


Health and Wellbeing Board Tuesday 18 th April 2017	
Report of the London Borough of Tower Hamlets	Classification: Unrestricted
Local Government Declaration on Sugar Reduction and Healthier Food	

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Executive Key Decision?	No

Summary

The purpose of the Local Government Declaration on Sugar Reduction and Healthier Food is to provide a framework to support local authorities to make a public commitment to improve the availability of healthier food and drinks and to reduce the availability and promotion of unhealthy options. This is a key component of a strategy to reduce obesity and other diet related diseases such as dental decay, diabetes, cardiovascular disease and some cancers. There is a close fit with two of the high level priorities in the draft Tower Hamlets Health and Wellbeing Strategy (2017-20): 'Creating a Healthy Place' and 'Children's Weight and Nutrition'.

The support pack (see appendix 1) sets out six key areas of action with a number of specific possible actions under each area. By signing the declaration the local authority commits to implementing at least one action from each of the six key areas (see details of report 3.11-3.16 for suggested commitments). In addition, the local authority commits to report on progress annually. The longer term aim is that each year the local authority will build on their previous commitments and take on one or more new actions, as well as maintaining previous actions.

Recommendations:

The Health & Wellbeing Board is recommended to:

1. Note the recommendations being considered by the Mayor in Cabinet, to agree
 - (a) to sign up to the Local Government Declaration on Sugar Reduction and Healthier Food and agree which specific actions should be recommended for 2017/18,
 - (b) that the formal sign up to the Declaration to be used as a publicity opportunity, and

(c) a cross council work programme to ensure that the agreed actions are implemented during 2017/18 and to provide a progress report at the end of the year

2. Partner agencies of the Health and Wellbeing Board are invited to consider whether they could sign up to a similar declaration of commitments

1. REASONS FOR THE DECISIONS

- 1.1 This is a key component of a strategy to reduce obesity and other diet related diseases such as dental decay, diabetes, cardiovascular disease and some cancers. There is a close fit with two of the high level priorities in the draft Tower Hamlets Health and Wellbeing Strategy (2017-20): 'Creating a Healthy Place' and 'Children's Weight and Nutrition'.

2. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS

- 2.1 Not to agree sign up to the Local Authority Declaration on Sugar Reduction and Healthier Food.

3. DETAILS OF REPORT

- 3.1 The development of the Local Government Declaration on Sugar Reduction and Healthier Food grew out of the 'Healthier Children, Healthier Place' programme of the East London 'Growth Boroughs' (former Olympic Boroughs) that was established to share good practice and learning on how to tackle the high levels of childhood obesity common to all of the participating Boroughs.
- 3.2 The 'Growth Boroughs' shared evidence on the impact of the wider 'food environment' on patterns of food consumption, and in particular of foods high in sugar, fat and salt, through a series of workshops and master classes. It was agreed that local authorities are well placed to influence the wider 'food environment' but to exert maximum influence need to ensure that they are models of good practice in terms of provision of healthier food and reducing the promotion of unhealthy options.
- 3.3 The idea of a Declaration was inspired by the work on tobacco control, led by Action on Smoking and Health (ASH) during the 1990s and early 2000s and the Local Authority Healthy Weight Declaration developed by a group of local authorities in North West England working with a voluntary organisation Food Active.
- 3.4 The Healthier Children, Healthier Place Programme Board agreed to commission an independent organisation to develop and promote a framework to support local authorities to make a public commitment to improve the availability of healthier food and drinks and to reduce the availability and promotion of unhealthy options. Following a competitive commissioning process, the contract to do this work went to Sustain, an organisation with a strong track record of campaigning on food, sustainability and health. From 2017 the Declaration will feature as one of the measures that local authorities are assessed against in the Good Food for London report, produced by Sustain.

- 3.5 The specific focus on sugar reduction was agreed in response to the recommendation from the Scientific Advisory Committee on Nutrition (SACN) that population average intake of free sugars should not exceed 5% of total dietary energy. The SACN evidence review highlighted that consumption of sugar sweetened drinks, compared to non-sugar sweetened drinks, results in greater weight gain in children and adolescents due to increased energy consumption as well as increasing the risk of dental caries and type 2 diabetes. Average intakes of sugar in England are three times higher than the maximum recommended level in school-aged children and teenagers and around twice the maximum recommended level in adults.
- 3.6 It was also agreed that the scope of the Declaration should extend to healthier food as a whole this would have the greatest impact on health. Dietary risks contribute 10.8% to the global burden of disease in England (slightly higher than the contribution of tobacco smoke) with the largest component being diets low in vegetables and fruit.
- 3.7 In Tower Hamlets 27.1% of 10-11 year olds are obese (compared to 23.2% in London and 19.8% in England) and 41.0% have excess weight (obese or overweight) (compared to 38.1% in London and 34.2% England) .. In Tower Hamlets 33.0% of Asian and 35.6% of Black 10-11 year old boys are obese and 48.7% and 55.6% respectively have excess weight.
- 3.8 There has been extensive consultation on the content of the Declaration with local authorities across London, London Councils, Greater London Authority and also expert groups including Public Health England, British Dietetic Association, London Food Board, Food Foundation, Queen Mary University, Action on Sugar and Health Equalities Group.
- 3.9 The following actions are suggested as measures that the council could commit to addressing during 2017/18. There is scope for these suggested actions to be modified to describe what is considered to be achievable during 'year one' of the commitment.

3.10 Area 1 – Tackle advertising and sponsorship

1.1 Develop a policy on future corporate partnerships or sponsorships that welcomes opportunities for investment in the borough and joint working, whilst avoiding sponsorship being used as an opportunity to promote brands or messages that are associated with foods and drinks that are high in sugar, fat or salt, that undermine breastfeeding or are associated with other unhealthy products (e.g. alcohol and tobacco)

3.11 Area 2 – Improve the food controlled or influenced by the council and support the public and voluntary sectors to improve their food offer

2.1 Improve catering by ensuring that all council canteens and other council food provision meet the 'gold standard' of the local Food for Health Award Scheme and build these standards into contracts as they come up for re-tender, as a step towards a longer term goal of meeting the Government Buying Standards.

2.3 Discontinue promotions by council canteens including 'meal deals' on foods high in sugar, fat and salt and replace with promotions on healthier food e.g. fruit and vegetables

2.4 Develop a policy to improve the food provided at all Council meetings and events, to ensure that healthier options (e.g. fruit) are always available and to reduce or eliminate the provision of foods that are high in sugar, fat or salt.

2.5 Review the school meal menus offered by the Council's contract services to reduce the frequency of cakes and desserts high in sugar and saturated fat and replace with fruits and other options low in sugar and saturated fat.

3.12 Area 3 – Reduce the prominence of sugary drinks and actively promote free drinking water

3.3 Put in place a voluntary sugary drinks levy on sales from council run canteens and raise funds for children's health promotion e.g. sign up to the Children's Health Fund

NB this measure has been adopted by the GLA who have reported that it did not have an adverse impact on sales

3.13 Area 4 – Support businesses and organisations to improve their food offer

Tower Hamlets is already addressing the following suggested actions and so the commitment could be to ensure these actions continue:

4.1 Restrict the proliferation of businesses selling foods high in sugar, fat and salt by maintaining planning regulations to stop new outlets opening (in areas of high concentration)

4.5 Ensure that Public Health continues to be consulted on planning applications, including at pre-application stage or that the local plan includes clear health criteria, agreed with public health that will apply to all planning applications

4.7 Work with takeaway businesses, public facing establishments, iconic businesses e.g. museums, park cafes, and the food industry to make food healthier by working to meet the local Food for Health Award scheme standards and increasing the number of establishments achieving the silver and gold standards.

4.8 Encourage local fruit and vegetable businesses to accept Healthy Start Vouchers

3.14 Area 5 – Public events

5.1 Ensure that the majority of food and drink provided at public events organised by the council are healthy choices, supporting food retailers to deliver this offer (through agreeing a policy)

3.15 Area 6 – Raise public awareness

6.1 Develop a network of local champions from various backgrounds e.g. elected members of the council, schools, public health, children's centres, nursing, primary care, education, health visiting, catering and retail to advocate the healthier food and sugar reduction agenda

And / or

6.7 Support and promote local voluntary and community food partnerships and projects that encourage a healthy food culture e.g. sign up as a member of Sustainable Food Cities.

4. COMMENTS OF THE CHIEF FINANCE OFFICER

4.1 The report does not have any additional financial implications. The cost of implementing the Local Government Declaration on Sugar Reduction and Healthier Food is to be met within the Public Health Grant (£35.974m for 2017/18) under the Healthy Environments, Healthy 0-5's, Healthy Children & Adolescents and Healthy Communities allocations. Areas 2 and 4.7 of the support pack will be covered within the £72k Food for Health Awards allocation. Areas 1, 3, 4 (except 4.7) and 5 is policy work that will be covered by current staff in the Healthy Environments Team. Area 6 costs will be met by existing commissioned programmes within the services detailed above, with the aim of improving communication across these programmes.

5. LEGAL COMMENTS

5.1 There are no legal implications arising out of this report. The sign up to the Local Government Declaration on Sugar Reduction and Healthier Food is an Executive decision and therefore it is for the Mayor. Signing up also supports the Healthy and Supportive Community Theme of the Council's Community Plan.

6. ONE TOWER HAMLETS CONSIDERATIONS

6.1 Improving the availability of healthier foods and reducing the availability and promotion of unhealthy options has important Equalities considerations as poor diet, excess weight and tooth decay, along with other health conditions, are strongly associated with deprivation. Children living in the most deprived communities in England are twice as likely to be obese or overweight as those in the least deprived communities. Children from Black and Minority ethnic groups and boys are also more likely to be obese or overweight.

7. BEST VALUE (BV) IMPLICATIONS

7.1 Implementation of the recommendations in this proposal will have implications for future procurements but should be entirely compatible with the Council's Best Value Action Plan. By improving the quality of food provided by the Council the benefits to the local population will be increased and the costs of poor health reduced.

8. SUSTAINABLE ACTION FOR A GREENER ENVIRONMENT

- 8.1 While the focus of this proposal is on improving the availability of healthier food, there is scope to ensure that the supporting policies to be agreed also address increasing the use of sustainably produced food and this is included in the Government Buying Standards, referred to under 3.11 , that provide the gold standard for food procurement.

9. RISK MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1 The proposals in the report mitigate risks and costs to the Council arising from nutrition related disease.

10. CRIME AND DISORDER REDUCTION IMPLICATIONS

- 10.1 There are no crime and disorder reduction implications arising from this proposal.

Linked Reports, Appendices and Background Documents

Linked Report

- NONE

Appendices

- APPENDIX 1 - Local Government Declaration on Sugar Reduction and Healthier Food Support Pack, Sustain: the alliance for better food and farming.

Local Government Act, 1972 Section 100D (As amended)

List of “Background Papers” used in the preparation of this report

List any background documents not already in the public domain including officer contact information.

- NONE

Officer contact details for documents:

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