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| SUBJECT: | Childhood Obesity Strategy for Gwent |
| MEETING: | Monmouthshire Children and Young People Select Committee |
| DATE: | 11 February 2016 |
| DIVISION/WARDS AFFECTED: | Implications across all divisions / wards |

1. PURPOSE:

- 1.1 To introduce the Gwent childhood obesity strategy to 2025, "Fit for Future Generations" to the Monmouthshire Children and Young People Select Committee.
- 1.2 To develop understanding of the significant impact of obesity and childhood obesity on people and the public service sector, the benefits of coordinated effective action and the recommended strategic approach to delivery.
- 1.3 To inform the Committee of the response across the Gwent / ABUHB area.
- 1.4 To suggest actions that Elected Members could take to support implementation of the strategy in Monmouthshire and to enable the Committee to input at the early stages of development of a Monmouthshire response.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS:

- 2.1 The Committee are asked to provide comment on the attached draft strategy: "Fit for future generations – a Childhood obesity strategy for Gwent to 2025" particularly noting the public service wide benefits if we tackle childhood obesity effectively.
- 2.2 The Committee are asked to note that Monmouthshire Local Service Board (in future the Public Service Board) have agreed to provide overall governance and accountability for delivery on the Childhood Obesity Strategy. Structures and processes for delivery of the strategy are at the early stages of development, and any input from the Committee at this stage is welcomed.
- 2.4 The Committee are asked to consider the following:
 - The role of Elected Members as leaders for this cross-government agenda
 - The role of Elected Members in scrutinising services and policies for impact on childhood obesity
 - How we can best engage with the population to change attitudes around obesity and the leadership role of Elected Members in facilitating this

3. SUMMARY:

- 3.1 The draft childhood obesity strategy and action list attached at Appendix 1 presents a vision of healthier, fitter future generations – where obesity will not be harming children and limiting the wellbeing of future generations in Gwent as it is today. It outlines the important and wide ranging benefits to people, communities and public services from effective and coordinated action on childhood obesity which include (but is not limited to):

- improved physical and mental wellbeing leading to better educational attainment;
 - stronger local economy with increased activity with less long-term limiting illness;
 - reducing health inequality,
 - increased social cohesion and inclusion,
 - improved local environment and
 - better quality of life
 - improved independence and less demand on social care services, offsetting the impact of our ageing population
- 3.2 The Strategy makes the case that childhood obesity should be included as a priority wellbeing objective, for both Public Service Boards and organisations because of its relevance to the Wellbeing of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 and the significant harm childhood obesity causes right across the *wellbeing goals*.
- 3.3 Coordinated, collaborative and effective long-term action is the only way to turn the curve on childhood obesity. Following analysis of local action from comprehensively collected sources and a thorough analysis of the evidence, including the views of people and practitioners, the strategy recommends areas for action for ABUHB, Local Authorities and Public Service Boards. This strategy is a “call to coordinate” and suggests shared governance for accountability and scrutiny within both organisations and Local/Public Service Boards.

4. BACKGROUND:

- 4.1 Childhood obesity harms children and young people now and damages the life chances of future generations. Childhood obesity causes a range of poor physical, mental and social health amongst children and young people and causes more severe chronic ill health in adulthood. In addition to health impact, childhood obesity also damages education, equality, prosperity, productivity and social inclusion.
- 4.2 The population scale of childhood obesity, its higher rates in deprived areas and, the fact that up to 80 per cent of obese children go on to become obese adults means childhood obesity is not only harming individuals’ lives, but also communities social, economic and environmental sustainability.
- 4.3 There are an estimated 37,000 children and young people (age 0 to 18 years) in Gwent who are overweight or obese of whom 19,400 are obese (Childhood Measurement Programme, the Welsh Health Survey and Health Behaviour in School-Age Children Survey). Adult obesity rates are at nearly 30 percent and have risen by a third in the last decade. In Monmouthshire, it is estimated that nearly 5,400 children and young people (age 0 -18 years) are overweight or obese of whom nearly 2,900 are obese.
- 4.4 Rates of overweight and obesity are significantly higher in our more deprived areas. At the age of just four or five years, many children are at greater risk of becoming overweight or obese just because of factors associated with where they live. This inequality also imposes a disproportionate burden on these already disadvantaged households and communities, magnifying the already serious consequences.
- 4.5 The economic consequences are staggering. Obese individuals have lower employment rates, lower productivity with more sick days, and people with obesity earn considerably less. The health and social care budgets bear the brunt of these costs through increased dependence, packages of care and equipment much of which is avoidable and can be delayed, particularly for future generations if we coordinate effective action.
- 4.6 The *effective and coordinated* action to improve diet, physical activity and healthy weight at population scale produces outcomes across *wellbeing goals* in addition to improved ‘health’, leading to a whole that is much greater than the sum of its parts:

- Less discrimination and bullying leading to better educational achievement
- Improved independence and reduced demand on health and social care services
- Improved local environment
- Offset the impact of our aging population
- Reduced health inequalities
- Greater social cohesion and inclusion
- Increased local economic activity with less limiting long-term ill health
- Stronger local economy
- Better quality of life

4.7 Robust analysis of local action reveals there is a huge amount of public sector activity and investment which can and probably does impact on obesity and childhood obesity – even if it is by consequence rather than design. In addition to that there is a supportive policy context and overlapping objectives held by statutory services and partnership. Yet despite that obesity rates continue to rise.

4.8 The Childhood Obesity Strategy for Gwent presents a vision of healthier, fitter future generations, where obesity will not be harming children and limiting the wellbeing of future generations in Gwent and its local authority areas as it is today.

4.9 A thorough analysis of the causes of obesity and the evidence of effective approaches, which included the views of people and practitioners, demonstrate two important things:

- There are clear areas for action and achievable activity with the best chance of success. Action has to be public service-wide and coordinated with robust governance for accountability and scrutiny.
- In this sense addressing childhood obesity has much in common with the challenges that the LSB is addressing around Welfare Reform and sustainability more generally.

4.10 The causes of obesity are wide ranging and complex, yet the causes of obesity reveal the areas for our joint action to tackle childhood obesity. There is no one single organisation or policy area, let alone one single intervention which will provide the solution to childhood obesity. **Sustained, effective action on many of the key causes at the same time is required.**

The areas for action in this strategy are:

- Disrupt obesogenic social norms
- Support a healthy start in life
- Coordinate and improve the efforts in early years and schools settings
- Influence healthy food choices in our communities
- Encourage active recreation and play for families
- Create active and safe communities
- Provide community and healthcare based weight management interventions for families who need them

4.11 The strategy includes an action list, which represents the total actions that need to be progressed together to have a chance of turning the curve on childhood obesity. The pace and scale of implementation of actions within Local Authority must be decided by the Local Authority. The strategy recommends that the University Health Board, the five local authorities and the five local service boards adopt childhood obesity as a priority piece of work and as a “Wellbeing Objective”

under the Wellbeing of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015. The strategy also calls for the five local authorities in Gwent to identify the relevant existing internal cross-organisational structure(s) who can provide: 1) assurance to Cabinet on progress against the childhood obesity “wellbeing objective”, 2) hold local authority departments and other providers accountable for delivery and 3) provide the appropriate cross-policy scrutiny for policy and activity which could impact on childhood obesity. The Strategy recommends that a Cabinet champion be nominated as a senior leader for this cross-government agenda.

4.12 Recognising the unprecedented austerity facing public services, and local authorities in particular, balancing what public services have to do today with tackling childhood obesity for future generations’ wellbeing is increasingly challenging. However, this *is* about the *Wales We Want*, defining the development path for our future generations, and, as mentioned there is already a lot of work underway. The success of this strategy and the work behind it will depend on a renewed focus on coordination and the *reorientation* of the actions to achieve closer alignment to what we know to be effective at reducing childhood obesity. Considering the above, this strategy is a call to coordinate and recommends that leadership and governance for delivery needs to be identified within both the University Health Board and local government corporate structures with overall accountability to the Local/Public Service Boards.

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Appendices:

Appendix 1: DRAFT childhood obesity strategy for Gwent 2015 to 2025 *Fit for Future Generations*

Appendix 2: DRAFT Childhood Obesity Action Evidence Based Actions

