

Slough Borough Council

Report To: Slough Health and Wellbeing Board

Date: 5th December 2024

Subject: Progress report on the Whole System Approach to Healthy Weight

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Contact Officer: Dr David Davies, Public Health Registrar, Slough Borough Council

Ward(s): All

Exempt: NO

Appendices: None

1. Summary and Recommendations

1.1 This report provides a progress update of the Whole System Approach (WSA) to Healthy Weight.

Please indicate which priority in the Joint Local Health and Wellbeing Strategy, [Slough Wellbeing Strategy 2020 – 2025](#), your report links to:

Priority 1 – Starting Well	Priority 2 - Integration	Priority 3 – Strong, Health and Attractive Neighbourhoods	Priority 4 – Workplace Health
X		X	X

1.2 Consideration:

- Information
- Discussion
- Decision
- Endorsement

Recommendations:

1.3 The Health and Wellbeing Board is recommended to:

- (a) Acknowledge and endorse the work being implemented through the WSA to Healthy Weight work stream.

Reason:

- 1.4 The continued endorsement ensures sustained momentum and alignment across stakeholders, supporting the progression of current efforts and facilitating collaborative impact

2 Report

- 2.1 This report aligns with the Council's vision and priorities outlined in the Wellbeing Strategy 2020-2025 by contributing to the improvement of health and the reduction of inequalities, especially among young and diverse populations. Specifically, it supports Priority One: Starting Well, with its target to reduce the number of Reception and Year 6 children classified as obese. It also addresses Priority Three: Strong, Healthy and Attractive Neighbourhoods (Building Community Asset Resilience) by working to reduce health inequalities between wards, and complements Priority Four: Work and Health, aiming to enhance the wellbeing of the local workforce. The report also furthers the Corporate Plan 2023-2027's emphasis on prioritising children's health and addressing social determinants of wellbeing and aligns with the SEND and Inclusion Strategy 2021-2024 by bolstering support for children with special needs, fostering an inclusive and healthier community in Slough. In parallel, it supports key NHS policies such as Core20PLUS5 by addressing healthcare inequalities and focusing on at-risk populations and aligns with the NHS Long Term Plan through early life care enhancements and chronic health issue management. This work also complements the Major Conditions Strategy by tackling obesity—a major contributor to poor health—reinforcing the strategy's focus on prevention, early diagnosis, and management of long-term conditions within an integrated care approach.

Background

- 2.2 Obesity and excess weight are significant public health issues due to their impact on health and healthcare needs. Living with obesity is linked to conditions such as type 2 diabetes, cardiovascular diseases, and some cancers, contributing to higher healthcare usage and costs, estimated at £51 billion annually in the UK. For children, excess weight can lead to immediate and long-term health impacts, including an increased risk of type 2 diabetes and cardiovascular conditions. Contributing factors include dietary habits, physical inactivity, and socioeconomic influences, highlighting the need for comprehensive public health interventions.
- 2.3 The March 2024 Health and Wellbeing Board were presented with Healthy weight Needs Assessment (HNA). This included key data on the prevalence of adults and children living with excess weight in Slough. Approximately 66% of adults were living with excess weight, with 23.8% living with obesity, figures that exceeded the regional average. Additionally, hospital admissions related to obesity were significantly higher than in the broader South East region. Among children, the prevalence of living with excess weight increased markedly by Year 6, where 42.5% were affected, with 27.4% living with obesity—both figures being the highest in the region. Disparities were also observed between different wards within Slough. The HNA highlighted physical inactivity and suboptimal dietary habits as contributing factors, underscoring the complex interplay of lifestyle, environmental, and socioeconomic aspects influencing healthy weight.
- 2.4 The Healthy Weight Summit, held in February 2024 and attended by over 60 stakeholders, served as a platform for discussing the HNA findings and exploring potential strategies. The summit focused on developing a coordinated, whole-system approach to address the issues identified in the HNA. Stakeholders emphasised the

need for improving access to healthy foods, creating opportunities for physical activity, and ensuring culturally sensitive health interventions. The summit fostered collaboration and a shared understanding of the necessity for integrated actions to promote healthier weight outcomes in Slough.

2.5 Following the summit, the Health and Wellbeing Board in March 2024 reviewed the findings and discussions and endorsed the decision to implement a whole-system approach. The board approved the formation of task and finish (T&F) groups to focus on four areas: Children and Young People (CYP), pathway development, physical activity, and creating a healthier eating environment. These groups were established to coordinate efforts across sectors and support targeted actions to address the factors influencing healthy weight in Slough.

Current situation

2.6 The latest 2023/24 data on children's weight in Slough indicates some changes compared to the previous year. For Year 6 pupils, 40% are now living with excess weight, down from 42.5%, and 25.7% are living with obesity, reduced from 27.4% (Source: National Child Measurement Programme, NHS England). Despite these decreases, statistical analysis based on the previous five years of data points suggests that the trend remains stable. Slough now ranks 5th in the South East region for excess weight and 3rd for obesity in Year 6, an improvement from previously being the highest in the region for both metrics. For Reception-aged children, 19.3% are living with excess weight, up from 18.1%, while 11.2% are living with obesity, up from 10.4%. Trend analysis for these figures, based on the previous five data points, indicates that obesity remains stable, while excess weight shows a decrease over the same period.

2.7 There is no new data available for adults in Slough regarding overweight and obesity prevalence.

Progress on Whole System Approach to Healthy Weight

2.8 The four T&F groups have been set up, supported by a Core Working Group providing oversight to ensure cohesion and strategic alignment. Each T&F group has an external co-chair working alongside the Public Health team to bring a broader system perspective and an external sponsor to raise the profile of the work. All groups have agreed on a common endpoint: to develop an action plan guided by the Public Health England (2019) Whole System Approach to Obesity framework. Each T&F group plans to conduct at least one workshop involving key stakeholders with expertise in their specific focus areas, contributing to a coordinated, system-wide action plan. The deadline for the first round of workshops is March 2025, and a press release on 24th September 2024 announced the progress.

2.9 The Physical Activity and Active Travel group, co-chaired with Get Berkshire Active, held its workshop on 3rd October at Chalvey Community Hub. This event was attended by over 40 stakeholders from various sectors and provided key insights into existing challenges and opportunities within the system. Discussions highlighted the need to enhance communication about physical activity opportunities, make better use of community assets like the Community Directory, promote workplace health initiatives, and address language barriers that may limit engagement. The data from this workshop is currently being analysed to identify any additional areas for insight to develop a comprehensive action plan for this domain.

2.10 The Creating a Healthy Eating Environment group, co-chaired with the Planning team at Slough Borough Council, ran its workshop on 13th November, attended by around a

dozen stakeholders. Initial system mapping has begun, and early opportunities have been identified, particularly in enhancing communications and collaborating with food businesses. These findings will be developed further to inform an action plan that promotes a supportive food environment.

- 2.11 The Pathway Development group, co-chaired with NHS Frimley ICB, has been established and is preparing for its first workshop, planned for early next year. This group will focus on exploring opportunities around current pathways to better support residents in achieving a healthy weight and consider a hyperlocal way of working based on community assets.
- 2.12 The CYP has been formed, with an external co-chair identified. The group is adopting a life course approach that addresses healthy weight from pre-conception through adolescence, emphasising the role of families. In parallel to the group's development, the HENRY (Health, Exercise, Nutrition for the Really Young) programme has been launched. This evidence-based intervention supports childhood obesity prevention and health improvement through a multi-layered approach that includes workforce training for practitioners to build skills and confidence, multi-week family programmes, and peer-led community support. These components aim to establish sustainable health practices that promote a healthy start for children in Slough.
- 2.13 The progress of these T&F groups represents a constructive development in the system-wide approach to healthy weight in Slough. Ongoing stakeholder engagement and careful analysis of workshop outcomes will be important for informing and refining the action plans in each focus area as work continues.

3 Implications of the Recommendation

3.1 Health and Wellbeing Board and Partners Implications

- 3.1.1 The continued implementation of the WSA to Healthy Weight involves shared responsibility among the Health and Wellbeing Board and its partners. Their ongoing support and active engagement are key to aligning strategies and ensuring that the approach effectively supports the health and wellbeing of Slough residents.

3.2 Equality implications

- 3.2.1 The WSA to Healthy Weight builds on the understanding of inequalities identified in the previous health needs assessment and the Healthy Weight summit. The current efforts are focused on addressing these disparities through targeted actions and inclusive strategies within the work stream.

3.3 Environmental implications

- 3.3.1 Implementing the WSA to Healthy Weight is anticipated to support environmental benefits. Increased physical activity and active travel can help reduce reliance on light vehicles, while promoting healthier food choices, such as reduced takeaway consumption, may contribute to decreased litter and use of single-use packaging.

3.4 Financial implications **[Discretionary]**

None

3.5 Legal implications **[Discretionary]**

None

3.6 Risk management implications **[Discretionary]**

3.6.1 Not continuing to develop and implement the WSA to Healthy Weight could lead to sustained high levels of excess weight among adults and CYP, which would not align with the objectives of the Wellbeing Strategy or Corporate Plan.

3.7 Procurement implications **[Discretionary]**

None

3.8 Workforce implications **[Discretionary]**

None

3.9 Property implications **[Discretionary]**

4 Background Papers

4.1 [Outputs from Slough Healthy Weight summit. Health and Wellbeing Board paper, 12 March 2024. Chief Officer: Tessa Lindfield, Director of Public Health; Contact Officer: Dr David Davies, Public Health Registrar](#)