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**Levelling Up - White Paper**

**Food and diet p236**

Food and diet also underpin the health, well-being and potential of our society. The UK Government’s forthcoming **Food Strategy White Paper** will take forward recommendations from Henry Dimbleby’s independent review towards a National Food Strategy to help ensure that everyone can access, understand, and enjoy the benefits of a healthy and sustainable diet. This includes looking at how consumers access information about food, drawing on programmes like the new £200m per year Holiday Activities and Food Programme, to not only provide children with enriching activities, but also nutritious food. This will support eligible children and families in some of the most disadvantaged areas to learn and improve their knowledge of health and nutrition, laying the foundations for a healthier and more sustainable future.

In line with Henry Dimbleby’s recommendations, a joint project will be launched between DfE and the Food Standards Agency to design and test a new approach for local authorities in assuring and supporting compliance with school food standards. The project will engage with multiple local authorities in March, with pilots expected to go live in September. Participating local authorities will include Blackpool Council, Lincolnshire County Council, Plymouth City Council and Nottingham City Council. The UK Government will promote accountability and transparency of school food arrangements by encouraging schools to complete a statement on their school websites, which sets out their whole school approach to food. The UK Government’s intention is that this will become mandatory when schools can do this effectively.

Finally, given the UK ranks amongst the worst countries in Europe for obesity rates, there is a clear need to go further on prevention.409 The UK Government will take this forward by accepting Henry Dimbleby’s recommendation to trial a Community Eatwell programme by running a three-year pilot, building on highly successful models from around the world. The Produce Prescription programme in Washington DC, for example, allows doctors to prescribe vouchers for fresh fruit and vegetables, along with cooking lessons and nutritional education. The scheme has been shown to increase consumption of fruit and vegetables and improve nutritional understanding. Of the 120 patients who received vouchers between 2012 and 2017, 50% lost weight over the course of a prescription.410 Where Community Eatwell is piloted, GPs will be able to prescribe fruit and vegetables, as well as food-related education and social support to those suffering, or at risk of, diet-related illness or food insecurity.

409 NHS England. *The NHS Long Term Plan*. p.36. 2019.

410 Henry Dimbleby. *The National Food Strategy Independent Review*. p.153. 2021.