

Councillor Smith reported that he had been told there were some new national ranking figures relating to oral health.

He asked:

'Has Slough's position in the national rankings for oral health changed recently; do we have any clearer picture now where the main problem lies with the state of oral health in Slough; what targeted action is being directed towards the main causes of the problem?'

The Director of Adults and Communities read out the following response received from the Council's Public Health Programme Officer:

The oral health data, as reported on Public Health Outcomes Framework had not changed recently and showed that the number of children with one or more decayed, missing or filled teeth – in Slough stood at 41.5%, compared to an average rate across England of 23.3% (2016/17 data). Evidence suggested that poor oral health was intrinsically linked to social economic deprivation, as well as, but to a lesser extent, obesity. The link to obesity was due to the wide availability of sugars consumed in children's diets, which also related back to areas of social economic deprivation. The underlying factors which exemplified poor oral health included a lack of parental knowledge and education around the importance of brushing teeth and regularly attending a dentist. The outcomes of a Council research project were due during the summer and would assist in providing additional Slough based evidence on the reasoning behind poor oral health. There were currently two projects running simultaneously to deal with these issues:

- **Healthy Smiles** – This was a Public Health funded project which aimed to provide information sessions across a range of settings, upskill healthcare professionals and teachers with knowledge of oral health and work within early years settings to accredit them. For example all 10 Children's Centres were now accredited and a further five Early Years settings had just achieved accreditation. The project was in its third year and officers were in the process of reviewing the service for operation after 1st April 2020.
- **Starting Well** – This was an NHS England funded project, working in partnership with the local authority, to improve access to dental practices. It funded dental practices to go into a variety of primary schools to provide information and awareness and supervised tooth brush training. It also ran a series of open days throughout the year to encourage children under five to be registered with a dentist. The programme was in its second year and the NHS had agreed to extend funding until April 2020; officers were currently exploring funding options beyond this date.

Councillor Sandhu asked about the membership fees for the recently refurbished Langley Leisure Centre. He reported that a full membership was £45 per month and he raised concern that the charge was prohibitive.

The Director of Adults and Communities explained that there was a need to ensure charges covered costs, whilst not precluding people from using the facilities. He explained that the Council's Leisure Fees and Charges were set annually by Cabinet and suggested a future report setting out the proposals for 2020/21 be presented to the Panel prior to being considered by Cabinet. Data relating to the use of leisure facilities and membership uptake would also be included in the report. Members were informed that the Council had recently launched 'Explore Slough' and residents could download a range of leisure discounts via this mobile application.