

**NORTH EAST DERBYSHIRE
DISTRICT COUNCIL**

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY

**OBESITY IN YOUNGER
RESIDENTS**

MAY 2021

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Chair's Foreword

TO BE INSERTED

Review Panel

The review panel comprised the following members:

- | | | |
|---------------------------|---|-------------------------------------|
| Councillor K Tait | - | (Conservative) – Review Panel Chair |
| Councillor J Birkin | - | (Labour) |
| Councillor N Barker | - | (Labour) |
| Councillor O Gomez Reaney | - | (Conservative) |
| Councillor L Deighton | - | (Conservative) |
| Councillor R Hall | - | (Conservative) |
| Councillor D Hancock | - | (Liberal Democrat) |
| Councillor J Lilley | - | (Labour) |
| Councillor R Welton | - | (Conservative) |

1. Recommendations

That the Council:

- 1.1 Considers how it can ensure it receives timely data from its partners to enable it to set and monitor its objective's for tackling Childhood Obesity within the District.
- 1.2 Reviews how it can maximise the use of Section 106 monies for play areas and sets criteria for how these monies are generated.
- 1.3 Considers creating a Capital Replacement Budget for the facilities and equipment in the Districts Parks.
- 1.4 Undertake a review of its current parks and equipment to ensure they are being used and remain relevant to young people
- 1.5 Considers developing a dedicated Strategy to help make better use of the Districts Parks and encourage children to be more active.

2. Introduction

- 2.1 At its meeting on 19th June, 2020 the Communities Scrutiny Committee agreed to undertake a review of Obesity in Younger Residents.
- 2.2 The review panel thought it timely to review this area to ensure the Council was taking effective action to tackle childhood obesity in the District.

3. Scope of Review

3.1 The review aimed to:

- Understand the prevalence of Childhood Obesity in North East Derbyshire;
- Consider what the Council and its partners are currently doing to address this problem within the District;
- Review current best practice and evaluate what is being successful;
- Identify any opportunities for improving Childhood Obesity within the District.

4. Method of Review

- 4.1 The review panel met on six occasions to consider the scope of the review, key issues they wanted to discuss and key people they wished to interview.

4.2 Evidence was gathered in a variety of ways including written sources and interviews with a range of stakeholders.

5. Evidence and Research

5.1 A number of documents and evidence were provided to the review panel for consideration. Details are provided below:

- Scene Setting Presentation by the Head of Partnerships and Transformation on 7th August, 2020;
- Briefing Paper by the Healthy Lifestyles Team – Obesity in Younger Residents (Primary School);
- Physical Activity and Lifestyle Support – A Behaviour Change Plan;
- Sharley Park School – Obesity Action Plan;
- Open spaces, Sports and Recreation sites;
- Children’s Play Ares in North East Derbyshire;
- Playground inspection sheets.

6. Key Findings

6.1 Strengths/Observations

6.1.1 The Public Health Lead from Derbyshire County Council provided evidence to the Panel. Members heard about the Healthy North East Derbyshire Action Plan, which had a focus on tackling obesity and mental health issues in North East Derbyshire. A variety of external partners made up this group. The panel discussed the effects of lockdown on the Districts children including the closure of services that may have impacted their physical and mental health. Members were concerned that this could impact on childhood obesity. The Panel also discussed the government’s recently published Obesity Strategy. The Panel acknowledged the recent funding announcement by Government to tackle obesity and hoped that more funding would be available to the HNED Partnership and the Healthy Lifestyles Team.

Regarding obesity, members heard it was a highly complex issue and there was often a number of factors that influenced physical health such as diet, access to green space and socio economic background. The officer stated that cultural change and early intervention were crucial in tackling obesity. The Panel heard that there were targeted public health interventions and focused support for certain areas in the District, such as Clay Cross, where an Obesity Focus Group had been established

6.1.2 The Leisure Operations Manager provided information on the work of Leisure Services in the District and community based and partnership work the service was engaging with. The Council had three leisure centres, alongside the Healthy

Lifestyles Team who engage regularly with communities. Free swimming was offered to children under the age of five and free courses and sessions were available for other young people. They also provided schools with learning to swim activity. Evidence was provided of the link between deprivation and obesity and the Authority did all it could to make leisure centres affordable to those who experienced financial hardship. The Panel also heard about Eckington Leisure Centre and the efforts they were undertaking to ensure the facilities were Corvid Safe. The Review Panel concluded that the leisure provision in the District was of a good quality and the swimming pools provided good facilities. It was stated leisure facilities are part of the social fabric within the district and it was agreed they were a fantastic resource to have. It was felt it makes the District an attractive place to live.

- 6.1.3 The Panel reviewed the work of the Healthy Lifestyles team including looking at funding and costs, measured outcomes and alternative measures of different social investments. It also discussed with the Health and Wellbeing Development Officer what the Council was doing to tackle obesity for residents from poorer backgrounds and what the potential impact of the Pandemic might be within the District. She informed the Panel that the two key providers were the Healthy North East Derbyshire Partnership and the Councils Healthy Lifestyles Team. Projects such as the Physical Activity Lifestyle Support (PALS) and Five60 programme, a ten week programme being delivered to all pupils across upper key stage 2 (year 4-6) were being delivered. The Five60 programme aims to get children aged 5 to 16 years to eat five fruit and vegetable per day and take part in 60 minutes of exercise. Previously funded by Derbyshire County Council until 2016, the Council had subsequently contacted 29 schools within the District to see if they would be willing to buy in the programme independently. Nineteen schools took up this offer and continued with the programme. The Panel concluded from the evidence they had heard that good work was being undertaken to tackle obesity in the District. They believed that the local approach to public health had brought communities together and led to better health initiatives and lifestyles.
- 6.1.4 Other initiatives highlighted included the Walking for Health groups and the Beat the Street scheme which have had made a positive impact. Clay Cross has received additional support as a result of the obesity statistics for the town. The public health lead for North East Derbyshire pulled together an Obesity forum to bring partners together to discuss the obesity statistics and make a change through pooling resources and capacity. It was recognised that obesity is a multi-faceted issue. Healthy eating and physical activity were important factors. An action plan has been produced for Sharley Park School which sets out a number of actions that will aim to increase physical activity, improve healthy eating behaviours, improve wellbeing and resilience and improve links to things outside of school. The Panel also discussed the capacity for dealing with mental health issues and heard that a number of partnerships through the PALS scheme were able to provide sufficient mental health support. It was hoped that in the near future the service would be able to provide their own mental health support services.
- 6.1.5 The Panel heard from the Head of Street scene and the Street scene and Waste Services Manager on the provision of parks by the Council in North East Derbyshire. Street scene were responsible for the maintenance of North East Derbyshire's parks, green spaces and also recreation facilities at Eckington, Arkwright and Sharley Park. They additionally maintained recreation grounds and playgrounds for some Parish

Councils. A database document was provided which outlined information relating to the provision and maintenance of parks. This included the geographic location, the type of equipment for each play area, play area inspection costs, play value scores and life spans for each facility. A number of factors that were considered to determine play area inspection costs including staff hours and size of the site were discussed. Play areas were inspected monthly and skate parks were undertaken weekly. It also discussed other facilities like the Five Pits Trail which provided a useful outdoor open space. The Panel concluded that the Authority have a good provision of parks and green spaces within its District. However, the Pandemic had significantly increased the demand for good quality parks and open spaces and the panel stated that open spaces and parks needed to be kept in good condition to promote exercise and a healthy lifestyle.

6.2 **Areas for Improvement/Observations**

- 6.2.1 The Health and Wellbeing Development Officer advised the Panel that various methods were used to measure the success of the schemes to tackle obesity such as using targets and collection of case studies. The officer provided the Panel with information of some case studies but was unable to provide other data, as she was awaiting its completion by Derbyshire County Council. Officers at County had stated that as a result of the ongoing Pandemic the section was unable to provide this data due to the County team being diverted to dealing with the crisis. As a consequence this was having an adverse effect on monitoring current targets and how effective actions were being. Additionally the Pandemic and lockdowns had delayed the Sharley Park Obesity action plan. Whilst understanding this the Panel were concerned at the lack of meaningful data provided. They stated that timely data is important so the Authority can see what is happening in areas like schools and target them to address issues. Without this it was difficult to be able to set objectives and get them right.
- 6.2.2. The consensus of the Review Panel was that whilst the provision of play areas within the district was good, this could be improved. Members discussed the maintenance budget and lifespans of the Districts parks and what could be done in the future to improve them. They were advised that 5 to 10 new play areas had been built in the past year as a result of 25 new major developments being built in District. Officers had advised that Section 106 monies had been used to finance some of the new parks. Additionally site replacement and refurbishments were predominantly influenced by these monies. The Panel discussed evidence in relation to how Section 106 monies were used in the provision and maintenance of parks. The Panel were concerned that the Council may be missing out on using the potential funding of Section 106 funds effectively. It was felt that they could be better utilised and it would be useful to review the use of funds in this area and set some criteria for how they could be used to maximum effect.
- 6.2.3 Linked to this was a discussion on a Capital Replacement Programme for park sites. The Council needs to provide parks and green spaces. The Panel agreed that a dedicated budget would help their overall maintenance and desirability and encourage children to use them more frequently. Having a structured capital funding resource would enable the overseeing department to have a planned and structured approach towards refurbishing play equipment and the play experience. Following a discussion on costs for park inspections the Panel queried whether the Council could achieve better value for money on these inspections. Several panel members made

comparisons to their parish play area inspection costs. They felt that if savings could be identified the money could be used to improve parks.

- 6.2.4 Another area of concern was the need to ensure parks were reviewed to ensure they remained relevant to their users. The Panel heard how some equipment lasted many years. Possibly a 30 year or more lifespan. Whilst this may be cost effective, older equipment becomes less appealing to children when compared with new and modern play sites. The consensus was that the Council also needed to invest in key sites which had other facilities to provide a more diverse range of leisure and play experience. Additionally we need to target appealing sites in areas with the highest levels of obesity. There was some concern over the locations of smaller play sites once children of local families moved away they may be less used and attract anti-social behaviour. The Panel concluded that it would like to see a dedicated Strategy developed to help make better use of the Districts Parks and get children to be more active.

7. Conclusions

- 7.1 The review panel heard views from a wide range of stakeholders during the review process. The review process identified a number of measures the Council was taking to support this area.
- 7.2 However, some areas for improvement which would enhance the current provision were identified around timely data, funding of parks and a strategy to ensure people use them.

Appendix A

Stakeholders Engaged During the Review

M Broughton	-	Head of Partnerships and Transformation
S Brunt	-	Head of Street scene
D Green	-	Public Health Lead – Derbyshire County Council
K Massey	-	Health and wellbeing Development Officer
C Mills	-	Leisure Services Operational Manager
D Mitchell	-	Street scene and Waste Services Manager