



Belfast City Council

Report to:	Parks and Leisure Committee
Subject:	Obesity Consultation
Date:	10 February 2011
Reporting Officer:	Andrew Hassard, Director of Parks and Leisure
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1.0	Relevant Background Information
1.1	The purpose of this report is to inform members that the Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety (DHSSPNI) has commissioned a consultation exercise on the Obesity prevention framework for Northern Ireland 2011 -2021 entitled ' a Fitter Future for all' the aim of which is to prevent and address obesity within Northern Ireland over the next 10 years.
1.2	Appended to the report is the draft written response which has been submitted in order to make a return to the Department within the timeframe allocated. The Department is aware that this may be amended by the Committee.
1.3	The consultation was received in November and officers across three departments have provided input for the draft response – Health & Environmental Services, Development and Parks & Leisure.
1.4	The format of the consultation document was a 109 page report accompanied by a 13 page questionnaire. Copies of either of these documents can be made available to Members on request and a brief summary of the framework is attached at Appendix 1.
1.5	The framework focuses action on three main pillars: food and nutrition; physical activity; and data and research, and within the context of three life course stages: early years; children and young people; and adults. This approach is consistent with the responses being undertaken by a number of countries, following the Foresight Report ¹ .

¹ The 2007 Foresight Report 'Tackling Obesity: Future Choices', highlighted the importance of tackling the growing obesity trend in a coherent and comprehensive manner. Early in 2008, the IDEA's Healthy Communities Programme commissioned Sheffield Hallam University to analyse the implications of the report for local government. This report examines where councils can use their local leadership role to positively change obesity levels and create healthier

2.0	Key Issues
2.1	In the draft response the need for the obesity framework to be fit for purpose to address the scale and complexities involved in obesity and its presence citywide is emphasised.
2.2	The response starts by outlining the strategic position the council has in the city, having the democratic legitimacy to lead key partners to work together in tackling the prevalence of obesity. One of the key themes in the council's corporate plan is to enable 'Better Support for People and Communities' under which the council provides support and services to generate health and wellbeing and active lifestyles across the city. The council is in a unique position to influence and enable many of the factors relating to obesity and seeks within the response to reinforce its primary role in the future development of the framework.
2.3	The response also refers to the fact that the obesity prevention framework aligns with the strategic assumptions the council is forming as it develops its new 'Active Belfast and Open Spaces' strategy.
2.4	The response also highlights council's lead role in working in partnership and the recent formation of the Belfast Health Development Unit (March 2010) which has been driven through city wide collaboration to address health inequalities in the formation of a single health partnership for the city.
2.5	<p>The response also outlines the support and services the council offers to address obesity which should be used as a foundation on which to focus and co-ordinate prevention and intervention. The response makes specific mention of key council projects such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li data-bbox="368 1368 1388 1514">(i) Healthy Families A citywide whole family pilot intervention approach for up to 25 participating families, combining weight management, education and physical activity. <li data-bbox="368 1514 1388 1693">(ii) Renewing the Routes Developing the arterial routes enables more aesthetically appealing routes within neighbourhoods to be attractive as methods of travel across the city for pedestrians and cyclists alike. <li data-bbox="368 1693 1388 1883">(iii) Chinese Nutrition Project A partnership project between Belfast Health & Social Care Trust and Belfast City Council to assist Chinese takeaways in Belfast to develop, display and maintain a healthier choice menu whilst reinforcing traditional Chinese good cooking practices.
2.6	The framework is a starting point to focus a joined up approach to obesity

	however the council's draft response suggests the aim; objectives and actions should be more compelling and there are also improvements sought in how this could be managed and measured.
2.7	In relation to the more "indirect" services that the council provides and that impact on obesity and the factors linked to the prevalence of the obesity on a daily basis, the response suggests that the framework needs to revisit the aim and action to provide a greater balance of health, physical activity and environmental outcomes to fully address the complexity of obesity.
2.8	It is suggested in the draft response that - due to the scale of the challenge, the number of stakeholders and factors that require intervention on obesity - the inclusion of a statutory duty may more effectively underpin accountability across all agencies and service provision as well as focus the results in tackling obesity.

3.0	Resource Implications
	Officer time may be required for further support and development of the framework but no further implications are evident at this time.

4.0	Equality and Good Relations Implications
	None.

5.0	Recommendations
	Members are asked to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (i) note that the draft response was submitted to the Department subject to future committee and council approval; and (ii) review and approve the draft response subject to any amendments or comments they may wish to provide.

6.0	Decision Tracking
	None required.

7.0	Key to Abbreviations
	None.

8.0	Documents Attached
	Appendix 1: Summary of obesity prevention framework for Northern Ireland. Appendix 2: The council's draft response to the DHSSPSNI consultation on Obesity Prevention framework in Northern Ireland.