



Subject:	Motion: 'Nutrition in Council After/Out of Schools Provision'
Date:	4 th February 2020
Reporting Officer:	Ryan Black, Director of Neighbourhood Services, CNS
Contact Officer:	Kelly Gilliland, Neighbourhoods Service Manager Kim Kensett, Belfast Health Development Unit

Restricted Reports	
Is this report restricted?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
If Yes, when will the report become unrestricted?	
After Committee Decision	<input type="checkbox"/>
After Council Decision	<input type="checkbox"/>
Some time in the future	<input type="checkbox"/>
Never	<input type="checkbox"/>

Call-in	
Is the decision eligible for Call-in?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>

1.0	Purpose of Report or Summary of Main Issues
1.1	<p>The Council, at its meeting on the 4th November 2019, considered a motion which had been moved by Councillor Black and seconded by Councillor McAteer:</p> <p><u><i>Nutrition Support for Children in Out-of-Hours School Clubs</i></u></p> <p><i>"Practical healthy eating, supported by positive influence around lifelong food choices, improves children's wellbeing in physical and mental terms, including their ability to concentrate and learn.</i></p> <p><i>Good nutrition is essential for children to grow properly, do their best in school and be healthy and happy in the future. (Education Authority).</i></p> <p><i>A World Health Organisation commission has described childhood obesity as a 'growing epidemic'. Department of Health survey statistics indicate that 25% of children in this region</i></p>

	<p><i>are deemed to be overweight or obese. The estimated costs of healthcare attached to weight problems are around £450 million, representing 2.8% of total healthcare expenditure.</i></p> <p><i>Small changes across a range of arenas can help to turn the tide. Implementing healthy snack choices, as part of the daily routine, significantly increases the capacity of positive choices becoming embedded, ultimately, resulting in wider savings to the health sector.</i></p> <p><i>Belfast City Council supports a range of services and programmes for children, including Summer Schemes and Out-of-Hours School Clubs in areas facing disadvantage and food poverty.</i></p> <p><i>Such spaces provide daily opportunities for children to undertake physical activity, learning and play. It is worth noting the capacity for such spaces to further improve the health of children via the provision of small healthy snacks.</i></p> <p><i>It is within this Council's gift to contribute to the improvement of quality of daily life for children and to cement children's positive relationship with food and nutrition.</i></p> <p><i>Accordingly, the Council agrees that a report, looking at clubs located in areas of disadvantage and the potential for such spaces to incorporate healthy snacks, as part of out of school hours provision during both term and non-term time, be prepared."</i></p> <p>The motion was referred, without discussion, to the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee.</p>
<p>2.0</p>	<p>Recommendations</p>
<p>2.1</p>	<p>The committee is asked to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> i. Note the findings outlining Council's current practice in relation to addressing nutrition in Council-owned/supported facilities providing either after schools or out of school hours (e.g. summer schemes) youth provision. ii. Support the recommendation that officers should work collaboratively with the Active Belfast and Nutrition Leads within the Belfast Health Development Unit to develop and promote a more co-ordinated and consistent approach to promoting healthy eating (as well as increased physical activity) within BCC supported after school and summer scheme initiatives – in our community and leisure centres, aligning with Belfast Agenda priorities.
<p>3.0</p>	<p>Main report</p>
<p>3.1</p>	<p>To inform this report, Grainne McMacken, a BHSCT dietician working within the Belfast Health Development Unit liaised with the Public Health Agency and Food Standards Agency and spoke with staff within Council's Community Services Team as well as BHSCT's Community Dietetic Team alongside the Food in Schools dietician.</p> <p>3.2 Findings from a sample survey on current practice (completed by Assistant Community Development Officer)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A number of after schools projects accommodate a short break and provide some refreshments e.g. water, diluted juice (no added sugar), fruit, plain biscuits, toast. • Parents provide details of allergies in the registration form which helps staff if they are supplying items of food or drinks. • For trips during summer schemes lunch is provided by the parents. Staff encourage the parents to provide healthy options and discourage the inclusion of items such as

energy drinks, fizzy drinks and crisps however ultimately the decision rests with the parents.

- Parents providing the lunch or snacks reduces/removes the risk to staff in terms of inadvertently providing items that could cause a reaction if a condition exists.
- Overall there appears to be a general culture of encouraging healthy options however there are no prerequisites and there's no formal guidance/instruction in place.
- There would also be limits on what can be provided in Centres due to budget constraints.

3.3 **Current After schools food and physical activity provision**

Almost all of the 22 BCC owned Community Centres have after schools activities in place for 5-11 year olds. Activities include a combination of drama/arts/crafts/open play/music etc. as well, to a lesser extent, sporting activities. The main focus is on recreation and play.

In general food (as in a meal) is not provided due to the short time period the child is present (less than 2hrs). Mostly children go home first and then attend to the centre to take part activities (assumption being then that they eat in lunch in school and perhaps have a snack/small meal prior to going to the centre).

Although food currently does not appear to be a big feature of existing after schools provision there could still be potential to raise awareness amongst staff and parents of the importance of healthy eating and providing nutritious snacks as well as the value of offering, and taking part in, more physical focussed activities within the after schools setting.

After schools clubs/programmes have also been supported via the Belfast Health Development Unit's Active Belfast grants scheme. In these instances, grant awardees are invited and encouraged to attend a nutrition update session at the start of their project which focusses on promoting healthy eating, support available from other organisations and highlighting resources.

3.4 **Current Summer Scheme food and physical activity provision**

Food provision is different at summer schemes as children usually attend for a longer session (2 hours or more with a break included). They may attend either once or twice a day for 4 weeks. A snack is also provided morning and afternoon and there isn't currently a BCC-led healthy eating policy or guidance in place that the centres have to follow/adhere to in relation to providing nutritious meals and snacks.

BCC fund community based summer schemes via a grants scheme and one of the criteria is that the scheme *'provides activities that improve health - including physical activity/exercise/mental health/healthy diet/health behaviours.'* This criteria could be strengthened were we to develop a guidance and support process (further outlined in 3.6) Applicants are allowed to include a small budget line within their bid for provision of food.

3.5 **Current Guidance**

The nutritional guidance for afterschool clubs or school related activities in Northern Ireland comes from the 'Nutritional standards for other food and drinks in schools' document [available from the PHA website www.publichealth.hscni.net]. This publication provides details of the standards as they apply to all food and drinks served outside of lunchtime, which will include breakfast clubs, break time services such as tuck shops, vending machines and after schools clubs. It also explains the reasons why nutritional standards have been introduced and offers practical advice on how to implement the standards.

'School food: the essential guide' is another useful, practical supporting document available from the PHA website which is accompanied by a range of other resources including

guidance on how to develop a healthy eating policy – within the school setting (but which could easily be adapted to other settings such as community provision).

3.6 **Potential actions**

Belfast Health Development Unit, in partnership with BCC officers within community services and other stakeholders such as PHA/FSA, are best placed develop a range of actions to support a more consistent and coordinated approach to promoting and encouraging health eating and increased physical activity within the after school and summer scheme settings provided or supported by Council. These actions could include:

- **Further engagement with the BCC Assistant Community Development Officers Forum**

ACDOs are responsible for supervising BCC's after schools and summer scheme projects within the community setting and have expressed an interest in exploring further with BHDU leads how they could support this work going forward.

- **Resource development**

The resources referred to in 3.5 could be adapted and tailored for use in the community setting – Council could then, via lead officers responsible for community services and leisure, put in place processes for both developing and promoting them within Council facilities such as community centres and leisure centres – particularly where/when after school clubs and summer schemes are running. Consideration could also be given to developing a template healthy eating policy for after school programmes/summer schemes which highlights to children, parents and staff actions that will be taken to promote healthy eating/being active. A healthy living centre healthy eating policy already exists which could be referred to.

- **Staff training**

Potential for the development and delivery of a nutrition/ physical activity awareness session delivered by a community dietitian to key target groups involved in delivering children's programmes within BCC community centres. This would involve providing information on healthy eating – the importance of eating well for school-aged children/benefits to health/what is meant by a healthy diet for children/what are healthy snacks/the importance of oral health/healthy cooking as well as covering current physical activity recommendations for children. Staff would also be alerted to relevant resources e.g. posters/websites/healthy snacks leaflets for parents and children/ ecipes etc.

- **Information provided for parents – and children**

There may be potential for input to be delivered directly to participating children around healthy eating/ physical activity e.g. incorporating it into games/ activities. Information (written or verbal) could also be provided to parents on the importance of healthy eating and regular physical activity.

3.7 **Financial & Resource Implications**

There are no financial or resource implications attached to this report, however if Committee agree that the actions outlined in 3.6 should be pursued, this will need to be considered in terms of resource implications for both the BHDU and Council, that being said promotion of physical activity and nutrition are currently a priority work area within the Belfast Agenda framework and for staff within BHDU.

3.8 **Equality or Good Relations Implications/Rural Needs Assessment**

None.

4.0 Appendices

None.