

TRAFFORD COUNCIL

Report to: Health & Wellbeing Board
Date: 17/11/2023
Report for: Information/Decision
Report of: Director of Public Health

Report Title

Healthy Weight: an update on the deep dive priorities

Purpose

To update the Board on progress made against the identified healthy weight priorities.

Recommendations

Note the content of this report.

Support delivery of the resultant work programmes by:

- Supporting the next steps identified for each priority
- Committing to organisational actions that support the action plans
- Advocating for these plans through wider partnership/organisational groups
- Agreeing to phase the four recommendations across the next 12 months

Contact person for access to background papers and further information:

Name: Jane Hynes
Telephone: 0161 912 1899

Healthy Weight: an update to Trafford's Health & wellbeing Board November 2023

2. Introduction

The Health and Wellbeing Board conducted a deep dive into Healthy Weight in July 2022, with the aim of establishing a number of priority actions for the Board to support. The deep dive was attended by a wide range of stakeholders from across the system and four priority actions were agreed and supported by the Healthy Weight Steering Group:

1. Advertising policy
2. Local planning and policy
3. School food
4. Vending policy

This paper provides a progress update on these actions. Members of the board are asked to:

- 2.1. Note the content of this report
- 2.2. Support delivery of the resultant work programmes by:
 - Supporting the next steps identified for each priority
 - Committing to organisational actions that support the action plans
 - Advocating for these plans through wider partnership/organisational groups
 - Agreeing to phase the four recommendations across the next 12 months

3. Update on healthy weight prevalence

Adults: prevalence of excess weight in adults in Traffordⁱ is 61.7% which is similar to the England average of 63.8%. With a population of around 176,000 adult residents, this equates to around 108,000 adult residents who are overweight or obese.

Children and young people: latest National Child Measurement Programme data (2022/23)ⁱⁱ shows us that at age 4-5 years (reception) 17.8% of children are overweight or very overweight (better than England – 21.3%), while at age 10-11 (year 6) this is 31.8% (better than England – 36.6%). However, at year 6 in particular, this masks significant internal inequalities where children living in the most deprived quintile are nearly twice as likely to overweight or very overweight (44.6%) than those living in the least deprived quintile (24.6%).

We know that there is a complex system of factors that drive excess weight, and with such a huge number of people living with overweight and obesity, it makes sense to work to prioritise these system level actions that will have a population level impact. Thus these priority actions identified through the deep dives aim to address the wider determinants of excess weight at a population level, rather than focus on actions that require individual level changes.

4. Update on priority actions

- 4.1. **Recommendation 1: Advertising policy - undertake a feasibility study into the development and adoption of a Council policy relating to the advertising of foods high in fat, salt and sugar (HFSS) on Council-owned land. Produce recommendations for action with associated timescales in line with current contractual arrangements by December 2023.**

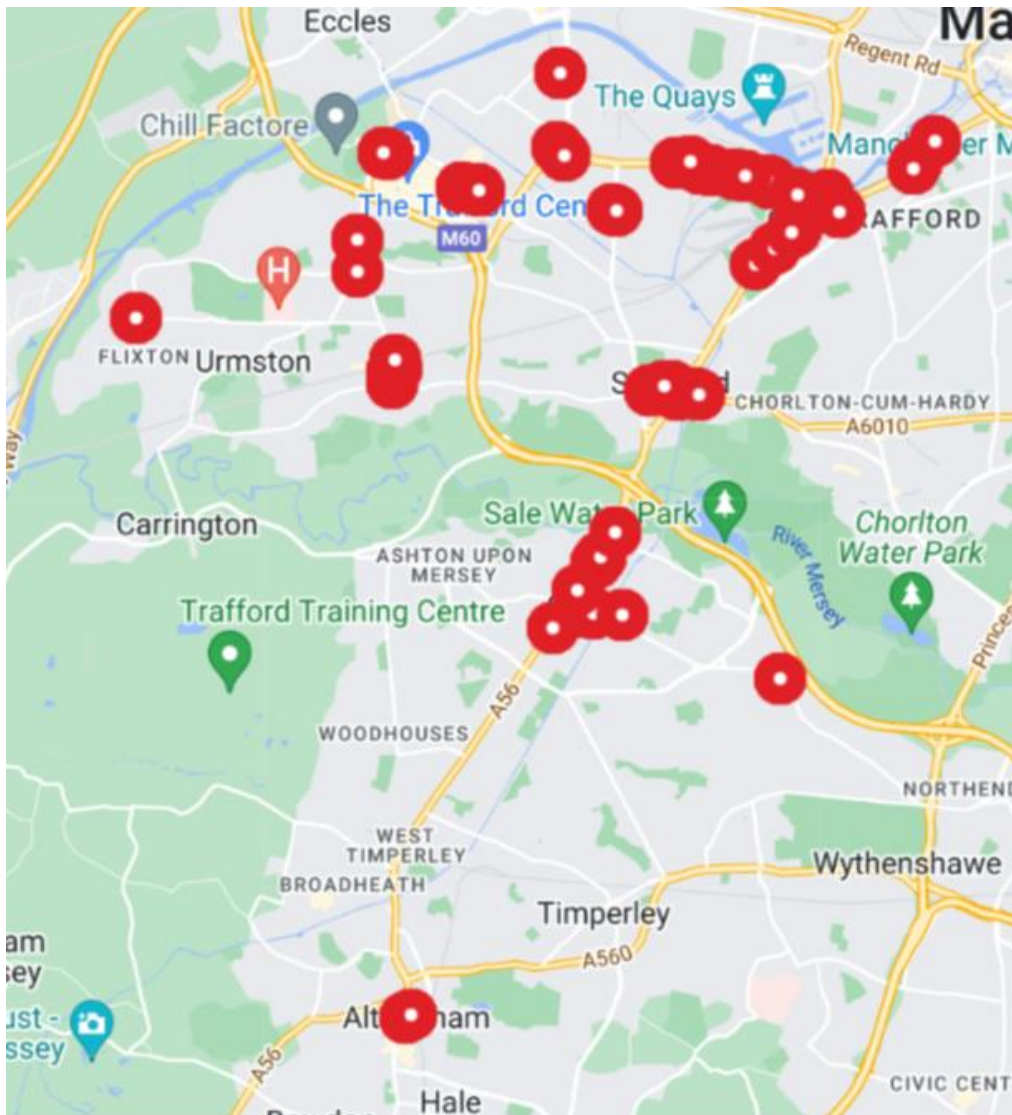
Reducing exposure to advertisements for products and services that are harmful to health has the potential to reduce consumption/use. Evidence suggests that there are considerable health and economic benefits from restricting the advertisement of HFSS foods.ⁱⁱⁱ Evidence on the effectiveness of wider restrictions of local advertising policy covering harmful products such as alcohol and betting/gaming and gambling is less clear cut. However, the World Health Organisation^{iv} recommends enforcing bans or comprehensive restrictions on alcohol advertising, sponsorship and promotion as one of five areas of intervention at national and sub-national levels. In addition, there is evidence that shows that HFSS food advertising is disproportionately targeted at the most disadvantaged communities^v, therefore compounding existing health inequalities.

At least ten local authorities across England have implemented advertising restrictions on HFSS^{vi}, more are in the process of implementing restrictions, and some have widened the scope to include all harmful products such as alcohol and betting, gaming and gambling.^{vii}

The GM Directors of Public Health have identified commercial determinants of health as one of their priorities, and this work aligns with this priority. This should facilitate work with TfGM to review and revise their advertising policy to enable greater coverage and impact of any work being delivered at locality level. It will also reduce the perceived risk of advertisers spending their money in neighbouring locations where the advertising policy may be less restrictive.

Trafford's Public Health team has initiated discussions with colleagues in the Place Directorate (specifically Highways, who manage the Council's advertising contracts) about the potential for revising the advertising policy in a way that aligns with and supports the Council's Corporate Priorities, specifically taking action to help our communities be happy, healthy and safe. There are clearly considerations to be made with regards to any potential impact on revenue income through selling advertising space, however learning from the Transport for London policy demonstrates that the HFSS ban did not negatively impact on advertising revenue^{viii}.

Trafford's Public Health team has undertaken an initial mapping exercise of existing advertising across the Borough. Trafford Council has external contracts to sell and manage advertising space on Council land. Transport for Greater Manchester (TfGM) manages bus stop advertising. Additionally there is advertising on private land (such as the screens on Hotel Football and Victoria Warehouse). These are shown on the map below:



The team has identified an opportunity to review and evaluate the impact of a change in policy via a Public Health colleague undertaking a Doctoral Fellowship, which would reduce impact on Council resource.

There is a need to balance financial risk in terms of short-term advertising revenue against the longer-term population health gains from taking action. Obesity costs in England are conservatively estimated at £6 billion per year. Using crude population estimates, this equates to a cost of around £25 million in Trafford.

Next steps:

Action	Lead	Timescale
1. Review Council's current contracts for sales and marketing of advertising space, in order to establish <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • contract terms and conditions • contract end/renewal/extension dates 	Highways	Q3 23-24

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> contractual social value commitments and deliverables 		
2. Complete baseline assessment of HFSS advertisements across Trafford – broken down into Council, TfGM and private ownership.	Public Health	Q4 23-24
3. Progress in introducing and evaluating a policy that restricts the advertising of HFSS on council owned advertisements	Highways and Public Health	Timeframe TBC subject to contractual position
4. Work with GM DsPH on wider programme of HFSS advertising policy review.	Public Health	Q4 23-24
5. Propose wider amendments to the council’s advertising policy to protect population health and wellbeing and mitigate potential harm	Public Health and Highways	Timeframe TBC subject to 3 above

Recommendations:

- The Board are asked to agree to the above steps.

4.2. Recommendation 2: Local planning and policy – influence local planning policy and decisions that impact on food and transport to ensure that people in most disadvantaged neighbourhoods are able to access affordable, healthy and sustainable food. Specifically:

- Establish a process for local planning decisions relating to food outlets to be reviewed by the Director of Public Health by April 2024.
- Include key statements within the Local Plan that support health and wellbeing, and build on this by developing Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs) that specifically outline the Council’s approach to
 - Planning requests for hot food takeaways
 - Sustainable transport

Public Health have consulted with colleagues in Strategic Planning to understand the timelines and processes in relation to the Local Plan and how we can influence content to ensure sufficient levers to achieve outcomes that positively impact on health.

The new Local Plan is in preparation, and the draft will be made available for consultation in mid-2024. The final version then requires central government approval, so is unlikely to come into force until 2026. In order to develop health related SPDs, there needs to be a strong policy ‘hook’ within the plan itself which provides the justification for the SPD.

Next steps:

Action	Lead	Timescale
1. Assemble and review evidence base on effectiveness of SPDs	Public Health	Q4 23-24
2. Research current food and planning landscape in relation to e.g. dark kitchens to establish whether SPDs are a sufficient lever to influence consumption	Public Health	Q4 23-24

3. Review wording of draft Local Plan and engage further with Strategic Planning colleagues to establish whether the health and wellbeing elements are strong enough to support SPDs	Public Health & Strategic Planning	Q1 24-25
4. Develop draft proposals for SPDs (dependent on outcome of above)	Public Health & Strategic Planning	Q2 24-25

4.3. Recommendation 3: School food - ensure school food standards are met across Trafford by April 2024 and develop a set of enhanced school food standards for Trafford (reflecting health and climate) by September 2024. Implement enhanced school food standards in at least one school by April 2025.

Publicly funded school meals (free school meals and those that children buy in school) are a vital mechanism to deliver healthy food to children, especially those from families with low income. British children have the highest levels of ultra-processed food (UPF) consumption in Europe, and these foods are typically high in calories, salt, saturated fat and sugar and have been linked to obesity and other health risks^x. It has been estimated that children may consume around 30% of their calories within school, and a recent study^{xi} has also identified that UPF content in school lunches accounted for 72.6% of the calories in primary school lunches and 77.8% of the calories in secondary school lunches.

Our Trafford data from the National Child Measurement Programme shows us that 18% of children in reception are overweight, increasing to 32% in year 6. This is one driver of the recommendation of reviewing school food provision to try and address one of the factors influencing weight in school-aged children.

An initial meeting was held between Public Health and colleagues in Environmental Health (EH) and Trafford Services for Education (TSfE) in quarter 1, in order to get an idea of the scope of the potential work and how to progress. Environmental Health are able to supply details of who the catering providers are at all schools due to their registration as food businesses. TSfE work in around 90% of Trafford Primary schools and a small number of secondary schools, and the menus they provide adhere to the School Food Standards.

Currently, there is no specific monitoring of adherence to the School Food Standards – this was previously undertaken via Ofsted inspections, but Ofsted were not best placed or skilled to undertake this. Consequently, the Food Standards Agency (FSA) are working with a number of local authorities to pilot an approach whereby Environmental Health Officers (EHOs) include monitoring against school food standards as part of their food safety inspections. Trafford was unable to be part of the pilot due to local capacity, however EH and PH have made contact with colleagues in Blackpool who are participating in the pilot to understand the processes and learning. EH now have a trainee EHO within the team who is able to undertake a research project as part of her third year undergraduate degree, and will be doing this on school food. This will provide some of the evidence and ground work for this priority.

In addition, PH have a small non-recurrent budget to commission an external organisation to undertake a review and feasibility study of this priority and to provide specialist technical

support and nutritional analysis, as well as providing recommendations and drafting enhanced school food standards for Trafford. This will deliver recommendations that take account of increasing food and labour costs and the need for profitability, environmental sustainability, and improvements to population health. This work will be undertaken from January 2024 with feedback expected by quarter 2 2024/25. As part of this contract, we are aiming to include the requirement to upskill staff in EH and/or TSfE to be able to assess and implement enhanced standards moving forwards.

Next steps:

Action	Lead	Timescale
1. Support trainee EHO to scope research project	Public Health & Environmental Health	Q4 23-24
2. Commission specialist organisation to undertake review and feasibility study	Public Health	Q4 23-24
3. Review outcome of above to determine next steps	Public Health	Q2 24-25

4.4. Recommendation 4: Vending policy - Develop a policy statement on vending machines by December 2023 and implement this across HWBB partner organisations by April 2024, or in line with contract renewals.

Vending machines typically contain energy dense snacks and drinks, and often are in areas where there are no alternative purchasing choices. The Public Health team are currently undertaking an evidence review on vending and healthy vending, to establish how best to develop local policies that can be adopted and shared with Health and Wellbeing Board members' organisations in order to achieve this recommendation.

It should be noted that Trafford Leisure already have a plan to address vending machines within Leisure Centres alongside the leisure investment programme and refurbishment of these buildings. There are no vending machines within Move Urmston, instead there is a café offering a range of food and drink, and this will be replicated in Move Altrincham and other centres on post-refurbishment re-opening.

Next steps:

Action	Lead	Timescale
1. Complete evidence review on vending	Public Health	Q4 23-24
2. Review vending machine provision across Council estate	Public Health & Estates	Q1 24-25
3. Review current HWBB partner vending machine provision across all Trafford sites.	Public Health & HWBB partner organisations	Q2 24-25
4. Develop draft vending policy template for use by HWBB partner organisations	Public Health	Q3 24-25

5. Conclusion

As detailed for each recommendation above, there are identified next steps in order to progress this work. It should be noted that each of these priorities are medium to long term priorities that

will have a population level impact on health outcomes and health inequalities relating to excess weight. Public Health will continue to lead this work, building relationships and working collaboratively with partners across the Trafford system to address the obesogenic environment.

ⁱ [Obesity Profile - Data - OHID \(phe.org.uk\)](https://phe.org.uk)

ⁱⁱ [Obesity Profile - Data - OHID \(phe.org.uk\)](https://phe.org.uk)

ⁱⁱⁱ [The health, cost and equity impacts of restrictions on the advertisement of high fat, salt and sugar products across the transport for London network: a health economic modelling study - PMC \(nih.gov\)](#)

^{iv} [9789241516419-eng.pdf \(who.int\)](#)

^v [Differential exposure to, and potential impact of, unhealthy advertising to children by socio-economic and ethnic groups: A systematic review of the evidence - PubMed \(nih.gov\)](#)

^{vi} [02/08/2023 - Luton Council is the first local authority in the East of England to restrict advertising of unhealthy food and drinks](#)

^{vii} [Advertising and sponsorship policy 2022-2025 \(barnsley.gov.uk\)](#)

^{viii} [Advertising Report - 2018/19 and 2019/20 \(tfl.gov.uk\)](#)

^{ix} [Transport for London declares junk food ad ban a success as revenues announced | Sustain \(sustainweb.org\)](#)

^x [Impact of ultra-processed food on children's health - House of Lords Library \(parliament.uk\)](#)

^{xi} [Nutrients | Free Full-Text | The Ultra-Processed Food Content of School Meals and Packed Lunches in the United Kingdom \(mdpi.com\)](#)