

COMMITTEE: Health Scrutiny Committee

DATE: 15 September 2009

REPORT OF: Director of Adult Social Care

REPORT TITLE: Draft Healthy Weight Strategy - A Long-term Vision for Tackling Obesity

1. Purpose of report

To seek the views of the Health Scrutiny Committee as part of the consultation process on the draft Healthy Weight Strategy which will replace the current Obesity Strategy adopted in 2006.

Scrutiny Members are pointed towards the vision and Executive Summary of the strategy on pages 3-8 which will provide a short overview, and the action plan which covers a comprehensive range of activities which it is hoped will achieve the overall vision.

It is important to note that whilst we are proposing a longer timescale of 10 years for the overall vision driving the strategy, the action plan covers only the initial 3 years of this journey. This has been proposed partly as a pragmatic measure, as the problems associated with healthy weight and obesity are not predicted to change fundamentally, or be addressed, within the next 3 years, but having a 3 year action plan will prompt us to review and take stock at regular intervals and revise the action plan so that we have the best chance of achieving the vision within the 10 year time-frame.

The other reason for a 10-year strategic vision is to develop **now** a shared, local sense of ambition and aspiration around this complex agenda which engages the 'whole system'. It is generally recognised that the problem of obesity has been decades in the making and is as much a social issue as it is one of individuals 'eating too much and exercising too little'. It is therefore vital to encourage wide awareness and ownership of this public health issue, through a shared, holistic vision.

2. Background to development & onward delivery

The issues of healthy weight and obesity are high on the national and local agendas. 'Obesity' has been a local public health priority since 2005 and the issue has been brought into sharp focus in recent years by the Foresight Report: Tackling Obesities, Future Choices final report (2007), the Government's National Strategy Healthy Weight, Healthy Lives published in 2008 and the Change4Life campaign and social movement launched earlier this year.

Late in 2008, the Council appointed to the joint post of a Tackling Obesity Strategy Co-ordinator which has been instrumental in the development of the strategy and consolidating a network of colleagues who are working directly and indirectly on this issue locally and helping to join up some of this work. The development of a focused, wide-ranging and ambitious strategy is just the beginning of the process, and this post will continue to be fundamental to the delivery of our aspirations around this agenda.

The development of the strategy has been a collaborative process and has helped to engage a wide range of colleagues, from town planners to breast-feeding support workers. It has been overseen by a strategy working group consisting of senior managers from a number of services and agencies who have a leading role to play in addressing obesity and facilitating healthy weights. Members of this group have often been representing a number of services and interests and this has been a productive process.

Over the Summer, the document itself has been 'out to consultation', with professional colleagues and wider stakeholders being asked to provide comments on the strategy and the responses to this process have been useful and constructive. These have been incorporated into this document and whilst there are still some amendments and changes that are anticipated, the document is now in a late draft form.

The current timetable is for the Executive to receive the strategy at its meeting on 26 October 2009 with a launch to follow before Xmas. The intention is for the launch workshop to focus on the structures, linked networks and working groups which are required to effectively deliver the overall vision and current action plan. The success of the strategy will rely to a large degree on appropriate structures and strong leadership across this network of groups with named colleagues leading specific aspects of the work.

The Strategy Co-ordinator will monitor progress; become involved directly in some of the specific actions, where additional capacity is required to make progress for instance; and help to co-ordinate and link up different projects to achieve efficiencies. In due course this work will also involve exploring and assessing where it may be possible and appropriate to scale-up certain services so that they can reach a wider group of potential service users and identify sustainable funding options to do this.

3. Recommendations

The Health Scrutiny Committee is invited to:

1. Comment on the draft Healthy Weight Strategy before it is presented to the Executive for approval in October 2009;

Further information

To discuss this report or for further information please contact Lynne Percival, Tackling Obesity Strategy Co-ordinator, or Sarah Newsam, Acting Head of

Modernisation by e-mail at lynne.percival@stockport.gov.uk or sarah.newsam@stockport.gov.uk