

# Overview and Scrutiny Committee

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Tuesday, 3rd March, 2015

## MINUTES

### Present:

Councillor Jane Potter (Chair), and Councillors Joe Baker, David Bush, Andrew Fry, Carole Gandy, Alan Mason, David Thain (substituting for Councillor Gay Hopkins) and Pat Witherspoon

### Also Present:

Councillor Natalie Brooks

### Officers:

S Hanley and R Bamford

### Democratic Services Officers:

J Bayley and A Scarce

## 87. TACKLING OBESITY TASK GROUP - FINAL REPORT

Councillor Potter, as Chair of the Tackling Obesity Task Group, introduced the report and delivered a presentation. Councillor Potter explained that the subject was of huge importance not only to this country but to the world as a whole and the effects of obesity led to a number of serious health implications, which in turn caused pressure and great expense to the National Health Service. The Chair provided information on a scheme which had been set up by the Mayor of Oklahoma City which had led to it being the healthiest state in the USA. The group had found during its investigations that there was lots of support available to the residents of Redditch, but she believed it was motivation that people lacked and it was this which needed to be addressed.

The Chair highlighted the following findings of the investigation during her presentation:

- Details of the terms of reference and areas investigated.

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Chair

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- Information the group received during its investigations to assess whether there was an obesity problem in Redditch and the cost of obesity related health conditions to the local NHS.
- In respect of Recommendation 1 and a communications strategy it was highlighted that there were many activities available within the Borough. However, there was limited awareness.
- A communications campaign could help to raise the profile of local projects and activities.
- Officers had confirmed that social media was currently the most popular form of communications.
- Recommendation 2 in respect of GP practices – the group had been disappointed at the limited response received from GPs. As Members believed that GPs were often a patient's first port of call for people they felt that more should be done to promote healthy lifestyle initiatives in GP practices.
- Recommendation 3 and an investigation into the potential for a Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) in respect of hot food takeaways– whilst it was acknowledged that this had its limitations and could not guarantee future businesses would provide healthy food the Chair suggested it would be a move in the right direction and had the potential to make an impact in the long term.
- The Chair stressed that at this stage the group were simply requesting that the Planning department investigate the potential for an SPD to be introduced.
- Health Chats training – recommendation 4. The Chair said that she and Councillor Natalie Brooks had attended these sessions and found them both informative and useful, giving them an understanding of the difficulties facing people with this condition. It also provided them with the tools to help residents if appropriate.
- There were also a number of areas which the group, whilst not making any recommendations, wished to highlight and support. These included Measures of Success, Healthy Eating Awards from Worcestershire Regulatory Services and the Council leading by example through the work it was already carrying out.
- The group had concluded that the Council had a moral obligation to take action that could lead to improvements in public health.
- By approving these recommendations the group was also suggesting that the council would be helping to meet both the LSP's priority of tackling health inequalities and the Council's strategic purpose; help me live my life independently (including health and activity).

Councillors Joe Baker and Natalie Brooks, as Members of the Task Group, reiterated the Chair's comments and informed the

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Committee that they had found the group informative. They suggested that it was important to find a way of providing overweight and obese people with the motivation to make healthy changes to their lifestyles. They urged the Council to take on board the work that needed to be done in order to improve the obesity levels within the Borough.

Following presentation of the report Officers were invited to comment on Recommendation 3, in respect of the Supplementary Planning Document, and made the following points:

- A health impact assessment was carried out in conjunction with Worcestershire County Council (WCC) as part of the Local Plan process.
- A number of policies were in place, particularly for new developments to take account of, including open spaces. An example was provided of a new development in Brockhill which would have good links with both the Abbey Stadium and Arrow Valley and included walks and cycle paths.
- Members needed to ensure that the inclusion of any policy was not to the detriment of or in conflict with the purpose of another policy. Officers suggested it should be noted that retail and food outlets were directed to the town centre and district centres. Most schools in Redditch were within 400 metres of the town centre or a district centre so an SPD would be at odds with these retail policies.
- The work of the Redditch Town Centre Partnership to bring food outlets into the centre of town.
- There were a set amount of retail shop fronts that could be hot food outlets in district centres. This was about 20 or 25 per cent.

Members discussed the following areas in further detail once the presentation and comments had been delivered:

- The number of hot/fast food takeaways in what was a relatively small area and particular “hot spots” in locations such as Headless Cross.
- Concerns around the Health Chats and the role of Members in delivering associated support to residents.
- The links between obesity and dementia and the need for this to be highlighted.
- Research and methods of tackling the obesity problem which were carried out in the USA.
- Concerns around obesity in children and the need to educate the parents in order for them to set a good example.
- The abundance of both support and activities available within the Borough.

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- The lack of response from the GPs and whether the recommendation in respect of providing them with monthly updates would be effective and resource intensive.
- The underlying causes of obesity in some people and how these needed to be treated sympathetically. For example due to bereavement or mental health problems.
- The planning process and the restrictions arising from this on particular types of usage.

Members discussed how they could best make use of the resources available. For example officers suggested that remaining Choose How You Move resources, such as bicycles, could be deployed to encourage greater participation in physical activities. The legacy of the initiative would be the provision of walking and cycle routes together with an increasing use of public transport. It was also suggested that local walks could be advertised through the press on a regular basis.

Following the discussions it was agreed that the wording supporting recommendation 4 would be amended to reflect the concerns raised by Members in the pre-amble above.

The Chair thanked the Members of the Task Group for their hard work together with thanks to the Democratic Services Officer for her support throughout the process.

## **RECOMMENDED that**

- 1) a Communications Strategy should be developed to enable the Council and partner organisations to promote existing healthy eating projects, physical activities and other initiatives that help people to live healthier lifestyles. This strategy should particularly focus on using social media to market local projects.**
- 2) GP practices should be notified of all of the healthy eating and physical activities that partners are delivering in the local community. Consideration should be given to providing GP practices with monthly updates.**
- 3) Officers should investigate further the potential for a Supplementary Planning Document for hot food takeaways to be introduced at Redditch Borough Council. Officers should report back to Committee on the outcomes of their investigations; and**

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- 4) **elected Members should all be encouraged to attend health chat training. Frontline service Officers should also attend health chat sessions if they have not already done so.**

The Meeting commenced at 7.00 pm  
and closed at 9.17 pm