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Health Scrutiny Committee – 6 April 2022

DRAFT Recommendations

Agenda Item 5 – Childhood Obesity Strategy and Action Plan

The Committee:

1. Thanked the Panel for their attendance and valuable contributions to the Committees' discussion of this topic;
2. Acknowledged the wide range of factors affecting childhood obesity levels, noted that the pandemic had significantly worsened the situation, and recognised that a sustained "whole systems approach" as adopted in Suffolk's Childhood Obesity Strategy 2019-2023 is essential to coordinate action across multiple sectors.
3. Agreed that due to the complexity of the subject and wide range of ideas and recommendations made by members that the best way to take these forward is to set up a separate group to examine the output from the meeting and to feed into an update of the Council's Childhood Obesity Strategy and Action Plan

The Committee recommended:

4. A joint (Health/Education and Children's Services) Scrutiny Task and Finish Group should be established, consisting of 5 councillors preferably who had been involved in the scrutiny of the topic, to work with officers in developing the refreshed Strategy. Councillors interested in taking part should contact the Business Manager (Democratic Services) in the first instance;
5. In developing its terms of reference, the Task and Finish Group should consider the following themes:
 - a) Communication – do parents know what support and advice is available to them (e.g. the OneLife Suffolk offer); how to make campaigns and messaging simple and engaging; opportunities to raise the profile of the offer through, for example, community events and networks; the role of councillors in getting key messages and information out to target communities;
 - b) How will co-production be used to inform the new strategy and who should be involved (for example: primary care, school meals provision, leisure centres, local planning, educational professionals);
 - c) The potential for role models or ambassadors for healthy lifestyles (for example: Ipswich Town Football Club, other sports and athletics clubs, high profile businesses, sports people, leading councillors in Suffolk);
 - d) Look at examples across the country - what are the most effective childhood obesity interventions (locally, nationally, internationally) tried by others and to what extent could any be effectively replicated in Suffolk;
 - e) Lessons learned from the Amsterdam pilot projects in Brandon and Lowestoft to date, and what is planned going forward;
 - f) How to promote healthy dietary habits (such as avoiding sweetened drinks) in early years, such as the HENRY Project (Childrens Centres and

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Family Hubs) and programmes for new mothers (NHS/ Social Services/ Libraries)

- g) How to incentivise schools to make healthy children a priority, for example
 - include healthy lifestyles in RSHE modules, promote in-school and external sports clubs and engage with the Duke of Edinburgh programme;
 - h) The committee and panel agreed that the basic DfE minimum physical education standard of 2 hours weekly is too little for all ages - what actions can be taken to increase exercise time into the school day and raise its importance in the national curriculum;
 - i) Work with schools to effect behaviour change in travel to school - link with local authority work to improve walking and cycling routes, the Junior Road Safety Officer programme and Suffolk Highways;
 - j) Linkages between mental wellbeing and obesity - recognise that activity is helpful to those with ADHD for example, and increases happiness levels;
 - k) Daily exercise and activity – how to make it readily available, accessible, exciting, affordable;
 - l) Initiatives to address food poverty and help parents with their own health issues such as better access to fresh food and cookery classes – are the opportunities publicised and taken up;
 - m) How to make tackling childhood obesity a consideration in wider policy making (identifying the public sector levers such as strategic and local planning).
6. The Committee requested an information bulletin setting out the prevalence of childhood obesity across the Waveney area, based on NCMP data.