

Committee(s):	Dated:
Health and Wellbeing Board – For Decision	2 February 2018
Subject: The Local Government Declaration on Sugar Reduction and Healthier Food	Public
Report of: Andrew Carter, Director of Community and Children’s Services	For Decision
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Summary

The Local Government Declaration on Sugar Reduction and Healthier Food was launched by the charity Sustain in November 2016 as an initiative to help local authorities in London tackle the proliferation and marketing of unhealthy food and drink. Several London boroughs have already signed up, and many more are in the process of doing so.

The City of London Corporation (City Corporation) currently ranks in the bottom third compared with other local authorities in the capital regarding the promotion of healthy eating (Good Food for London rankings, 2016). Tackling obesity among adults and children features prominently within the priorities of the Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy and this presents a framework within which the City Corporation can take action.

The Health and Wellbeing Advisory Group (HWAG) has agreed that the Declaration would be a valuable initiative for the City Corporation to sign up to and the Director of Public Health, Dr Penny Bevan, has offered to champion it. This paper outlines the nature of the Declaration and the commitment required from the City Corporation, notably members of the Health and Wellbeing Board.

Recommendations

Members are asked to:

- Note the report.
- Endorse the steps and proposals for action outlined in this report.
- Support the signing of the Local Government Declaration on Sugar Reduction and Healthier Food by the City of London Corporation.

Main Report

Background

1. The Local Government Declaration on Sugar Reduction and Healthier Food was launched by the charity Sustain in November 2016 as an initiative to help local

authorities in London tackle the proliferation and marketing of unhealthy food and drink.

2. Obesity is on the increase among adults and children. Almost half of Londoners aged ten years or older are either overweight, or obese¹. Among other causes, including an increasingly sedentary lifestyle, the availability of unhealthy, high-fat and highly-processed foods and drinks is a key contributing factor, especially as these foods and drinks are often cheaper than fresh produce.
3. Despite prevention of overweight and obesity being better than cure, spend on obesity prevention programmes is greatly outweighed by spend on the medical costs of conditions related to being overweight or obese. According to Cabinet Office data from 2008, if diets matched nutritional guidelines, it is estimated that 70,000 deaths annually could be avoided and £20 billion could be saved².
4. At a national level, the Soft Drinks Industry Levy (the “Sugar Tax”) is coming into effect in April 2018. It directly targets the producers and importers of sugary soft drinks to encourage them to remove added sugar, promote diet drinks and reduce portion sizes for high-sugar drinks³.
5. The Local Government Declaration on Sugar Reduction and Healthier Food was introduced to encourage local authorities to work together to effect change, with some local authorities collaborating around sponsorship and advertising protocols, which are important areas of revenue for some councils. Lambeth Council was the first borough to sign the Declaration in April 2017, followed by Tower Hamlets, Redbridge and Waltham Forest. A further ten boroughs are currently taking steps towards signing it.
6. In the last Good Food for London rankings (2016) the City Corporation ranked joint 23rd out of 33 London boroughs. As of 2017, the Declaration is a new indicator on the Good Food for London league table⁴. This represents an opportunity for the City Corporation to take a more proactive approach.
7. The renewal of the City Corporation’s corporate catering contract in 2018 encouraged the Corporation to take a high-level approach to healthy eating. Within the specification for the new contract, healthy eating and promoting healthier behaviours relating to food are explicitly outlined across all sites and specific KPIs have also been included, to ensure healthy eating becomes ‘business as usual’. The City Corporation has also committed to the “Food for Life”⁵ scheme within the new contract, which encourages healthier catering as part of wider work around sustainability and responsible procurement.
8. Prevention of overweight and obesity is a focus of the 2017-20 Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy, featuring in the following priority areas:

¹ <https://data.london.gov.uk/dataset/obesity-adults>

² http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20100407165056/http://www.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/strategy/work_areas/food_policy.aspx

³ <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/soft-drinks-industry-levy-12-things-you-should-know>

⁴ <https://www.sustainweb.org/gfll/?m=0&b=0&y=2017&v=1>

⁵ <https://www.soilassociation.org/certification/catering/>

- Priority 2 – a healthy urban environment: provide easy access to healthy and affordable food in the local area; encourage retailers of healthy food in under-served, low-income neighbourhoods and/ or encourage retailers to offer more healthy products.
 - Priority 4 – all children have the best start in life: work with the London Borough of Hackney to review our approach to childhood obesity and agree a revised strategy; develop an integrated health promotion offer for children and families, focused on breastfeeding and good nutrition.
 - Priority 5 – promoting healthy behaviours: raise awareness of the harms caused by a poor diet; encourage a healthy approach to food; work with Business Healthy to engage employers to break the culture of risk-taking behaviours among their employees; expand our prevention work with students in schools.
9. The City has a high density of food outlets – 1,700 – which mostly serve the vast daytime (worker) population. With many City workers visiting these outlets for breakfast, lunch and dinner, the City Corporation is able to help influence healthier choices to a large segment of its population.

Current Position

10. To sign the Declaration, local authorities must commit to take at least six different actions across six key areas (at least one action under each of the six key areas). The pledges do not all need to be new: actions that the local authority is already taking can be included.
11. The six key areas are as follows:
1. Tackling advertising and sponsorship
 2. Improving the food controlled or influenced by the council and supporting the public and voluntary sectors to improve their food offer
 3. Reduce the prominence of sugary drinks and actively promote free drinking water
 4. Support businesses and organisations to improve their food offer
 5. Public events
 6. Raising public awareness

Further detail is included on whether action is already being taken in these areas (see Appendix 1), or suggestions on what can be done.

12. Sustain have suggested local authorities take the following steps to sign and implement actions around the Declaration:

Step	Suggested action	Response
1	Identify the priorities in the borough and define the scope of the Declaration.	We are able to use the Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy and the JSNA, as well as other data to inform work in the Square Mile.
2	Take the proposal to a champion.	Director of Public Health Dr Penny Bevan has agreed to champion the Declaration for

		the City.
3	Undertake internal consultations.	Initial steps have been taken with the Health and Wellbeing Advisory Group and further discussions will be undertaken with relevant areas of the City Corporation.
4	Identify the route the council will take to sign up (full council or cabinet).	It is proposed that the Health and Wellbeing Board and Port Health & Environmental Services Committee will approve the signature to the Declaration.
5	Sign up and celebrate	
6	Don't let the Declaration gather dust.	It is proposed that an annual update report is presented to the Health and Wellbeing Board and Port Health & Environmental Services Committee, with more regular updates presented to the Health and Wellbeing Advisory Group.

13. There is no set monitoring or auditing process; local authorities must decide the most appropriate monitoring system.
14. While there is best practice that the City Corporation can draw on from other London boroughs, it is useful to bear in mind that it is unique to other local authorities in that the resident population is very small, compared with its daytime worker population. Local food outlets are geared towards the daytime population, who generally have a high disposable income. Offerings for lower-income City residents can be limited.

Proposals

15. The Declaration and associated actions will be the responsibility of the Health and Wellbeing Advisory Group (HWAG). The HWAG's responsibilities will include drawing on best practice and expertise to develop and undertake actions in each of the six key areas and to create an action plan to take forward the commitments. The HWAG will lead the monitoring year on year.
16. The Health and Wellbeing Board, along with Port Health & Environmental Services Committee, approves the signature to the Declaration.
17. Officers will present an annual update report on progress of the Declaration to the Health and Wellbeing Board and Port Health & Environmental Services Committee, with more regular updates presented to the Health and Wellbeing Advisory Group.
18. Members endorse the Declaration, where relevant and appropriate, among senior political leadership across the City Corporation.

Corporate & Strategic Implications

19. The above relates to the Department of Community and Children's Services' Business Plan (2017-22) lists a priority objective as health and wellbeing, specifically that "people of all ages enjoy good health and wellbeing".
20. It also relates to the draft Corporate Plan (2018-23), where a corporate outcome within the strategic objective of "contributing to a flourishing society" is that "people enjoy good health and wellbeing".

Conclusion

21. Obesity and overweight is an issue that affects the City of London's resident and worker populations, as part of wider trends seen nationally and across London. The Local Government Declaration on Sugar Reduction and Healthier Eating represents an opportunity to bring together the work that the City Corporation is already doing across departments and to address the issue in a more holistic, long-term and strategic manner, drawing in expertise and resources from across the organisation.

Appendices

Appendix 1 – Local Government Declaration Actions Outline, v1

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