

Committee: Healthier Communities and Older People Overview and Scrutiny Panel

Date: 14th March 2023

Wards: All

Subject: Annual Public Health Report 2022/23 – Health Co-benefits of Climate Action

Lead member: Cllr Peter McCabe, Cabinet Member for Health and Social Care

Lead officer: Dr Dagmar Zeuner, Director of Public Health

Recommendations:

Members of the Healthier Communities and Older People Overview and Scrutiny Panel are asked to:

- A. Consider the attached independent Annual Public Health Report 2022/23 on the topic of Health Co-benefits of Climate Action: opportunities for place-based partnership working.
 - B. Note the opportunities identified in the Annual Public Health Report and how we can innovate our ways of working across the council, and with partners particularly health partners through the Health and Wellbeing Board and Merton Health and Care Together partnership, to maximise health co-benefits for Merton residents.
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1 PURPOSE OF REPORT AND EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1. It is a statutory duty for the Director of Public Health to produce an independent Annual Public Health Report (APHR). The purpose of this report is to share the APHR 2022/23 with the overview and scrutiny committee and to set out the key findings.
- 1.3. The aim of the APHR 2022/23 is:
 - i. To demonstrate the nature and scale of potential health co-benefits of climate action and to identify ways of working across the council and with partners, to fully capture and maximise those co-benefits.
 - ii. To demonstrate that action on climate can help to deliver the Health in All Policies approach that the Health and Wellbeing Board has agreed.
 - iii. To inform the rolling priorities for the Health and Wellbeing Board as well as Merton Health and Care Together partnership and for consideration for wider policies and strategies.
- 1.4 This APHR has been developed with contributions across the council and beyond, particularly with Environment and Regeneration colleagues. It has been discussed with the council's lead Cabinet members for health, climate and transport respectively, endorsed by the Health and Wellbeing Board, and shared with Leader's Strategy Group as well as health partners.

2 BACKGROUND

- 2.1 Climate change, the long-term increase in the temperature of the earth's atmosphere caused by the release of greenhouse gases (GHG) is recognised as one of the greatest global health challenges. This is due to numerous direct health risks associated with rising temperatures, including heat waves, floods and food insecurity. As elsewhere, climate change is leading to negative health impacts on Merton residents. These impacts are felt unequally: we know, for example, that areas in the east of Merton are overall more at risk from hot weather, that older people will be especially at risk of heat and that food insecurity is a greater risk for those who are most deprived.
- 2.2 Climate action to reduce GHG will help to mitigate the above direct health risks and Merton's Climate Strategy and Action Plan, agreed in 2020, aims for the Council to become a net-zero organisation by 2030.
- 2.3 This report specifically sets out how climate action has a number of other positive health impacts that can help tackle some of the deep-rooted risk factors to public health, mainly air pollution, lack of physical activity, unhealthy diet and poor mental health and wellbeing. It is these health co-benefits that are the focus of this APHR.
- 2.4 It is important to acknowledge that there is a lot of good work already underway to tackle climate change and improve health in Merton that we can build on, and some examples are included in the report as case studies.

3. DETAILS

- 3.1 This APHR is about the health co-benefits of climate action and specifically the opportunities they present for place-based partnership working. This is particularly timely given the creation of the Integrated Care System (ICS), Merton Health and Care Together Partnership and Committee and the development work currently taking place to work jointly and collaboratively.
- 3.2. The APHR aims to provide a reference for councillors, officers, partners and residents to understand what we mean by the health co-benefits of climate action, and seeks to develop a shared understanding of how we can work most effectively together to capture and maximise health co-benefits.
- 3.3 The most significant and well evidenced health co-benefits of climate action arise from tackling some of the most pressing public health risk factors, especially air pollution, physical inactivity, unhealthy diets and poor mental wellbeing. In addition, the focus of climate action on energy efficient healthy housing and good green jobs offers opportunity to improve two major determinants of health. Equity is a central consideration for all climate action: and consequent health co-benefits can help reduce health inequality when designed purposefully to be affordable, accessible and acceptable
- 3.4 Key messages are summarised at the beginning of the report, highlighting opportunities and also some of the challenges we face. They stress the need for system thinking, integrated planning and policies as well as evaluation and that, in Merton, there is a strong foundation to build on, with a commitment to the

Health in All Policies framework that includes the core priorities of health, equity and sustainability.

3.5 The APHR is made up of six key themes:

Theme 1: Active Travel

Theme 2: Healthy and Sustainable Diets

Theme 3: Accessible Biodiverse Green Spaces

Theme 4: Good Green Jobs

Theme 5: Energy Efficient Healthy Housing

Theme 6: Green Health and Social Care

3.6 Each themed chapter provides an overview of the current climate action and its expected impact on carbon reduction as well as the impact on health, and the ways in which these health co-benefits can be captured and maximised through purposeful policies and actions.

3.7 The final section of the report looks at the opportunities for place-based working. Using conservative modelling assumptions it estimates that health co-benefits from active travel, healthy sustainable diets and housing retrofit could avert between 37 and 190 excess deaths per year. This does not include annual deaths attributable to air pollution (estimated at 52 -100) and heat (figures by borough not available).

3.8 Achieving these health co-benefits requires integrated planning and system working at place level, where all policy impacts are considered together as part of informed decision making. Merton has an increasing track record of considering health alongside carbon reduction. There is also considerable expertise in partnership working, including engaging with communities, the voluntary sector and businesses, with the potential to strengthen the contribution from young people and develop them as place leaders. As an example, a Young Inspector has been appointed to the Health and Wellbeing Board in a six month pilot to strengthen young people's voice.

3.9 The APHR is supported by evidence available at the time of writing, with research in this field evolving fast. A range of sources of further information are included in the Appendices with more details available on request, including the methodology used for modelling in the report.

4. NEXT STEPS

4.1. Following the endorsement of the Health and Wellbeing Board on 24th January 2023 the APHR, together with the Merton Story/JSNA, will now help inform its rolling priorities for action. It is also being designed for publication and will be shared broadly with officers, members and all partners to take forward.

5. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS

The publication of an independent APHR is a requirement of each Director of Public Health.

6. CONSULTATIONS UNDERTAKEN OR PROPOSED

The APHR was developed with the contribution of a range of colleagues listed in Appendix I of the full report. The APHR has been shared with colleagues in Environment and Regeneration, Community and Housing DMT and with Cabinet lead councillors for health, climate and transport as well as with health partners. It will be published, disseminated and shared widely with partners for consideration and action.

7. TIMETABLE

As outlined in the report.

8 FINANCIAL, RESOURCE AND PROPERTY IMPLICATIONS

None for the purpose of this report. Implementation of the recommendations of the APHR is based on delivery within existing resources by developing ways of working across the council and partners rather than new investment.

9 LEGAL AND STATUTORY IMPLICATIONS

Producing an independent APHR is a statutory duty of the Director of Public Health under The Health and Social Care Act 2012.

10 HUMAN RIGHTS, EQUALITIES AND COMMUNITY COHESION IMPLICATIONS

The APHR focuses on health co-benefits of climate action that can help mitigate health inequalities.

11 CRIME AND DISORDER IMPLICATIONS

None for the purpose of this report.

12 RISK MANAGEMENT AND HEALTH AND SAFETY IMPLICATIONS

None for the purpose of this report.

13 APPENDICES – THE FOLLOWING DOCUMENTS ARE TO BE PUBLISHED WITH THIS REPORT AND FORM PART OF THE REPORT

Appendix 1 – Annual Public Health Report 2022/23 summary slide

Appendix 2 - Annual Public Health Report 2022/3

Health Co-benefits of Climate Action: *Opportunities for place-based partnership working*

Annual Public Health Report 2022/2023 – at-a-glance

Health co-benefits of climate action: opportunities for place-based partnership working

Dr Dagmar Zeuner, DPH LBM, February 2023

- It is a statutory duty for the Director of Public Health to produce an independent Annual Public Health Report
- This Annual Public Health Report (APHR) 2022/23:
 - Demonstrates the nature and scale of the main health co-benefits of climate action: improved air quality, physical activity, diet and mental wellbeing as well as better jobs and housing.
 - Identifies ways of working together to capture and maximise the co-benefits.
 - Shows how action on climate can help to deliver a Health in All Policies (HiAP) approach, combining focus on health, sustainability and equity
 - Informs the rolling priorities for the HWBB, MHCT and is for consideration for wider policies and strategies.
- Developed with wide-range of contributions across the council, local health colleagues and beyond.
- Shared with the council's lead Cabinet members for health, climate and transport as well as health partners and endorsed by the HWBB 24/1/2023.

Format

- Ten key messages
- Six themes:
 - Active Travel
 - Healthy and Sustainable Diets
 - Accessible and biodiverse Green Spaces
 - Good Green Jobs
 - Energy Efficient Healthy Housing
 - Green Health and Social Care
- Opportunities for place-based partnership working
- Resources

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