What can be learned from the Amsterdam Healthy Weight Programme to inform the policy response to obesity in England?

The Amsterdam Healthy Weight Programme (AAGG) was introduced because the city's childhood overweight and obesity rates were substantially higher than those of the rest of the Netherlands. A key aspect of the AAGG is that it is designed and delivered as an urban-level policy. Some of the key objectives of the AAGG include reducing obesity by enabling children to eat and drink healthy foods, increase their physical activity and have good quality sleep. This report is the response to a request made to OPRU on 16 November 2017 by the Department of Health to answer the question: "What can be learned from the Amsterdam Healthy Weight programme to inform the policy response to obesity in England?"

Seven components define the strategy that appear to have contribute to how the AAGG has been able to successfully operate:

1. Strong vertical leadership
2. A collaborative, cross-departmental approach
3. Strategic use of power and influence
4. Clear parameters and expectations
5. An academically rigorous basis for action
6. A culture of reviewing, monitoring and reflective action
7. A creative approach to addressing barriers

While no direct evaluations of the effect of the programme on obesity prevalence in Amsterdam have been conducted, obesity prevalence appears to have decreased from 8% to 6% between 2012 and 2015.