

WELWYN HATFIELD BOROUGH COUNCIL
ENVIRONMENT OVERVIEW SCRUTINY COMMITTEE– 29 JANUARY 2019
REPORT OF THE CORPORATE DIRECTOR (PLANNING, PUBLIC PROTECTION
AND GOVERNANCE)

EAT OUT EAT WELL UPDATE

1 Executive Summary

- 1.1 A progress update regarding the delivery of Eat Out Eat Well healthy eating award within Welwyn Hatfield.

2 Recommendation(s)

- 2.1 For members to note the contents of this report.

3 Explanation

- 3.1 Eat Out Eat Well is a healthy eating award for food businesses compliant with food hygiene and food standard legislation. The award promotes and encourages businesses to offer healthier food choices. The award is inclusive of most businesses that sell food, with the exception of those that provide exclusively for children or the elderly, this is because their dietary needs are different.
- 3.2 Members previously agreed to lead by example by starting this project in Council operated facilities. As such Campus West and Mill Green Museum were both encouraged to participate in the award. Both businesses have subsequently achieved a bronze award and have recently completed nutrition training. This training provides additional points within the assessment process and increases their knowledge of the relationship between diet and health and wellbeing; along with The Eatwell Guide, which is the Government nutritional guidelines.
- 3.3 There remains a limited number of businesses that have been assessed within the scheme and officers are developing their own knowledge of the assessment process with each application.
- 3.4 Businesses scoring a Food Hygiene Rating score of '5' (Very Good) have been targeted by direct communication but this has not been found to engage business interest in the award. All of the businesses assessed so far have been identified by food officers and face to face contact has proven to be the most effective means of engagement.
- 3.5 The award itself is difficult to achieve and has required all the businesses involved to make changes to their food and/or cooking methods to achieve the bronze award. This does deter some businesses who want to be seen to achieve a gold award immediately, but this award is striving to make changes and improvements and as such is not designed to be easy to achieve.
- 3.6 A significant achievement in the last few months has been to get accreditation from The Royal Society of Public Health to deliver a level 2 Nutrition for Health

qualification. We are the only local authority in Hertfordshire offering this training, which is available to all residents.

- 3.7 Officers have designed and written a course following nutrition training they undertook earlier in the year, to build upon existing qualifications. The course is designed to cover a wide health syllabus and is delivered through a variety of teaching methods.
- 3.8 The first course was delivered in November 2018 and was well received with positive feedback. All candidates passed the examination and there was positive press coverage through the Welwyn Hatfield Times online.
- 3.9 Being in a position to offer this training is important to future businesses participating in Eat Out Eat Well as attendance by a business and cascading information learnt to food handlers achieves extra points within the assessment.
- 3.10 We have scheduled three more dates for training over the next six months and we will be advertising the course through all internally accessible media channels. The charge for the course is consistent with the ongoing food hygiene level 2 training provided by Public Health & Protection at £65 for residents and £70 for those outside the Borough. This is a competitive rate for a classroom course.
- 3.11 In summary whilst there has been a slower uptake in the scheme than we expected this is not an initiative that will achieve immediate change and improvement. We will increase our publicity of the scheme and aim to raise public awareness in the forthcoming months. In addition food officers will be reminded of the value of them encouraging participation with compliant food businesses.
- 3.12 Those businesses involved so far have been very receptive and are making positive changes that impact upon the community.

Implications

4 Legal Implication(s)

- 4.1 This project will be delivered as part of the public health district offer from Hertfordshire County Council.
- 4.2 This project also supports the government's Childhood Obesity Plan for action published in August 2016. <http://tinyurl.com/h4pawkv>

5 Financial Implication(s)

- 5.1 None directly arising from this report; there is a budget allocated to the delivery of this project within the district offer.
- 5.2 Whilst it is difficult to measure the cost saving to society achieved by this intervention, most public health interventions are highly cost effective. There are however a myriad of different factors that influence a person's health within their lifetime and the impact of this intervention may also take many years to come to fruition.
- 5.3 There are no negative costs associated for business participation in the award, some cost savings may be made by using alternative healthier food products.

6 Risk Management Implications

- 6.1 The risks related to this proposal are:
- 6.2 The Council is at risk from criticism from central government if it does not design food environments within public sector buildings, services and spaces that makes the easy choices also the healthy ones, as specified in the Childhood Obesity Plan.
- 6.3 The public are at risk if the council does not take any action to intervene in reducing obesity in the resident population.
- 6.4 Our work with local business, especially small and medium sized enterprises helps the local economy and business growth, thereby mitigating associated risks.
- 6.5 The work of the public health and protection service is considerably broad with the underlying theme of protecting the public. Therefore it is inevitable that in order to make best use of resources some work will be prioritised over other work. Sometimes the priorities afforded to work by officers using their professional judgement may not match the perceived priorities allocated by members of the public, and this mismatch can result in complaints to local councillors, MPs and the Ombudsman.

7 Security and Terrorism Implication(s)

- 7.1 Food security is a recognised risk¹ and environmental health work and the council's role as a category 1 responder under the Civil Contingencies Act can assist with the mitigation of this risk.

8 Procurement Implication(s)

- 8.1 There are no procurement implications.

9 Climate Change Implication(s)

- 9.1 None directly arising from this report, although there are links between climate change, food hygiene and availability.

10 Human Resources Implication(s)

- 10.1 None arising from this report.

11 Health and Wellbeing Implication(s)

- 11.1 Obesity is a national epidemic and is already having a significant impact on the health of the nation. In Welwyn Hatfield we have the highest proportion of obese children aged 4-5 (jointly with Broxbourne) in Hertfordshire and between 2016/18 and 2017/18 our borough saw the largest increase in obese children in this age. Our borough also saw the largest increase in children with excess weight (overweight and obese) in Hertfordshire in the same time period, and the highest proportion of obese female pupils.
- 11.2 Whilst Eat Out Eat Well does not seek to target children specifically, the evidence collected of reception aged children demonstrates that obesity is an issue for

residents of this borough and we need to carry out interventions to try and reverse the excess weight trend. One in every six meals is now eaten out of the home. This award aims to help residents identify healthier food choices when eating out in Welwyn Hatfield.

12 Communication and Engagement Implication(s)

- 12.1 Greater promotion of the scheme is needed for both businesses and residents, this will be achieved through press releases, articles in Life magazine and promotion through social media predominately. We will also seek to engage local commerce groups for example the Federation of Small Businesses.

13 Link to Corporate Priorities

- 13.1 The subject of this report is linked to the Council's Corporate Priority 'Our Community', and specifically to the achievement of 'Improving Public Health and Wellbeing'.

14 Equality and Diversity

- 14.1 An EqIA was not completed because this report does not propose changes to existing service-related policies or the development of new service-related policies.

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