

HEALTH OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

13 DECEMBER 2016

FAST FOOD OUTLETS AND HEALTH

Summary

1. The Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee (HOSC) is to receive an overview from the Council's Director of Public Health on fast food outlets and health, following recent publication of Public Health England's (PHE) fast food outlet map.

Background

2. Environmental influences on diet often involve physical ease of access to food and drink, for example, from supermarkets for home consumption, from takeaways and from restaurants. As eating habits become more unstructured, the availability of and access to 'food on the go' is an important consideration in diet and obesity. Takeaway outlets primarily offer ready-to-eat, energy-dense foods that are associated with higher total energy and fat intakes. Frequent consumption of takeaway food has been associated with excess weight gain over time.
3. The number of takeaway food outlets has risen substantially over the past two decades, with a large increase seen in areas of socioeconomic disadvantage, according to a study carried out across Norfolk by researchers at the University of Cambridge.
4. A map showing the density of fast food outlets was published by Public Health England in October, to help in the fight against obesity.
5. The [map](#) is accompanied by data, showing the number of fast food outlets including burger bars, kebab and chip shops within each local authority area and how this compares to the population in each area.
6. Of 30 local authority areas in the West Midlands, Worcester City is listed with the third highest count of fast food outlets, with 100.2 rate per 100,000 of population.

Tackling Obesity

7. Obesity is a complex problem that requires action from individuals and society across multiple sectors. One important action is to modify the environment so that it does not promote sedentary behaviour or provide easy access to energy-dense food.
8. Local authorities have a range of legislative and policy levers at their disposal, alongside wider influences on healthy lifestyles, which can help to create places where people are supported to maintain a healthy weight.

9. Local District Council planning authorities can influence the built environment to improve health and reduce the extent to which it promotes obesity. It is only in recent years that local authorities have started to use the legal and planning systems to regulate the growth of fast food restaurants, including those near schools. There is no clear evidence that can demonstrate a causal link between fast food outlet density and obesity at local small area level.

Purpose of the Meeting

10. Members are invited to consider and comment on the information provided regarding fast food outlets in Worcestershire, the impact on health, and the opportunities available to impact upon this area.
11. Following the discussion, HOSC Members are asked to consider whether any further information is required at this stage.

Supporting Information

Appendix 1 - News release from Public Health England 'Fast food outlet map published to help local authorities tackle obesity.'

Contact Points

County Council Contact Points

Worcestershire County Council: 01905 763763

Worcestershire Hub: 01905 765765

Specific Contact Points for this Report

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Background Papers

In the opinion of the Proper Officer (in this case the Head of Legal and Democratic Services) the following are the background papers relating to the subject matter of this report:

Agenda and Minutes of:

- Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 30 June 2016, available on the website [here](#)
- Cabinet on 16 July 2015, available on the website [here](#)
- Cabinet Member Decision on 20 November 2015, available on the website [here](#)