

Apologies For Absence

Apologies were received from Councillor Satti.

1. Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of Interest received.

2. Minutes of previous meetings

Resolved: that the minutes of the meetings held on 6 February 2025, 19 February 2025 and 4 March 2025 were approved as a true and accurate record.

3. Report on the whole system approach to weight in Slough

The Committee received a report that provided an overview of a Whole-System Approach programme to Healthy Weight that was being shaped in Slough. The report outlined the current challenges for healthy weight in Slough, the background to the healthy weight work and updates on progress of the four task and finish groups asked with developing this approach Whole System Approach to Healthy Weight in Slough. The aim of the report was to provide an increased awareness of the importance of healthy weight and an overview of the work being undertaken to develop a Whole System Approach to Healthy Weight in Slough.

The Committee was informed that a Healthy Weight Summit was held in February 2024 that was attended by over 60 stakeholders. The Summit focussed on developing a coordinated, whole-system approach to address the issues that had been identified in the Healthy Needs Assessment (HNA). Stakeholders emphasised the need for improving access to healthy foods, creating opportunities for physical activity, and ensuring culturally sensitive health interventions. Following the Summit, the Health and Wellbeing Board reviewed the findings and discussions of the HNA and endorsed the decision to implement a whole-system approach. The Board approved the formation of task and finish groups to focus on four areas. These had been set up with the Core Working Group providing oversight and ensuring strategic alignment. The task and finish groups formed were the Physical Activity and Active Travel group; the Creating a Healthy Eating Environment group; the Pathway Development group; and the Children and Young People's group. Each task and finish group had an external co-chair working alongside the Public Health team to ensure a broader system perspective and to raise the profile of the work. Each of the groups was working towards the development of an action plan by May 2025, guided by the Public Health England's Whole System Approach to Obesity framework. The development of the action plan was being facilitated through workshops involving key stakeholders. The task and finish groups had all committed to holding at least one workshop by early April 2025.

The long-term ambition of the Whole System Approach was to embed a sustainable approach to healthy weight for Slough, supporting individuals to have and maintain a healthy weight, thereby reducing rates of overweight and obesity for all ages across the life-course. This would be done by capacity building, establishing relationships, developing leadership across the system and embedding action and policies within and across organisations. There were a number of outcome measures that could be

used to track the progress over the longer term, including the National Child Measurement Programme data, Reception prevalence of overweight, including obesity (age 4- 5 years) and Year 6 prevalence of overweight, including obesity (10 – 11 years), the Overweight (including obesity) prevalence in adults (self-reported data via the Active Lives Adult Survey), the Obesity (QOF prevalence, NHS England), the Percentage of physically active adults (self-reported data via the Active Lives Adult Survey) and the Percentage of physically active children and young people (Active Lives Children and Young People Survey). Slough data was currently worse than the average for England for most of these measures. The ambition was that over the next 5-10 years, there would be an improvement in the trend of weight for Slough populations with the rates for each of these measures moving closer to the average for England.

Members of the Committee raised the following points with Officer responses:

- Were any of the task and finish groups looking at the planning policies to try and limit the number of takeaway establishments near schools. And could the indicators for obesity linked to Wards be considered such as ethnicity and deprivation. Officers responded that access to healthy food was so important, but no restrictions could be placed until the policy framework was in place and included in the Local Plan. The indicators had been considered in the Healthy Needs Assessment which was the first stage of all this work.
- The use of the gyms in the park had decreased, was this because broken equipment was not being replaced or were there other reasons? Officers would investigate this and report back to the Committee. **ACTION**
- A typo was highlighted on Page 4 of the Draft Healthy Weight Healthy Needs Assessment (HNA) March 2024 where it read that “Slough has the lowest obesity rate among its statistical neighbours.” It should read “highest”. This would be amended. **ACTION**
- Was the term “BMI” being correctly used for Slough? There was no reference to anorexia in the report and the HNA. Should it be included, and be termed as unhealthy relationship with food? Officers agreed that BMI was the best measure, but it did not work for all populations and Slough was one of them. Even with a low BMI, some populations had a higher risk of some health issues such as obesity. This was recognised. With respect to anorexia, it was not in the report but was very much included as the concentration was on healthy weight. An important factor was the relationship that children had with food and trying to use communications through schools to make it a positive relationship.
- Had any thought or resource been given to factors that had changed after covid such as people attending planned events, groups, classes and then these all ending during covid. How could people be enticed back to partake in these activities for exercise and education? Officers reported that it was interesting to see how behaviour could change, during covid people could only go out for exercise so people started going out once a day. It was a different world now with a lot less resources available and for that reason the whole-system approach was being used to make the environment better for lots of people, instead of a small group.

- What communication methods were being used to spread the message?
Different ways were being considered with the Communication Team such as Planning Hoardings being used for healthy eating messages. The Team would work with Planning to put the policies in place that could then be included as part of the Local Plan to stop the bad food advertisements.
- Where there any powers to influence fast food places? Officers commented that there were no direct powers, but teams had been working on quality marks alongside the food hygiene team.
- The report focussed on targets as these could be measured, should it be the outcomes that should be measured against? Officers reported that measures for children and on diseases was already available. This was a long-term aim.
- A question was asked that did the population of Slough know that obesity was an issue in Slough, did the population know what their weight should be and how was this being communicated? Were broader discussions needed? Officers were looking at data for different demographics and these showed that men were more overweight compared to women but for obesity, both demographics were the same. There were campaigns and meetings taking place. There were many other points that needed to be considered such as people could be active by walking which was free, children walking to school, access to and income to use facilities, working alongside GP surgeries or the food prepper in the household. There were many other avenues to explore.
- Other points considered included:
 - Leaflets for fast food advertisement and how these could be limited.
 - Cost of food, unhealthy food was cheaper and readily available.
 - Awareness in libraries, on high streets, and other places.
 - Could Legislation be altered, were the government behind this campaign?
 - Did the borough have staff with local knowledge.
 - The Councillors role when speaking with residents.
 - Access to activities for people with disabilities.
 - Issues in parks where exercise is free such as lack of benches and safety concerns.

Resolved: that the Committee provided their insight from a local perspective regarding the challenges of maintaining a healthy weight. The Committee considered the approach being taken to prioritise actions to implement as part of the whole-system approach. The Committee provided their reflections of how Councillors could be supported to be role models in promoting healthy weight across Slough and within their communities. And the Committee provided comments on the report and the draft HNA.

4. Discussion relating to Scrutiny of the Improvement & Recovery Programme

The Committee received a proposal report for CISC intervention in I&R Programme from the Scrutiny Officer. This would enable effective scrutiny of the recovery programme as scrutiny had not considered it since February 2024. The Committee were advised that a full proposal would be presented to Committee at the next meeting for recommendation to Cabinet.

The proposal would be to have an I & R task and finish group with four Members that would work throughout the year on looking at the delivery and action plans. Any deep dives would be considered by the Scrutiny Committee and any recommendations would be made to Cabinet and any comments would be made back to the Board.

The Chair of Scrutiny had been invited to the next Best Value Board to observe.

Members made the following comments:

- It was not clear why scrutiny would sit in the Board meetings as an observer as it was Scrutiny's role to hold the administration to account. What would the benefit be to be an observer on the Board. Would Scrutiny be compromised by the Chair sitting on the Boards. What was the rationale behind the suggestion? The Scrutiny Officer commented that in all discussions that had taken place, it had been made clear that the Scrutiny representation was not a Member of the Board but at the meeting to be a part of the discussions taking place. It was an opportunity to hear what was being done and what needed to be investigated further.
- The question was raised about why all Opposition Leaders were not named as board members. The Scrutiny Officer committed to look into further and report back. **ACTION**
- It was important to keep to the processes in place and as part of those processes, the role of scrutiny was to call in anything that further information was required on and hold the executive to account. It did not feel comfortable being part of the Board or in attendance at the meetings. The Scrutiny Officer commented that the process would remain, but by attending, scrutiny would have an earlier sight of topics.
- There was a concern that information may be disclosed in public that was internal information for discussion only. The Scrutiny Officer commented that this was an opportunity to see information not in the public domain and mirrored the approach to budget scrutiny.
- Members felt there was a chance that the Committee would lose its independence by being absorbed by or being part of another Board and this would affect the Committees judgement.

Resolved: that the Members agreed that they would discuss with their Groups and make comments at the next meeting when the proposal was put formally to the Scrutiny Committee.

5. Date of Next Meeting

The Committee noted that the next meeting would be on 29 April 2025.

The meeting ended at 20.45.