

# GREATER LONDON AUTHORITY

## Mayor's Office

City Hall  
The Queen's Walk  
More London  
London SE1 2AA  
Switchboard: 020 7983 4000  
Minicom: 020 7983 4458  
Web: [www.london.gov.uk](http://www.london.gov.uk)

### Victoria Borwick AM

City Hall  
The Queen's Walk  
More London  
London SE1 2AA

Our ref: MGLA160611-0602

Date: 06 SEP 2011

Dear Victoria

### Re: Tipping the Scales: Childhood obesity in London

Thank you for your letter and copy of the London Assembly's *Tipping the Scales: Childhood obesity in London* report. May I commend you on such a useful and informative investigation, which has helped to increase the profile of this important issue.

As you point out, childhood obesity is recognised as a significant concern by the GLA and it is good to see recognition within your report of the positive contribution that programmes such as the London Food Board, the London Health Inequalities Strategy and Sports Participation Programme have made in addressing a range of factors contributing to childhood obesity.

As you will be aware, I chair the shadow London Health Improvement Board, which met for the first time recently. This is a very exciting opportunity for London, and at the inaugural meeting the shadow Board members agreed the following:

The purpose of the shadow Board is to:

- (1) Develop a coherent pan-London approach to health improvement which recognises the different strengths of each tier of London Government and that of partners to take actions that will improve the health of Londoners.
- (2) Advise on pan-London public health activity to be funded by a 3% top slice from local authority funding for health improvement transferred to the Mayor (and a potential further 3% subject to a two-thirds London Councils veto) where the LHIB judges that pan-London work can add value. At the current time we do not know the exact value of this.
- (3) Develop and lead specific pan-London activities that achieve greater effectiveness and efficiency than solely local action and add value to actions in London Boroughs.
- (4) Ensuring mutual regard and alignment between the Mayor's statutory Health Inequalities Strategy and the local health improvement strategies and borough JSNAs, while recognising the diversity across London Boroughs.
- (5) Agree and support mutually regarding priorities to improve the public health outcomes framework across London Boroughs.

# GREATER LONDON AUTHORITY

The shadow Board agreed that (a) Alcohol (b) Childhood obesity (c) Early diagnosis and screening of cancers and (d) Information for health improvement should be prioritised for consideration by the Board at its next meeting. This should enable us to work together to address the rising levels of childhood obesity in a strategic way. Please see further detail on how this work will be taken forward, below.

## Recommendation one

In answer to Recommendation One of the Assembly's report, the next steps for this work will include the development of a Case for Action and Proposals for Action for childhood obesity for consideration by the shadow Board at the next meeting in October. They will be made publicly available in due course. The research undertaken in order to develop the Assembly's *Tipping the Scales* report will provide an important resource in developing the Case for Action for childhood obesity.

This work will draw on a wide range of expertise and underpinning all of the priority areas will be strong partnerships with Boroughs and other partners to ensure that the municipal approaches adopted can add value to childhood obesity initiatives already happening at a local level.

A project team will oversee this work and I am pleased to be able to let you know that Alwen Williams CBE, Chief Executive of NHS East London and City has agreed to act as the Senior Responsible Officer for this work stream.

## Recommendation two

You have requested further detail on the expected spending commitment of the GLA group for childhood obesity reduction programmes.

As you are aware, the Greater London Authority Act 2007 required the Mayor to set out the health inequalities facing London and the priorities for reducing them, as well as the role of partners in helping to reduce them. There was not, however, any specific funding attached to deliver this duty.

TfL delivers a continuous programme of cycling, walking and accessibility (CWA) which includes a specific schools and young people programme. This is currently complimented by an Olympics cycling, walking and regeneration programme (OCWRE) and an active travel programme which are specific for 2012 and the London Olympics. This activity forms part of a broader cycling, walking and accessibility programme for Londoners which totalled £54m in 09/10. This budget has increased significantly in 10/11 and 11/12 (£103m and £99m respectively) with the introduction of the Barclays Cycle Superhighways and the Barclays Cycle Hire scheme (for children aged over 14 years). Budgets for 2012/13 and onwards have not yet been confirmed.

The total budget for the schools and young people programme is approximately £2m per annum. There are no plans to remove this funding post April 2012.

In relation to London Food Board, the Capital Growth programme is jointly funded by the London Food Board and The Big Lottery. The GLA and the London Food Board intend to continue to support the ongoing delivery of Capital Growth post April 2012. However, the exact nature of this support will be decided once final budgets for next year are set. The total funding for Capital Growth until the end of 2012 is £486k.

# GREATERLONDONAUTHORITY

My Sports Legacy Programme is investing a total of £15m directly in community sport in London. Much of this investment is focused on increasing opportunities for young people.

In respect of *sports facilities*, I am investing £7m into the construction or refurbishment of sports facilities across the capital. The 38 projects funded to date will create the capacity for an extra 20,000 users a week. The projects have all been chosen because they are in areas of perceived need – and they have all set out clear plans for how they will engage new participants including young Londoners.

We are also funding *training in sport* and will invest up to £3 million for a range of sports-related skills and training opportunities for Londoners. Many of these are particularly focused on – or appealing to – young Londoners. To date we have funded over 4,000 people (1,700 young people) to train as sports coaches, officials or volunteers. I have also created opportunities for young people to take training courses to allow them to gain the skills necessary to work in the sport and leisure industry (gyms/health clubs/leisure centres etc.)

Finally, our *participation programme* will invest around £5 million in a number of innovative, exciting sports programmes that directly seek to increase participation amongst Londoners. Many of them also look to use sport to help tackle social issues such as youth crime and disaffection.

More widely, we continue to work with, and support with work of, organisations such as the London Youth Games and the Youth Sport Trust.

## Recommendation three

The shadow LHIB acknowledges there is a lack of robust evidence in relation to municipal approaches to childhood obesity reduction. The shadow LHIB will take measures to evaluate any work that we do. However, it is not envisaged that the shadow Board will commission evaluations of initiatives already underway.

Yours ever,



**Boris Johnson**  
Mayor of London