

Local Government Declaration on Sugar Reduction and Healthier Food Support pack



Sustain: The alliance for better food and farming, advocates food and agriculture policies and practices that enhance the health and welfare of people and animals, improve the living and working environment, enrich society and culture, and promote equity. It represents around 100 national public interest organisations working at international, national, regional and local level.

Part of Sustain, London Food Link is an independent network of individuals, businesses and organisations working for better food in the capital. We run and partner on policy initiatives, campaigns and practical projects that improve the food system including Urban Food Fortnight, the Urban Food Awards, the Capital Growth network, The Jellied Eel magazine, London Food Poverty Campaign, the Good Food for London report, Cage Free Capital, as well as running good food training and networking events.

More information and resources

Available at www.sustainweb.org/londonfoodlink/declaration

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Introduction

The aim of the Local Government Declaration on Sugar Reduction and Healthier Food is to achieve a public commitment to improve the availability of healthier food and drinks and to reduce the availability and promotion of unhealthy options. It should be endorsed by the elected leaders of London boroughs and relevant senior officers such as directors of public health.

The declaration is open to all local authorities in London and beyond. To sign the declaration the local authority has to commit to take at least six different actions across six different key areas. In addition, the local authority commits to report on progress annually.

Action can include continuing support to existing initiatives as long as there is a commitment to new initiatives as well.

This support pack includes a menu of initiatives under each key area of action for local authorities to choose from. Local authorities can adapt the wording of the initiatives based on local conditions, as long as commitments cover all six areas and some of them are new.

From 2017 the declaration will feature as a measure in the [Good Food for London report](#), encouraging local authorities to sign up and implement an annual evaluation programme.



The Buywell Food for Health project supports market traders to increase their fruit and veg sales.
Courtesy for Tower Hamlets Council

What is the problem?

Diet related conditions, including obesity, diabetes and heart disease, are some of the greatest health problems facing the UK today. More is spent on the direct medical costs of diabetes and obesity-related conditions than on fire and police services combined. And the total societal cost of obesity, including lost productivity, is second only to smoking.

The problems are even worse in London, where one in three children are overweight or obese by the time they start secondary school.¹ If left unchanged, this situation will lead to serious health complications later in life, such as diabetes, heart disease and cancers. In total more than 3.8 million Londoners are overweight or obese.²

Overconsumption of foods high in sugar, fat and salt, and sugary drinks is a major contributor to the health crisis. Unfortunately unhealthy foods are available at every corner, at every time of the day and night and strategically located near schools, in our high streets and in areas of higher deprivation where few healthy alternatives are available. Consumption of unhealthy food is also actively promoted through advertising, sponsorship deals and price promotions.

Urgent action is needed at all levels to promote healthy eating and sugar reduction. Local authorities have an important role to play. They control planning, public and environmental health, leisure and recreation. They control or at the very least influence food and drink in schools, nurseries, civic centres, leisure centres and others.

In order to help local people to achieve healthier diets, local authorities need to integrate and co-ordinate their policies. This is a vital part of taking a whole-systems approach to achieving healthier diets.

A Local Government Declaration on Sugar Reduction and Healthier Food is a whole-systems approach which will help to address these problems through targeted action under six key areas of commitment by local authorities across the Capital.

¹ National Child Measurement Programme - England, 2014-15, available online at <http://content.digital.nhs.uk/catalogue/PUB19109>

² London Health Commission (2014), Better Health for London, available online at http://www.london-healthcommission.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/London-Health-Commission_Better-Health-for-London.pdf

The steps to sign the declaration

Step 1: Identify the priorities in your borough and define the scope of the declaration

Make a compelling case for why action is needed in your borough. You may have already identified priorities (e.g. in your Health and Wellbeing Strategy or Obesity Strategy). Choose at least six actions, one under each of the six key areas from the menu or propose your own as long as they include SMART goals. What are the outcomes you would like to see in terms of meal quality, increase in water points, vending, money raised through a voluntary sugary drinks' duty, etc.? Start with the easy wins. Your borough may already be taking action but this is an opportunity to galvanize support and do more.



Step 2: Take the proposal to your champion(s)

Take the proposal to the elected member responsible for public health and director of public health. Ideally they will champion the declaration through the democratic process. They need to be well briefed to make their case to other members and the media.



Step 3: Internal consultation

Ideally your champion will facilitate consultation with other departments such as Children's Services (school meals, nurseries), Adult Services (meals on wheels, care homes), Leisure (leisure centres), Environment and/or Parks (water points in parks), Finance, Corporate Management Team, etc. What are the priorities for the whole of the council? What are the difficulties envisaged? At the end of this process you should have a declaration that the whole of the council will support.



Step 4: Identify the route the council will take to sign up

Ideally the declaration should be discussed and agreed in full council and/or cabinet. This will signal strong political ownership and support and may protect the actions under the declaration from future budget cuts.



Step 5: Sign up and celebrate

Send the commitments you chose to work on and expected impact to Sustain and...
Congratulations! You have become a signatory. Take photos, share it with the local media and think about holding an event to celebrate. Send photos to Sustain so we can publicise it on our website and news too.



Step 6: Don't let the declaration gather dust...

Review local policies and practise and embed the declaration's commitments into local plans and activity.

Monitor the progress of the plan against commitments and publicise the results annually.

Work in partnership with other boroughs in London to exploit opportunities to collectively shift our food culture and environment across borough boundaries.

Support the government in taking action at national level to help local authorities reduce obesity prevalence and health inequalities in our communities.

The journey to a Local Authority Declaration on Healthy Weight in Blackpool

Obesity is a problem in Blackpool, as it is across the country. Billed as Britain's favourite seaside resort, the town has a high density of fast food outlets. Fish and chips, and sweet 'treats' like ice-cream and sticks of rock have become synonymous with a trip to the seaside.

Following support from Food Active, the council team first presented the idea for a local declaration to the portfolio holder for public health in September 2015 alongside a review of the local healthy weight strategy. They discussed the complex challenges driving obesity levels, and the particularly worrying rates in children. The declaration moved forward and a paper to the authority's Corporate Leadership Team followed soon after. A process of consultation with the Healthy Weight Steering Group and senior managers from across all directorates of the authority was set up to determine the local areas for action. The wide range of discussions revealed a number of perspectives ranging from the practicalities of advertising restrictions, income from corporate sponsorship of council-led events and initiatives, the strength of the council's position to lead by example and influence the local environment.

This process was taking place at a time when child obesity was featuring frequently in the media and this greatly influenced the local declaration going forward in the council. The House of Commons Health Select Committee was working on child obesity and celebrity chef Jamie Oliver was campaigning for a sugary drinks tax. There was local interest too around the #GULPchallenge, Blackpool's campaign encouraging teens to 'give up loving pop'.

In the end the journey has been quicker and smoother than originally anticipated. In January 2016, only five months after the first discussions the Local Authority Declaration on Healthy Weight was formally presented and signed in a Full Council meeting. Although there were some anxieties about potential impacts on the economy and revenues, there was a clear acceptance that supporting healthier weight was the right thing to do. The council has since then been working with procurement and revising vending arrangements to reduce the amount of sugary drinks available, linking to other Strategies. Other work underway include the relaunch of the council's healthier catering award, a healthier packed lunch project with schools, a re-run of the GULP campaign and a Health and Wellbeing Board summit for partner organisation to commit to similar declarations.

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The six key areas of action – menu of actions

The declaration is open to all local authorities in London and beyond. To sign the declaration the local authority has to commit to take at least six different actions covering all the six key areas.

The menu of options below is not an exhaustive list. The local authority can choose more from amongst these actions or commit to different actions as long as they have SMART (specific, measurable, attainable, realistic, timely) goals so we can quantify impact locally and cumulatively across all those who have signed the declaration. Action can include initiatives under council control as well as those influenced by the council.

Action can include support to existing initiatives as long as there is a commitment to new initiatives on some of the six areas.

In addition, the local authority should set up a timetable outlining when they expect to reach the outcomes and implement an annual evaluation programme.

Area 1 – Tackle advertising and sponsorship

Actions under council control:

1.1 Develop coherent policy on future corporate partnerships or sponsorships that welcomes opportunities for investment in the borough and joint working, whilst avoiding those that promote unhealthy foods and drinks and undermine breastfeeding (total number of corporate partnerships affected by the policy)

1.2 Develop coherent policy on future marketing/advertising that welcomes opportunities for investment in the borough and joint working, whilst avoiding those that promote unhealthy foods and drinks and undermine breastfeeding (total number of advertising boards covered by the policy)

Actions under council influence:

1.3 Ensure all food and beverage advertising in publications, events, billboards, bus stops and others under the control of the council includes nutrition information e.g. traffic light labels (number of adverts affected by this policy)

Hackney corporate sponsorship policy on sugar-sweetened fizzy drinks

Hackney Council has previously refused sponsorship offers from fizzy drinks companies, but did not have a formal policy to ensure that the health implications of sponsorship opportunities are considered in a consistent way. This changed when Hackney launched a new Obesity Strategic Partnership (OSP) in February 2016.

The OSP is chaired by Hackney Council's Chief Executive, and brings together stakeholders from across the system to work together for a place where everyone can achieve a healthy weight. The OSP members discussed opportunities to use corporate levers to make healthier food and drink choices easier for local residents.

Following agreement at an OSP meeting, the Public Health team provided input into the review of the Corporate Sponsorship Policy in June 2016. The policy states that the Council will not put itself in a position where entering into an agreement could, or could be thought to, have aligned the Council with any organisation that conducted itself in a manner that conflicted with the Council's aims and objectives. The Council will, therefore, make a case-by-case decision on sponsorship from sugar-sweetened fizzy drinks companies and sponsorship from these companies will not be accepted for events targeting children. The Council will not accept direct sponsorship for promotions of products that the Council feels may adversely affect the well-being of its residents, or be in conflict with the organisation's values or policies (including its new responsibilities to protect and improve the public's health).

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St Helens Borough Council experience

St Helens is a metropolitan borough of Merseyside, in North West England. Over the years it has undertaken various approaches to try and increase the prevalence of healthy weight and halt the increase in unhealthy weight. Currently, adult obesity stands at almost 30 per cent. Obesity in children, as captured in the NCMP (National Child Measurement Programme), currently stands at ten per cent in reception age and increases to 20 per cent amongst year six pupils, demonstrating a linear increase in unhealthy weight through generations.

In 2014 a Healthy Weight Strategy was launched which highlighted three priority areas to address – people, places and policy. Action since then has included:

People reframing weight management services to include more universal preventive programmes and recommissioning of specialist weight management services.

Policy building on the successful supplementary planning guidance, working with local takeaways on a chip fryer award, healthier takeaways.

Places introducing the workplace wellbeing charter with local businesses; healthy eating awards in early years settings and schools, introducing a range of outdoor gyms across the borough and promotion of active travel.

When Food Active developed the Healthy Weight Declaration this presented an ideal resource for the council to put their own spin on. The council has adopted the declaration in September 2016. Key to ensure uptake included:

- Availability of local data highlighting the issue, particularly amongst children (via NCMP).
- National Childhood Obesity Strategy coverage within the media generating the interest of local press, the local population and members.
- Proactive and passionate cabinet member for Public Health who took on a personal approach to highlighting the need for such a declaration convincing peers to adopt.
- Being the first council in Merseyside to adopt the declaration.

The declaration highlighted the work that was already underway and provided an opportunity for the council to commit to a whole system approach. It raised the profile of the work on healthy weight and provided cross council support for a number of initiatives that are being taken forward.

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Area 2 – Improve the food controlled or influenced by the council and support the public and voluntary sectors to improve their food offer

Actions under council control:

2.1 Improve catering by working towards the [Government Buying Standards](#), for example by running accreditation programmes such as [Food for Life Catering Mark](#), [Sustainable Restaurant Association](#), [Healthier Catering Commitment](#) and build these standards into contracts as they come up for re-tender (number of meals served by caterers making commitments)

2.2 Remove foods high in sugar, fat and salt from tills and queuing areas e.g. register action at [Check junk off the checkouts](#) (number of checkouts committed)

2.3 Discontinue promotions including ‘meal deals’ on foods high in sugar, fat and salt and replace with promotions on healthier food e.g. fruit and vegetables (number of points of retail affected)

2.4 Remove vending offering food and drinks high in sugar, fat and salt from council run premises or commissioned services e.g. leisure centres (number of vending machines affected)

2.5 Tackle portion size by working towards ‘nutrition best practise’ in the [Government Buying Standards](#) (number of points of retail affected)

Actions under council influence:

2.6 Work with public and voluntary sector partners e.g. schools, early years, after school clubs, youth clubs, to improve food and restrict access to foods high in sugar, fat and salt with initiatives such as a closed gate policy, vans on site, awareness days, etc. (number of settings affected)

Central Bedfordshire vending requirements in leisure centres

When the Council re-tendered the management of leisure centres in 2014, staff from different departments were engaged to identify ways in which the centres could contribute to wider objectives. Discussion with Public Health resulted in the inclusion of a section for ‘Promoting health and reducing health inequalities’. Contracts now have a requirement that:

- At least 25 per cent of options in vending machines should be ‘healthy eating’
- Cafes need to achieve Heart Beat Award

Leisure centres need to report monthly as part of an outcomes scorecard. The results from the vending machines vary from month to month but most of the time the 25 per cent target is being (or close to being) reached. The ‘healthy eating’ options includes a reduction in the number of sugar sweetened fizzy drinks and availability of bottled water.

Two leisure centres achieved the Heart Beat Award so far and the Council is working with the remaining four.

The Heart Beat Award is a local award to caterers who can demonstrate that they offer healthy, nutritious and wholesome food to customers. Central Bedfordshire works with dietitians at Bedford Hospital to ensure updates are correctly implemented into the scheme. Criteria is currently being revised but so far includes: at least one-third of the dishes on the menu are ‘healthy choices’; at least 30 per cent of food handling staff had received training on hygiene; healthy options were applied in the preparation of food for sale in canteens and workplaces; placement of products for sale.

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Area 3 – Reduce prominence of sugary drinks and actively promote free drinking water

Actions under council control:

3.1 Put in drinking fountains, or become a water refill point. List your venue on tapwater.org (number of drinking fountains installed/registered)

3.2 Make sure that bottled water is most prominent in vending and retail, ban promotions on sugary drinks, or make sure health warning information on sugary drinks is displayed (number of points of retail affected)

3.3 Put in place voluntary sugary drinks levy and raise funds for children's health promotion e.g. sign up to the [Children's Health Fund](#) (amount of money raised/amount of drinks affected)

Actions under council influence:

3.4 Promote voluntary 'sugary-drinks duty' to local businesses, such as convenience stores, cafes and restaurants, to help dissuade people from drinking high-sugar drinks and raise vital funds for children's health promotion e.g. [Children's Health Fund](#) (amount of money raised/amount of drinks affected)

London's City Hall becomes first Government building to introduce sugar tax

In January 2016 the City Hall café, operated by OCS, introduced a 10 pence charge on all added-sugar soft drinks sold in its café. By doing so they joined 130 others around the UK, including all Jamie Oliver restaurants, Leon, Abokado and Tortilla who had already introduced a levy on added-sugar drinks.

The money raised by the levy goes to the [Children's Health Fund](#), launched by celebrity chef Jamie Oliver and food charity Sustain to support schemes that improve children's health. To date, the Fund has awarded £50,000 to 26 projects from 11 regions in the UK to provide water fountains within its Water Fountain Fund and £40,000 to strategic projects working on children's food.

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Brighton influences outlets to go Sugar Smart

In October 2015, Brighton launched its campaign to become the first Sugar Smart City. The campaign is led by Brighton and Hove City Council in conjunction with other partners. As the leading partner in the campaign, the council is using its influence to ask caterers, cafes, restaurants and takeaways to be sugar smart.

Caterers have already begun making pledges including those working in NHS Trusts, universities, workplaces, leisure centres and major venues. The University of Brighton is leading the way by being the first university in the country to consider introducing a sugar levy across their campuses with any funds raised supporting cookery sessions and food education for their students. The council's primary school caterer, Eden Foodservice, has reduced sugar in their desserts by 40 per cent by changing recipes and removing drizzles and icings. Lusso Catering, for employer Legal & General, has committed to reducing unhealthy snacks available in the staff restaurant. The i360 (catered by Heritage Portfolio) is committing to serving a selection of low/sugar-free cakes are served in their tearoom.

Sussex County Cricket Club is one of the latest major players in the city to go Sugar Smart. The club has introduced a 20p levy on sugary drinks. The club has posters prominently displayed to explain the changes. The cricket ground is also introducing healthy kids lunch boxes and new meal deals. The club has achieved a [Healthy Choice Award](#) in recognition of making these, and other, commitments.

Contact

www.brighton-hove.gov.uk/sugarsmart

Area 4 – Support businesses and organisations to improve their food offer

Actions under council control

- 4.1 Restrict the proliferation of businesses selling foods high in sugar, fat and salt by adopting planning laws to stop new outlets opening, or use licensing to encourage them to improve the standard of food sold (number of outlets affected by the policy)
- 4.2 Consider supplementary guidance for hot food takeaways, specifically in areas around schools, parks and where access to healthier alternatives is limited (number of outlets affected by the policy)
- 4.3 Put in place weighted/financial support or favourable treatment in planning or access to land and premises for healthier affordable retail e.g. greengrocers, co-operatives, street markets, etc., especially in deprived areas (number of outlets affected by the policy)
- 4.4 Work towards adopting a Breastfeeding Friendly/Welcome scheme which encourages and supports businesses to welcome breastfeeding mothers (number of services and businesses accredited)
- 4.5 Ensure that Public Health is consulted on planning applications, including at pre-application stage (number of planning applications reviewed by Public Health)
- 4.6 Work with vending suppliers to ensure only healthy produce is sold (number of vending machines affected)

Actions under council influence:

- 4.7 Work with takeaway businesses, public facing establishments, iconic businesses e.g. museums, park cafes, and the food industry to make food healthier by working towards the [Government Buying Standards](#) for example by running accreditation programmes such as [Food for Life Catering Mark](#), [Sustainable Restaurant Association](#), [Healthier Catering Commitment](#) (number of outlets and meals affected)
- 4.8 Encourage local fruit and vegetable businesses to accept [Healthy Start Vouchers](#) and/or [Rose Vouchers](#) (number of outlets accepting vouchers and total number of vouchers)
- 4.9 Encourage local businesses and public sector employers to run their own sugar campaigns e.g. [Sugar Smart](#) campaign (number of businesses taking action)
- 4.10 Encourage local food retailers, public facing establishments, iconic businesses (e.g. museums, park cafes) to remove foods high in sugar, fat and salt from tills and queuing areas e.g. register action at [Check junk off the checkouts](#) (number of checkouts committed)
- 4.11 Work with local employers to remove vending offering food and drinks high in sugar, fat and salt from their premises or encourage them to work with vending suppliers to ensure only healthy produce is sold (number of vending machines affected)
- 4.12 Encourage local businesses and employers to tackle portion size by working towards 'nutrition best practise' in the [Government Buying Standards](#) (number of points of retail affected)

Gateshead's Supplementary Planning Document to limit hot food takeaways

The [Gateshead and Newcastle core strategy and urban core plan](#) (2015) set out to improve access to healthier food and control the location of unhealthy outlets following concern of Council members with high levels of child obesity. The Gateshead Approach to Healthy Weight (2014) emphasised a number of levers to influence the local environment and set out a target to lower obesity amongst Year 6 children to less than 10% in every ward. This measure was chosen because it can be monitored using the National Child Measurement Programme (NCMP) ward level data.

The SPD developed states that planning permission to new hot food takeaways (A5) will not be granted in locations where:

- Children and young people congregate
- Levels of child obesity above 10 per cent (using NCMP data)
- Over proliferation of hot food takeaways
- Clustering of hot food takeaways will have a negative impact on the vitality of the local area

All future hot food takeaways would need to be accompanied by a Health Impact Assessment.

To make a robust case for determining planning permission for new A5 outlets the Council collected and tested 374 food samples from 187 takeaways for nutritional quality and portion size. This proved the poor nutritional quality of takeaway food. Furthermore, the Council has checked the concentration of takeaways in each ward using data from the Local Food Premises Register and made a review of academic evidence linking obesity to exposure to takeaways.

The conditions set out in SPD mean there are currently no locations where opening a new hot food takeaway would be possible (all wards have child obesity levels above 10 per cent). The numbers of applications and successful appeals have dropped, resulting in no new permissions granted since the SPD was implemented.

The resources deployed were staff time (to review academic evidence, undertake research and draft the policy), costs of collecting samples and laboratory analysis (£90 per sample).

Contact

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Islington targeted approach to takeaways near secondary schools and in planning

The [Healthier Catering Commitment](#) was initially promoted in Islington through Hearty Lives Islington, a British Heart Foundation grant-funded project, and is now funded by Islington Council. The cost is approximately £125 per outlet plus the associated administration, monitoring and evaluation costs.

There are currently over 240 businesses signed up (16 per cent of all catering outlets), serving approximately 26,600 meals a day.

In 2013 Islington ran a pilot targeting takeaways within 500 metres of secondary schools and of the 25 initially targeted 16 signed up. In 2014 the secondary schools project was rolled out across the whole borough. In total 90 hot food takeaways within 500 metres of 11 secondary schools are now aware of the Healthier Catering Commitment and around 70 have signed up and meet the required criteria. Businesses include pizza premises, fish and chip shops, kebab shops and sandwich bars.

The work is promoted to young people through the Youth Health Forum and to schools via Junior Citizens for primary school age children and through secondary school food technology teachers.

In parallel, the new [Supplementary Planning Document](#) approved in April 2016 restricts the opening of new hot food takeaways within 200 metres of schools and will only grant planning/change of use permission to outlets that have a minimum three star Food Hygiene Rating and gain the Healthier Catering Commitment award within six months.

The council is using its procurement powers to promote further take up of the Healthier Catering Commitment. Children's centres with cafes are contractually required to have the award and adventure playgrounds and greenspace concessions are expected to work towards it.

Contact

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Tower Hamlets Buywell Food for Health markets project

The [Food for Health Award and Buywell](#) were launched in Tower Hamlets in 2009 as part of the Healthy Borough Programme, a whole systems approach to tackling the environmental causes of obesity. The award scheme recognises restaurants, cafes and market traders for making small, healthy changes to the food they sell and recognising them through a three-tiered award system -standard, silver or gold. Buywell supports convenience stores to increase purchase of fruit and vegetables by improving availability, positioning and promotion.

The Buywell Food for Health markets project builds on these schemes and supports market traders to increase their fruit and veg sales by providing them with the help of a retail and marketing expert who works with them to help grow their business and boost their sales. By improving the quality, range and freshness of their produce, displays, pricing and promotions, sales have increased by nearly £1.5M a year through the Buywell Food for Health project.

Traders can then be assessed for a Food for Health Award. In order to qualify for a standard award, fruit and veg stalls must increase by 40% compared to sales before joining the scheme, for silver they must develop a partnership with the local community where appropriate (for example by supplying the local school tuck shop) and gold winners have to demonstrate innovation.

A pilot started in 2015 to help low income families buy more fresh fruit and vegetables from their local market by supporting traders to accept the government's Healthy Start Vouchers. This scheme provides £3.10 or £6.20 a week to families which can be spent on healthier produce. The pilot project focused on two gold Food for Health fruit and vegetable stall traders in Chrisp Street Market. This is one of four Buywell markets across the borough located in a deprived area, who had been struggling to survive financially.

The pilot was funded by the Mayor of London's High Street Fund. The £3,440 budget covered retail advice to traders, support with setting them up in terms of systems and processes, banners and posters. It also provided support to, and gained support from, parent volunteers from the local children's centre who undertook targeted outreach to spread the word to families and friends and encourage them to spend their vouchers in the market.

After the six month pilot, the project continues to grow and has proved its sustainability. The scheme offers great quality affordable and easily accessible fruit and veg to identified low income families. Traders are benefiting from a marketing campaign that brings them new customers, estimated to be worth £20,000 per annum.

Contact

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Area 5 – Public events

Actions under council control:

5.1 Ensure that the majority of food and drink provided at public events organised by the council are healthy choices, supporting food retailers to deliver this offer (number of events affected by the policy)

Actions under council influence:

5.2 Ensure that the majority of food and drink provided at public events on council premises and property are healthy choices, supporting food retailers to deliver this offer (number of events affected by the policy)

5.3 Ensure that mothers are aware that breastfeeding is welcome at public events, and space to breastfeed is provided (number of events affected)

5.4 Influence other event organisers to provide healthy choices (number of events affected)

Area 6 – Raise public awareness

Actions under council control:

6.1 Develop a network of local champions from various backgrounds e.g. elected members of the council, schools, public health, children's centres, nursing, primary care, education, health visiting, catering and retail to advocate the healthier food and sugar reduction agenda (number of champions recruited)

6.2 Run staff development and training programmes e.g. sign up to the [GLA's Healthy Workplace Charter](#) or similar workplace led initiatives (number of council staff affected)

6.3 Use the council's publicity team to help promote simple steps individuals can take to reduce the amount of excess sugar, fat and salt they consume through national campaigns such as [Change4Life](#), [One You](#) or more locally sensitive campaigns set around the [Eatwell Guide](#) (number of people engaged)

6.4 Support mothers to start and maintain breastfeeding by promoting the health and wellbeing benefits of breastfeeding along with creating a supportive environment for women to breastfeed in. Ensure maternity and health visiting services are working towards achieving UNICEF Baby Friendly accreditation (number of beneficiaries)

6.5 Develop healthy eating programmes targeting residents in areas of high deprivation and those at risk of diabetes and cardiovascular disease (number of beneficiaries)

6.6 Support and influence the London Mayor and national government in taking action at London-wide and national level to help local authorities reduce obesity prevalence and health inequalities in our communities e.g. by taking part in national consultations (number of consultations)

6.7 Support and promote local voluntary and community food partnerships and projects that encourage a healthy food culture e.g. sign up as a member of [Sustainable Food Cities](#) (number of beneficiaries of projects)

StreetBase and Splash healthy living reward scheme in Barking and Dagenham

The StreetBase and Splash card scheme is unique to Barking & Dagenham and consists of reward cards to encourage young people to lead healthier and more active lives.

Every young person between the age of 11 and 19 who lives and studies in the borough is given a StreetBase card free of charge and the parents/guardians of every child aged five to 11 are given a Splash card. Each time a young person uses this to buy healthy food items at their school or take part in positive activities such as using a local library, leisure centre or attending a youth club, they earn points. The activities rewarded through the StreetBase and Splash scheme are wide ranging and include visits to Trewern Outdoor Activity Centre in Wales, cycling proficiency training and attending the theatre or gym. The points earned can be exchanged for prizes such as free swims, art sets or sports equipment. In 2015/16, 2,500 young people claimed rewards.

The scheme has seen an increase in the number of healthy items of food and drink consumed in the borough's schools by 500,000 last year.

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Hackney Community Kitchens

One You Community Classes are Hackney's Council programme of fitness and cook and eat courses taking place in community centres, churches and libraries across Hackney. They run alongside the national Public Health England One You campaign to encourage residents to get fitter, eat healthier and feel better.

Within this programme, residents can learn how to cook healthy and nutritious meals on a budget at the community kitchens the council run on estates across Hackney. There are lunchtime and after-school cooking courses for families with children, and adults' courses on week nights delivered by local providers including Made in Hackney, Shoreditch Trust and Helping Hackney Health.

The programme, now in phase four, is making a positive impact on long-term healthy choices of participants. Evaluations are carried out at the end of every phase of the programme and adjustments are made based on the outcomes. For example:

Daily fruit and vegetables consumption increased from three portions (pre-course) to four portions six months after the course (evaluation by Helping Hackney Health, Family Cook and Taste Courses delivered April to July 2014 in the New Kingshold Community Centre)

Confidence in preparing new foods and recipes at home increased from 18 to 90 per cent six months after the course (evaluation by Made in Hackney, courses delivered during the summer of 2014 at the Redmond Community Centre)

The programme started in May 2014 and is funded until April 2017. To date 1,700 residents took part and approximately half of those are families. Annual funding is dependent on the number of courses and locations. The approximate spend for three years of the programme is £220,000 – equivalent to around £130 per beneficiary – for a six week course / 12 hours course time.

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FAQs

Obesity is a complex problem. Will a local authority declaration make a difference?

Everyone agrees that encouraging lifelong good food habits is going to take many different interventions and policies. Public Health England conducted an analysis of the evidence for action on sugar reduction and suggests that a successful programme should include action at many levels including the environment around us that influences our food choices; our food supply and changes that could be made to this; knowledge and training; and local action.¹

Local authorities have an important role to play. They control planning, public and environmental health, leisure and recreation and regeneration and this declaration is a vehicle to take the sort of whole-systems approach needed to tackle this complex issue. By seeking a public commitment endorsed by the elected leaders of London boroughs, the declaration can have an impact across local authority departments, making sure the council works as one to achieve maximum impact, and ideally will by working with other local partners have an impact far beyond council controlled areas.

Why the focus on these six areas of action and not others?

During consultation with stakeholders from local authorities, GLA (Greater London Authority), health sector and campaigning organisations these six areas were identified as the ones where local authority action will have the maximum impact.

Many local authorities in London are currently taking action to improve school meals, restrict hot food takeaways, working with businesses to improve their food and running local eating programmes. While we think it is important to recognise what is already being done, we invite local authorities to go beyond and look at the crucial areas of advertising and sponsorship policies and public events where there hasn't been so much action.

How the idea for a local declaration came about?

It arose out of the East London 'Growth Boroughs' 'Healthier Children Healthier Place' programme. The latter was established to share learning and good practise on developing a whole systems approach to tackling child obesity, including what can be done differently to improve local food and the local food environment. The inspiration for a local declaration came from the Local Declaration on Tobacco Control and the work of Food Active in the North West that culminated in the Blackpool Local Government Declaration on Healthy Weight. The councils then commissioned Sustain as an independent organisation to run the project, from consulting with key stakeholders on the content of the declaration to promoting it to the majority of London councils.

Can we change the wording or add to the declaration?

Absolutely! The acknowledgments section can be tailored to the local authority and contain local data (e.g. NCMP child obesity data). The commitments (at least six, covering all six areas of action) can be chosen from the menu of actions or include new ones not included in the menu as long as the action goals are relevant and SMART (specific, measurable, attainable, realistic, timely).

The Government has adopted a national Sugary Drinks Industry Levy. Why are you advocating local voluntary action on sugary drinks?

We are thrilled that the Government has now committed to doing this, with the national Soft Drinks Industry Levy to be introduced in 2018. However the nature of how the levy will be introduced is still up for debate, and there is a likelihood that none of the levy will be passed on by the industry to make the most sugary drinks more expensive, therefore missing out on one of the key components of, for example, those participating in the Children's Health Fund where customers pay more for the those drinks with added sugar.

Also, two years is a long time in politics and a lot could change before the national levy is implemented. Action is needed now to improve the health of our diet. This is why we are encouraging local authorities to influence local restaurants to implement a sugary drinks levy for the foreseeable future, and re-distribute this money to causes that help healthier food and food education.

¹ Public Health England (2015), *Sugar Reduction: The evidence for action*. Available online at https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/470179/Sugar_reduction_The_evidence_for_action.pdf

Sugary drinks levies have been introduced successfully in France and Mexico in recent years. They have worked – for example, in Mexico there was a decrease of approximately 6 per cent in sales of sugary drinks in the year since January 2014 when they imposed the levy. The effect has been even greater in lower-income households, which are often the most affected by diet-related ill-health.

France, Finland, Hungary, and Berkeley and Philadelphia in the USA have also successfully introduced extra taxes on sugary drinks.¹ Studies suggest that people who swap to lower or no-sugar alternatives don't tend to add on the extra sugar and calories elsewhere in their diets.

What do you mean by healthier products in vending?

Healthier products are low in sugar, fat and salt. [The Irish Health Service Executive](#) has standards in place concerning vending that the declaration signatories should look to for best practise. It differentiates between 'Better Choice Items' and 'Other Choice Items' and lays out that the ratio of 'Better Choice' to 'Other Choice' in vending machines should be 60:40. This classification of products is useful but there is no reason why local authorities should not go beyond the 60:40 target and aim for 100 per cent better choice.

	Better Choice Items	Other Choice Items
Energy	≤150kcal per packet	≤250 kcal per packet
Total fat	≤20g/ 100g	Not restricted
Saturated fat	≤5g / 100g	Not restricted
Sugar	≤15g/ 100g	Not restricted
Salt/ sodium	≤1.5g/0.6g /100g	Not restricted

Furthermore:

- No soft drinks, energy drinks, sports drinks and fruit/vegetable drinks with added sugars (or sugar products) can be included in the 'Better Choice' selection.
- Milk and water will be the only drinks that can be included in the "Better Choice" items.
- Packets of unprocessed nuts and dried fruit are exempt from sugar and fat criteria. Items containing nuts and dried fruit as an ingredient must meet sugar and fat criteria.

What about the economic impact of the declaration?

The role of the local authority is to work for the wellbeing of the population and the situation we are in now is one were we can't afford inaction. Sugary drinks and unhealthy food are posing a heavy burden on our NHS, social care services and society as a whole.

The local authority and other public sector bodies need to balance the long term costs to the health and care services against the short term costs of turning down sponsorship or vending deals. Sponsorship and advertising, vending or others may be a source of income locally and for the local authority but supporting healthier food is the right thing to do.

¹ <http://foodresearch.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2015/06/Food-and-beverages-taxes-final-amended.pdf>

Template press release

XXX becomes the first council in London to sign a charter on sugar reduction and healthier food

Councillors voted in favour of a Local Authority Declaration on Sugar Reduction and Healthier food at the Full Council/ Cabinet meeting held XXX.

The Council's declaration leads the way amongst other local authorities in London by it becoming the first to sign this new initiative conceived by local authorities in East London and now promoted by Sustain, a charity working for better food and farming and with a strong presence in London.

Council leader XXX, along with Public Health Director XXX, met with representatives from Sustain to put the Council's commitment down in writing by signing a declaration that will be proudly placed in the Council building.

Cllr XXX, Cabinet Member for XXX, said: "Obesity is a huge problem for us in XXX. XX% of children in the borough are overweight or obese by the time they start secondary school (complete using National Child Measurement Programme borough level data).

"I'm really pleased that this council is working with other councils in London and Sustain to lead the way on tackling sugary drinks and making food under council control or influence healthier.

"Our work will focus on ... (complete with actions the council is committing to under the declaration)

Sofia Parente, coordinator of this initiative on behalf of Sustain, said: "Congratulations to XXX Council for taking this stand.

"We all know how difficult it is to make the right choices when we are surrounded by unhealthy food, the wrong advertising messages and when sugary drinks are cheaper than water. I am delighted that XXX Council is doing everything they can to help their residents, workers and pupils eat healthier.

"I hope other councils in London will now follow XXX's example".

For more details on the Local Authority Declaration on Sugar Reduction and Healthier Food initiative visit: www.sustainweb.org/londonfoodlink

Local Government Declaration on Sugar Reduction and Healthier Food Support pack

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Sustain: The alliance for better food and farming, advocates food and agriculture policies and practices that enhance the health and welfare of people and animals, improve the living and working environment, enrich society and culture, and promote equity. It represents around 100 national public interest organisations working at international, national, regional and local level.

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Part of Sustain, London Food Link is an independent network of individuals, businesses and organisations working for better food in the capital.

We run and partner on policy initiatives, campaigns and practical projects that improve the food system including Urban Food Fortnight, the Urban Food Awards, the Capital Growth network, The Jellied Eel magazine, London Food Poverty Campaign, the Good Food for London report, Cage Free Capital, as well as running good food training and networking events.