

Feasibility Report – Childhood Obesity

Summary

1. At a meeting of the Health Overview & Scrutiny Committee held on Wednesday 8th July 2009 Members of the Committee were presented with a report regarding the Corporate Strategy Key Performance Indicators relevant to the remit of the Committee.
2. Discussions raised some concerns regarding two of the National Performance Indicators (NPI); namely NPI55 (obesity among primary school age children in Reception Year) and NPI56 (obesity among primary school age children in Year 6). In light of this Councillor Susan Galloway registered a scrutiny topic regarding obesity levels in children. A copy of the topic registration form is attached at Annex A to this report.

Criteria

3. Councillor Galloway has identified the following criteria as being relevant to this topic:
 - Public interest (i.e. in terms of both proposals being in the public interest and resident perceptions)
 - In keeping with corporate priorities
 - National/local/regional significance e.g. a central government priority area, concerns joint working arrangements at a local 'York' or wider regional context.
4. The Assistant Director (Partnerships & Early Intervention) agrees that this topic fits with the identified criteria.

Consultation

5. The following people were consulted as part of the feasibility process and comments received are set out in Annex B to this report:
 - Executive Member for Children's Services
 - Executive Member for Housing & Adult Social Services
 - Director of Housing & Adult Social Services
 - Assistant Director (Partnerships & Early Intervention)

- LINKs Steering Group
- Various representatives of York Hospitals Trust
- Various representatives of NHS North Yorkshire & York

Analysis

6. The majority of the comments outlined in Annex B to this report indicate support for progressing this topic to review. Many of the comments indicate that childhood obesity is currently a matter of public interest and there would be much merit in the Health Overview & Scrutiny Committee undertaking some work surrounding this.

7. In York, the issue of obesity is currently being tackled from a variety of directions and by a number of partners and the scrutiny process could be a good way of taking stock of all/or some of these initiatives. It could also give the Committee an opportunity to do some focussed work on how the current initiatives are faring in tackling the problem of childhood obesity within the local area. In addition to initiatives targeted at children (such as 5 a day, healthy eating and 30 minutes PE provision) there are also several groups looking at childhood obesity and healthy lifestyles and these are detailed below:
 - The Healthy Weight, Active Lives Strategic Implementation Group whose aim is to reverse the rising tide of obesity and overweight in our local population by ensuring that everyone is able to achieve and maintain a healthy weight.

 - The All Together Better Project North Yorkshire & York is one of 17 projects within the Altogether Better Programme, funded by the Big Lottery Fund in the Yorkshire & Humber region. Altogether Better is a 5-year well-being programme to help individuals and communities to eat more healthily, be more physically active and improve their mental health. The project will operate in two local authorities where a total of 12 wards have been identified as meeting the criteria for involvement – Scarborough Borough (8 wards) and York (4 wards [Westfield (Foxwood), Clifton, Guildhall, Heworth/Hull Road (Tang Hall)]).

 - MEND (Mind, Exercise, Nutrition ...Do it!). This is an organisation that is dedicated to reducing global childhood and family overweight and obesity levels. They are a social enterprise, working with local, regional, national and international partners to achieve a shared vision of fitter, healthier and happier families.

8. In addition to these the Health Improvement Manager (obesity) at NHS North Yorkshire & York highlighted other factors that may have an impact on obesity such as road networks, location of shops, number of fast food outlets (see paragraph 7 of Annex B to this report for further details).

9. The Comments received raised some concerns regarding the possible breadth of the subject and it was therefore suggested that the remit remain

focussed and not try to cover all areas that may have an effect on childhood obesity. The Director of Housing and Adult Social Services comments that there would be some justification to touch on adult obesity as well, especially in relation to continuity (see his comments in Annex B to this report).

10. Further information published by the Centre for Public Scrutiny is attached at Annex C to this report. This provides a variety of information that Members may find useful in coming to a decision on whether to progress this topic to review. Reviews on this topic have been undertaken in several other Local Authorities and the information in Annex C outlines some of these.

Conduct of Review

11. Should Members choose to proceed with this review Councillor Galloway suggested that they look at the following areas:

- The impact that initiatives such as PE provision, Healthy Eating, 5 a day have had on childhood obesity
- The impact that the 'All Together Better' Campaign is having on the health of the communities it is targeting. The campaign covers other areas in North Yorkshire and some comparison work with other areas could be undertaken.
- Whether monies being spent on the various initiatives is being used to the best advantage.

12. Whilst the topic is aimed primarily at obesity in children, it should also cover measures to tackle obesity in adults.

13. If the review were to go ahead Members may wish to consider consulting the following:

- Relevant persons from the Local NHS Trusts (there is a dedicated lead for obesity at NHS North Yorkshire & York [Greg McGrath] and he should be involved in any review undertaken).
- Relevant Officers from the City of York Council
- LINKs
- Schools
- Local Residents

14. Members have the option of forming a small cross-party task group to undertake any review that they choose to progress. This may have the advantage of giving Members further scope to work more immediately and flexibly on a review topic. All evidence gathered by a task group is regularly reported back to the Health Overview & Scrutiny Committee for consideration.

15. Members will also need to take into consideration commitments already in their work plan and decide where any review would be best placed.

16. Should this be progressed to review the topic registration form indicates that this ought to take between 3 to 6 months.

Corporate Strategy 2009/2012

17. The contents of this report and any review that may be undertaken on the subject of childhood obesity would be directly linked to the 'Healthy City' theme of the recently refreshed Corporate Strategy.

Implications

18. **Financial** – There is a small amount of funding available within the scrutiny budget to carry out reviews. There are no other financial implications associated with this report; however implications may arise should the review be progressed.
19. **Human Resources** – There are no Human Resources implications associated with the recommendations within this report.
20. **Legal** – There are no direct legal implications associated with the recommendations within this report; however implications may arise should the topic be progressed.
21. There are no known equalities, property, crime & disorder or other implications associated with the recommendations in this report.
22. In general terms, the Assistant Director (Partnerships & Early Intervention) commented that he could not see that there would be any implications associated with this topic at the present time; he felt that any recommendations arising would be more likely to address prioritisation of existing resources rather than calling for more.

Risk Management

23. In compliance with the Council's risk management strategy there are no risks associated with the recommendations in this report.

Recommendations

24. Based on the evidence presented within this report Members are advised to proceed with this review in order to explore the points raised within the topic registration form and the comments in Annex B. It is suggested that a cross party task group be set up to undertake the work and that the review begin as soon as possible. If Members agree the Task Group would need to spend their first meeting scoping and timetabling the review.
25. In making the above recommendation, the overall aim for this review was recognised with a number of key objectives. A draft remit is attached at

Annex D to this report. Members are asked to make any appropriate changes prior to approving the remit.

REASON: That childhood obesity is currently a topic of considerable public interest and any findings the Committee may make could go towards improving the health and lifestyles of the young citizens of York.

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Feasibility Study
Approved



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Specialist Implications Officer(s)

None

Wards Affected:

All



For further information please contact the author of the report

Background Papers:

None

Annexes

- Annex A** Topic Registration Form
- Annex B** Comments from Consultees
- Annex C** Centre for Public Scrutiny – Library Monitor 9 – Childhood Obesity
- Annex D** Draft Remit