

## Leisure and Youth Policy and Review Panel – 15th January, 2018

### Healthy Weights Audit

#### Executive summary

The main purpose of this study was to examine potential influences within school catchment environments which may be contributing to the above average levels of younger years obesity within the Borough of Rushmoor.

#### Key Findings

- The weights of children within Rushmoor are more affected by deprivation, rather than the environment or by the work that schools are doing to address the issue of obesity.
- In catchment areas where there is relatively very high deprivation affecting children, the weights of Year R and Year 6 children are significantly above the Hampshire average.
- Farnborough Grange Infants and Fernhill Primary each have Year R pupils whose weight is significantly above the Hampshire average. It is therefore a priority that a collective approach is adopted from all partners to undertake work in these areas to address the issue of young children entering school overweight.
- The study has identified strengths and weaknesses within school catchment environments in terms of the provision of open and green space, play areas, and the number of leisure facilities and sports clubs. More work is required to understand whether or not this has an effect on children's weight. It is recognised that improving the environment and the provision of facilities is far from simple. For example, some of the catchment areas are more heavily urbanised and much smaller in area than others, and existing infrastructure and the costs involved could be prohibitive. Nevertheless, the Council should continue to explore opportunities to improve leisure and play provision in those environments that were identified as being poor in this respect. For instance, the Council is seeking planning consent to install a wide range of leisure and play facilities for all ages at Moor Road recreation ground, which is located between Farnborough Grange Infant and Grange Junior schools. The Council should also work with Hampshire County Council, the local highways authority, to identify potential schemes and funding opportunities to improve routes to schools, and it could use the data collected within this study as evidence to oppose applications for the opening of new fast-food takeaway outlets within areas where high levels of childhood obesity exists.

Obesity is a complex problem, and with many causes and influences, it can be likened to a jigsaw puzzle. Tackling one piece of the puzzle will not solve the problem, but tackling one piece at a time can make a difference. This study recognises that obesity is a collective issue, and can only be addressed through a collaborate approach and not in isolation.