

Full Council: 13 December, 2016

Administration Motion: Cllr Caroline Stock

Taking on Diabetes

Council notes that it is two years since the Mayor's Golden Kilometre was launched and to date it has encouraged thousands of children, their parents and teachers to become active. Since launching the project the Council has become increasingly aware of the time bomb that is ticking, namely obesity.

Council also recognises that obesity is a major public health problem due to its association with serious chronic diseases such as Type 2 Diabetes, Cardiovascular disease and Cancers. All of these can lead to disability, reduced quality of life and premature death. Obesity is estimated to be the fourth largest risk factor contributing to deaths in England. In England 61.3% of adults and 30% of children aged between 2-15 are overweight or obese.

Council can see that there is an explosion in medical problems associated with obesity: a 30-fold increase in bariatric surgery, a 4-fold increase in hospital admissions for obesity-linked conditions such as asthma and sleep apnoea, a surge in prescribing for high cholesterol and high blood pressure and rocketing diabetes. Obesity is the most potent risk factor in Type 2 diabetes. It accounts for 80-90% of the overall risk of developing it and underlies the current global spread of the condition.

Council notes that people who are diabetic are 62.1% more likely to have a heart attack and 23.5% more likely to have a stroke. It is also an issue of health inequality, as individuals living in the 20% most deprived areas of the country being 56% more likely to have diabetes. Research clearly indicates that improving dietary habits, managing weight and keeping active will directly influence diabetes. It is estimated that we currently spend about £23.7 billion (direct and indirect costs) on diabetes in the UK, which is nearly £3 million an hour, and is predicted to rise to £39.8 billion by 2035.

Council recognizes that prevention is an essential part of the equation if we are to have any hope of solving this growing crisis. Council further recognizes that it already has a raft of Public Health programs in place to tackle both childhood and adult obesity – examples of which include Healthy Children's Centres, the Shape Programme to engage 13-19 year olds in Burnt Oak & Colindale in sport & physical activity, Awards for Restaurants and Cafes using healthy cooking techniques, Outdoor Gyms and Marked & Measured Routes in Parks, Free Adult Cycle Training, Leader-led Walks, Over 50's Adult Activity classes and Move Like a Pro, a Men's health program for 35-55 year olds with BMIs over 28 who are inactive.

However, there is much more that can be achieved through engaging more with the general population in Barnet - firstly by alerting them to the seriousness of this problem and then involving them in actively taking preventative measures themselves. Projects need to be made innovative, enjoyable and inclusive so that individuals can start looking at their problems in a positive manner and where exercise, understanding food intake and encouragement are all part of a package.

Council notes that in addition to its own information and advice services, there are also support groups available, such as the Barnet Group of Diabetes UK, and welcomes their sign-posting via the Council website. Council asks officers to consider how awareness can further be raised and information on support be provided through other channels, such as Barnet First. Council needs to seek yet further involvement of schools and Headteachers and to make far greater use of voluntary groups, noticeboards and digital communications. We all have a part to play and we should encourage all 63 Councillors to become Healthy Lifestyle Ambassadors to create a ripple effect to promote healthy life styles.

Council would like to have an Action Day in the Summer where individual wards each have an activity, whether it's having diabetic testing, running/walking a kilometre around your local park (making use of the marked/measured routes) or even demonstrations on the use of our outdoor gyms.

Council welcomes the success of the Mayor's Golden Kilometre which has collaborated with Saracens Sports Foundation, England Athletics, Public Health Barnet, Middlesex University, Barnet Partnership for School Sports and School Travel Plan Officers. Council needs to build on this early intervention to engage with Barnet Residents to fight Type 2 Diabetes - the growing insidious killer. Simon Stevens, the Head of NHS England, has stated "If you could pack exercise into a magic pill, it would be a pharmaceutical blockbuster." This message together with informed education on diet and lifestyle changes needs to be embraced and communicated to our ever increasing Barnet population.

Council calls on the Health and Well Being Board to take a national lead on devising a local improvement strategy.

Under Full Council Procedure Rule 23.5: if my item is not dealt with by the end of the meeting I ask that it be voted upon at the Council meeting