

Item No. 15.	Classification: Open	Date: 18 September 2018	Meeting Name: Cabinet
Report title:		Local Government Declaration on the Reduction of Sugar and Healthier Food	
Ward(s) or groups affected:		All Southwark electoral wards	
Cabinet Member:		Councillor Evelyn Akoto, Community Safety and Public Health	

FOREWORD - COUNCILLOR EVELYN AKOTO, CABINET MEMBER FOR COMMUNITY SAFETY AND PUBLIC HEALTH

Southwark is vibrant, thriving borough. Alongside making Southwark a great place to live, work, visit and play, we are supporting our residents to lead healthy, active lives. Obesity rates in Southwark continue to be a challenge: 43% of 10-11year olds and almost 60% of adults are overweight or obese. Obesity is also a national and London priority. The recent release of Chapter 2 of the Childhood Obesity Plan and the London Mayor's announcement of the draft Food Strategy reinforces the importance of tackling unhealthy weight.

It is my intention to make tackling unhealthy weight everybody's business in Southwark. The Local Government Declaration on the Reduction of Sugar and Healthier Food offers an important opportunity for the Council to demonstrate and to spearhead a strong commitment to reduce sugar consumption – a major factor in obesity – and to promote healthier options.

In addition to all that we are already doing, I am keen that we tackle the 'upstream' factors: we know the obesogenic environment that we live in influences the decisions and choices we make. Excessive, and often hidden, sugar in our food and drinks, is making our communities unhealthy. It is for this reason that I am leading the Council in a collaborative, cross departmental manner, in the signing and implementation of the Declaration. In addition to reducing sugar and promoting healthier food offers, I will be promoting free drinking water, encouraging healthier advertising and sponsorship and leading health promotion campaigns on sugar and healthy eating.

I warmly welcome the Local Government Declaration on the Reduction of Sugar and Healthier Eating.

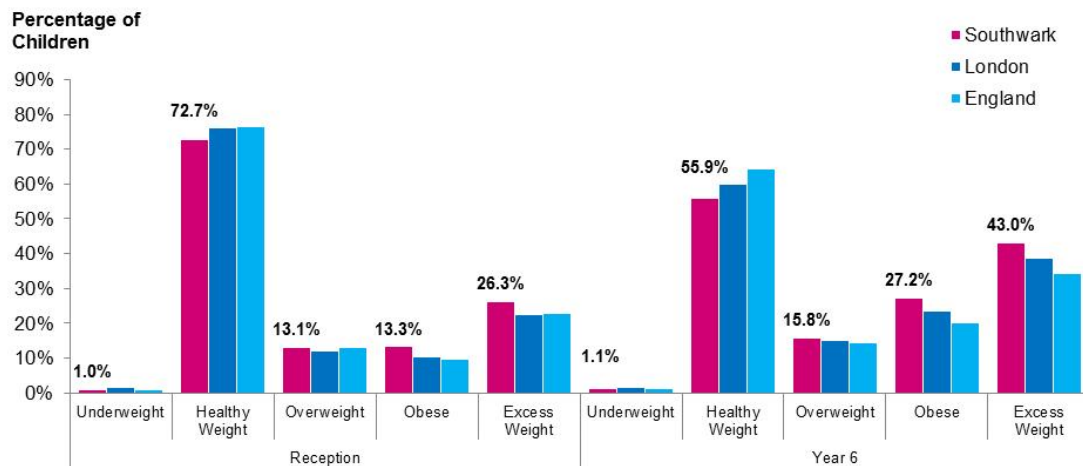
RECOMMENDATIONS

That the Cabinet:

1. Signs the Local Government Declaration on Sugar Reduction and Healthier Food.
2. Considers and agree the initial actions for the six key cross council areas.
3. Requests a progress report back in 12 months with a more developed action plan for each of the 6 areas.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

4. Southwark has high levels of overweight and obesity, particularly among children and those from the most deprived parts of the borough.
5. The latest National Child Measurement Programme (NCMP) data show fewer than 3 in 10 children in Reception are overweight or obese (excess weight), yet by Year 6 this increases to more than 4 in 10 children. The increase in obesity between Reception and Year 6 is statistically significant. Furthermore, 58.8% of adults are classified as overweight or obese demonstrating the problem of excess weight persists beyond childhood.



6. The Health and Wellbeing Board convened a senior leadership group for obesity to oversee development of a new healthy weight strategy for the borough in May 2016 and agreed the new Southwark Healthy Weight Strategy – Everybody's Business – in July 2016. The strategy was informed by national and local learning and subject to external scrutiny and assurance.
7. The strategy is comprehensive, including elements of both prevention and treatment of overweight and obesity with actions across the whole life course including pregnant women, children and adults. The strategy also aims to influence the environment in which people live in order to make the healthy choices the easiest choices to make. Although the strategy takes a life-course approach it prioritises children and the early years.
8. It is well recognised that the overconsumption of energy-dense and calorific foods and drinks specifically that are high in fat, salt or sugar (HFSS) are a major contributor to the obesity epidemic. The availability and easy access to unhealthy foods enable this behaviour to persist and habits to develop.
9. As of 2016-17, just under 60% of Southwark adults met the recommended '5-a-day' on a usual day, and averaged 2.8 and 2.9 portions of fruits and vegetables daily. Similarly, at age 15 only 53% met the recommended '5-a-day' averaging just 2.6 portions of fruits and vegetables daily. Almost one third of primary and secondary school pupils in Southwark also reported having sweets, chocolates or non-diet fizzy drinks on most days, and 7% of primary school pupils reported having sweets or chocolate for breakfast.

10. Healthy eating is an essential part of the Healthy Weight Strategy and having a coordinated, whole-systems approach to healthy weight, and specifically tackling sugar intake, is a key opportunity for addressing obesity and disrupting the unhealthy food environment.

KEY ISSUES FOR CONSIDERATION

11. The Local Government Declaration on Sugar Reduction and Healthier Food was launched by Sustain in 2017. It aims 'to achieve a public commitment to improve the availability of healthier food and drinks and to reduce the availability and promotion of unhealthy options.'
12. The Declaration takes a whole-systems approach to enabling people to have healthier diets by encouraging local authorities to coordinate policies on the availability of healthy food and drinks. Signing up to the Declaration would:
 - Allow for continued support of existing initiatives with colleagues in Planning, Communications and Events on healthy eating while developing a stronger focus sugar reduction – sugar being a major factor in obesity
 - Help clarify the extent of, and opportunities for, advertising and sponsorship of healthy (rather than unhealthy) food and drinks
 - Improve the food offer for Southwark residents through better access to healthy foods and business, public and community sector offers
 - Highlight the impact of sugary drinks and support Southwark communities to reduce their consumption of fizzy drinks.
13. The formal commitment to coordinated actions across the whole system through the Local Government Declaration on Sugar Reduction and Healthier Food aligns and strengthens the actions in the Healthy Weight Strategy – Everybody's Business.
14. In signing the declaration, Southwark must commit to one action in each of the six key areas of sugar reduction and provide an annual progress report. Over the last three months, there was engagement and consultation with council colleagues to identify and scope potential actions to reduce sugar and promote healthy eating.

The following actions for each key area have been identified for implementation over the next 12 months.

15. Area 1 – Tackle advertising and sponsorship.

The 2018 Mayor's Draft London Food Strategy highlights that food advertisements, particularly for unhealthy food, are often unregulated and targeted at young people. Evidence shows that food preferences and behaviour can be influenced by marketing techniques and may be contributing to the childhood obesity epidemic.

Currently there is a lack of clarity in Southwark around advertising and sponsorship opportunities, limitations, relationships and geography. To be able to deliver healthy eating messages and promote corporate partnerships that align with the Council's priorities and existing strategies, the proposed action for Area 1 is:

Conduct an audit of corporate partnerships, sponsorship, marketing and advertising to determine opportunities to promote healthy eating and to develop and implement a new council policy on healthier sponsorship and advertising.

16. Area 2 – Improve the food commissioned or provided by the council and support the public and voluntary sectors to improve their food offer

As part of the Healthy Weight Strategy – Everybody's Business, the council works with partners to deliver a number of healthy eating initiatives across the borough including:

- A Nutrition and Dietetics Early Years Service in Southwark's Children's Centres;
- Free, healthy school meals for all primary school pupils;
- The UNICEF Baby Friendly Initiative accreditation for Health Visitors;
- A range of cook and eat classes in diverse settings.

Whilst these initiatives have demonstrated positive outcomes with our residents, more can be done specifically with contracts under the influence of the council with support from the public and voluntary sectors. Therefore the proposed action for Area 2 is:

To incorporate the Healthier Catering Commitment (HCC) and other accreditation for healthy food into new and renewed contracts wherever possible.

The HCC is a London-wide accreditation programme supporting businesses to implement small changes to offer a healthier food option for their customers. Currently all leisure centres and park cafes in the borough are contractually obligated to work towards meeting the standards required for the HCC. In addition to the HCC, Council businesses could also be supported into other recognized healthy eating accreditation programmes such as the Food For Life and Good Food Awards.

Businesses in areas of the borough with the high deprivation would be targeted first to ensure the greatest impact to our residents most in need of support to achieving healthy diets.

This commitment will be evaluated against the number of existing and newly accredited businesses signed up to the HCC, showing an increase in the presence of the HCC across Southwark.

17. Area 3 – Reduce the prominence of sugary drinks and actively promote free drinking water

In addition to encouraging residents to consume less sugar in their diets, of equal importance is promoting drinking water as a healthy alternative to sugary drinks. Due to the financial and environmental impact bottled water could have, water fountains offer a low cost and environmentally-friendly alternative. As a result the proposed action for Area 3 is:

Add new water fountains in the borough, gather feedback on usage and public perception, and explore more ambitious plans for borough-wide installation/rollout.

This action aligns with the council priorities: the Council Plan 2018-2022 commits to 'introduce water fountains throughout Southwark to reduce plastic bottles' as a means for creating a greener borough.

18. Area 4 – Support businesses and organisations to improve their food offer

Businesses play an important role in engaging with our residents, and act as key stakeholders in tackling unhealthy weight. Southwark is a vibrant place to live, work and visit, however sometimes the food offer can contribute to an obesogenic environment. Southwark is already leading the way in delivering healthy places through a range of initiatives, particularly through planning permissions. The New Southwark Plan (Proposed Submission version) incorporates several new policies including a provision to implement A5 takeaway exclusion zones within 400m of secondary schools. Given this existing work the first proposed action for Area 4 is:

Continue to restrict the proliferation of businesses selling food high in sugar, fat and salt through 400m exclusion zones around secondary schools

Already this policy has successfully limited the addition of new businesses contributing to the obesogenic environment, but there are many ways existing businesses can improve their food offer. Encouraging healthy diets particularly for our youngest residents is one way that businesses can contribute.

There is ample evidence to demonstrate that breast milk offers infants the best start to life, but there are many reasons why mothers do not continue breastfeeding for the first six months of life. Whilst women have the legal right to breastfeed anywhere in public, it is important that women also feel welcome. To achieve this, the second proposed action for Area 4 is:

Commission the Breastfeeding Welcome Scheme and support Council owned buildings to become Breastfeeding Welcome.

The Breastfeeding Welcome Scheme is an accreditation programme supporting local businesses and venues with the tools and resources to facilitate a breastfeeding-friendly environment for mothers outside of clinical settings. Formally recognising places as having an environment where mothers can feel welcome to breastfeed removes another barrier that prevents continued breastfeeding for the entire first six months of life.

The outcomes for this area will be measured by the continued presence and influence of a local 400m exclusion zone around secondary schools and the accreditation of all council-owned buildings and a range of local businesses as Breastfeeding Welcome.

19. Area 5 – Public events

Southwark is host to numerous events throughout the year celebrating the range and diversity of communities across the borough. Because food and drink is commonly available at these events, there is the potential to influence the vending offer to include options for healthy eating. The proposed action for this area is:

Set a policy requiring vendors supplying food and drink at events in Southwark to include an option of free or cheap water on their menus. Where alcohol is served, to promote the provision of free water as a condition of license.

By promoting water at Southwark events, vendors will be able to offer a healthy alternative to any sugary drinks without compromising an opportunity for additional sales. Adding this requirement allows vendors to continue providing their preferred food and beverage option whilst also making sugar-free options available.

This commitment will be evaluated on the inclusion of an additional policy for vendors to offer water within the Southwark Outdoor Events Policy.

20. Area 6 – Raise public awareness

In addition to tackling sugar in the places across the borough and in the food available, of equal importance is educating our residents on the impact excess sugar has on weight. Evidence indicates excess sugar has negative effects on weight and oral health, and it is essential this message is communicated strongly. To raise public awareness the proposed action for Area 6 is:

Raise awareness of the health harms associated with over consumption of sugary drinks through a targeted sugar reduction campaign.

Already Southwark has committed to sharing information about the health effects of excess sugar through the Fizz Free February campaign 2018. The campaign challenges residents to give up fizzy drinks for the entire month of February, whilst also delivers positive messages around the benefits to reducing sugar intake. This campaign offers residents a simple first step to healthy eating by helping to raise awareness of the health harms associated with excess sugar. Fizz Free February will be supported annually further communicating the health risks of sugar overconsumption and increasing public awareness.

The campaign offers information and health promotion resources and invites pledges from all residents and community groups across Southwark, however the primary target audience is young people as they have the highest risk in developing habits that facilitate unhealthy eating.

Policy implications

21. Southwark Council and the Southwark CCG have a statutory duty under the 2012 Health and Social Care Act to produce a health and wellbeing strategy for Southwark. The health and wellbeing board leads the progress of the strategy. The health and wellbeing strategy is underpinned by more detailed thematic strategies and action plans – of which the Healthy Weight Strategy is one.
22. The Local Government Declaration on the Reduction of Sugar and Healthier Food will strengthen the action plan of the Healthy Weight Strategy.
23. The council's formal commitment to taking action on sugar aligns with wider national and regional initiatives. The release of Chapter 2 of the Childhood Obesity Plan from central government introduces stronger actions to tackle unhealthy weight through advertising bans, reformulation of sugar and more, directly aligning with initiatives of the declaration.

24. Adopting the declaration also supports the council's Fairer Future Promise to help residents achieve healthy, active lives by working to reduce the availability of sugar across the borough.

Community impact statement

25. The public sector equality duty requires public bodies to consider all individuals when carrying out their day to day work, in shaping policy, in delivering services and in relation to their own employees. It requires public bodies to have due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations between different people when carrying out their activities.
26. Communities and individuals experiencing greater disadvantage and deprivation have higher rates of overweight or obesity and less likely to access services to prevent or treat it. The actions identified within the declaration will prioritise the parts of the borough with the highest risk to excess weight or greatest need of support.

Resource implications

27. There are no specific financial implications contained within this report. Where the findings inform policy development and their implementation, their financial implications will be considered at the time these are brought forward.

SUPPLEMENTARY ADVICE FROM OTHER OFFICERS

Director of Law and Democracy

28. As stated, Southwark Council have a duty under the 2012 Health and Social Care Act to produce a health and wellbeing strategy. The sign up to the Local Government Declaration on Sugar Reduction and Healthier Food is an Executive decision.

Strategic Director of Finance and Governance (FC18/012)

29. The strategic director of finance and governance notes that there are no immediate financial implications arising from this report.
30. Staffing and any other costs connected with this report to be contained within existing departmental revenue budgets

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

Background Papers	Held At	Contact
Southwark Joint Strategic Needs Assessment	160 Tooley Street London SE1 2QH	Public Health 020 7525 0280 jsna@southwark.gov.uk
Link: www.southwark.gov.uk/jsna		
Southwark Health & Wellbeing Strategy 2015-20	160 Tooley Street London SE1 2QH	Public Health 020 7525 0280
Link (please copy and paste into your browser): http://www.southwark.gov.uk/health-and-wellbeing/public-health/for-professionals?chapter=3		
Everybody's Business: Southwark's Healthy Weight Strategy	160 Tooley Street London SE1 2QH	Public Health 020 7525 0280
Link (please copy and paste into your browser): http://moderngov.southwark.gov.uk/documents/s63091/Appendix%20%20Healthy%20Weight%20Strategy%202016%20-%202021.pdf		

APPENDICES

No.	Title
Appendix 1	Sustain briefing: Local Government Declaration on Sugar Reduction and Healthy Food

AUDIT TRAIL

Cabinet Member	Councillor Evelyn Akoto, Community Safety and Public Health		
Lead Officer	Kevin Fenton, Strategic Director of Place and Wellbeing		
Report Authors	Melinda Chau, Policy Officer Jin Lim, Consultant in Public Health		
Version	final		
Dated	5 September 2018		
Key Decision?	Yes		
CONSULTATION WITH OTHER OFFICERS / DIRECTORATES / CABINET MEMBER			
Officer Title		Comments Sought	Comments Included
Director of Law and Democracy		Yes	Yes
Strategic Director of Finance and Governance		Yes	Yes
Cabinet Member		Yes	Yes
Date final report sent to Constitutional Team			5 September 2018