

Committee(s): City of London Health & Wellbeing Board	Dated: 15 11 2024
Subject: Review of the City & Hackney 'whole system' response to tackling obesity - including findings from the healthy weight Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA)	Public
Which outcomes in the City Corporation's Corporate Plan does this proposal aim to impact directly?	2 & 4
Does this proposal require extra revenue and/or capital spending?	N
If so, how much?	n/a
What is the source of Funding?	City and Hackney's Public Health grant
Has this Funding Source been agreed with the Chamberlain's Department?	n/a
Report of: Dr Sandra Husbands <i>Director of Public Health</i>	For Decision
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Summary

This paper presents an update on two pieces of work related to healthy weight: a review of the City & Hackney 'whole system' response to tackling obesity and findings from the 2024 Healthy Weight Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA).

The City and Hackney Healthy Weight JSNA was developed between 2023-2024. Alongside this piece of work, the City and Hackney 'whole systems' approach (WSA) review, which began in March, aimed to work with stakeholders from across the system to understand the local context in relation to healthy weight initiatives, services and programmes to identify gaps, challenges and opportunities for action.

The review has now concluded and a series of recommendations have been developed. This paper provides an update on the process for this work and outlines draft recommendations from the JSNA and review.

Recommendations

Members are asked to:

- Note the emerging findings from the healthy weight JSNA and whole system review.
- Advise how the Board (and membership organisations) can support implementation of the report's recommendations.

Main Report

Background

1. Hackney has been working towards a 'whole system' approach to reducing obesity since February 2016, initiated through the formation of the Obesity Strategic Partnership, renamed the Healthy Weight Strategic Partnership (HWSP) in 2019.

Whole system approaches

A whole system approach is about 'responding to complexity' through a 'dynamic way of working', bringing stakeholders, including communities, together to develop 'a shared understanding of the challenge' and integrate action to bring about sustainable, long-term systems change.¹

2. Under the leadership of the HWSP, the Healthier City & Hackney Framework was co-developed. The evidence within the JSNA is structured under each of our five local City and Hackney healthy weight priorities, listed below.

Box 1: Healthier City & Hackney Framework

Our ambition: To improve health and wellbeing for all by making City and Hackney a place where everyone can be a healthy weight.

Our priorities:

- *Working together.* We will support the development of a social movement for healthy weight. We will build on the strengths and resources in our local communities and existing partnerships.
- *Targeted help for those who need it most.* We will ensure that individuals, families and communities at greatest risk of obesity-related harm receive the support they need to live a healthy life.
- *Easy access to affordable healthy food.* We will make it easier for people to buy and prepare affordable healthy food.

¹ [Whole systems approach to obesity: a guide to support local approaches to promoting a healthy weight](#). Public Health England, 2019.

- *A healthy environment that makes it easy for people to be active.* We will continue to work to improve the design of local spaces and places so more people can be active as part of their everyday lives.
- *Easy access to information.* We will make it easy for everyone in City and Hackney to find information about what action they can take, and what help they can get, to live a healthy life.

3. The aim of the healthy weight JSNA is to:
 - explore the evidence related to whole system approaches to excess weight
 - identify local unmet needs related to weight, diet and physical activity
 - identify areas of good practice in the delivery and offer of services and any gaps
 - develop a set of recommendations for system partners related to healthy weight in City and Hackney.
4. The JSNA informed the whole system approach (WSA) review, to create a shared understanding of the evidence base, local needs and assets across City and Hackney.
5. The WSA review was overseen by a Healthy Weight Task and Finish Group (T&FG) which brought together a wide range of stakeholders, including Council, NHS, and Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS) representatives, to oversee the review process. The T&FG focussed on mapping local healthy weight interventions, identifying system gaps, and prioritising actions for a refreshed approach to supporting healthy weight in City and Hackney.
6. Alongside the T&FG, wider stakeholder engagement was conducted through one-on-one meetings and attending forums and networks to assess existing services and identify further opportunities for action. A mapping exercise highlighted the complex landscape of interventions contributing to the healthy weight agenda, funded by various partners.
7. The group identified priority actions and shaped the recommendations for the work moving forwards. As a result, a series of recommendations and a high level Healthy Weight Plan have been drafted.

Current Position

8. Using the evidence collected through the JSNA and Whole System Approach review, we understand that there is a lot more work to be done locally to shift the dial on obesity, requiring a coordinated, sustained effort at multiple levels by partners across the system.
9. There is no 'quick fix' to reduce obesity prevalence and related harms. Certain interventions have a good evidence base for achieving and maintaining a healthy weight. These include:
 - supporting women to breastfeed for longer
 - making changes to school environments to increase healthy eating/reduce unhealthy eating

- pharmacotherapy² combined with behaviour change interventions to help people lose weight
 - making changes to the built environment to increase physical activity
10. Evidence is positive, but still emerging, on a number of other initiatives, such as: the removal of HFSS (foods high in fat, sugar and salt) advertising; 'whole system' approaches; health promoting planning policies; School Streets and Low Traffic Neighbourhoods; Healthy Start schemes; Healthy Early Years and Healthy Schools award schemes and the Daily Mile. Some of these approaches can be very difficult to evaluate, this does not necessarily mean that they are not effective.
11. The evidence on the longer term impacts of weight management programmes is mixed, and there is limited evidence on programmes that work for our local populations and communities. Locally, there are wider opportunities to influence the parts of the system that are likely to impact healthy diets and physical activity- through local healthier food advertising, working with local food businesses and developing healthier food environments in early years, schools and through our planning system and wider built environment.

Engagement with City of London Corporation and residents

12. City of London residents were invited to take part in resident focus groups, which were delivered in 2023 as part of the JSNA process. City and Hackney stakeholders working with residents also fed into the JSNA and whole system review.
13. A City of London corporation workshop was delivered in October 2024 to review and discuss the findings from the JSNA and the whole systems review recommendations, considering the local context and needs of the City of London. Colleagues from policy and strategy, climate, commissioning, sports and early years attended this workshop. There was agreement that the recommendations below were applicable to the City of London. Particular barriers to healthy weight highlighted in the workshop included: equitable access to physical activity; lack of green spaces; food accessibility. Opportunities identified within City of London Corporation to take this work forward included:

Health in all Policies

- a. Explore opportunities to embed healthy diet and physical activity principles into the new education strategy that is being developed.
- b. Integrate healthy diet and physical activity into wider City of London strategies, and join up work across teams where there are synergies in objectives (such as joining up work around food access with physical activity initiatives).

Healthy environments

- c. Discuss emerging recommendations with Environment and Planning colleagues at City of London Corporation.
- d. Develop the urban environment further to encourage residents to build

² Pharmacotherapy is the treatment of a condition or disease with medication.

physical activity into their daily lives.

- e. Use Community Infrastructure Levy³ fund to expand the food hub offer in the City of London. Ensure that the food provided is healthy and nutritious.
- f. Consider food access stigma (in relation to food hub/pantry models), and how this can be addressed to normalise accessing food in the City of London.
- g. Explore opportunities to engage local business leaders to increase access to healthy, affordable food in the City of London.

Tackling obesity related inequalities, inequity and stigma

- h. Consider the JSNA and WSA review recommendations and data in the procurement of the new leisure contract; consider inequalities in JSNA as part of the work.

Targeted support for those who need it most

- i. Possible role for Social Prescribers⁴ (having diet and physical activity discussions with residents), although need to consider the fact that residents in the east of the City do not attend the Neaman Practice.

14. The recommendations below have also been shared with the Department of Community and Children’s Services DLT.

Recommendations

15. The JSNA and ‘whole system’ review that it has informed, points to a number of recommendations, which are themed and summarised below. These recommendations also map onto the five local healthy weight priorities.

System Leadership	
Subtheme	Recommendation
Leadership	Work with senior leaders to champion and prioritise the healthy weight agenda to build understanding and support for the importance of a collaborative multi-sector, multi-level approach.
Leadership	Re-establish the Healthy Weight Strategic Partnership (or similar) to provide leadership and to drive the whole systems approach forwards.
Governance	Develop a clear governance structure to ensure stakeholders are held to account, agreed actions are taken forwards and momentum is maintained.

³ The Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) is a charge that local authorities can set on new development in order to raise funds to help fund the infrastructure, facilities and services - such as schools or transport improvements - needed to support new homes and businesses.

⁴ Social prescribing links people to a wide range of community groups and services. This may include creative activities such as art, dance, and singing or other activities such as knitting, cooking or sports, for social support and to improve wellbeing.

	Refresh and relaunch the Healthier City and Hackney framework to ensure it recognises the priorities of stakeholders across City and Hackney. Develop a delivery plan to support the framework based on the gaps, opportunities and actions identified by stakeholders.
Funding	Reprioritise resources including funding and investment to address recommendations raised through the review.
Evidence and data	
Data collection and analysis	Improve data collection and analysis on the environmental determinants of obesity to enable the development of tailored and targeted approaches and to identify levers to support the work.
	Better understand uptake and health outcomes for local healthy weight services, where appropriate and relevant.
Evidence and insight	Develop further insights in areas currently less understood locally for example what strategies for long term behaviour change, culturally specific support and what information residents need and how they would like to access it.
Monitoring and evaluation	Develop a framework for evaluating actions and approaches to enable a culture of continuous improvement and to celebrate success across the partnership.
Healthy environments	
Active environments	Prioritise physical activity in the planning and development process to create and maintain spaces that encourage physical activity.
	Champion community spaces that are examples of a healthy environment which make it easy for people to be active.
	Ensure that early years, youth and schools settings prioritise play and physical activity
	Increase the number of schools participating in the Daily Mile
	Improve understanding about the impact of local interventions, such as School Streets and Low Traffic Neighbourhoods on active travel
Food	Ensure community spaces are used to access healthy, affordable

environments	food.
	Explore opportunities to incentivise convenience stores, supermarkets and market traders to provide affordable, healthy foods in underserved areas.
	Develop an approach to create 'fast food buffer zones' around schools to restrict street traders such as ice cream vans, ensuring consistency with planning applications on hot food takeaways.
	Improve the food environment in early years settings and schools
	Support more families in need to be able to purchase fresh food and vegetables
	Increase food growing in schools
	Explore opportunities to decrease unhealthy food advertising
Supporting long term behaviour change	Shift focus towards long-term behaviour change by integrating complementary strategies that address social and environmental factors within programmes and services where appropriate.
Training and capacity building	
Workforce development	Develop a comprehensive training and capacity-building plan to build the knowledge, skills and confidence of the workforce
Harness the knowledge and connections of the VCS	Develop capacity within the VSC to maximise their long standing, trusted relationships with residents and enhance their ability to engage and empower communities around diet, physical activity and healthy weight
	Co-design a peer support model to support communities to make changes to their behaviour and sustain changes in the longer term
Nutritional standards & training	Identify spaces and settings where access to affordable healthy food is limited
	Develop healthy catering guidelines and training for providers to improve the food provided and the food environment.
	Support community food distribution initiatives such as food banks, food pantries and community food shops to ensure they provide balanced and nutritious food options as part of their offer to communities.

Tackling obesity related inequalities, inequity and stigma

Focus on health inequalities	Strengthen partnerships with key services who are well placed to engage key at risk populations e.g. people on a low-income, people with disabilities or learning disabilities and global majority communities.
	Develop targeted support for people with very complex needs
	Work closely with stakeholders to ensure obesity related inequalities are at the heart of service planning and delivery.
Proportionate universalism	Consider how resources are allocated and interventions are delivered to the needs of populations that are disproportionately affected by obesity and related health issues e.g. people on a low-income, people with disabilities or learning disabilities and global majority communities.
Addressing weight stigma & discrimination	Develop a comprehensive programme of work to tackle weight stigma.

Settings and life course approaches

Life course approach	Engage stakeholders working with people at key life stages e.g. maternity, children's and older peoples services to ensure they are actively involved and opportunities are maximised to support the healthy weight agenda.
	Continue to support new mothers to breastfeed for longer
	Ensure access to affordable healthy food starts from the beginning of the life course working with and through programmes such as Healthy Early Years and Healthy Schools to influence food and physical activity provision.
Intergenerational approaches	Explore with partners the opportunities for intergenerational approaches to improving access to food through meaningful connections between different generations through cooking, growing and eating good food.
Workplace health	Work across anchor institutions and other employers to develop workplace health charter/support for employees to promote active workplaces and improve access to healthy, affordable food

Cross-sector collaboration

Networking and sharing good practice	Develop opportunities to facilitate networking, sharing of good practice and collaboration.
Integrated pathways	Improve care pathways and develop integrated approaches which respond to need and focus on inequalities.
Partnership building	Strengthen partnerships with key stakeholders e.g. healthcare providers, education providers, businesses to further develop the shared objectives of the programme and create a true 'whole system approach'
Communications and engagement	
Community engagement	Leverage local knowledge and resources by working collaboratively with community leaders and community members in planning and implementing the Healthy Weight Action Plan.
Co design and co production	Test and co design approaches with at risk populations
Communication s plan	Develop a coordinated communications plan based on insight to ensure clear, consistent and accessible messages are given around healthy weight.
Improving Health Literacy	Develop a streamlined approach to support residents to access information and services about nutrition, physical activity and weight management which they can find, understand and use to support them to make decisions and take action.

Next steps

16. A high level City and Hackney Healthy Weight Plan has been drafted, based on the emerging recommendations listed above. This work will be developed and progressed after the recommendations are agreed.

Key Data

17. One in five children in Reception and two in five in Year 6 were above a healthy weight in 2022/23 in City and Hackney. Boys, those living in areas of higher deprivation & children from certain ethnic groups were associated with higher levels of childhood obesity, mainly in Year 6.
18. In 2023, around 45% of City residents (18+) with a BMI recording in the last five years were either overweight or obese. Sex, ethnicity and deprivation were associated with higher obesity prevalence among City and Hackney

adults in 2022.

19. One in two pregnant women were obese at their first antenatal appointment and inequalities exist.

20. Obesity prevalence was higher than average among City and Hackney adults with a recorded learning disability or severe mental illness diagnosis.

Corporate & Strategic Implications

These recommendations align with numerous corporate plans and strategies and there are many co-benefits:

- City of London Corporate Plan (outcome 2 and 4).
- Local Plans - City Plan 2036 (building healthier environments that promote active travel, physical activity, play and healthier food environments).
- Transport Strategies - City Streets - through promotion of active travel.
- Climate Action Strategy- increasing active travel and increasing the number of residents eating locally sourced, fresh, plant based diets.
- City of London Health and Wellbeing Strategy- obesity is related to all three strategic priorities (both as causes and consequences of obesity).
- North East London Integrated Care Strategy- recommendations align with numerous priority areas in the Integrated Care Strategy, including:
 - providing the best start in life for babies, children and young people of North East London
 - to support everyone at risk of developing a long term condition in North East London to live a longer and healthier life
 - to improve the mental health and wellbeing of people in North East London.

Financial implications

None.

Resource implications

City of London Corporation stakeholders working in relevant departments will be asked to consider opportunities to progress the healthy weight work plan actions, where relevant.

Legal implications

None.

Risk implications

Taking no action to support residents to achieve and maintain a healthy weight can have physical, mental and social implications for residents.

Equalities implications

Equalities and equity considerations are central to the data analysis conducted within the healthy weight JSNA and the draft recommendations.

Climate implications

There are a number of co-benefits related to action to tackle obesity for climate mitigation- these include actions such as increasing active travel and increasing the number of residents eating locally sourced, fresh, plant based diets.

Security implications

None.

Conclusion

The Healthy Weight JSNA and Whole System Review recommendations will enable the City of London and Hackney to better support its residents to achieve and maintain a healthy weight, through whole system actions.

Appendices

Appendix 1 – Review of the City & Hackney 'whole system' response to tackling obesity - info pack and recommendations [CoL HWBB]

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