

## PUBLIC HEALTH PRIORITIES FOR SCOTLAND

### 1 Purpose of the paper

- 1.1 For decision.
- 1.2 The Scottish Government's Public Health Reform Programme aims to establish a whole system approach to improving public health, and is informed by a set of Public Health Priorities for Scotland ('the Priorities'), which relevant organisations are invited to endorse. This paper recommends that Food Standards Scotland endorses the Priorities.
- 1.3 The Board is asked to:
  - **Agree** that Food Standards Scotland should formally endorse the Public Health Priorities for Scotland as published by the Scottish Government and Convention of Scottish Local Authorities (COSLA) in June 2018.

### 2 Strategic Aims

- 2.1 Endorsement of the Priorities is consistent with Strategic Outcome 3 (consumers have healthier diets), and chimes in particular with our commitment to work with others to achieve this aim.

### 3 Background

- 3.1 The Scottish Government's Health and Social Care Delivery Plan, published in December 2016, contained specific commitments in relation to improving the health of the population. These included the establishment of a new national public health body, and work to develop stronger local partnership working with a focus on creating wellbeing. The first commitment was that the Scottish Government and COSLA would together publish a set of high level public health priorities for the wider public sector in 2018.
- 3.2 The Priorities, published in June 2018, represent agreement between the Scottish Government and Local Government about the importance of focusing efforts to improve the health of the population. While the Scottish Government and COSLA led the work to develop the Priorities, the intention was - and is - to build broad consensus about what must be done to improve the health of the population. Therefore endorsement has been sought from a broad range of stakeholders, and in particular those public sector bodies, organisations, or professional groups whose activities contribute to wellbeing and health creation.
- 3.3 In summary, the 6 Priorities are:
  1. A Scotland where we live in vibrant, healthy and safe places and communities.
  2. A Scotland where we flourish in our early years.
  3. A Scotland where we have good mental wellbeing.

4. A Scotland where we reduce the use of and harm from alcohol, tobacco and other drugs.
  5. A Scotland where we have a sustainable, inclusive economy with equality of outcomes for all.
  6. A Scotland where we eat well, have a healthy weight and are physically active.
- 3.4 The full (52 page) publication introducing and setting out the Priorities can be found [here](#). The text relating to Priority 6 is reproduced at Annex A.

## 4 Discussion

- 4.1 The Priorities inform the Scottish Government's [Public Health Reform programme](#). Delivery of the programme is overseen by a Programme Board, and FSS is represented on that Board by our Chief Executive.
- 4.2 Endorsement of the Priorities is intended to reflect that an organisation is supportive of the need to improve the health of population and recognises and agrees that the identified priorities are important areas of focus; and to demonstrate that its work will reflect and support the priorities.
- 4.3 The Priorities have already been endorsed by a number of bodies, including NHS Boards, the British Heart Foundation, Cancer Research UK, Chest Heart and Stroke Scotland, Community Health Exchange, Glasgow Centre for Population Health, and Voluntary Health Scotland. Those endorsing the priorities are listed on the Public Health Reform website [here](#).

## 5 Conclusion/Recommendations

- 5.1 FSS is involved in the Public Health Reform programme through the Programme Board, we have a statutory objective and lead role relating to improvement of the Scottish diet, and the priorities support our strategic aims. Public endorsement of the Priorities would demonstrate our commitment to work with others to do our part towards improving Scotland's public health.
- 5.2 The Board is asked to:
- **Agree** that Food Standards Scotland should formally endorse the Public Health Priorities for Scotland as published by the Scottish Government and Convention of Scottish Local Authorities ( COSLA) in June 2018.

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## **ANNEX A**

### **Priority 6**

#### **A Scotland where we eat well, have a healthy weight and are physically active**

**We want everyone in Scotland to eat well, have a healthy weight and enjoy being physically active. A healthy diet and regular exercise bring a wide range of benefits for both physical and mental health. They play an important role in attaining and maintaining a healthy weight and help protect us from a wide range of serious health conditions. Conversely, poor diet, an unhealthy weight and physical inactivity are all major and growing issues for Scotland and impact across all public services and communities, and with significant costs to the economy. Why are a healthy weight and physical activity important?**

Scotland faces great challenges in this area. Our diet and activity levels are influenced by multiple factors, many of which are outside our individual control. For example, our income, the food (including drink) our friends and families consume, the food available and affordable in our shops, food's energy density, the types of outlets around us and promotional and marketing influences all play a role in our daily lives. Our physical activity levels are influenced by the transport and planning systems, access to affordable and attractive sports facilities and clubs, stigma and social expectations and many other factors. During the development of the priorities, participants highlighted the value people place on improving diet, reducing levels of overweight and obesity and increasing levels of physical activity. For diet, particular emphasis was placed on the food environment, especially the availability and accessibility of healthy versus unhealthy food, and the role of the food industry in its widest sense in supporting transformational change. For physical activity, highlighted priorities included building the need for movement into our daily lives and making the walking or cycling route the most attractive option.

#### **A Scotland where we eat well, have a healthy weight and are physically active**

## **Priority 6**

### **How will we make a difference?**

Addressing complex challenges like diet and physical inactivity requires the whole system to work collaboratively, bringing together local and national decision-makers within healthcare, transport, planning, education and many other sectors. Success depends on clear leadership and effective partnership working at all levels to deliver meaningful and lasting change. We need to build on existing efforts and help strengthen national and local activity. A significant amount of work is under way to address these challenges, but building on this through partnership working across all sectors will be central to success in meeting this priority.

The 2017-18 Programme for Government committed the Scottish Government to progress measures to limit the marketing of products high in fat, sugar and salt which disproportionately contribute to ill health and obesity and to deliver new services to support people with, or at risk of, type-2 diabetes, to lose weight. It set out the aspiration to increase physical activity levels and tackle diet and obesity in Scotland. It includes commitments to boost investment in walking and cycling and put active travel at the heart of transport planning and to publishing a new Active Scotland Delivery Plan. The Scottish Government will shortly publish detailed plans setting out actions across many areas to support people to eat well, have a healthy weight and to be more physically active. There are significant continuing inequalities in diet, weight and physical activity that need to be addressed. So in taking forward relevant actions, it is particularly important to consider how they would contribute to reducing inequalities. There is good and improving evidence that population approaches including making food healthier by reducing fat, salt and sugar content; marketing restrictions and taxation are effective means to improve the food environment and can help reduce inequalities in diet and weight as part of a whole system approach to acting on the causes of overweight and obesity.

Collective leadership and partnership working can also make a real difference on the ground, especially in achieving benefits through multiple, targeted interventions. Councils and their partners are working to create community environments that support healthier eating and make it easier to stay active through strategies and programmes such as the “Daily Mile” initiative, community gardens and numerous projects focused on food as well as the work of local government in developing cycling and walking networks and green spaces. All of this involves taking a multi-faceted approach, involving among other things, the public and private sector working together to help transform the environment to support healthier choices.