



Obesity and Unhealthy Weight in Leicester

For consideration by: Health Scrutiny Commission

Date: 15th April 2021

Lead director: Ivan Browne

Useful information

■ Ward(s) All

■ Report author: Jo Atkinson, Consultant in Public Health; Etain McDermott, Public Health Programme Manager

■ Author contact details: jo.atkinson@leicester.gov.uk;
etain.mcdermott@leicester.gov.uk

1. Purpose of report

1.1 To update Health Scrutiny on Obesity and unhealthy weight in Leicester City including Childhood Obesity

2. Report Summary

2.1 Introduction

Obesity is defined as an excess accumulation of body fat that presents a risk to health. The recommended measure of overweight and obesity is body mass index (BMI).

The National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence (NICE, 2006) has recommended the classifications for defining weight in adults, as detailed in the table below.

Classification	BMI
Underweight	<18.5
Healthy Weight	18.5 – 24.9
Overweight	25.0 – 29.9
Obese	30.0 – 39.9
Severely Obese	>40

It is important to note that as there is a high risk of type 2 diabetes and cardiovascular disease among Asian groups at a BMI lower than 25 using lower thresholds (23 to indicate increased risk and 27.5 to indicate high risk) for BMI to trigger action to prevent type 2 diabetes among Asian populations is recommended by NICE (2014).ⁱ

Weight gain can occur gradually over time when energy intake from food and drink is greater than energy used through the body's metabolism and physical activity. Obesity is a complex problem that is influenced by many different factors including excessive food intake and physical inactivity.

Research has identified a wide range of biological, psychological, environmental and economic determinants of obesity and the relationships between them, demonstrating the complexity of the issue.

Factors that cause obesity include;

- global factors – global food economy, multinational corporations
- local factors – health system, education system, socioeconomic, food economy
- community factors – support systems, built environment, culture and beliefs
- individual factors – food, psychology, physical activity, stress
- internal factors – genes, hormones

Obesity is a major public health issue. Among adults, obesity prevalence rose from 15% in 1993 to 29% in 2017. Health problems caused by obesity include type 2 diabetes, cardiovascular disease and cancer.

Diabetes is an on-going concern in Leicester, particularly type 2 diabetes which is often related to being overweight and physically inactive. In 2019-20 there were 31,242 people aged 17+ diagnosed with diabetes (type 1 or 2) on Leicester GP practice disease registers. Leicester City CCG has a diabetes QOF prevalence of 9.4% for those aged 17+. This is significantly higher than England, which has a diabetes QOF prevalence of 7.1%. Around 95% of diabetes patients have Type 2 diabetes. In 2018/19 two thirds (66.9%) of those living with type two diabetes in Leicester were of a minority ethnic background. Losing weight and being physically active can improve the symptoms of diabetes in most cases. It is important to note that as a result of the covid-19 pandemic it is likely that many residents of Leicester have experienced weight gain, it is therefore likely that the prevalence of diabetes will increase furthermore.

The resulting NHS costs attributable to overweight and obesity are projected to reach £9.7 billion by 2050, with wider costs to society estimated to reach £49.9 billion per year.

It is likely that the impact of covid will have a detrimental effect on healthy weight levels across the city due to the restrictions in the amount of exercise / activity people can do, closure of sports centres, clubs and gyms and the availability of fast food delivery. School closures will have affected the amount of activity children experience on a daily basis through the loss of PE lessons, daily mile and informal play through break times. In addition, throughout the covid-19 pandemic it has been found that being overweight or living with obesity increases the risk of dying from covid.

The Government have released a policy paper on tackling obesity in July 2020 that aims to empower children and adults to live healthy lives. Priorities of the plan include working to expand weight management services, introducing legislation

to add calorie labels to food, calorie labelling on alcohol and banning the advertising of foods high in fat, sugar or salt before 9pm.

As a result of the government call to action PHE have developed the Better Health campaign that urges people to take stock of how they live their lives in the wake of the covid-19 pandemic. It promotes evidence based tools and apps with advice on how to lose weight and keep it off.

Locally public health have also developed a healthy weight strategy through the implementation of the 1000 Tweaks to feeling great campaign. The campaign encourages everyone in the city to pledge to make a small tweak to their lifestyle to improve healthy lifestyle behaviours. It is targeted at everyone but particularly children, parents and grandparents, local businesses, communities, healthcare professionals, schools and teachers.

2.2 National Funding for Weight Management

On the 4th of March this year, the government announced an additional £100 million over 2021/22 to support people living with excess weight and obesity to lose weight and maintain healthier lifestyles.

The Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Prevention, Public Health and Primary Care has confirmed that £34.9 million of this new funding will be dedicated to supporting the expansion of local authority weight management services for adults, children, and families. Funds will be allocated via two ringfenced grants under section 31 of the Local Government Act 2003 and will be available to Local Authorities for 12 months from the beginning of the 2021/22 financial year.

First, the Adult Weight Management Services Grant (No. 31/5540) will distribute £30.5 million among all local authorities in England, based on population size, obesity prevalence, and deprivation to commission adult behavioural weight management services. The funding is conditional on local authorities: commissioning new, or expanding existing, behavioural weight management services; providing information on current service provision at the start and end of the programme; and regularly sharing service user data (including demographics and outcomes) using a standardised dataset. It has been confirmed that Leicester will receive approximately £250,000 for 2021-22 expansion to adult weight management.

A further 5 million has been made available to support child weight management programmes. Public Health England (PHE) is seeking applications from local authorities with a high prevalence of childhood obesity and deprivation. Successful applicants will be allocated funding to support their work over the period 2021 to 2022.

2.3 Adult Obesity and Overweight in Leicester

The Active Lives Survey covers the whole of England and provides estimates for excess weight at a local authority level. In 2017/18 the Active Lives Survey estimated the level of excess weight (overweight or obese) in adults aged 18+ in Leicester at 55%, which is significantly lower than the England overall of 62%.

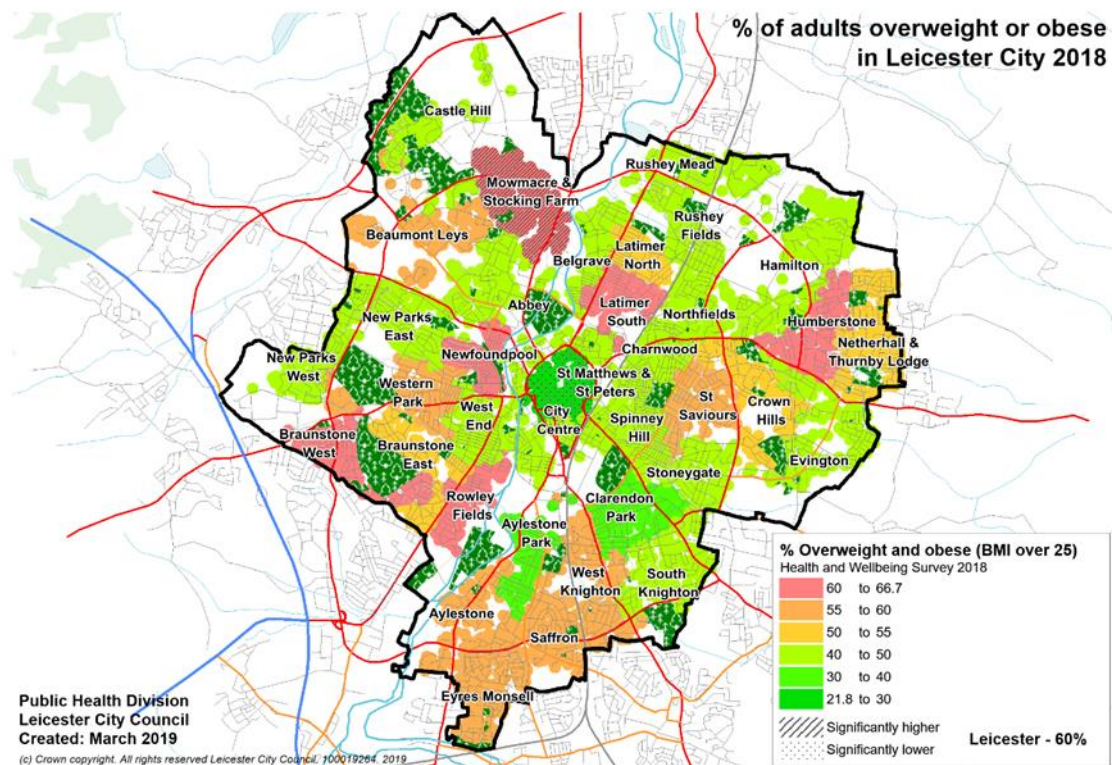
Local survey data estimates the levels of excess weight at 60% which is likely to be a more accurate estimate. (It is important to note that estimates of healthy weight are likely to be underestimates and they are based on self-reported height and weight measurements).

Leicester's relatively low excess weight prevalence can obscure the challenges posed by adult overweight and obesity in the city. A large proportion of Leicester's population are from ethnic backgrounds with a higher risk of chronic health conditions at a lower BMI threshold.

Small area estimates from the Leicester Health and Wellbeing Survey 2018 shows geographic variation within the city. Prevalence of overweight and obesity combined is generally higher in the south and west of the city (see figure below).

There is a strong relationship between socio-economic deprivation and being overweight/obese. Obesity prevalence increases with increasing levels of deprivation and there is a significant difference between the prevalence of obesity in those in the highest and lowest income and socioeconomic groups. Prevalence of type 2 diabetes is 40% more common among people in the most deprived quintile compared with those in the least deprived quintile.

It should be recognised that Leicester's Asian population is concentrated in the East of Leicester, so the geographical spread of risks associated with excess weight is likely to be more even than suggested by the geographical spread of overweight and obese BMI classifications.



2.4 Children's Overweight and Obesity

National Child Measurement Programme (NCMP)

The NCMP is a government-mandated activity. Every year, every child in reception year and year 6 has their height and weight measured.

The programme was established in school year 2005/06 and there is quality data available from 2007/8. It provides reliable data for monitoring changes in the weight of the 5/6-year-olds (reception) and 10/11-year-old (year 6) population over time and allows some comparison with England and other local authorities, as well as between demographic groups.

Data from the NCMP is used to support the commissioning and targeting of a range of local services and form part of the school health profiles public health provides to every school.

In Leicester, and most other local authorities, parents also receive a letter with feedback on their child's weight status and the offer of further advice and support on achieving a healthy weight for their child.

Leicester NCMP 2018/19 Key Messages:

- In reception year 10% of children were obese
- 23% of year 6 children were obese
- Boys were significantly less likely to be a healthy weight than girls in both age groups
- Reception year children in Leicester are just as likely to be a healthy weight as their peers in England
- Since 2007/8 there have been no statistically significant changes to levels of underweight, overweight and obesity in reception year .
- Since 2007/8 there has been a statistically significant increase in combined obesity and overweight prevalence among year 6s.
- overall.
- Leicester year 6 children are significantly more likely to be overweight or obese than their peers in England.
- In line with England, the highest levels of overweight and obesity were found in Black children in Leicester for both reception and year 6.
- White children in reception year were significantly more likely to be overweight or obese in Leicester than in England.
- Asian reception year children were significantly more likely to be underweight, and less likely to be overweight or obese compared with Asian children in England overall.
- In reception year, children in the West of the city were significantly more likely to be overweight or obese than England overall. Braunstone West (31%), New Parks East (30%), Newfoundpool (30%), and Mowmacre and Stocking Farm (27%) has the highest overweight and obesity rate.
- Children in 11 of Leicester's 37 MSOAS were significantly less likely to be overweight or obese compared to England. These areas were typically in the East, with high Asian populations. Charnwood (11%), Latimer South (14%), Hamilton (15%), and Rushey Mead (15%) had the lowest combined overweight and obesity prevalence.

2.5 Current Service Provision (Adults)

NICE (2006) recommend that any weight loss programmes fulfil the following criteria:

- Are based on a balanced healthy diet
- Encourage regular physical activity
- Expect people to lose no more than 0.5 – 1kg (1 – 2 lbs) a week

Weight management services are organised by tiers. The tier system of the ideal Obesity Service is outlined below:

Tier 1- Universal interventions for prevention and reinforcement of messages about physical activity and healthy eating. This is for all overweight individuals and includes local and national campaigns.

Tier 2- Lifestyle weight management programmes aimed at less complex cases, namely patients with lower BMI and/or without co-morbidities.

Tier 3- Specialist weight management service for obese individuals with complex needs and/or multiple co-morbidities who have not responded to intervention from other tiers. This service is aimed at those with BMI of $\geq 40\text{kg/m}^2$ or $\geq 35\text{kg/m}^2$ with co-morbidities.

Tier 4- Bariatric Surgery including pre-operative assessment and post-operative follow up. Must have participated in Tier 3 for 6-12 months prior to referral to Tier 4.

Based on national guidance, the commissioning of weight management services is shared across Local Authorities and CCGs. Local authority public health teams have the responsibility for commissioning tier 1 and 2 weight management services. CCGs have the responsibility for commissioning tier 3 (specialist weight management services) and tier 4 bariatric services:

Tier 1

Leicester promotes and signposts to open access universal services and opportunities, particularly those offered through leisure centres, sports clubs, parks and green spaces and active travel.

Tier 2

A Lifestyle services review took place and the decision was made to bring the majority of lifestyle services in house. As a result of this as of the 1st of July 2019 a new integrated lifestyle service called Live Well Leicester has been launched.

Currently there are three commissioned weight management programmes for adults with slightly different eligibility criteria. Live Well Leicester undertakes a holistic assessment with the referred client and then agrees which is the most appropriate service for them. GPs refer directly into the tier 3 service or for bariatric surgery.

Leicestershire Partnership Trust provide targeted weight management groups called LEAP (Lifestyle, Eating and Activity Programme) for people who are overweight or obese. LEAP is accessible for individuals who are overweight and obese and have

such as those with learning difficulties or mental health problems. The annual target is 218 per year.

Leicestershire Partnership Trust also provide enhanced programmes for people who are obese and have multiple comorbidities and so may need the specialist input of a dietician. This programme is known as DHAL, it is targeted at those with a South Asian diet but is open to anyone who is obese with multiple comorbidities. The annual target is 102 a year.

Tier 3

There is a gap with no local tier 3 provision of a specialist multidisciplinary team weight management service, although the DHAL and LEAP programmes described in tier 2 could be considered the dietetic component. There is a small team of dieticians based in the University Hospitals in Leicester (UHL) that provide Tier 3 dietetic support to less than 150 patients per year. Commissioning tier 3 is the responsibility of Clinical Commissioning Groups.

Tier 4

Leicester City CCG commission tier 4 bariatric surgery, however numbers of Leicester residents accessing bariatric surgery are low. Bariatric surgery is the option of choice (instead of lifestyle interventions or drug treatment) for adults with a BMI of more than 50 kg/m² when other interventions have not been effective.

2.5.1 Other related services

Live Well Leicester undertakes a holistic assessment with clients referred from their GP or other health professional and some self-referrals. Subject to meeting the service specific referral criteria, the client will select which of the Lifestyle services to be referred to including weight management programmes, exercise on referral scheme, smoking cessation, alcohol support services and others.

Making Every Contact Count is available currently within UHL and Leicestershire Partnership Trust (LPT) with a training programme developed and implemented for all staff. This offer is due to be extended to the Local Authority with training for social care and leisure services staff a priority.

Midwifery

There is currently a limited amount of support available from a consultant midwife for pregnant women who are very obese at the time of booking. However, there is a lack of support available for women who are overweight or moderately obese apart from general support and advice from midwives.

Active Leicester

Leicester City has many assets to encourage and support greater participation in physical activity, from leisure centres and sports clubs, to, numerous parks and outdoor gyms to utilise for free.

Sport Services provide Nine sport and leisure facilities across the city, which consists of seven 7 leisure centres, an 18-hole golf course, 3G football pitches and an athletics track. The leisure centres offer a range of formal and informal sport and leisure opportunities including swimming, badminton, table tennis, climbing and football.

In addition, the service provides a portfolio of outdoor sport and physical activity opportunities across the council's parks and open spaces. These range from formal sport fixtures i.e. rugby and football pitches and tennis courts to a boating lake for leisure activities.

Outdoor Gyms (ODGs)

Leicester now has 32 ODG's spanning the City. These gyms are a valuable community asset as they provide a free, accessible form of exercise for members of the public. A mixture of resistance and cardiovascular equipment is available in each location ranging from 6 pieces of equipment in Netherhall park to 18 pieces of equipment in Spinney Hill park. The outdoor gym equipment states that it is appropriate for those 14+years, at any level of fitness and is free to use.

Park run

These are free, weekly, 5km timed runs around the world. They are open to everyone, free, and are safe and easy to take part in. These events take place in pleasant parkland surroundings and encourage people of every ability to take part; from those taking their first steps in running to Olympians; from juniors to those with more experience; Park Run welcomes everyone. There are 2 park runs in Leicester city Victoria Park and Braunstone Park. There is currently 1 junior park run in the city, public health, in partnership with Leicester City in the Community Trust and Beat the Street are looking to set up an additional junior park run once covid restrictions ease.

Parks and Open Spaces

There are 130 parks in Leicester 13 of which are considered large parks, all offering something different for everyone. Facilities include playgrounds, outdoor gyms, walking and cycling trails and meditation areas. Leicester City's parks, open spaces, community gardens and riverside corridor provide opportunities to participate in organised sport and fitness sessions along with space to enjoy informal recreational physical activity opportunities with friends and family.

Community Activities

There are large number of community sport and activity programmes and links to help individuals and families get out and about and active within their community and be as active as possible such as organised walks, tennis courts and community sports clubs.

Workplace Health

It is well documented that a sedentary lifestyle can prove harmful to health, however a number of occupations involve extended periods of sitting for employees. There are many workplace initiatives that aim to reduce the amount of sitting people do through encouraging short breaks at regular intervals, taking the stairs instead of the lift and provision of standing desks.

Leicester-shire and Rutland Sport (LRS) support workplaces to improve their health and wellbeing through:

- Workplace Health Needs Assessment - a tested tool to help businesses identify key priority areas of health and wellbeing.
- Opportunities for workplaces to get involved in competitions and Business Games, as well as training and workshops.
- Activity Tracker track your sport and physical activity levels, link to popular tracking apps and create workplace 'challenges'.
- Exercise, health, and wellbeing 'top tips' to support you to lead a healthy lifestyle in and out of work.

Walking in Leicester

There are many opportunities across Leicester to walk more including walking to school and health walks.

Choose How You Move (CHYM)

This website provides travel information for Leicester and Leicestershire, with a journey planner which allows residents and visitors to consider the different travel options available to them. The journey planner offers a variety of travel methods starting with the most active or sustainable travel options.

Cycling in Leicester

Increasing opportunities for people to cycle across Leicester City is a priority for the council. The level of change to the built environment and improvements for cyclists in Leicester has been unprecedented. The city has undergone much transformation with many new cycle routes and paths established. There has also been an increase in the availability of secure cycle parking, cycle training and guided rides.

Professional Sports Clubs

Leicester City benefits from 5 professional clubs all of which have extensive community programmes with a number of physical activity sessions on offer to local people who wish to improve their fitness, learn new skills, lose weight or socialise with likeminded people. Types of sessions include walking sports, educational sessions on a wide range of health topics, sporting camps and match day opportunities

Public Health have developed excellent partnerships with the professional sports clubs, establishing the Strategic Alliance for Sport and Physical Activity which is attended by all 5 clubs and other key partners including sports services and chaired by the Lead Member for Health. This has resulted in the development of a number of exciting initiatives including the sports club diabetes pledge and the formation of United Leicester. United Leicester is the umbrella brand for all 5 professional clubs work under to deliver public health initiatives to tackle unhealthy weight, physical inactivity and poor mental wellbeing.

2.6 Current Service Provision (Children)

Leicestershire Nutrition and Dietetic Service (LNDS)

Public Health commission LNDS to deliver a child weight management service called FLiC (a Family Lifestyle Club). FLiC is run by Dietitians and local Council Physical Activity leaders. It is an 8-week programme (meeting once each week) for children aged 8-13 years and their families, offering support and information about weight management. Each week will involve some fun active games for the children lead by the Physical Activity Co-ordinator. Whilst the children are involved in active games, there are topic based discussion for parents led by a Dietitian. At the end of each session children and parents get back together to take part in a fun, informative and tasting/food preparation session.

Food 4 Life – provided by the Soil Association, commissioned by Public Health

- A holistic, whole school evidence-based programme of tailored support that includes resources, training, cooking on the curriculum, food growing, the dining experience and the pupil voice. The programme has an accredited scheme for schools to achieve Bronze, Silver or Gold awards.

- Lunch box audits – sub-contract LNDS to conduct lunch box audits in FFL schools to see how healthy they are and educate children, staff and parents on how to improve them
- Currently 83 schools are enrolled on the FFL accreditation and are working towards achieving bronze or silver, 23 schools currently have bronze accreditation, 4 have achieved silver and 1 school has achieved gold.

Community Food Growing Support

- Develops and incentivises food growing to increase knowledge and skills in communities that may have limited access to food growing and its benefits. It focuses on sharing good practice by building a productive social media presence, providing a responsive and flexible service to support groups, building networks and widening opportunities for collaboration amongst community food growing groups, schools and early years settings to address diet related ill health. Public Health commissions The Conservation Volunteers (TCV) to provide this support. In addition, there are many wider initiatives in existence across the City run by community groups, including allotments.
- 26 schools have been supported to develop a food growing area

2.7 Physical Activity Interventions for Children

The Daily Mile

Aims to improve physical, mental, emotional and social health and wellbeing of children, regardless of age or circumstances. Encourages children to walk, jog or run outside in the fresh air for 15 minutes every day. It is simple, free & sustainable. Led in partnership between Public Health and SSPAN there are currently 54 schools currently participating in TDM (as of Jan 2020).

School Sport & Physical Activity Network (SSPAN)

National School Games Programme

- A nationally funded offer free to schools including a limited competition programme, leadership opportunities, targeted health club resources and links to community opportunities.

Local SSPAN Membership enhanced offer

- A comprehensive offer to support schools developing the National School Games programme to offer more choice and opportunities relevant to Leicester City schools
- PE & Sport Premium advice and guidance – 5 Key Indicators plus Swimming

Enhanced health/well-being and physical activity offer

- Possible through additional funding for education-based interventions secured through partnership working with Leicester City Council Public Health.

Beat the Street

Beat the Street is an evidence-based intervention designed to increase physical activity levels across a community. It connects individuals with their local environment and supports long term behaviour change by making physical activity an enjoyable, integral part of everyday life.

Beat the Street encourages participation through game-based strategies and motivates positive behaviour that, over time, becomes the daily norm. Beat the Street

addresses some of the physical barriers to being active by using an inclusive, simplistic concept and combats emotional barriers by creating a community-wide social norm. Beat the Street ran very successfully in the north west of the city in 2019 and is planned to run city wide in 2021 dependant on covid restrictions,

Professional Sports Clubs – United Leicester

The city's 5 professional sports clubs offer a wide range of physical activity, healthy weight and wellbeing sessions to young people in schools and during the holidays.

Active Leicester – Leisure Centres

All of the city leisure centres offer range of formal and informal sport / leisure activities including Swimming/Badminton/Table Tennis /Climbing /Football. They offer access to gyms for 11 year olds and up. They also offer concessionary pricing available for children (Kids for a quid schemes) and Holiday camps

Other key professionals

There are many key partners who can and do play an important role in tackling childhood obesity including children's centres, health visitors, school nurses etc who have day to day interactions with children and their families.

2.8 City Council Vending Machines

A decision has been made to remove unhealthy snack foods from vending machines in council premises, starting with leisure centres. In regards to Leisure Services a contract currently exists with Selecta (vending company) and the centres take a commission of sales per year as income (£20k in 2019/20) across the leisure centres. However the contract currently rolls over annually so a procurement process is easily implemented.

There are 2 options going forward:

Option 1 – procurement of healthy vending externally managed, leisure services will receive a commission, but it is challenging to predict the impact on future finances. It would be natural to assume that a healthy vending product may reduce interest from external companies in the procurement, therefore the % commission that we receive may reduce slightly.

Option 2 – operating healthy vending internally, this is something that will deliver an improved financial return from vending, retaining all sales income. That said, the management becomes more intensive distracting from the core busines of leisure centre and outdoor sport with income of circa. £6 million.

A potential solution is that leisure services and public health develop a 2-year procurement for external healthy vending and accept a limited impact on income vs health benefits. During the 2-year period further work will be conducted to assess whether to then operate the healthy vending machines in-house.

2.9 Wider Determinants of Health

The wider determinants of health are a diverse range of social, economic and environmental factors which influence people's mental and physical health.

Tackling the wider determinants of health in order to make a significant impact on reducing levels of obesity is vital as we will not see sustained improvements in healthy weight just by commissioning services.

There are a number of key areas that can influence and support the healthy weight agenda including;

The Food Plan – the plan offers the opportunity to improve the food environment across the City. It aims to make healthy choices the easy choices for residents, encourage breastfeeding and influence food businesses (retail and manufacturing) to improve their food offer.

The built environment – supporting planners and transport colleagues to consider the impact of the built environment on physical and mental will have a positive impact on healthy weight through the development of environments that encourage increased activity – better public transport systems, more cycle lanes, pedestrianised zones to encourage walking for example.

Making Every Contact Count - MECC is key to supporting the wider determinant of health in encouraging our own and other organisations to better consider health when planning and implementing services.

3. Recommendations

3.1 Scrutiny members are asked to note the contents of the report

3.2 Scrutiny members are asked to support the motion remove unhealthy snacks from leisure centre and other council premises vending machines

4. Financial, Legal and other implications

Financial implications

None associated with his paper.

Legal implications

None associated with his paper.

Climate Change and Carbon Reduction implications

None associated with his paper.

Equalities implications

None associated with his paper.

5. Is this a private report (If so, please indicated the reasons and state why it is not in the public interest to be dealt with publicly)?

No

6. Is this a “key decision”?

No

ⁱ NICE, BMI: preventing ill health and premature death in black, Asian and other minority ethnic groups ,(2014). Available at: <https://www.nice.org.uk/guidance/ph46/chapter/1-recommendations>