

## HAMPSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

### Report

<b>Committee:</b>	Cabinet
<b>Date:</b>	16 March 2021
<b>Title:</b>	Annual Report of the Director of Public Health 2019-20 Tackling environmental factors is vital to address obesity in Hampshire
<b>Report From:</b>	Director of Public Health

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#### Purpose of this Report

1. The purpose of this report is to present the latest Director of Public Health's Annual Report to Cabinet ahead of final publication.

#### Recommendations

2. That Cabinet note the Annual Report of the Director of Public Health 2019-20.
3. That Cabinet endorse the recommendations within the Director of Public Health Annual Report 2019-20 which are:
  1. The COVID-19 pandemic has highlighted the urgent need to reduce levels of excess weight. Refocus on this key issue post-COVID-19 as an integral way to address health inequalities through the Health and Wellbeing Board.
  2. Use the opportunities arising from the development of the Local Transport Plan 4 for Hampshire to create environments that encourage walking and cycling and address connectivity to help create healthy weight environments.
  3. Continue working in partnership with District Councils, the NHS and the voluntary sector to provide healthy weight settings and environments, including delivering a local 'Eat Out Eat Well' award.

4. Focus on opportunities arising from the development of new places such as Manydown and Welbourne Garden City to embed healthy environments and behaviours into new communities.
5. Re-energise the Rushmoor Whole Systems Approach and use the learning to roll out this approach to another District or Borough Council in 2021.
6. Support early years and schools to provide healthy weight settings, with a particular emphasis on those locations where children and young people are more at risk of developing an unhealthy weight.

## **Context**

4. This year's report 'Tackling environmental factors is vital to address obesity in Hampshire' looks at the importance of environmental factors in tackling excess weight amongst Hampshire's population. It considers these factors and uses innovative case studies to explore this issue in Hampshire and makes recommendations for what more we and our partners can do together to address obesity
5. Obesity is one of Hampshire's most serious public health issue with emerging evidence indicating that being overweight or living with obesity puts individuals at a greater risk of serious harm and the risks from COVID-19 in comparison to the rest of the population has highlighted this issue further.
6. The report highlights the seriousness of the issue with nearly two-thirds of adults over 18 years old, almost one-third of children aged 10-11 years and over one-fifth of children aged 4-5 years in Hampshire being overweight or obese.
7. Excess weight is influenced by wider environmental factors which includes: the food environment, food advertising and marketing, neighbourhoods and public spaces, transport, infrastructure, green and blue spaces and the places in which we live and learn. Cutting calories alone will not shift the weight; we need to focus on how best to address these wider factors and move away from concentrating solely on individual behaviours.
8. When this topic was selected for my report, nobody could foresee that the work of Public Health, the wider Council and its partners would be transformed by the impact of COVID-19 and our response to manage the pandemic and contain the spread of the virus. However, as we have learnt more about coronavirus, evidence has emerged that being overweight or living with obesity puts individuals at greater risk of serious harm from COVID-19 in comparison to the rest of the population.

9. COVID-19 has also highlighted the inequalities and vulnerabilities within our communities. This is especially true for weight where some residents including those:
  - in areas of deprivation
  - from black, Asian and ethnic minorities
  - with severe mental health problems
  - with learning disabilities

are more likely to be at risk of obesity and experience worse health outcomes. The impact of COVID-19 on obesity has been included within the report, giving it greater salience and relevance at this time.

10. The pandemic has had an adverse impact on some programmes aimed at reducing obesity as well as decreasing the capacity of local partners to enable change. Despite this, work has continued to tackle environmental factors and this report highlights innovations such as Healthy New Towns as well as exciting new opportunities being explored in planning and transport.
11. The pandemic has also provided greater impetus and a real drive by local partners, including those in health through the NHS prevention programme, to work with Public Health and others to shape and deliver health promoting places. The report considers how these are being implemented across the system, potential investment funding opportunities to support environmental changes and what more we can do to influence a return to a healthy weight amongst Hampshire's population.
12. We know that obesity is preventable and that we need to take a whole system approach to reduce levels of excess weight, focusing on addressing environmental factors. This report demonstrates how public health has become embedded within the work of key Council functions such as planning and transport and recommends how more partners can be supported to play their part. This includes the NHS through its long-term prevention plan, education, early years and childcare settings, infrastructure developers and local planners in Hampshire's districts and boroughs.
13. Finally, the report makes the following recommendations as set out in this report .