010). It was also acknowledged that this would cause a significant rise in ill health for this group in later years.
- 3.2 The Children's & Young People's Performance Panel set up a working group to focus its investigation on work currently being undertaken to tackle childhood obesity. The working group also accessed activity undertaken elsewhere which could have a positive impact if introduced in Walsall.
- 3.3 The working group report was presented to the Children's & Young People's Performance Panel at its meeting on 28 April 2011. The Panel endorsed the report and recommended the proposals as set out in the report.
- 3.4 The recommendations made by the working group, along with comments addressing them are set out below:-

- **To tackle childhood obesity and ensure collective local resources are focused on those areas within the borough with the greatest inequalities using Public Health intelligence including the Children's Healthy Weight Needs Assessment.**

The Joint Strategic Needs Assessment takes account of child obesity and identifies the specific hot spot areas and any priorities arising feed into the Children & Young People's Plan (CYPP). The new CYPP has identified a key priority relating to reducing child obesity.

- **Funding is identified through key partners e.g. Local Authority, to enable full participation in the Food Dudes programme in all 86 Primary Schools in Walsall.**

Work has begun in identifying eight schools who will be in the first wave to participate in the Food Dudes programme. Funding from NHS Walsall has been secured to implement this programme in up to ten schools, however further funding is still required to implement the programme across all schools in the borough. The Health, Wellbeing & Citizenship team within Children's Services Serco will support schools with the implementation of this programme within their schools in order to maximise its impact. The team will need to plan for the roll out of this programme to other schools.

- **Walsall special schools participate in the Food Dudes pilot; this group is identified through Walsall's Healthy Weight Strategy as a high risk group.**

NHS Walsall funding will allow all the Special Schools to access Food Dudes. These schools will be given support by the Health, Wellbeing & Citizenship team within Children Services Serco to ensure positive outcomes for students.

- **Best practice and shared learning from the A\* STAR Active School Travel and Road Safety scheme is implemented in schools throughout the borough, including the establishment of a network of schools.**

Through the Healthy Schools' Network meetings best practice can be shared and disseminated. Consideration will be given to Area Partnerships and targeting the A\* STAR Active School Travel and Road Safety Scheme for schools to clusters which directly benefit the children and communities in most need.

Officers continue to deliver the current NHS funded A\*STAR pilot project is in its final year and was aimed at 12 schools in the borough that suffer from high levels of childhood obesity with low levels of walking & cycling in areas of high deprivation.

To develop the project a bid has been submitted to the Department for Transport for resources from the new Local Sustainable Transport Fund with the aim of expanding the project to cover a wider range of participants across a greater age range.

Initially the focus will be on a secondary school and its primary feeder schools to provide continuity to participants through the life of the project. As the project evolves the model will expand to include pre-school, further education organisations and the wider community.

- **Best practice and shared learning from the Bikeability scheme is implemented in schools throughout the borough, including the development of a central training site.**

Support through the Healthy Schools' Network will be given to this scheme to encourage all schools to engage and successfully implement best practice.

It is hoped that Public Health grant may be used to support healthy sustainable travel options, to extend the current project beyond the next three years. The development of central training sites will be progressed between officers in the Neighbourhood's Directorate as part of an overall review of leisure facilities provision.

- **Commercial sponsors are being sought to support the promotion and maintenance of cycle and tow paths for recreation and exercise.**

Officers continue to seek funding to support maintenance though the number of off-road routes is minimal, funding for the maintenance of these routes is a long-standing issue. Seeking sponsorship could help their promotion and establish a routine maintenance programme, which would improve the environment for existing and potential pedestrians / cyclists. However all maintenance issues associated with the network of canal towpaths come under the direct responsibility of British Waterways.

- **The consultation zone for planning applications for take-aways would be 100m radius for residents/ business and is extended to schools within a 400m radius**

This is not an executive matter, however it is understood that this has now been implemented by the Planning and Building Control Service.

- **Schools, Serco and NHS Walsall should be alerted if a planning application is received for a take-away within 400m of a school**

This is not an executive matter, however it is understood that this has now been implemented by Planning and Building Control.

- **The upper floors of existing take-aways should not be approved as locations for Free Schools or Academies**

This is not an executive matter, however where planning permission is required this will be considered as a material consideration in the decision making process.

- **A Health Impact section be included in all council reports, led by Public Health.**

This will be considered as part of a general review of the report format

already underway.

- **Consideration is given to the use of new social media to help in the promotion of healthy lifestyles to young people.**

Working with partners and IT and communication services, the use of social media will be delivered to communicate positive healthy life-style messages to children in Walsall positive healthy lifestyle messages.

- **The Council and school's require there to be effective communication between kitchen and lunchtime staff to help promote healthy food options.**

The Council's Catering Service has a good two-way form of communication between the school and the catering staff. This applies to the 81 (72%) schools that the council currently provides catering provision to.

- **Each school has a governor nominated for health .**

In conjunction with Children Services Serco's Governor Support Service the Health, Wellbeing and Citizenship team will offer training to governors and encourage the appointment of a Health Governor in each school. The first step will be with an article in the Governor Support Newsletter to engage Governors in this work.

- **A Walsall Healthy School Awards standard is introduced to engage schools to increase physical activity and improve diet, championed by a Councillor.**

A Walsall Healthy Schools Award is being developed. The National Healthy Schools Award now ceased and a local award will replace the original national award. The local Walsall award will be in conjunction with our partners e.g. NHS Walsall, Walsall Leisure Services and will offer schools the opportunity to build on and embed the successful Healthy Schools work they have already done. Support from the Council is sought in raising the profile of this award in order to engage and reward schools that are successful in having positive healthy lifestyle outcomes for children.

- **Parents receive a letter at the commencement of their child's primary and secondary school education setting out the school's policy to obesity.**

Through the Healthy Schools' Network and one to one work with schools, an obesity policy is being piloted and this will then be disseminated to schools.

- **Nominated points of contact are established and updated where necessary to maintain effective communication between schools and NHS Walsall and other statutory partners in relation to obesity.**

Walsall Children & Young People's Partnership includes all key partners which includes all key partners and provides the opportunity for effective communication between schools, NHS Walsall and other statutory partners in relation to child obesity.

**School dinner portion sizes are appropriate for children at Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2.**

It is recognised that meal sizes for Infant aged children should be slightly smaller than the meal offered to junior aged children. A judgement is also made by catering staff for more mature children (for instance year 6) where their height and early/accelerated growth may require a larger meal size.

- **The childhood obesity working group be re-established in the new municipal year.**

This is a matter for the Children & Young People's Scrutiny and Performance Panel.

#### **4.0 Resource considerations**

##### **4.1 Financial:**

A variety of funding streams, including partner contributions, support the work to tackle childhood obesity. Recommendations are to be taken forward, which will be financed from within existing budgets. Others will be prioritised and progressed as funding from partners, grants or other sources become available.

##### **4.2 Legal:**

Local authorities have a statutory duty under the Children Act 2004 to make arrangements to ensure that they take account of the need to safeguard and promote the welfare of children in the discharge of their own functions.

##### **4.3 Staffing:**

There are no staffing implications arising from this report.

#### **5.0 Citizen impact**

The proposals will result in improved outcomes for children and young people.

#### **6.0 Community safety**

The proposals will result in improved outcomes for children and young people.

## **7.0 Environmental impact**

There is no environmental impact as a result of this report.

## **8.0 Performance and risk management issues**

- 8.1 **Risk:** The key risk is that failing to address obesity will seriously impair the life outcomes and life expectancy of children and young people as it is likely they will be obese for the rest of their lives. This will also result in higher costs to the state due to poorer health outcomes. Childhood obesity levels are higher in deprived areas; failing to reduce levels will increase health inequalities in the borough. There is a challenge in delivering the ambitious programme of change required by the recommendations above which will require commitment from a wide range of stakeholders. Progress of the obesity reduction delivery programme will be monitored by Children and Young People's Performance and Delivery sub group and will be reported to the Health Inequalities and Wellbeing Board.
- 8.2. **Performance management:** The Children and Young People's Performance and Delivery sub group will monitor progress of priorities within the CYPP, this includes reducing childhood obesity and performance will be reported to the Children and Young People's Partnership Board on an exception basis. Progress will also be reported to the Health Inequalities and Wellbeing Board

## **9.0 Equality implications**

The proposals will result in an improved approach to addressing childhood obesity.

## **10.0 Consultation**

The working group consulted with the Scrutiny and Performance Panel and key members of staff in formulating the report.

## **Background papers**

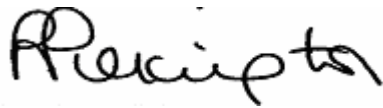
Report from the Childhood Obesity Working Group.

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