

Health and Well-Being Emergency Declaration



Lowestoft Town Council's (LTC) Sustainability Strategy includes concerns about human economic, social and environmental vulnerability and disadvantage. The Town Council has no direct statutory role in health and well-being and we cannot solve the problems of the world. However, we believe that every organisation and individual has its part to play in helping to create a sustainable world. Part of this is raising the physical and mental health and well-being standard for more people so that they can benefit from and contribute positively to society.

We could fill pages with citations of credible authorities and sources to evidence that health is a serious problem nationally and globally. However, we believe that there is widespread understanding and recognition that a problem exists. The recent pandemic has highlighted and exacerbated this problem, not least owing to the particular vulnerability of the obese and those with mental ill-health.

Nothing is every completely straightforward or clear-cut but the bottom line is that it must be a good thing for a public authority to try to do its bit to help improve local health and well-being. **To this end we are declaring a health emergency in recognition of the need to keep consideration of health as a major ongoing concern as part of our activities.**



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As part of our initial work on this, our actions will include:

1. Progressing our Sustainability Strategy as there are strong links between health and well-being and climate change and other sustainability issues
2. Supporting turning any Government/NHS health and well-being initiatives into local benefit
3. Planting an orchard tree for every other tree planted (which helps biodiversity and the environment too)
4. Exploring opportunities to enhance and expand our allotments
5. Rapidly progressing our improvement of our parks, open spaces and linked facilities for the enjoyment for all
6. Working with partners and promoting health and well-being initiatives
7. Prioritising support and promotion of transport which is not reliant on fossil fuel and which encourages exercise and independence, including cycling, walking and running
8. Taking account of health and well-being as part of our decisions on planning and development
9. Progressing local economic opportunities, including progressing our own planned recruitment of staff at the earliest opportunity
10. Progressing outdoor shopping and entertainment opportunities, including an outdoor market and cultural/event space in parks
11. Exploring opportunities to enhance the community benefit of our community halls and leisure facilities, including through related sports clubs
12. Providing grants to foodbanks and other food initiatives and organisations supporting health and well-being, with the emphasis being on the provision of nutritious and healthy food and an active and positive lifestyle
13. Progressing water fountains in our parks to provide a free quality drink for those enjoying the outdoors
14. Encouraging buying and eating local produce
15. Supporting education on food, nutrition, cooking and active lifestyles
16. Supporting the reduction in pollution

Brief supporting information

Lowestoft has levels of deprivation which affect the health of a significant portion of its population. We believe that the 2020 pandemic will have made things worse for many of these people and the number of people suffering deprivation and ill-health will have increased against historic data. According to data published by East Suffolk Council in October 2019 based on the last available census figures:



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General health

Health	Residents
Very good health	18,331
Good health	17,318
Fair health	7,955
Bad health	2,686
Very bad health	775

Long-term health problem or disability

Day-to-day activity limited	Residents
Not Limited	36,051
Limited a little	5,626
Limited a lot	5,388

<https://www.eastsuffolk.gov.uk/assets/Planning/Neighbourhood-Planning/Town-and-village-profiles/Lowestoft-Town-Profile.pdf>

End Child Poverty released figures in May 2019, over 7000 children were found to be growing up in poverty (30.6% - nearly a third) in the Waveney constituency in 2017-18.

<http://www.endchildpoverty.org.uk/poverty-in-your-area-2019/>

Food poverty increased during lockdown. Buttle UK reported that:

- ▶ **83%** of frontline workers have seen an increase in need for **foodbanks** and **64%** for local authority **welfare assistance**.
- ▶ Frontline workers reported major difficulties during lockdown for families in accessing basics. **57%** could not afford **essential household items**; **47%** of families were unable to afford **food**.

<https://www.buttleuk.org/news/the-state-of-child-poverty-2020>

The area around London Road South, in Lowestoft, was ranked at number 25 of 32,844 neighbourhoods in England which suffers from high levels of deprivation, according Government statistics. The 10 most deprived areas in the county are all in Great Yarmouth and Lowestoft.

Government/NHS/World Health Organisation health advice is not followed by a significant number of people. Few take Vitamin D supplements and many do not exercise at or above



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recommended minimum levels and many do not have 5 or more fruit or vegetables in their daily diet.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/phe-publishes-new-advice-on-vitamin-d>

<https://www.nhs.uk/live-well/eat-well/why-5-a-day/>

<https://www.nhs.uk/live-well/exercise/>

Obesity levels are too high and appears to be more prevalent among those in poverty. A peer reviewed article in The Lancet is among those studies which make for sad reading, suggesting that changes in societal behaviour (including junk food and lack of exercise) are causing a rise in childhood obesity – with associated long-term poor health risks – and this affects children from more deprived sections of society disproportionately. The paper concludes that the “powerful influence of obesogenic environment [growing up in an environment that encourages, or at least facilitates unhealthy eating] has disproportionately affected socioeconomically disadvantaged children” and that policies to prevent obesity have been “ineffectually focused.”

[https://www.thelancet.com/journals/lanpub/article/PIIS2468-2667\(18\)30045-8/fulltext](https://www.thelancet.com/journals/lanpub/article/PIIS2468-2667(18)30045-8/fulltext)

Government has recognised that obesity is a major health concern and increases health risks and mortality rates associated with the current pandemic and is planning a series of measures to try to encourage societal change, not least encourage a reduction in food intake and an increase in exercise, such as cycling.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/tackling-obesity-government-strategy/tackling-obesity-empowering-adults-and-children-to-live-healthier-lives>