

## Council – 8 April 2019

### Notice of motion – Healthy borough

A notice of motion has been received from Councillors S. Coughlan, D. Coughlan, Shires, Ward, Burley, Jeavons, Chambers, Jukes, Robertson, Underhill, Hussain and Nawaz as detailed below:

“Walsall Council is working to become a Healthy Borough. Our ambition is to reduce health inequalities so that all residents can live a longer and healthier life.

Council notes:

That the local authority is using its powers and resources to promote physical and mental health and that it is recognised nationally and by WHO (European Healthy Cities Network) as developing a “health in all policies” approach to embed actions across policies and services. This approach includes:

- Healthy transport and air quality
- Leisure services and physical activity
- Housing and planning
- Health improvement in community settings such as action on smoking reduction, healthy weight and promoting mental wellbeing
- A working city and health at work
- Working with partners to develop a Good Food Plan
- A vibrant healthy schools programme
- Working with partners through the Wellbeing for Life Board

Council also notes:

That the challenges are great. Government policies are conspiring against making our Borough healthier. In particular Council regrets:

- The impact of austerity through public sector pay reductions, cuts to local government funding and cuts in “welfare reform” and housing benefits. Child poverty in the Borough is growing and this will have lifelong health and wellbeing consequences;
- Cuts to services across the NHS which will seriously impact on the health and wellbeing of Walsall residents now and in the future and which may no longer be accessible at the point of need. These will severely restrict the direction of travel as set out in the NHS five year forward view of strengthening community-based services and focusing on prevention at a time NHS spending is falling as a proportion of GDP and is projected to fall further by 2020, well below the European average;
- That children and young people are having to wait longer to access mental health support, if they manage to get a referral at all, and the numbers having to attend A and E with a psychiatric condition are increasing;
- The reductions in the funding for community pharmacies which will lead to closures, reduction in services and lack of capacity to develop innovative approaches in support for our vision for public health;

- Closure of GP practices in areas of high deprivation;
- Reduction in CCG spending on mental health at a time when demand is increasing;
- A £413m funding gap in NHS services by 2021 in the region which is driving the Black Country Sustainability and Transformation Plan (STP);
- The lack of transparency, inclusivity and local accountability of the government driven STP.

Council resolves to:

- Endorse the Council's approach to develop a Healthy borough;
- Note the scale of the challenge to reduce health inequalities in the face of the Government's continuing austerity agenda which impacts on our public services;
- Restate our opposition to Government policies on the funding and future governance of NHS services;
- Call on the Government to invest in the NHS to the same level as in European countries;
- Call for a more transparent and inclusive approach to the development and implementation of STPs by ensuring all stakeholders are fully involved at both regional and local level;
- To continue adhering to the Marmot objectives in order to address health inequalities in our town."

## Response

The Walsall Joint Strategic Needs Assessment was recently refreshed in late 2018 which highlighted that violence, childhood poverty, obesity in adults and children and fuel poverty remain an issue. Details can be found here <https://www.walsallintelligence.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/sites/6/2019/03/JSNA-2018-refresh-slides-for-website-2019.pdf>

Walsall Council is working with partners to help the local population improve their health and wellbeing. This response focuses on how we are focussing our work to continue developing a healthy borough. It makes specific reference to the work of the Healthy Environment Transformation Programme (HETP). The programme recognises that our environment has a huge influence on our health including education, housing, workplace, resources, green spaces, physical activity, healthier eating options, air quality and social connections. Therefore, the focus for this programme has been around:

- Where we Live
- Where we Play
- Where we Eat
- Where we Travel
- Healthy transport and air quality  
Air Quality improvement has been a key focus of the HETP. Examples of this focus include:
  - Forming a Transport and Health Sub-group to look at better use of Walsall's transport systems in the promotion of healthier living

- Both as an organisation and with agreement from partners, contributing to a sustainable travel approach to look at and explore alternative methods of travel to work and around the borough; in particular supporting cycling to work and schemes such as the Bike Share Scheme (commencing September 2019); Staff pool bike scheme; and wider participation in developing a walking/cycling infrastructure such as the A34 Sprint Cycling Route in conjunction with WM Combined Authority
  - Public Health Air Pollution Partnership gathering data on harmful air pollutants, and how this correlates with health issues. Current work involves expanding the data collection system and including other emission indicators to allow for enhanced modelling. We are also looking to submit a research bid to evaluate the impact of air quality alerts on health and health service usage of people with respiratory conditions in Walsall
  - Working with colleagues across regeneration and planning to take forward provision of electric vehicle points across the borough and through the planning application process for future developments  
Public health commissions the A\*STARS programme. This is a series of walking, cycling, scooting and road safety initiatives, along with training, expertise and support that is given to schools to help them to develop and promote safer, healthier lifestyle choices for all. The programme promotes health and wellbeing by combining and providing road safety, health and sustainable travel education, training and awareness.
- Leisure services and physical activity  
Through the HETP, we have:
    - Developed of a Green Space Strategy (2018-22) and action plan to improve our green spaces and parks and develop opportunities for the community to increase their physical activity/volunteering
    - Introduced 'people counters' in parks to capture data on usage and use this to improve physical activities across the borough
    - Secured 2-year funding (£200k) under the 'Rethinking Parks' Programme to engage with local businesses in supporting and sustaining a shared local environment and green spaces
    - Launched a Making Connections Walsall (MCW Active) funding opportunity to local voluntary organisations. MCW Active will also reduce loneliness but will utilise physical activity and/ or weight management as a vehicle for doing so.
    - Developed a Physical Activity Framework called "on the Move" with the West Midlands Combined Authority to support increasing physical activity on a regional and local level e.g. the bike share scheme.
    - Coordinated and delivered corporate volunteering opportunities for 5 businesses. Volunteers will carry out a range of activities including path clearance, conservation and habitat creation.
    - Developed a Healthy Spaces Programme including the vision of a healthy park and opportunities for corporate volunteering with business.
- Housing and planning
    - The public health team have created a secondment for a Wider Determinants (WD) programme manager, which focuses on closer working between planning and PH. Currently we are standard consultees on planning applications that could impact on the Walsall residents' health and

- wellbeing, and are invited to attend planning meetings where potential new developers submit their intended plans for large scale developments
- We are also actively involved in the current review of the Black Country Core Strategy, now known as the Black Country Plan, to embed health and wellbeing within this Planning and Regional Plan for the Black Country.
  - Public Health have been working closely with Arcadis, who are leading the Town Centre Master Plan to ensure we maximise the opportunity to improve health and wellbeing for Walsall residents. Related to this, we have supported a bid for Healthy High Street funding working closely with colleagues with Regeneration.
- Health improvement in community settings such as action on smoking reduction, healthy weight and promoting mental wellbeing
    - A new Tobacco Control Plan for Walsall 2016-2019 builds on the previous 2012-2015 plan. A co-ordinated approach to tobacco control is required to fully realise the improvements to the health and economy of Walsall and its residents. This includes a combination interventions including ensuring effective regulation and enforcement, cease promotion of tobacco, making tobacco less affordable, promoting smoke-free environments. We have also signed up to the Local Government Declaration on Tobacco Control a commitment by the Council to tobacco control activity.
    - Walsall Council are committed to reducing health inequalities by offering all pregnant women at Walsall Healthcare Trust the opportunity to have screening for smoking and support to quit smoking from a specialist stop smoking advisor. In addition peer supporters (buddies) are providing additional support to pregnant women who want to quit smoking. Walsall have stop smoking services which offer the people of Walsall support with smoking cessation.
    - Walsall has a Multi-Agency Suicide Prevention Strategy in place which takes a broad approach to improving the mental health and wellbeing of people living in the borough. It seeks to raise awareness of suicide, encourage help-seeking behaviour amongst high risk groups and to tackle the social, health and economic factors that increase suicide risk. Walsall also has a Mental Health Recovery and Enablement Service to support adults living in Walsall or registered with a Walsall GP experiencing mental health difficulties . The service has a number of support groups.
    - The importance of strong social networks, access to friends, family and an active social life should not be underestimated. Those who enjoy a happy social life, achieve better health outcomes than those who do not. Making Connections Walsall (MCW) is a friendly service for residents of Walsall addressing loneliness and social isolation.
    - It offers people in Walsall an opportunity to explore their social needs and interests. It also provides support to people to build their social networks, improve their emotional health and wellbeing and engage in community activities. MCW provides the health community and social care professionals with a single route of referral into appropriate local community-based support networks. This utilises a “social prescribing” approach to help engage people (particularly vulnerable and marginalised groups).
    - Families are integral to the promotion of healthy weight in children and young people and equally a family needs the support of their local community and social networks to make healthy weight a norm. Seed

funding has been provided to communities to set projects in place to support and encourage good health promoting habits in the community specifically aimed at young people. These range from establishing a walking route around a green space, provision of traditional toys and how to use them to cooking and sharing programmes.

- Walsall Council was successfully shortlisted as one of 13 Childhood Obesity Trailblazer Local Authorities. The programme, in partnership with the Local Government Association, aims to test the limits of existing powers, share best practice, develop solutions to local obstacles and consider how to achieve large-scale changes. The proposal focused on collaboration with local businesses to ensure that they thrive, invest into the local area and tackle childhood obesity.
- A working city and health at work
  - The Walsall Healthy Workplace Programme has been developed to provide tailored health and wellbeing support to a range of businesses across Walsall.
  - A joint Health and Wellbeing Board & Walsall Economic Board sub-group has been developed to address priorities of common concern via a set of task and finish projects. For example, the sub-group has started testing some emerging best healthy workplace practice with local businesses represented on the group (e.g. ZF Lemforder). Walsall Public Health secured £250,000 (through Big Lottery and European Social Fund) to provide health support to unemployed residents (over 25) as part of the Bridges project.
- Working with partners to develop a Good Food Plan
  - PH have worked with Environmental Health to increase the number of Walsall takeaway food outlets that have been awarded the HealthSwitch award for introducing healthier options for Walsall residents. We have re-designed the Health Switch Award resource pack to improve data collection and evaluation including capturing the customers view and impact of the award. We have designed a bespoke Health Switch Award resource pack for mobile traders and soft play centres and are piloting it with 10 mobile traders and 4 soft play centres. The Health Switch website now also includes mini case studies, gallery of premises and a map of premises who have signed up. We are also piloting a new approach to recruiting hot food takeaways to the Health Switch Award with 20 new premises with a scoring of 3 on the Food Hygiene Rating Scheme to increase their score to a min 4 and improve their nutritional offer to residents. Finally, we have successfully piloted a mentoring programme leading to 2 hot food takeaway premises increasing their Food Hygiene Rating Scheme and being assessed for gold award.
  - Public Health commission Food For Life to work with Walsall early years settings and all Walsall schools.  
Food for Life brings schools, early year's settings and their surrounding communities together around the core ethos of healthy, tasty and sustainable food. The Early Years Award provides an independent endorsement that they serve good quality, nutritious food and support the babies and children in their care to develop good eating habits for life. The School Award supports schools to take a whole school approach to food and nutrition. This includes growing their own food; organising trips to

- farms; providing cooking and growing clubs for students and their families; serve freshly prepared, well-sourced meals and providing an attractive dining environment.
- Food For Life are also commissioned to deliver train the trainer cook and eat sessions, these are free for community and voluntary sector organisations in Walsall. The sessions include training in practical cooking skills development, healthy eating and food hygiene guidance, budget management and food waste reduction. The course then allows project leaders and volunteers to run community cook and eat activities in their own venues.
  - A vibrant healthy schools programme
    - From September 2020 Relationships Education will be compulsory in all primary schools in England and Relationships and Sex Education compulsory in all secondary schools, as well as making Health Education compulsory in all state-funded schools<sup>1</sup>. Public Health and key stakeholders are developing a Health in Education Framework to support Walsall schools to meet the legal expectations with which they must comply whilst taking a whole school approach to promote the health and wellbeing of students within schools to improve their educational and their health and wellbeing outcomes.
  - Working with partners through the Health and Wellbeing Board
    - We have a strong partnership in Walsall's Health and Wellbeing Board
    - Public Health has also led the refresh of the Walsall Plan, Our Health and Wellbeing Strategy (2019-2021)

Dr. Barbara Watt,  
Director of Public Health

29 March 2019

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<sup>1</sup> Draft Regulations Available at: [https://consult.education.gov.uk/pshe/relationships-education-rse-health-education/supporting\\_documents/Draft%20Regulations.pdf](https://consult.education.gov.uk/pshe/relationships-education-rse-health-education/supporting_documents/Draft%20Regulations.pdf) {accessed 18<sup>th</sup> March 2019}.