

News Release

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09 Oct 2019

Two key strategies to improve quality of life agreed by Bexley's Cabinet.

Two five-year strategies, the Bexley System-wide Prevention Strategy and the Bexley Obesity Strategy, were approved at yesterday's Public Cabinet meeting (8 October).

Bexley System-wide Prevention Strategy is an ambitious five-year strategy aimed at not only preventing illness, poor health and social care need, but actively promoting a positive state of health and wellbeing for people who live in Bexley.

The strategy sets out how the Council will work with the NHS and voluntary sector to try to stop people's needs escalating to the point where they lose their independence. It covers the period 2020 to 2025.

The strategy recognises the vital part that residents play through their own behaviour.

The Bexley Obesity Strategy recognises that Bexley has among the highest rates of obesity in London, with nearly three in ten children classified as overweight or obese when they start primary school.

This figure continues to rise, with 36.6% of children aged 10-11 now leaving primary school with excess weight. Children who are obese are five times more likely to grow into adults who are obese, which can predispose them to an increased risk of serious long term conditions.

The strategy sets five-year targets for a reduction in the levels of excess weight for children and adults. It addresses these themes –

- Increase the availability of healthier foods
- Create an environment that inspires physical activity
- Recognise the links between obesity and mental health

- Equip the workforce to contribute to the obesity agenda
- Embed healthy lifestyles across agendas
- Provide quality services that support weight management
- Communicate core and targeted healthy lifestyles messages

Leader of the Council, Cllr Teresa O'Neill OBE said: "A tremendous amount of work has gone into both of these strategies. The old saying says that 'prevention is better than cure' and this is true for the health and wellbeing of our residents. We want our residents to enjoy good health and a good quality of life for as long as possible.

"If agreed these strategies will be the backbone of our health and wellbeing work for the next five years. Work has already started and a number of projects are already in place. I am looking forward to seeing the positive changes their implementation will bring to the lives of our residents over the next five years."

The strategies have both been sponsored by Bexley's Health and Wellbeing Board. They are the results of months of work and have been developed through consultation with local people and organisations involved in health and social care.

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