



## HEALTH, SOCIAL CARE AND WELLBEING SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – 20TH OCTOBER 2015

**SUBJECT: FIT FOR FUTURE GENERATIONS – A CHILDHOOD OBESITY  
STRATEGY FOR GWENT TO 2025**

**REPORT BY: CORPORATE DIRECTOR, SOCIAL SERVICES**

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### **1. PURPOSE OF REPORT**

- 1.1 This report seeks the Committee's views on a draft childhood obesity strategy for Gwent to 2025. The report also aims to assist in the development of an organisational understanding of the significant impact of obesity and childhood obesity on people and the public service sector.

### **2. SUMMARY**

- 2.1 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.
- 2.2 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*.
- 2.3 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.

### **3. LINKS TO STRATEGY**

- 3.1 This draft strategy contributes to the Council's Anti Poverty Strategy as well as all of the priorities of the Single Integrated Plan, *Caerphilly Delivers*.
- 3.2 The strategy demonstrates how tackling childhood obesity will support organisations and Partnerships to demonstrate they are fulfilling their obligations to the Wellbeing of Future Generations (Wales) Act (2015) and other national and local strategic obligations.

## 4. THE REPORT

- 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 Caerphilly, it is estimated that 11,614 children and young people (age 0 -18 years) are overweight or obese of whom 5,950 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 activity and investment in obesity and childhood obesity-related topics from the public sector. 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 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:
- Action has to be public service-wide and coordinated with robust governance for accountability and scrutiny
  - There are clear areas for action and achievable activity with the best chance of success
- 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 UHB, 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.
- 4.13 The Caerphilly Well Being Delivery Group is an existing partnership forum operating within the Local Service Board delivery structure. It is Co-Chaired by the Council’s Head of Public Protection and Mererid Bowley, Consultant in Public Health, Public Health Wales. This Group has two main priorities, Obesity and Smoking. Whilst the existing Obesity priority requires further development to fully respond to the draft Childhood Obesity Strategy the Group has members from a range of Council services including Leisure, Public Protection, Communities First, Families First, the Sustainability Team, and the Youth Service, and is well placed to take

the Strategy forward.

## **5. EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS**

- 5.1 This strategy is about reducing inequalities caused by childhood obesity. Implemented as directed is predicted to have significant positive impact on child health and wellbeing and deprivation-linked health inequalities.

## **6. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 6.1 There are no financial implications at this stage. This strategy is not recommending new actions requiring investment. The focus is predominantly about reorientation of existing activity but in line with the evidence aligning local authority corporate plans and local service board single integrated plan actions and as such most of the actions in the accompanying action plan are low cost or no-cost.
- 6.2 However, consideration should be given to balancing the current financial constraints across public services with the costs of doing nothing and the benefits of coordinating effective multi-agency action on childhood obesity.

## **7. PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS**

- 7.1 There are no personnel implications arising directly from this report, but consultation would be undertaken with staff should any proposals emerge to alter roles and responsibilities if and when appropriate.

## **8. CONSULTATIONS**

- 8.1 This report has been sent to the consultees listed below and all comments received are reflected in this report.

## **9. RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 9.1 The Committee are asked to provide their comments on the attached draft strategy: *"Fit for future generations – a Childhood obesity strategy for Gwent to 2025"*.
- 9.2 The Committee are also asked for their views on the internal structure/process to provide accountability for planning and delivery of relevant actions, as well as providing scrutiny of core business for impact or synergy on childhood obesity.

## **10. REASONS FOR THE RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 10.1 To ensure effective governance and accountability for Local Authorities to deliver on the Childhood Obesity Strategy.

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Consultees: Cllr Nigel George, Cabinet Member for Community and Leisure Services  
Mererid Bowley, Consultant in Public Health  
Dave Street, Corporate Director Social Services  
Rob Hartshorn, Head of Public Protection  
Mike Eedy, Finance Manager

Sian Phillips, Acting HR Service Manager  
David Thomas, Senior Policy Officer (Equalities and Welsh Language)

Background Papers: None

Appendices:

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