

Children's Scrutiny Panel

8th December 2021

Meeting commenced: 6.00pm

Meeting ended: 7:05pm

Present:

Councillor Brocklehurst (in the chair)

Councillors:

Ari Leitner, Lewis Nelson; Neil Reynolds; Madeline Wade;

Co-opted Members:

Dr Keith Archer; Jacqui Morrissey.

Officers:

Debbie Blackburn – Assistant Director Public Health, Nursing and Wellbeing

Liz Wright – Democratic Services (Clerk)

Members of the public:

None

1. Apologies for Absence

Apologies were received from Councillor Karen Garrido, Councillor Mike Pevitt, Councillor Collette Weir, Judith Elderkin, Yolande Amana-Ghola, Dr Alex Klein. Best wishes were sent to Councillor Karen Garrido who was isolating in advance of an operation.

2. Declarations of interest

There were no declarations of interest.

3. Minutes of the previous meeting

Resolved: That, the minutes of the meeting held on 10th November 2021 were approved as a true and correct record.

4. Matters arising from the minutes

There were no matters arising from the minutes.

5. Budget Monitoring

Resolved: That, the Children's Scrutiny Panel agreed to defer the budget monitoring report to 9th February meeting (as detailed on the updated Work Programme) as there was no material change to the information for the recent update report.

6. Childhood Obesity Strategy Update

The Assistant Director (AD) Public Health, Nursing and Wellbeing introduced the report and highlighted the following.

- The aim of the report was to ask members to:

- To note of the current position and the data analysis of excess weight of children in Salford.
- To review the findings from the recent mapping of the family weight management pathway and gap analysis.
- To note the developments arising from external investment towards tackling obesity in the Early Years.
- To note the progress towards a whole-systems approach which will be embodied within the next Childhood Healthy Weight Strategy.
- The report set out the current position in terms of childhood obesity and the harm to children and young people and the harm, if not addressed, that it causes in later adult life.
- The report outlined the pre-pandemic data and the context for Salford, review of the Family Weight Management Pathway and the opportunity to tackle obesity in Early Years and the recommendations for forming the basis of the Salford's future Healthy Weight Strategy.
- The impact of mental health, physical behaviour issues, access to healthy food and development of cooking skills were discussed.
- The approach to reducing obesity was a multi-faceted approach and included the Healthy Weight Declaration had been discussed at a previous panel meeting.
- It had not been possible to carry out the measurement of children's obesity during the pandemic lockdowns, so up to date comprehensive data was not available. 10% of mandated checks had taken place since schools re-opened in September. It was hoped to have a fuller picture in the Spring term but the measurement programme had been impacted by school nurses being diverted to helping on the booster programme.
- The National Measurement Programme had outlined the national and local increase in levels of obesity and that Salford's statistical neighbours were in a similar position. The programme also outlined that the higher the level of deprivation the higher the levels of obesity.
- The levels of obesity had been mapped across Salford and work was ongoing to try and understand the why rates varied in different parts of the city.
- Work was ongoing to develop a rewards programme and examples being piloted included assisted car parking schemes to support the daily mile in schools. Assured car parking was being provided away from the school so that parents and children were encouraged to walk together and exercise on the way to school.
- There was a lot of work going on to try and get children get back into physical exercise after the pandemic has curtailed opportunities for exercise for many children.
- Salford had secured NHS funding towards the development of a GM test site for tackling obesity in Early Years. The funding was around £300,000 each year over two years to develop integrated working across Maternity, Early Years, Dietetics, schools and community services. The principles for the approach (the Amsterdam Model) were:
 - A strong emphasis on co-production/co-development of solutions with local communities.
 - Consolidating existing work with BAME communities around culturally appropriate approaches.
 - Working with families living in poverty and with foodbanks/food clubs to improve the quality of food offered, food literacy and cooking skills.
 - Focus on maternity pathways with weight management support for mothers with raised BMIs and in respect of information around nutrition and infant feeding.
 - Review of food nutrition and information provided via private, voluntary and independent childcare providers.
 - Acknowledging co-morbidity of mental health problems among overweight/obese, as both a symptom and driver.
 - Supporting tech enablement through the Assure App to promote opportunities to
 - Make Every Contact Count.

The Chair invited questions and comments from the members and the following were raised.

- A member commended the walking to school initiatives, the whole family approach to health improvement and the healthy food in foodbanks initiatives.
- A member thanked the AD for the detailed report and presentation and asked about the variations in weights between year groups and wards of the city. It was explained that the data could vary from one side of the street to another. There needed to be a deep dive into the data to try and unpick it as the aggregated figures were not helpful as they averaged out the differences between years, schools, council wards and a better understanding of the data could help identify the reasons behind the data.
- A member asked about the Red Pepper initiative. It was explained it was the Family Weight Management that included activities, shopping, cooking to help families manage. The programme was appropriate for all ages within families.
- A member asked about *Making Every Contact Count*. It was confirmed that it was important to reinvigorate Public Health intervention programmes such as weight reduction, smoking cessation as they had been impacted by the pandemic but were important to health outcomes.
- A member asked how the walking to schools initiatives were promoted to children. It was explained that rewards and incentives would be provided for children and parents. There were many ready made programmes for schools to use to promote walking to school and included Apps for the families to use. Work was ongoing with the Place Directorate to identify assured car parking spaces near schools that could be used for the park and walk initiative.
- A member asked if *walking buses* could be revisited and promoted with schools
- A member asked about links with Salford Community leisure and if any schemes were being looked at to provide discounted rates for access to facilities for children on free school meals (FSM). This had been done as part of the Winter Holiday Scheme and the members asked if this could be extended for FSM pupils for the whole year and if it would also be possible to extend it to all children. It was confirmed that free swimming lessons for pupils eligible for FSM in 2012/13 but the uptake was not good. This may have been because the access to data at the time and accessibility and that it was timely to look at this again.
- The Chair asked where the panel should be focusing on. It was suggested that the panel may want to look in more detail at community involvement in tackling obesity. The Future Generation Commission in Wales was also highlighted as an area for possible further investigation. The commission checked policies and proposals for the impact on future generations and it would be interesting and useful to consider how Salford could do something similar and focus on the longer term.
- A member thanked the AD for the detailed information and particularly the mapping exercise. They commented that in their experience in education that poverty often drove obesity. They also raised their concern about how the amount of PE had been reduced in school timetables in to accommodate a more academic curriculum. This had meant a reduction from having PE/games everyday to maybe only once or twice a week. Some schools had also reduced and removed some playtimes and so reducing the opportunities for physical activity during school time. The AD stressed the importance of physical activity for mental health and dealing with stress and anxiety. The School Sports Partnership was very important in developing sports and physical activity in schools. The AD would raise the members concerns about PE and the time for physical activity in schools with the AD for Education, Skills and Work (Cathy Starbuck).

The Chair thanked the AD and Steve Gavin for the detailed report and presentation.

Resolved: That, the Children’s Scrutiny Panel noted:

- the current position and the data analysis of excess weight of children in Salford;

- the findings from the recent mapping of the family weight management pathway and gap analysis;
- the developments arising from external investment towards tackling obesity in the Early Years;
- the progress towards a whole-systems approach which will be embodied within the next Childhood Healthy Weight Strategy.

7. The Work Programme and Membership

7a. The Work Programme

- The Mental Health Update would be presented in January.
- It was agreed to defer the budget monitoring report to 9th February meeting.
- The childhood obesity was programmed for June.

7b. Membership

- The following vacancies still remained:
 - A parent governor vacancy – to be filled by an election.
 - A Labour Party vacancy (to fill the place left vacant by Councillor Walker)
 - A representative from the Free Churches.
 - A Roman Catholic Diocesan Representative.

Resolved: That, the Children’s Scrutiny Panel

8. Any Other business (AOB)

8a. The future timing of meetings

- There was concern that attendance at the meetings had reduced and a few members had commented that the timing of the meetings had meant they were struggling to attend.
- A member asked if the start times for meetings could be alternated between 2pm and 6pm.
- It was agreed to discuss the timings of meeting at the pre-meet for the January meeting and the clerk would ask members to attend for the pre-meeting for this purpose.

Resolved: That, the panel would have a discussion on the future things of meetings at the pre-meeting at 5:30pm on 12th January with a view to making a decision formally at the next panel meeting on 12th January 2022.

9. Date, time and venue for next meeting

- The meeting will be held on Wednesday 12th January 2022 at 6pm (5:30pm briefing for members).
- The venue for the meeting is Salford Suite, Salford Civic Centre, Old Town Hall Building. Members must attend in person.