

TITLE OF REPORT: **Review of Obesity (across the life course)
Scoping Report**

REPORT OF: Director of Public Health

SUMMARY

Families Overview and Scrutiny Committee have agreed that the focus of its review in 2018-9 will be obesity across the life course.

During the course of the review it is proposed that the Committee will consider the complex range of factors that contribute towards obesity and the impact of obesity across the life-course on society and the wider health and social care economy. An approach that involves the 'whole system', with action at an individual, environmental and societal level will be explored further with the Committee.

The Committee will also consider the current evidence base as part of a 'Whole system approach' including a focus on legislation, regulations, advertising control and taxation measures in tackling and reducing obesity, with a view to agreeing a set of recommendations for Gateshead.

This report sets out the proposed scope of the review and the process for taking it forward.

Background

1. Obesity is considered to be one of the most serious public health challenges of the 21st century. Without action, 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.
2. Obesity is a key preventable cause of death and disease in the UK and a priority for Public Health. Almost three in four adults in the UK will be overweight or obese by 2035 and over the next twenty years rising levels of obesity could lead to an additional 4.62 million cases of type 2 diabetes, 1.63 million cases of coronary heart diseases and 670,000 new cases of cancer.
3. At a time of significant pressure on public spending, the cost of obesity to the economy is huge, for example in the United Kingdom it is estimated to be around £20 billion per year, taking lost productivity and sick days into account
4. For Gateshead 'Vision 2030' sets out the 6 Big Ideas. Of these, "Active And Healthy Gateshead" resolves to provide support to encourage people to improve their health and lifestyle. The five year Council Plan sets out how

Gateshead will be a healthy, inclusive and nurturing place for all. The Gateshead Health and Wellbeing Board have also undertaken to reduce excess weight in Children for 4-5 year olds to 18.1% and for children 10-11 year olds to 25% by 2020.

5. Gateshead Council's commitment to 'Making Gateshead a place where everyone thrives' provides everyone in Gateshead the opportunity to determine what matters most and the opportunity to contribute and work together to make Gateshead a place where everyone thrives. In terms of the healthy weight agenda, we are beginning to better understand what works to reduce levels of obesity overall, however there is very little accessible evidence available on what works to reduce inequalities or differences in obesity levels between social groups.
6. The causes of obesity are extremely complex encompassing biology and behaviour, but set within a cultural, environmental and social framework. Although personal responsibility plays a crucial part in weight gain, human biology is being overwhelmed by the effects of today's 'obesogenic' environment, with its abundance of energy dense food, motorised transport and sedentary lifestyles. The obesity epidemic cannot be prevented by individual action alone and demands a societal approach.
7. There is a broad consensus that preventing and tackling obesity effectively requires the development of a sustained 'whole systems approach', with co-ordinated policies and actions across individual, environmental and societal levels involving multiple sectors (including planning, housing, transport, children's and adult's services, education, business and health).

Scope of the Review

8. The review will provide an overview of the current picture for Gateshead in terms of what the local data is telling us about the size of the problem for both children and adults who are 'excess weight' (overweight and obese). An overview of the evidence base and emerging areas of interest in terms of a 'whole system obesity approach' will be presented.
9. By 2050, modelling indicates that 60% of adult men, 50% of adult women could be obese. Current data shows that 69.4% of adults in Gateshead have excess weight. This is significantly worse than the England average of 64.8%. Almost two in every three adults in Gateshead has excess weight and around one in four are obese. The emerging picture for our children in Gateshead is not positive. Reception children in Gateshead have some of the lowest prevalence rates of excess weight (overweight and obese 22%) in the North East, however by the time children reach Year 6, Gateshead has one of the highest rates of excess weight levels in the North East (35.5%).
10. The evidence base suggests that in order to tackle obesity effectively we need an approach that involves the whole system, with action at an individual, environmental and societal level. This approach needs to create a culture where healthy weight is the default for everyone in Gateshead.

11. The scope of the review includes consideration of factors influencing obesity that can be tackled by joint working across a number of areas including, planning, transport, housing, business, education and health. With local authority responsibilities in health, planning, highways, transport, education, culture, housing, employment, social care and their relationships with businesses they are in a uniquely influential position to bring about transformational change in the way that obesity is tackled.
12. Successfully tackling obesity is a long term, large scale commitment. The current prevalence of obesity in the population has been at least 30 years in the making. This will take time to reverse and it is reported that it will at least 30 years before reductions in the associated diseases are seen. The evidence is very clear that policies aimed solely at individuals will be inadequate and will not be sufficient to reverse this trend. Significant effective action to prevent obesity at a population level is required.

The suggested scope of this review:

- Provide an overview of the current picture in Gateshead in relation to obesity across the life course, outlining the complexity of the issue.
- An overview of the Whole System approach which provides a different view to tackling obesity. A system approach to obesity moves away from silo working on short term interventions to working with partners across the system to review a range of actions to tackle obesity in the short, medium and long term.
- Identifying opportunities to disrupt the current system, which involves identifying the most likely and productive areas of activity in the local system where Gateshead Council and its partners can take action.

The Process

13. The process and timescale for the review in this paragraph is set out in Appendix 1. It is proposed that the review will take place over an eleven month period from 14 June 2017 to 4 April 2019. It will involve the presentation of expert evidence and research findings.

Who will be involved?

14. While the Review is led by the Council, partner organisations will be involved to ensure an approach that reflects the complexity, prevalence and extent of the response.
15. It is proposed that the first evidence gathering session will provide a detailed overview of the current status for Gateshead in terms of excess weight across the life course and the current evidence base regarding a whole systems approach to tackle this complex area,
16. Information will be presented at the most local levels possible to provide members with insight into the scale of the problem across the life course.

17. Subsequent evidence gathering sessions will include presentations from internal services, external organisations and experts in their respective disciplines.

18. Evidence will be sought from Gateshead Public Health Team, Public Health England, The Newcastle and Gateshead Clinical Commissioning Group, Gateshead Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust and leading academics and clinicians.

Recommendation

Overview and Scrutiny Committee is recommended to agree:

- The scope, process and timescale as set out in this report

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Progress of the Review

This appendix sets out the standard framework for Overview and Scrutiny Committees to agree and conduct policy reviews and includes proposals specific for this review.

Stage 1

The scope, purpose and intended outputs of the Review should firstly be agreed by Families Overview and Scrutiny Committee. The recommendations of Advisory Groups may also be considered if appropriate.

Proposal

- 14th June: Scoping report to Scrutiny Committee

Stage 2

Evidence may be gathered by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee making visits as necessary or inviting persons and organisations to give evidence before it. Relevant Group or Strategic Directors and the Chief Executive will assist the Overview and Scrutiny Committee as necessary. The evidence gathered by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee will be written up by officers. The evidence gathering will include a focus on a whole systems obesity approach including:

- The built environment and transport.
- Food environment.
- Community led approaches.

Proposal

- 13 September, 18 October, 6 December 2018 and 31 January 2019- To have evidence-gathering events that will involve research, presentations by relevant officers, outside organisations and site visits if appropriate (details to be confirmed).

Stage 3

The Overview and Scrutiny Committee will then meet (as many times as is necessary) to analyse the information gathered and prepare its conclusions.

Proposal

- 7 March 2018 - Committees to consider an interim report, prepared by the Lead Officers, and to analyse the evidence presented.

Stage 4

Officers will then prepare a report on the issue based on the views of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee. Officers will submit this report to the next practicable meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee to secure agreement that the report is a fair, accurate and complete reflection of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee's conclusions.

Proposal

- 4 April 2018- Draft final report to be considered by the Committee.

Stage 5

The Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee will then present this report to the Cabinet. The Cabinet may take note of the report, approve all or some of the report's recommendations or refer the report to full Council or to an Advisory Group for further consultation.