

**HEALTH AND WELLBEING BOARD: 23 FEBRUARY 2023**

**REPORT OF LEICESTERSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL, PUBLIC HEALTH  
LEICESTERSHIRE HEALTHY WEIGHT STRATEGY; IMPLEMENTATION  
PROGRESS UPDATE**

**Purpose of report**

1. The purpose of this report is to share the Leicestershire Healthy Weight Strategy 2021-26 action plan and update the Health and Wellbeing Board on the progress of actions taken to implement the Strategy.

**Recommendation**

2. The Board is asked to note the progress made to date and comment on future opportunities for action.

**Policy Framework and Previous Decision**

3. The Leicestershire Healthy Weight Strategy was approved by Leicestershire County Council's Cabinet in March 2021. It sets out a vision for the future where everyone in Leicestershire can eat well, be physically active and develop in a way which facilitates a healthy weight.

**Background**

4. In Leicestershire 65% of adults are above a healthy weight and 1 in 5 children start school above a healthy weight. This proportion rises to 1 in 3 at year 6 of Primary School. Maintaining a healthy weight can improve our health-related quality of life and reduce the risk of health conditions such as heart disease, stroke, type 2 diabetes, liver disease, and some cancers.
5. However, obesity is a complex and multifaceted problem that requires coordinated, effective action to change the food, physical activity, and social environments from 'obesogenic' to ones which promote a healthy weight. If we are going to take effective action to reverse obesity at a population level, we need to work together with partners through a 'whole systems approach' to create an environment that facilitates healthy choices and supports individuals to be physically active and achieve and maintain a healthy weight.
6. This is the approach which is being taken in Leicestershire via a place-based Strategy and Action Plan, with some interdependencies at system level.

**Proposals/Options**

7. In developing the Healthy Weight Strategy Action Plan it was agreed that actions should focus on new partnership activity, rather than documenting what was already being done to support healthy weight in partner organisations.

8. The Strategy is based around three themes addressing the healthy weight environment, services to support people to be a healthy weight and the systems leadership to embed actions in all policies and practice.
9. The Action Plan is attached, as the Appendix, and includes quarterly updates until the close of year on. Below is a summary of key achievement from the Action plan, and an outline of work being undertaken.

### **Theme 1 – The Healthy weight environment**

10. Much of the work undertaken in this first year has been to understand what is available locally and identify gaps in provision locally and identify best practice from other areas of the UK that can be applied locally. As a result, we have:
  - A greater understanding of programmes in Leicestershire to improve availability of healthy and sustainable food, including food banks, social supermarkets and community fridges and larders. This is improving signposting of people in need to valuable community food resources. Work has also been undertaken to learn from other local authorities in England working with restaurants to increase healthy affordable options.
  - Undertaken scoping work to understand local powers relating to the location of fast-food outlets.
  - Identified an opportunity to support further education colleges in their food provision.
11. This activity supplements existing work delivered through the Leicestershire Food Plan (see <https://resources.leicestershire.gov.uk/good-food-leicestershire>) and work to embed 'Health in all Policies'.
12. As part of the Food Plan, two projects in particular have enjoyed great success:
  - i. Veg Power is a programme funded by Public Health in 100 schools encouraging them to take part in the Veg Power Campaign in 2020, 2021 and 2022. Veg Power uses a partnership across supermarkets and prime media (e.g. ITV) to encourage kids to eat veg. Running over a 6 week period each week sees a vegetable taking centre stage with associated activities given out in schools. The stats from the 2021 campaign are attached – 25,382 children received a Veg Power activity pack and the family and school surveys conducted in Leicestershire showed over 60% increase in vegetable consumption through the schools programme, compared to approximately 20% increase in the UK due to the advertising campaign alone.

- ii. The Venner project is a collaboration with Leicestershire County Council and North West Leicestershire District Council in which families are given Venner plant forward recipe boxes. These boxes are aimed at providing fresh ingredients and recipes for a family of four for five meals, kids breakfasts and some snack recipes. Alongside the boxes families were able to access on-line videos and extra support for cooking advice and skills. Following the successful pilot in which families reported learning new skills and added recipes into their weekly food plan, we worked with Venner to open access to the boxes for women who are overweight or obese in pregnancy and post pregnancy to enable easy and affordable access to healthier food. A total of 164 families will receive 4 Venner boxes to encourage healthier diets. The programme will be evaluated to understand how initiatives like this are taken up and what the associated benefits are.
13. As part of the Health in All Policies work, strategic health policies are being embedded within local plans and health impact assessments are being undertaken on local plans to include consideration for healthy eating, food access and physical activity opportunities offered within the plans. In addition, pilot work is being undertaken with North West Leicestershire and Blaby districts to build an evidence base for hot food takeaway restrictions within the Local Plans. This will enable the sharing of best practice with the other districts, including the development of the 'Health in All Policies' staff training (Health in All Our Work) which is being piloted amongst staff. One section of the training module covers 'access to good food and health' and the e-Learning aims to ensure all staff across the whole organisation have an understanding of the key components needed for 'good health' and how their role may contribute towards this. It will be launched at Leicestershire County Council and rolled out to districts, NHS and Health and Wellbeing Board members as requested and agreed.

## **Theme 2 - Support to maintain a healthy weight**

14. For this theme we have focused on identifying gaps in weight management service provision and identifying ways to increase referrals for support for under and overweight individuals. We have:
- Improved the referral mechanisms for children that are under and overweight as identified through the National Child Measurement Programme.
  - Included healthy weight questions in the 2022 residents' physical activity and wellbeing survey run by Active Together. Data from the survey has been summarised in an infographic and is being used to inform behaviour change programmes.
  - Been supporting the development of a Tier 3 weight management pilot programme and website that sets out all weight management services in the county.

15. This activity is in addition to existing weight management services delivered by Leicestershire County Council which has been expanded to include bespoke services for certain groups of the population to help reflect needs.
16. The Healthy 4 Me service is a weight management programme designed specifically for people with learning disabilities and their carers. This programme offers face to face intervention with adapted resources to reflect the needs of the population using infographic and pictorial information to convey the key health messages together with support from a Nutritionist. This has also been designed with carers in mind to help them assist people with learning disabilities around food planning and cooking.
17. There is a new tailored weight management service for men. This was a result of feedback from men who otherwise would not access weight management services.
18. We also provide a Healthy Weight in Pregnancy programme and work collaboratively with midwives and health visitors in providing nutrition support and advice for pregnant mums. This is not a weight loss programme but is designed to provide informed choice, healthier eating and cooking choices in pregnancy to overweight mums and consists of a 12 week behavioural intervention programme.

### **Theme 3 - Systems leadership**

19. This theme is about working at system level to improve activity across organisations within Leicestershire. Actions taken so far include:
  - 'Healthy Conversations' training is being rolled out across LLR, including training for midwives about healthy weight during and after pregnancy. Website information has been improved and there is more integration with the Core20Plus5 work.
  - Work is ongoing to embed health (including healthy weight) in planning policies and to undertake health impact assessments for larger developments.
  - As a result of the strategy implementation and closer working between the LLR ICS and Local Government, we have identified ways to improve referral pathways for the NHS digital weight management service. People who are referred by the GP for this service but are not eligible will be identified and signposted to the Leicestershire tier 2 weight management service. More will be done to reduce inappropriate referrals through support to practices. There will also be more support to PCNs that have identified healthy weight as a priority for their plans.
20. Following the approval of the Strategy, an implementation oversight group was convened in October 2021 co-chaired by a Consultant in Public Health from Leicestershire County Council, and the Health and Wellbeing Team

Leader from North West Leicestershire District Council, and with membership from a wide range of partners including:

- a. Leicestershire County Council (Public Health, Trading Standards, Adult Social Care, Children and Families);
  - b. District councils (Health, Culture and Leisure, Planning, Environmental Health);
  - c. Active Together (formerly LRS)
  - d. LLR ICB
21. Three task and finish subgroups were established representing each theme of the Strategy. These were: 'Healthy Weight Environment', 'Empowering Individuals to Maintain a Healthy Weight' and a cross-cutting theme of 'Systems Leadership'.
  22. The groups were asked to develop actions to be undertaken in the next 12 months in their theme that enable delivery of the Strategy.

### **Consultation/Patient and Public Involvement**

23. Extensive consultation with the public and stakeholders was undertaken during the development of the Strategy and partners have been involved in the development of the Action Plan. A communications plan has been developed to communicate the actions being taken and their outcomes, to the public and stakeholders.

### **Resource Implications**

24. Delivery of the Strategy is being undertaken using existing resource allocations.

### **Conclusion**

25. The report summarises key outcomes achieved to date in the first year of the Healthy Weight Strategy for Leicestershire. The pandemic slowed the initial implementation of the Action Plan, but partners are now working through agreed actions and making progress as set out here.
26. The Action Plan outcomes are considered quarterly by the Strategy Implementation Group to review progress, agree actions and work collectively to unblock any problems that have arisen.

### **Appendix**

Leicestershire Healthy Weight Strategy Action Plan – End of Year 1 Update

### **Officer to contact**

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### **Relevant Impact Assessments**

#### Equality and Human Rights Implications

Due regard' has been paid to equality, diversity, community cohesion and human rights in the development of the Strategy and reported in the report presented to the Leicestershire County Council Cabinet in March 2021.

#### Partnership Working and associated issues

This is a partnership strategy involving actions from a wide range of organisations within Leicestershire. Partners form the action subgroups and the overarching implementation oversight group.