

Report of:	The Mayor and Executive Member for Adult Social Care & Public Health; Director of Public Health (South Tees)
Submitted to:	Executive
Date:	19 July 2023
Title:	Healthy Weight Declaration
Report for:	Decision
Status:	Public
Strategic priority:	All
Key decision:	Yes
Why:	Decision(s) will have a significant impact in two or more wards
Urgent:	No
Why:	Not Applicable

Executive summary

- The report outlines an overview of the process of signing up to the Healthy Weight Declaration (HWD) and the recommendation to progress Middlesbrough Council's adoption of the declaration.
- The report outlines the aim of the HWD to increase the number of people living in Middlesbrough who are a healthy weight and improve nutrition and hydration outcomes across the town.
- The report provides a summary of the current obesity rates in Middlesbrough for children and adults either overweight, living with obesity or living with severe obesity.
- The report demonstrates the HWD 16 commitments that provide strategic vision and aspiration for the council. It offers a rationale and platform to connect council teams, bringing them together to raise awareness about the importance of healthy weight and to deliver interventions.

Purpose

1. The purpose of the report is to seek approval from the Executive to progress with Middlesbrough Council's adoption of the Healthy Weight Declaration, ensuring it is aligned to the Council's 'Health and Wellbeing' recovery plan and the wider Public Health South Tees Strategy, which a particular focus to reduce obesity levels and thereby improve both the health of local communities and those working for the council.

Background and relevant information

2. Being overweight or living with obesity increases the risk of serious health problems, including disability, disease and death, and have substantial long-term economic, wellbeing and social costs. Diet and obesity-related ill-health has a huge financial impact on the NHS with estimates that it costs the UK around £6 billion each year, before we consider the economic and societal impacts due to reduced productivity and obesity-related illness that make people unable to work.
3. In Middlesbrough, an estimated 71% of adults (18+) are overweight or living with obesity, with 28% mothers living with obesity in early pregnancy.

1 in 3 children in reception are overweight or living with obesity and by the age of 11 (Year 6), 1 in 4 children are overweight or living with obesity, with higher prevalence of excess weight being strongly associated with increasing deprivation.

4. The current cost of living crisis has resulted in reduced household budgets as prices of essentials such as food and fuel increase, as well as rising housing rents and mortgages. Food costs alone rose by over 13% in the 12 months up to August 2022. By June 2022, 1 in 6 households were already in serious financial difficulty impacting on both physical and mental health and well-being. Lower income families are more vulnerable to increases in the cost of living; they have less money to spend and less flexibility when it comes to household budgets. The poorest fifth of families spend almost two-fifths (37%) of their income on essentials (food, housing, fuel and power).
5. Being overweight or living with obesity can be prevented, but it is a normal reaction to an abnormal environment, where it is very difficult to achieve and maintain a healthy weight given all the external factors and influences on our lives. We therefore need to look at the whole system of social, economic and environmental factors that impact on weight.
6. The HWD has been developed to support local authorities to demonstrate commitment at a leadership level to develop and implement policies that promote healthy weight and improve the health and well-being of the local population.
7. Following its initial launch in August 2015, the HWD was first adopted by Blackpool Council in January 2016. It has subsequently been adopted by the following councils; St Helens, Knowsley, Blackburn with Darwen, Lancashire, Sefton, Cumbria, Allerdale, Copeland, Eden, Carlisle, South Lakeland, Barrow in Furness, Rochdale, Liverpool, Cheshire West, Cheshire, Pendle, Leeds, Kirklees, City of York, Rotherham, Devon, Bristol, Plymouth and Sunderland.

8. Middlesbrough Council has an important role to play. We control planning, public and environmental health, leisure and recreation and regeneration – the HWD is a vehicle to take a whole-systems approach needed to tackle this complex issue. The declaration can have an impact across local authority departments, making sure the council works as one to achieve maximum impact and, ideally by working with other local partners, will have an impact far beyond council controlled areas.
9. The Healthy Weight Declaration (HWD) includes 16 standard commitments (appendix 1, page 14).
10. To meet the 16 commitments Public Health will lead and develop the following five areas:
 1. Commitment from system leaders
 2. Evidence of initiatives to address commercial determinants
 3. Health promoting environments/infrastructure
 4. Organisational and cultural change
 5. Evaluation and monitoring
11. This work will be led by Public Health linking into the development of a Healthy eight Strategy and guided by the new healthy weight steering group. It will, by definition, involve a wide range of stakeholders, both internal and external to the Council in order to make progress.
12. These actions do not all need to be done at once, or prior to signing up to the declaration – we will prioritise and work systematically through the commitments, identifying those where work is already being undertaken.

What decision(s) are being recommended?

13. That the Executive agrees to signing the Healthy Weight Declaration as a tool to gain leadership support and promote the Local Authority's commitment to addressing obesity.
14. That the Executive identifies an elected member champion who will help to progress the HWD through the democratic process.
15. That the Executive identifies opportunities for leaders to promote the HWD as part of a wider system.

Rationale for the recommended decision(s)

16. It is important that the Executive has oversight of the Local Authority's commitment to achieving the HWD. The HWD will be integral to achieving this by enabling all Directorates across the council to consider the impact they can have to promote and encourage healthy weight.

Other potential decision(s) and why these have not been recommended

17. There are no other decisions to be made.

Impact(s) of the recommended decision(s)

Legal

18. No foreseeable legal impact to adopting Healthy Weight Declaration.

Strategic priorities and risks

19. The Healthy Weight Declaration supports the delivery of the Public Health South Tees, Healthy Environments programme area.

20. **Risk description:** The Healthy Weight Declaration will provide a multifaceted framework to guide Middlesbrough Council in supporting local people to be a healthy weight. The concern if we do not adopt this approach is that we will continue to see limited action to address obesity, which will lead to obesity rates across the town to continue to rise, resulting in wider health inequalities, and poorer health and wellbeing outcomes for the local population. This will result in increasing demands on services across the NHS and Local Authority.

Human Rights, Equality and Data Protection

21. Not applicable

Financial

22. There are no direct financial implications arising from the recommendations in this report. All expenditure will be incurred within existing Public Health budgets or will be the subject to future reports to the Executive.

Actions to be taken to implement the recommended decision(s)

Action	Responsible Officer	Deadline
Identify political champion	Jo Bielby	July 2023
Executive agrees for Middlesbrough to sign up to the Healthy Weight Declaration	Jo Bielby	July 2023
Implementation of the Healthy Weight Declaration and creation of new Healthy Weight Declaration Steering Group.	Jo Bielby	March 2024

Appendices

1	Healthy Weight Declaration 16 core commitments - page 14
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Background papers

Body	Report title	Date

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