
SCRUTINY INQUIRY PANEL - TACKLING CHILDHOOD OBESITY IN SOUTHAMPTON
MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 17 DECEMBER 2019

Present: Councillors Coombs, Harwood, Houghton, Professor Margetts, McEwing and T Thomas

Apologies: Councillors Vaughan

7. **APOLOGIES AND CHANGES IN PANEL MEMBERSHIP (IF ANY)**

The apologies of Councillor Vaughan were noted.

8. **MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING (INCLUDING MATTERS ARISING)**

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on 26 November 2019 be approved and signed as a correct record.

9. **UNDERSTANDING LOCAL ENVIRONMENTAL INFLUENCES ON CHILDHOOD OBESITY - THE ACTIVE ENVIRONMENT**

The Panel considered the report of the Director, Legal and Governance requesting that the Panel consider the comments made by the invited guests and use the information provided as evidence in the review.

Following discussion with invited representatives the following information was received:

An overview of physical activity levels in children and young people – Ravita Taheem on behalf of Helen Fisher, Strategic Lead for Physical Activity and Health, Energise Me

- A presentation was provided by Helen Fisher giving an overview on levels of physical activity of children and young people in Southampton.
- Key points raised in the presentation included the following:
 - The Hampshire and Isle of Wight Physical Activity Strategy includes an aim to 'Inspire our children and young people to form an active habit for life' and 'improve levels of physical activity among children and young people'.
 - Chief Medical Officer guidelines recommends 180 minutes a day of physical activity for 0-5 year olds (nationally only 9% of 2-4 year olds are meeting the target) and 60 minutes average per day across the week for 5-18 years.
 - 2018/19 - % of Children and Young People doing 60 mins a day - Nationally 19.6%, Hampshire 18.3%, Southampton 18.3%
 - 2018/19 - % of Children and Young People doing **an average** of 60 mins a day - Nationally 46.8%, Hampshire 43.4%, Southampton 40%
 - 2018/19 - 30 minutes of Sport and Physical Activity at school all years 1-11 - Nationally 40.4%, Hampshire 35.2%, Southampton 36.7%
 - 2018/19 - 30 minutes of Sport and Physical Activity outside school all years 1-11 - Nationally 57.2%, Hampshire 56.5%, Southampton 47.8%

- There are still insufficient numbers reaching the 60 minutes a day target.
- Significant and stubborn inequalities remain in areas of deprivation, gender and race.
- Energise Me is working together to support schools to build physical activity into their school day through Active initiatives: Active Bursts, Active Learning, Active Travel, Active Playtime and outside school through Active Home.

Healthy Places: how planning can support healthy weight environments – Angela Baker, Deputy Director for Health and Wellbeing, Public Health England South East

- A presentation was delivered by Angela Baker on the role that planning can play in supporting a healthy weight environment.
- Key points raised in the presentation included the following:
 - A healthy-weight environment supports people in avoiding becoming overweight or obese through the way in which a place is designed and the facilities it provides.
 - The planning system has a range of powers which can help create and support healthy weight environments.
 - Local Planning Authorities (LPAs) can use tools such as local plan policies, Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs), design codes, planning conditions, Health Impact Assessments (HIAs) and developer contributions to help create and support healthy weight environments, modifying the environment so that it supports being active and does not promote sedentary behaviour or provide easy access to energy-dense food.
 - Six elements to help achieve healthy weight environments through planning process: These are movement & access, open spaces, recreation & play, food environment, neighbourhood spaces, building design & local economy.
 - Key features of these elements are creating places that prioritise walking, cycling and mass transit; provide communal spaces that support wellbeing and encourage active behaviour in children and adults; create buildings which are able to promote a healthy lifestyle, such as building homes with kitchens big enough for people to store, prepare and cook meals and eat together.
 - Leeds have developed a planning framework that requires takeaways to give people healthier choices, calories on menus and they have banned high sugar and high caffeine drinks in takeaways in areas near schools. Licensing funding has been used to police premises.
 - Brighton and Hove Council developed a drinks levy before the national policy. Money recovered was invested into physical activity initiatives by the council.
 - These approaches are part of a long term culture change required to change attitudes to obesity (following successful change in attitude to smoking).
 - It is important that a whole systems approach is taken to promote healthy weight, including encouraging physical activity and other actions, to help reverse the obesity epidemic.

- Local authorities can provide local leadership and take positive action to promote a healthy weight environment by taking a coherent approach across all their relevant functions, including sport and leisure, planning, transport, public health, social care and economic development.
- Such an integrated and place-based approach is demonstrated through the TCPA Planning Healthy Weight Environments and the NHS England Healthy New Towns guidance. Additional guidance from PHE for Local Authorities, Public Health and Planning Teams on 'using the planning system to promote healthy weight environments' is currently in development.

Southampton City Vision Local Plan: contributing to health – Paul Barton, Interim Service Lead for Infrastructure, Planning and Development

- A presentation was delivered by Paul Barton outlining how the Southampton City Vision Local Plan will contribute to health in the city.
- Key points raised in the presentation included the following:
 - Planning decisions, in keeping with the National Planning Policy Framework, are always a balancing act between economic, social and environmental objectives. Health is embedded within social objectives.
 - The City Council is in the process of developing a new local plan. The City Vision Local Plan, due for adoption in 2022, will set out the strategic priorities for development of the city.
 - This provides an opportunity for the facilitation of a healthy city to be a priority in the city's development.
 - A "healthy planning" specialist, funded by Public Health, is being recruited into the Planning Policy Team to ensure that health is at the forefront of planning making processes.
 - The new plan can help to improve health in the city by influencing wider determinants of health such as the quality of homes, transport, environment, jobs and infrastructure. A number of these factors can help support levels of physical activity among city residents and enhance the food environment.
 - A number of areas in the UK have been designated 'healthy towns'. Here localities are exploring how the development of new places could provide an opportunity to create healthier and connected communities with integrated and high-quality services.
 - A healthy city cannot be achieved by planning policy alone. It needs a coherent approach across relevant functions.
 - To influence the content of the local plan, including policies to help manage the increase in exposure to takeaways, it is recommended that feedback is provided during the initial stages of consultation.

Better Transport for a Healthy and Active City – Neil Tuck, Sustainable City Team Leader

- A presentation was delivered by Neil Tuck providing an overview of the developments in Southampton to encourage and enable people to choose healthy and active travel options.

- Key points raised in the presentation included the following:
 - Connected Southampton, the Local Transport Strategy, influenced by Public Health, includes, under the strategic aim of 'A Better Way to Travel', the goals of supporting people to change how they move around the city by widening their healthy and clean travel choices and encouraging them to get around actively and healthily, and helping Southampton become a zero emission city.
 - To deliver policy objective significant resources being invested in delivering a cycle network. Completed Western corridor – 20% uplift in people cycling.
 - Alongside physical infrastructure changes an engagement & behaviour change programme targeting those who want to change / those whose change will create the most impact is being delivered. Focus is on new school starters, building cycling confidence and competence, with priority given to schools near core corridors / areas of poor air quality.
 - In 2018/19 53 Southampton schools engaged in the programme - an active travel rate of 88% was achieved in 13 selected schools.
 - Metamorphosis, EU funded programme, developing an ethos of child-friendly neighbourhoods and streets that are conducive to walking and cycling, and reducing motor car use.
 - Neighbourhood trials – community and school street closures.
 - A trial street closure by St Marys Primary School, a school where obesity levels for year 6 pupils are above the city average (one of the reasons for choosing this site) had positive results. 93% supported more regular closures. We are now working to implement a long term School Street trial with physical measure for times closure at St Marys.
 - Introducing a Healthy Streets assessment tool to integrate health outcomes into the assessment for evaluating projects (utilised by TfL).
 - Working with local communities to develop Active Travel Zones (ATZs) in neighbourhoods so people can walking and cycle easily and safely.
 - Creating safe spaces, routes, changing roads, landscaping, cycle parking and links to main corridors.
 - Transforming Cities Fund - £1.8bn pot – We are awaiting announcement regarding funding award for bid by Southampton and Hampshire.
 - Three year programme - runs from April 2020 to March 2023. If significant award big opportunity to improve sustainable and active travel in Southampton; to do large scale transformative schemes; progress ATZs, Quiet Zones and access to school; and transforming people's journeys by bike and public transport.
 - Working with University of Southampton to evaluate the effectiveness of initiatives and develop evidence base.
 - Modal shift is happening but changing travel habits and culture is a long term, gradual process.

What role can parks and green spaces play? – Lindsay McCulloch, Technical Team Leader Environment and Ecology

- A presentation was delivered by Lindsay McCulloch on Southampton's parks and open spaces.
- Key points raised in the presentation included the following:

- Access to green space has been linked with reduced levels of obesity in children and young people.
- A positive correlation between distance to green space and childhood obesity levels has been identified.
- Living in areas with green spaces can reduce effect of deprivation on health.
- Good access across Southampton to parks and green spaces. However, a large proportion of the most densely populated areas are more than 300m from a 2 hectare site (smallest size for a decent walk).
- Formal and informal sports, play and wildlife activities for children are delivered in the parks.
- Few unaccompanied children playing on semi-natural greenspaces in the city. Possible reflection of parental sense of risk. Leading to lack of confidence in green spaces, particularly evident in children from the city's council estates.
- Tailored interventions which increase the interest in green spaces for disadvantaged areas are required.
- Schools have the opportunity to introduce children to green spaces in lessons. The offer needs to be right for them.

RESOLVED that the comments and presentations made by Helen Fisher, Strategic Lead for Physical Activity and Health, Energise Me, Angela Baker, Deputy Director for Health and Wellbeing, Public Health England South East, Paul Barton, Interim Service Lead for Infrastructure, Planning and Development, Neil Tuck, Sustainable City Team Leader, and Lindsay McCulloch, Technical Team Leader Environment and Ecology be noted and used as evidence in the review.