

Divisions Affected – N/A

Delegated Decision by Cabinet Member for Public Health, Inequalities and Community Safety

5 December 2023

Budget approval for provision of a Life-course Healthy Weight Public Health Service in Oxfordshire

Report by Corporate Director for Public Health and Community Safety

RECOMMENDATION

1. **The Cabinet Member for Public Health, Inequalities and Community Safety is RECOMMENDED to**
 - a) Approve the budget for and authorise the Director of Public Health to commence the procurement of a Life-course Healthy Weight Public Health Service in Oxfordshire; and
 - b) Delegate authority to the Director of Public Health in consultation with the Head of Legal and Deputy Monitoring Officer and Section 151 Officer, to award and complete the contract for a Life-course Healthy Weight Public Health Service in Oxfordshire as referred to in this report following the conclusion of a procurement exercise pursuant to the Council's Contract Procedure Rules.

Executive Summary

2. In Oxfordshire more than half (64%) of adults and over a third (31%) of school year 6 children are living with overweight or obesity (22/23). Obesity is one of the leading causes of preventable early deaths, increasing the risks of heart attacks, strokes, many types of cancer, and depressionⁱ. Excess weight comes with high social costs due to its impact on residents' quality of life and increased need for health and social care, costing an estimated 3% of the UK's GDPⁱ.
3. Levels of adult overweight and obesity continue to rise in Oxfordshire and levels of children's overweight and obesity are not improving. Although Oxfordshire combined rates are slightly below the England average, there are specific geographic areas and populations that disproportionately experience higher than the Oxfordshire average, meaning big inequalities remain in the County.
4. A recent Health Needs Assessment for Promoting Healthy Weight in Oxfordshireⁱ identified support for people with excess weight as a key component to addressing the issue. It highlighted that existing weight

management support services should be enhanced to provide for additional groups.

5. The current commissioning arrangements for healthy weight services are split into two contracts, a core service for adults and a pilot service supporting children and families. The contract for the adult service ends on the 31st August 2024 (cannot be extended further) and for the child service, is planned to also end on the 31st August 2024 (although could be extended until 31st January 2025). A new Life-course Healthy Weight Public Health Service will bring in additional elements of service as identified as gaps in the health needs assessment and be commissioned under a single contract.
6. The new contract arrangements need to be in place from **1st September 2024**, to avoid a break in service provision. The current providers are aware of the contract end date and the need to re-procure services. There is sufficient time to procure and award a new contract. It is anticipated that the invitation to tender will be published January 2024, with evaluation during March 2024, contract award by 31st May 2024 and then a mobilisation phase.
7. The Contract value will be a **maximum of £1,018,000 per annum**. The initial contract term is proposed to be 3 years and 6 months, with a unilateral option for the Council to extend by up to a further 36 months in aggregate.
8. The contract value will be over £500,000 and therefore is required to be entered in the Forward Plan, in accordance with the Access to Information Rules. This is a key decision and one that is delegated to the Cabinet Member for Public Health to take, consistent with overall Council policy to deliver agreed strategy/plans within the area of responsibility and within approved budgets.

Background Information

9. Global obesity rates have tripled since 1975, and the UK ranks amongst the worst in Europeⁱⁱ. Obesity and poor diet are linked with type 2 diabetes, high blood pressure, high cholesterol, cancer and increased risk of respiratory, musculoskeletal and liver diseaseⁱⁱ. Nearly two-thirds of adults in England are living with overweight or obesity and one-third of children leave primary school with overweight or obesityⁱⁱ. Obesity has a significant burden on the NHS contributing to 900,000 hospital admissions per year (2018-19) and costing £6.1 billion annually (2019)ⁱⁱⁱ. Childhood obesity predicts adult obesity and the health complications associated with it^{iv}.
10. Type 2 diabetes, a condition previously found almost entirely in adults, is now being diagnosed in children and young people due to excess weight. Being overweight or obese as a child can impact on self-esteem and quality of life and result in depression^{iv}.
11. The latest excess weight data for Oxfordshire (2022-23) show that nearly 1 in 5 (19%) children of reception school age are overweight or obese, rising to 1

in 3 (31%) of Year 6 children^v. The latest data for Oxfordshire adults (2021-22) show that 64% are overweight or obese^{vi}.

12. The Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC) published the policy paper 'Tackling obesity: empowering adults and children to live healthier lives in 2020'ⁱⁱⁱ. The paper acknowledged the need to make changes to the wider environment within which we live due to how this fosters obesity and outlined the need to expand weight management services to achieve a reduction in obesity levels. Their pledge was to reduce the number of adults living with obesity, halve childhood obesity by 2030 and reduce inequalities in obesity prevalence.
13. Weight management services are separated into four tiers: The local authority public health grant funds tier 1 – universal services (like health promotion); tier 2 – lifestyle interventions (typically 12-week group interventions that provide community-based diet, nutrition, lifestyle and behaviour change advice). Tier 3 – specialist weight management services and Tier 4 – bariatric surgery are provided by the NHS^{vii}. There are important pathways and links between services.
14. The following public health services are included within this commission:
 - (a) Tier 1 – universal offer for all Oxfordshire residents (all age including children and adults) to promote healthy weight and resources for self-help/learning
 - (b) Tier 2 – weight management services covering the life-course (with specific programmes delivered to support people in groups identified as having greatest need and where there were gaps in provision in the Health Needs Assessment).

Adult Tier 3 (specialist multi-disciplinary weight management) and Tier 4 (bariatric surgery) services in Oxfordshire are commissioned by the Integrated Care Board (NHS).
15. The revised life-course healthy weight service will be in line with the latest national guidance and evidence base. Provision will take into account local level data collected at school for all Reception and Year 6 children via the National Child Measurement Programme (NCMP) and for adults via the Active Lives Survey (a sample survey)^{viii}.

Corporate Policies and Priorities

16. This commission aligns with the following local priorities:
 - (a) Oxfordshire County Council's **Strategic Plan 2023-2025**^{ix} which includes commitments to tackle inequalities in Oxfordshire, prioritise the health and wellbeing of residents and create opportunities for children and young people to reach their full potential.
 - (b) The Oxfordshire **Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2018-23**^x which recommends the prevention of childhood obesity, and prevention of

chronic disease through tackling obesity. The new strategy for 2024-2030 is in the final stages of development and is expected this focus will remain.

- (c) The **Berkshire, Oxfordshire and Buckinghamshire (BOB) Integrated Care Partnership (ICP) Strategy (2023)**^{xi} which outlines priorities to increase the proportion of people who are a healthy weight and physically active, especially in most deprived areas and in younger people.
 - (d) The 2022/23 **Director of Public Health Annual Report**^{xii} (Healthy Weight, Healthy Communities, Healthy Lives) which recommends for a whole-systems approach to obesity including providing access to weight management support.
 - (e) The 2022/23 **Health Needs Assessment for Promoting Healthy Weight**ⁱ which recommends five key objectives one of which is to ensure those living with excess weight are connected with healthy weight-promoting programmes and weight support services.
17. The service also fits with national guidance for tackling overweight and obesity:
- (a) The DHSC (2020) policy paper **Tackling obesity: empowering adults and children to live healthier lives**ⁱⁱⁱ
 - (b) The **NHS Long Term Plan (2019)**ⁱⁱ
 - (c) **NICE guidance** (2014) – Weight management: lifestyle services for overweight or obese adults^{iv}

Financial Implications

18. The contract value is expected to be approximately £1,018,000 per annum in line with the funding assigned for this contract. The contract term will be 3 years 6-months with a maximum extension of 36 months (in aggregate). If the contract was extended to its maximum term, thus lasting 6 years and 6 months, the total contract value would be approximately £6,617,000.

Comments checked by: Thomas James, Finance Business Partner

Legal Implications

19. The Council has a statutory obligation to “take such steps as it considers appropriate for improving the health of the people in its area” (s2B National Health Service Act 2006 (“NHS Act 2006”) as amended by s12 Health and Social Care Act 2012).

The Contract will be tendered in accordance with the requirements of the Provider Selection Regime which is due to come into effect on 1st January 2024 (if passed by Parliament in October 2024). In the event that the legislation does not pass, the Contract will be tendered in accordance with the requirements of the Public Contract Regulations 2015.

Comments checked by: Jayne Pringle, Principal Solicitor Contracts & Conveyancing

Staff Implications

20. The Live Well Promote and Prevent Team will carry out the procurement process. Procurement and Legal staff time will also be required to complete the procurement to the timescales of service commencement on 1st September 2024.

Equality & Inclusion Implications

21. Every Oxfordshire resident will be eligible for healthy weight guidance under the Tier 1 service.
22. The Tier 2 service, as a targeted service, will offer support to those with excess weight. All individuals with excess weight referred to the service will receive a motivational interview to assess readiness to change. Some Tier 2 interventions will be designed to meet the specific needs of population groups and communities experiencing disproportionately high levels of overweight and obesity.

Sustainability Implications

23. Bidder's will need to describe how they will provide social value that will benefit local communities within Oxfordshire, in accordance with the Council's social value policy.

Risk Management

24. If we do not proceed with this procurement, there will be no contractual mechanism for providing weight management support to individuals experiencing overweight and obesity.
25. The key risks identified for this commission are:
 - (a) There is strong interest in the commissioned evidence by the market engagement. This showed a number of different approaches to potential delivery, so ensuring these match the need for Oxfordshire will be key in evaluation of the full competitive tender.
 - (b) There is a risk of uncertainty of year-on-year government funding. This will be mitigated as far as possible through contractual terms and conditions.
 - (c) TUPE of staff and transfer of care of existing clients if the tender is awarded to a new provider. A minimum 3-month implementation period and plan will be required.

Consultations

26. Statutory consultation is not required for this proposal. However, we have drawn insight from relevant activity to inform this work.
27. In 2022 there were two consultations with local partners and communities to gather insights on establishing and maintaining a healthy weight and the role that food plays in staying healthy and well. These views will be incorporated into the commissioning process and service design.
28. A market engagement exercise was undertaken in July 2023 which demonstrated that there is interest from a number of different organisations in tendering for the new contract.

Ansaf Azhar

Corporate Director – Public Health and Community Safety

Contact Officer: Derys Pragnell, Public Health Consultant, Live Well Promote and Prevent Derys.Pragnell@oxfordshire.gov.uk

07th November 2023

ⁱHealth Needs Assessment for Promoting Healthy Weight (2023) – page 2

ⁱⁱ[NHS Long Term Plan » Obesity](#)

ⁱⁱⁱ[Tackling obesity: empowering adults and children to live healthier lives - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

^{iv}[Overview | Obesity in children and young people: prevention and lifestyle weight management programmes | Quality standards | NICE](#)

^vHealth Needs Assessment for Promoting Healthy Weight (2023) – page 27

^{vi}[Obesity Profile - Data - OHID \(phe.org.uk\)](#)

^{vii}[NHS Tiered Care Weight Management Pathway – Obesity Empowerment Network \(oen.org.uk\)](#)

^{viii}[Obesity Profile - OHID \(phe.org.uk\)](#)

^{ix}[Our strategic plan 2022 - 2025 | Oxfordshire County Council](#)

^x[Oxfordshire Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy](#)

^x[Item 10 - 230307 BOB ICP Integrated Care Strategy - FINAL.pdf \(westoxon.gov.uk\)](#)

^{xi}[2022-23 Director of Public Health annual report | Oxfordshire County Council](#)