Public Health England

Protecting and improving the nation's health

Using the planning system to promote healthy weight environments

Guidance and supplementary planning document template for local authority public health and planning teams

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Foreword

Evidence clearly points to the quality of the local environment in which people live, play and work as a contributing factor to excess calorie consumption and inactive lifestyles. The planning and design of the environment can help address obesity while contributing positively to sustainability and a healthy lifestyle. The environment can promote physical activity in daily lives, enable active travel to get to work, school or leisure activities, and help people access and choose healthier food options on our high streets, around schools and in our town centres.

The planning system has a range of powers and levers to implement effective change at local levels. All local authorities are encouraged to consider how they can best use the planning system to improve their communities' health and reduce health inequalities. In the context of this guidance, this includes helping to promote a healthy weight environment.

This guidance aims to provide practical support for local authorities that wish to use the planning system to achieve important public health outcomes around diet, obesity and physical activity. It provides a framework and starting point for local authorities to clearly set out in local planning guidance how best to achieve healthy weight environments based on local evidence and needs, by focusing on environments that enable healthier eating and help promote more physical activity as the default. It draws on the experience of local authorities which have successfully adopted practical, but creative and appropriate planning policies.

There are wide societal benefits for individuals, families and communities from living in a healthier environment. We take this opportunity to urge all those involved in creating places and spaces to work together to ensure the health of current and future generations.

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About this guidance

This guidance supports local authority public health and planning teams to use the powers of the planning system to promote healthy weight environments. It helps to support local authorities taking proportionate actions to protect vulnerable and at-risk groups, such as young children, from less healthy environments. A healthy-weight environment means an environment that fully supports individuals and local communities in maintaining and achieving a healthy weight. Maintaining a healthy weight can be achieved by encouraging access to healthier food and drink options through the local food environment, active travel and physical activity through neighbourhood design, in a range of settings including the high street and areas of new housing and commercial development.

This guidance was developed in response to requests from local authority public health and planning teams. It aims to support a consistent evidence-based approach to developing local planning policy and guidance, including supplementary planning documents (SPD), and making planning decisions on planning applications.

This guidance provides strategic information on the use of the planning system to promote local healthy weight environments, in particular to focus on the healthier food and active environments. It set out:

- the context of national public health and planning policy
- the role of SPDs to promote healthy weight environments to support where there are existing or emerging relevant policies in adopted local or neighbourhood plan
- evidence needed for planning policies to be created and planning decisions to be determined that promote healthier behaviours

The template ‘Healthy Weight Environments SPD’ in Appendix 2 provides a starting point for local public health teams to liaise with planning officers and other local authority teams, including environmental health, licensing, transport, and leisure.

The template reflects current local practice from across England and enables local authorities to develop their own SPD using appropriate local data and evidence, and establish links with relevant local plans, policies and strategies, including the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and the national Planning Practice Guidance (PPG). If appropriate it can enable the development and adoption of the SPD as local planning guidance, form the basis of the production of other forms of local guidance or evidence-base, and support public health teams’ responses to planning applications.

Introduction

System-wide actions are needed to create an environment, which can help address the current levels of obesity and support future generations maintain a healthier weight (1). Local authorities are in a unique position to improve the quality of the environment by actively promoting walking and cycling, enabling easier access to healthier food and drink options and supporting a diverse and healthy high street retail offer. By doing so, they can help promote a healthy weight and reduce inequalities associated with obesity prevalence (2).

There are strong connections and shared objectives between public health and town planning. Effective planning for health can contribute to an area's economic wellbeing as much as to individual physical and mental wellbeing (3). There are also co-benefits to be realised, relevant to other local policy objectives, including improving air quality and tackling public orders issues of refuse, litter and smells. The drive to use the planning system to promote healthy weight environments has been highly influenced by the Government Office for Science's Foresight report of 2007 Tackling Obesities: Future Choices (4), which recognised the role of planning in tackling obesity, and in the Association of Directors of Public Health (ADPH) and Public Health England (PHE) 'What Good Healthy Weight for all ages Looks Like' publication (2).

Many local authorities are already including healthy weight environment elements into local planning policy and practice. The Local Government Association (LGA) has published case studies of councils using planning to take a holistic approach to the challenge of obesity (5) including Gateshead Council's innovative SPD approach which is featured as a PHE case study (6). This guidance will encourage and support more local authorities in taking appropriate action through the planning system on ensuring healthy weight environments.

What is involved in planning for a healthy weight environment?

A healthy weight environment can support people with healthier food and drink options and opportunities to increase their physical activity through the way a place is designed and the variety of uses provided.

The Town and Country Planning Association (TCPA) and PHE have set out 6 elements to help achieve healthy weight environments through planning in the 2014 publication 'Planning Healthy Weight Environments' (7). These are:

- movement and access - promoting active travel and physical activity
- open spaces, recreation and play - providing informal and formal spaces and spaces necessary for leisure, recreation and play

- food - improving the food environment for both consumption and production of healthier food options
- neighbourhood spaces - improving public realm and provision of community facilities to run local programmes such as for weight reduction
- building design - improving the internal design and quality of homes and building to promote living healthier lifestyles
- local economy - supporting people into local employment in accessible and healthy town centres or high streets

Background context

The health policy context now sets a clear ambition for taking decisive action, for example the Prevention Green Paper ‘Advancing our health, prevention in the 2020s’ (8) recognises that obesity is a major health challenge and commits the Government, through working with its system partners, to address the issue. Supporting healthy diets and a healthier weight is a priority in the PHE Strategic Plan 2020-2025 (9). The Everybody Active, Every Day framework for physical activity highlights the need to make active living both an easy and an enjoyable option by creating environments that support active living (10). The Government’s Walking and Cycling Investment Strategy sets out the ambition to make cycling and walking the natural choices for shorter journeys, or as part of a longer journey (11).

Obesity impacts on different parts of the population. Children and young people living with excess weight are more at risk of being overweight or obese as adults, increasing their risk of preventable illnesses. Data from the National Child Measurement Programme (NCMP) (12) shows inequalities exists, with rates of obesity in families from the most deprived areas more than double that of the least derived areas. Living with obesity, during adulthood, can increase the risk of a range of diseases, most notably type 2 diabetes, hypertension, heart disease, stroke, liver disease, asthma and is the biggest preventable risk factor for cancer after smoking.

Among a range of measures set out in the Government’s Childhood Obesity: A Plan for Action Chapter 1 (13) and Chapter 2 (14) include a challenge to the food industry to reduce 20% of sugar and calories in everyday foods consumed regularly by children, mandatory calorie labelling in the out-of-home food sector, a restriction on price promotions on less healthy foods and a ban on the sale of energy drinks to children.

A high intake of free sugars is a known risk factor for dental caries and obesity and there is a positive correlation between the index of multiple deprivation and tooth decay levels (15). Dental caries is the most common reason for hospital admissions in children aged 5-9 years, costing the NHS £50.5 million (16) and the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) Public Health Guideline on Oral Health (17) recommends local authorities address oral health and the wider social determinants of health, by reviewing ‘levers’ such as local planning decisions for fast food outlets.

Obesity and overweight affects 75% of men and 69% of women in the over 75 age group (18). This has implications for the levels of help and care a person may require as they age, particularly in relation to maintaining independence.

Given the scale of obesity, failing to address this will place additional burden on public sector resources. It is estimated that the NHS in England spent £5.1 billion on

overweight and obesity-related ill-health in 2014 to 2015. It also costs local government in England £0.35bn in obesity related social care costs and the wider UK economy £27bn (2).

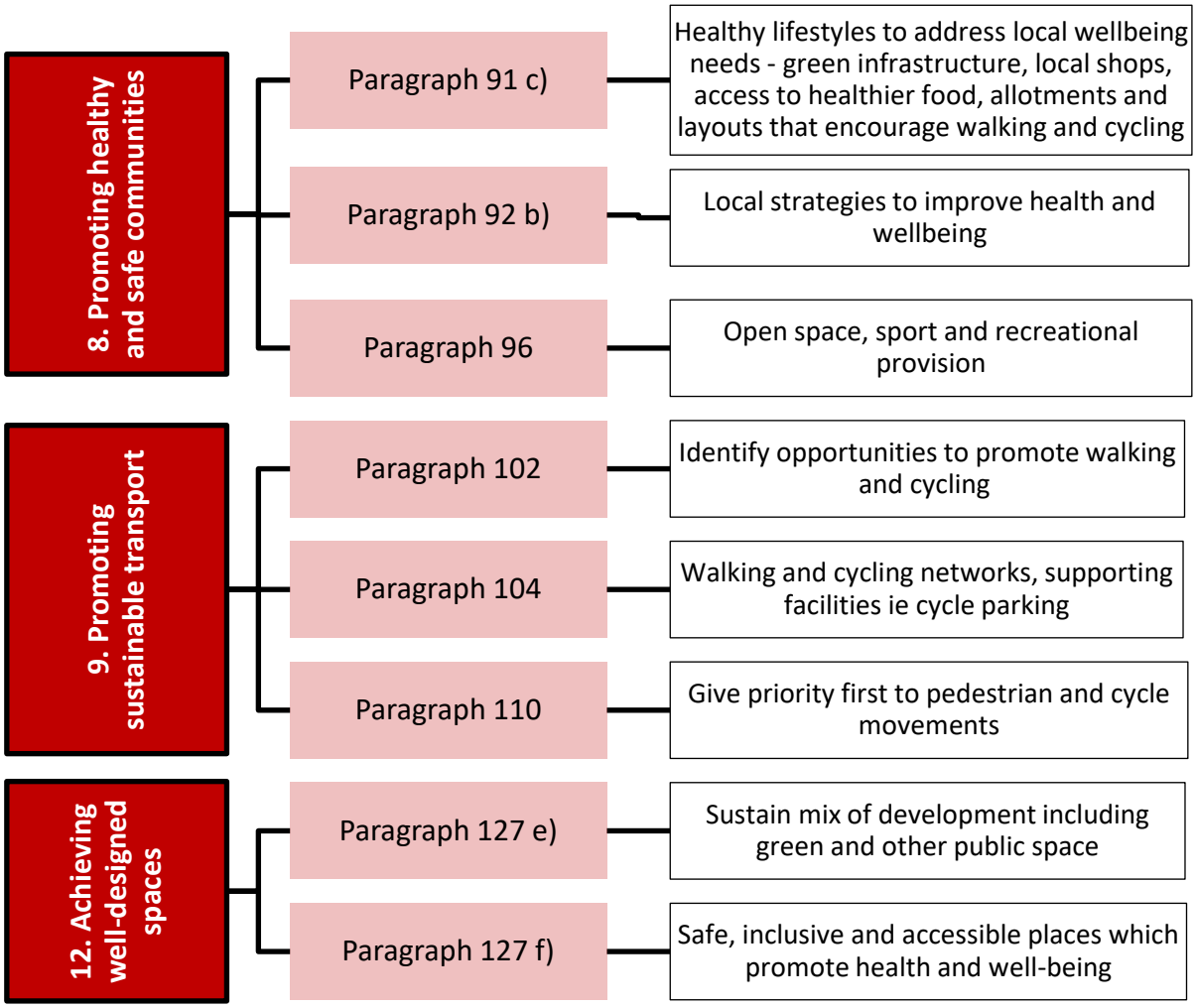
Planning system

Local authorities have powers including planning that can be used to create healthy weight environments (7). Planning decisions influence the design and use of the built environment and can therefore improve population health and targeting where specific actions are needed to address inequalities. Given the ways the environment can influence access to physical activity, active travel and healthier food and drink options, local authority planners are a pivotal factor for change, working together with local authority public health and environmental health officers and other professionals such as leisure officers and transport planners.

National policy and guidance

The Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (19) makes it clear that local authorities have a responsibility to promote healthy and safe communities by fostering a well-designed and safe built environment, with accessible services and open spaces that reflect current and future needs and support communities' health and well-being. The NPPF sets out explicit policy requirements pertinent to promoting healthy weight environments (See Figure 1). These can help frame and inform actions when preparing local plans and making planning decisions.

Figure 1. NPPF chapters and policies relevant to healthy weight environment (19)



The Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) (20) is an online resource created to support planners with ways to apply the policy in the NPPF. This includes promoting active travel and physical activity, as well as access to healthier food, high quality open spaces, green infrastructure and opportunities for play, sport and recreation.

Local policy and guidance

The PPG on Healthy and Safe Communities (20) has a specific section on using planning to create healthier food environment by allowing local authorities to adopt local plan policies and SPDs which limit the proliferation of certain retail uses in identified areas such as fast food outlets. Other PPG guidance on sustainable transport (21) and green infrastructure (22) should also help inform these local plan policies and decisions. Such policies and decisions should link with relevant health evidence and strategies including the local joint strategic needs assessment, health and wellbeing strategy and those set out by clinical commissioning groups, sustainability and transformation partnerships and integrated care systems.

Supplementary planning documents

A SPD is part of a package of planning powers available to local authorities to build upon and provide more detailed advice or guidance on policies in an adopted local plan such as on health and wellbeing, design or housing. The SPD is a material consideration for planners and planning inspectors when determining planning applications. Compliance with guidance set out in the SPDs will promote planning applications that have the best chance of achieving planning permission in line with the local plan.

Local plans should contain a healthy weight environment or a health and wellbeing policy to substantiate any supporting guidance. SPDs should be prepared in accordance with the PPG (23). The SPD should help applicants to make successful planning applications and should not add unnecessary burdens on developments and should be considered in any viability assessment. Examples of councils with SPDs are included in Appendix 3.

Soundness test for local plans

The Planning Inspectorate (PINS) on behalf of the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government deals with planning appeals, examines local plans for ‘soundness’ and ensures there is consistency in terms of the decision-making process. The NPPF requires the LPA to submit a local plan for examination that it considers is ‘sound’, namely that it is:

- positively prepared – seeks to meet objectively assessed needs
- justified – an appropriate strategy based on proportionate evidence
- effective – deliverable over the local plan period
- consistent with national policy – enable the delivery of sustainable development

Up to date evidence to support local policy

In order to support local authority planning teams in effectively justifying local plan policies and decisions, and helping to defend against any planning appeals, there is a need to provide localised evidence. Evidence can draw on what is available nationally, such as on the wider determinants; health inequalities; Public Health Outcomes Framework (24) and the Strategic Health Assets Planning and Evaluation (SHAPE) tool. It should include local evidence, data and knowledge to support the policy, including any specific geographic areas or business activity where actions can be focused. Local data can include:

- levels of obesity, healthy eating, for example in schools, and associated long term health conditions across all ages

- levels of deprivation and where particular vulnerable and at-risk groups are located
- local food environment, which includes food retail premises and other consideration of sources of healthier food e.g. supermarkets, grocers
- location of current food retail premises and areas of recent planning applications and decisions (last 3-5 years)
- location of schools or sites to be covered by the proposed policy
- community views on food availability, shopping centres, high streets or planning policy
- number of businesses and applications likely to be affected by a new policy

It is important for local public health teams to liaise with the planning team to ensure the evidence base and supporting context form part of the evidence base for the consultation exercise and any submissions to PINS as part of the examination in public process.

Joining up public health strategies with planning

Support for decisions on planning applications and defence against appeals can be more successful if there are other complementary non-planning plans and strategies. For example, if a local authority has a corporate approach to promoting healthy places and healthy eating or where schools have created a healthy eating policy, or strategies for town centre and local high street regeneration.

To ensure that future planning decisions are based on wider issues, links should be made to policies and priorities included in other statutory plans developed by the local authority, in particular, the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment and the Health and Wellbeing Strategy. Planning inspectors can use these links as material consideration in determining planning applications. Questions that are likely to be particularly relevant are:

- Is there an agreed healthy weight, obesity, or physical activity strategy adopted by the local authority?
- Are there relevant priorities set out by the local healthcare partners?
- Do these policies and priorities make reference to restricting hot food takeaways or ensuring a healthy environment?
- Have local communities and schools been engaged and support the proposals?
- Have schools adopted healthy eating policies?

Understanding impact of local plan policies and guidance

The use of planning controls is only one measure that local authorities need to consider as part of a wider strategy to address obesity. Local authorities which have put such policies in place (be it in the local plan or SPD), have successfully refused planning

applications for new establishments within their preferred exclusion areas, including cases on appeal. Local authorities should have methods to monitor the economic and health impact of planning policy in place. These should be agreed and form part of the draft policy for consultation. As many local authorities have already adopted local policies and SPDs (See Section 5) to help address health and wellbeing, including on managing the food environments, they should help establish a clear precedent to planners that they can be successful at a local level.

Healthier food environments

Creating a healthier food environment, through the planning system and supporting local businesses and workplaces to provide healthier food and drink, will help enable people access healthier options. Advertising, promotions, the business mix within high streets and the food and drink offered in work cafeterias and in local takeaways, cafes and restaurants all have a major influence on food and drink options.

In the UK, 27% of adults and 19% of children eat meals out of the home at least once a week, and takeaway food consumption peaks in young adults aged 19-29 years (25). Takeaway foods tend to contain high levels of fat, saturated fats, sugar, and salt, and lower levels of micronutrients (26) (27). Some takeaway food can represent a low-cost option to the consumer, which may enhance its appeal to children and other consumers with low discretionary incomes (28). Evidence shows that regular consumption of takeaway food over time has been linked to weight gain (29).

Hot food takeaways are one example of retail uses that can be the subject of local planning controls. Hot food takeaways are often co-located with other potentially less healthy land uses, such as betting shops, gambling and shisha bars and the availability of alcohol. These businesses are also subject to additional planning restrictions (30). PHE (31) and the Royal Society for Public Health (RSPH) (32) have published material on the high street's impact on public health and identified the need for the controls of these businesses.

Evidence for planning restrictions on fast food takeaways

The NICE Public Health Guideline on Cardiovascular disease prevention (33), recommends action to encourage local planning authorities to restrict planning permission for takeaways and other food retail outlets in specific areas (for example, within walking distance of schools).

In 2017, there were an estimated 56,638 takeaway outlets in England, a rise of 8% (or 4,000 restaurants) since 2014, according to data from the Food environment assessment tool (Feat) (34). There are an increasing number of academic studies that

identify the role of physical access to takeaway food outlets in promoting unhealthy diet and obesity (35). For example, research has shown associations between exposure to takeaway outlets, takeaway consumption and body weight in adults (36, 37, 38). There was some evidence that these associations were stronger in groups with lower levels of education, which may contribute further to socioeconomic inequalities in obesity (39).

Exclusion zones

The PPG supports actions, such as the use of exclusion zones, to limit the proliferation of certain unhealthy uses within specified areas such as proximity to schools and in areas of deprivation and high obesity prevalence (20). Health and wellbeing is clearly relevant to policy making and determining the outcome of planning applications. For example, the importance of place for health and wellbeing has been documented by planning inspectors in many examinations in public and appeal decisions. Examples of some local plan policies on managing the food environment are set out in Appendix 3.

A census of local planning authorities in England in 2017/18 identified planning policies specifically addressing takeaway food outlets, with a 'health', and 'non-health' focus (40). It found that 164 (50.5%) local planning authorities had a policy specifically targeting takeaway food outlets. Of these, 56 (34.1%) local planning authorities had adopted planning policies specifically designed to promote health through regulation of new takeaway food outlets.

The single most common planning policy adopted to promote health (by 33 local planning authorities), has been the introduction of takeaway food outlet exclusion zones around locations often frequented by children and families. See Figure 2. These locations are most often schools, but also parks and leisure centres. Exclusion zone buffer sizes are often 400 metres, which has been considered a reasonable 5-minute walk, or 800 metres which is a 10-minute walk. The 400-metre distance is outlined within the Urban Design Compendium (41) and the guidelines for providing journeys on foot (42) as a reasonable walking distance.

Figure 2. Planning strategies to manage hot food takeaways (40)

STRATEGY

PLACE	Reset		Exclusion Zones		Limit Density		Minimise Impact & Protect Vicinity		Other Strategies	
			Health	Non-Health	Health	Non-Health	Health	Non-Health	Health	Non-Health
	All Areas Within a Local Government Area Boundary	Local Government Area	3		3	6	11	68	11	26
		Criteria	3		3	6	13	144	14	34
	Immediate Vicinity of an existing Hot Food Takeaway Site	Local Government Area					2	7		
		Criteria					3	11		
	Places for Children & Families	Local Government Area	33	1	1				7	
		Criteria	33	1	1				7	
	Retail Areas	Local Government Area		10	18	64	9	65		13
		Criteria		11	28	73	9	83		16
	Residential Areas	Local Government Area		1			1	26		6
		Criteria		1			1	31		6

Several local authorities, such as Hackney, have carried out food mapping studies as the preliminary stage of developing policy and guidance (Appendix 3). This has been the preferred approach when trying to establish the 400m exclusion zone around schools, but also when trying to prevent further clustering of hot food takeaways on the high streets and local shopping parades. Local data on the food environment, including changes over time, can be found using the Food environment assessment tool (Feat) (34).

This principle includes primary schools, even though it is acknowledged that many primary school pupils are not permitted out of the school grounds during the school day, and pupils are likely to be accompanied by a supervising parent, guardian or adult, during the journeys to and from school. Some primary school children, such as those in year 6 walk to and from school on their own, in preparation for the transfer to secondary schools. It is noted that families may use fast food outlets on the way home from school and the presence of an adult does not necessarily mean that take away food will not be purchased and subsequently consumed by children.

Each application for new hot food takeaways are made on its own merits and the 400m zone must be considered in the context of the individual application. There are mitigating factors that can be considered, for example the potential for natural or man-made barriers that limit accessibility from schools. There have been examples where applications have been submitted just outside of the 400m zone, resulting in difficulty in applying the exclusion policy despite public health concerns. It may be appropriate to restrict hot food takeaway premises just beyond the 400m zone, subject to the local circumstances, such as:

- childhood obesity levels
- main school routes used by majority of children
- density of existing food retail uses

The Use Class Order and healthier catering

In England, hot food takeaways (Class A5) are a different use class to restaurants or cafes (Class A3), drinking establishments (Class A4) and shops (Class A1). Under the Town and Country Planning (Use Classes) Order 1987 (43), a Class A5 hot food takeaway is an establishment which primarily sells hot food for consumption off the premises. The degree to which the sale of hot food takeaway items is ancillary to the main use within A3 premises is not defined, but decisions from planning appeals have held this to be a “small proportion” of sales (4 - 10% of total sales). See examples of some appeal cases set out in Appendix 3.

Although planning cannot directly control the type of food being sold, it is appropriate to highlight the issue to food operators during the planning process. Less healthy food is typically sold in a range of premises, from takeaway food outlets to sit-down restaurants, to coffee and sandwich shops. In addition to Class A5 outlets (hot food takeaways), others classified according to the Use Class Order as A1 (Shops) and A3 (Restaurant and Cafes), may also sell less healthy food. One recent UK study found only frequent use of takeaways (not cafes or restaurants) was associated with obesity (44).

Improving the quality of the food environment around schools has the potential to influence children's behaviour through their food and drink purchasing habits. It is important to note that taking action on hot food takeaways is only part of the solution, as it does not address confectionery and other food and drinks that children can buy in shops near or on the way to and from schools (45). Children spend a significant amount of time at school which must be open for at least 190 days during a school year (46). Research suggests that children are price sensitive and that school meals were perceived to offer poor value for money, compared to what could be bought in a takeaway (47).

A council can demonstrate how it is working as part of a whole system approach (1), where planning forms part of a wider approach to addressing obesity. PHE's 'Strategies for encouraging healthier out of home food provision' toolkit (48) supports local councils and independent food businesses to develop healthier food options for children and families, and the healthier catering guidance within this toolkit provides practical tips on how to do this. In addition, the Government Buying Standards for Food and Catering Services provides a framework for procuring healthier and more sustainable food by the public sector (48) and in London, the Mayor is supporting the Healthier Catering Commitment, a voluntary scheme promoted by local authorities to help caterers and food businesses reduce the levels of saturated fat, salt and sugar in the food they sell. (49).

Other considerations

PHE is aware that the retail environment is increasingly complex and there may be multiple issues which may not be readily tackled through this guidance. These issues include how the planning system can be justified in helping to manage emerging food outlets which are not A5 fast food takeaways, help improve the food offer of existing food outlets and ways to work with premises as they change ownership without needing planning permission. Further work will need to be done in partnership with researchers, businesses and other professions to explore their contribution to having a healthier food environment.

For example, there are challenges for managing the presence of mobile hot food businesses or other outlets as the retail environment evolves. Local policy and trading permit conditions can be used to restrict the operation of mobile food outlets within the vicinity of schools. For example, by prohibiting trading within 400 metres of school grounds from an hour before the start until an hour after the end of the school day. There are also concerns about the impact of dark kitchens, which are virtual kitchens or delivery-only restaurants, on efforts to promote a healthier food environment.

Local Authority environmental health and licensing teams, responsible for the street trading consent system, can play a key role to work with takeaway businesses to encourage healthier eating and diets. They will already be involved in the controls on hot food takeaways in order to minimise the potential for statutory nuisance, food safety and food standards. Further guidance on using environmental health and licensing policies are produced by the Chartered Institute of Environmental Health (CIEH) (50).

Active environments

Physical inactivity is responsible for one in 6 UK deaths and is estimated to cost the UK £7.4 billion annually (including £0.9 billion to the NHS). Many people are unaware that physical activity has significant benefits for health, both physical and mental, and can help to prevent and manage over 20 chronic conditions and diseases, including some cancers, heart disease, type 2 diabetes and depression.

Thirty-four percent of men and 42% of women are not achieving recommended levels of physical activity; 21% and 25% of men and women are classified as being physically inactive by doing less than 30 minutes of activity over a week (51). These recommended levels of physical activity are set out by the UK Chief Medical Officers (52). Physical activity varies across the population according to age, gender, ethnicity. People tend to get less active with age, especially in older years and people with disabilities or long-term conditions are twice as likely not to be active (53).

For most people, the easiest and most acceptable forms of physical activity are those that can be incorporated into everyday life, such as walking or cycling. Yet our neighbourhoods, towns and cities have largely been designed around the car. Switching more journeys to active travel has benefits for the environment and the local economy, while at the same time having substantial mental and physical health benefits. Improving or adding green spaces and tree cover improves air quality as well as making spaces feel more welcoming. Such environmental improvements have prompted substantial shifts from car transport to walking and cycling (54).

Features of the built environment that have an impact on physical activity include:

- location, density and diverse activities
- street layout and connectivity
- physical access to public services, employment, local fresh food
- safety and security
- open and green space
- air quality and noise
- public transport options

Whilst this document focuses on planning and design *within* places, a critical strategic priority is to make sure that decisions on where new development first takes place take into account key broader considerations. These include locating in places with good existing public transport to a range of locations or choosing places where large scale development can both support and take advantage of new strategic connections in public transport at regional level.

Travel planning

Travel Plans are long-term management strategies for integrating proposals for sustainable and active travel into the planning process (55). They are based on evidence of the anticipated transport impacts of development and set measures to promote and encourage sustainable and active travel. Travel plans are normally created in parallel to development proposals and integrated into the design and occupation of the new site rather than retrofitted after occupation. They can positively contribute to:

- encouraging sustainable and active travel
- lessening traffic generation and its detrimental impacts
- reducing carbon emissions and climate impacts
- creating accessible, connected, inclusive communities
- improving health outcomes and quality of life
- improving road safety
- providing greater patronage for public transport services, especially in the early years of a development so as to assist its viability
- reducing the need for new development to provide new roads

Travel plans have been successful both in reducing the number and length of single-occupancy car journeys and in increasing the use of sustainable forms of travel. Local authorities can require developments (work place, residential, education) to have travel plans where they will generate significant amounts of movement, supported by a transport statement or transport assessment so that the likely impacts of the proposal can be assessed.

Pedestrians, cyclists, and users of other modes of transport that involve physical activity need the highest priority when developing or maintaining streets and roads. This can mean:

- re-allocation of road space to support walking and cycling
- restricting motor vehicle access
- introducing road-user charging and traffic-calming schemes
- creating safe routes to schools

The Local Cycling and Walking Investment Plans (LCWIP) can also be incorporated into development plan documents, including the Local Plan and Neighbourhood Development Plans, and Supplementary Planning Documents (56).

Active design

Resources exist that can help develop more ‘active’ levels of design of new and existing environments. Sport England and PHE’s Active Design guidance (57) looks at the

opportunities to inspire the design of new and existing places that promote active lifestyles. The Ten Active Design principles are (See Figure 3):

- activity for all – enabling those who want to be active, whilst encouraging those who are inactive to become active
- walkable communities – creating the conditions for active travel between all locations
- connected walking and cycling routes – prioritising active travel through safe, integrated walking and cycling routes
- co-location of community facilities – multiple reasons to visit a destination, minimising the number and length of trips and increasing the awareness and convenience of opportunities to participate in sport and physical activity
- network of multifunctional open space – multifunctional spaces opens up opportunities for sport and physical activity and has numerous wider benefits
- high quality streets and spaces – well designed streets and spaces support and sustain a broader variety of users and community activities
- appropriate infrastructure – access to facilities and other infrastructure to enable all members of society to take part in sport and physical activity
- active buildings – activity inside and around buildings
- management, maintenance, monitoring and evaluation – a high standard of management, maintenance, monitoring and evaluation is essential to ensure the long-term desired functionality of all spaces
- activity promotion and local champions – physical measures need to be matched by community and stakeholder ambition, leadership and engagement

Figure 3. Active Design principles (57)

The Active Design guidance provides further information on each principle, supported by key facts, pointers to best practice, checklists and references to further sources of information.

NICE has produced a suite of guidance on physical activity and the environment (58), to support increased levels of physical activity including:

- the promotion and creation of physical environments
- physical activity in the workplace
- walking and cycling

Building design can encourage movement through and around buildings, as well as between sites. NICE recommends that campus sites, such as hospitals, encourage active travel by creating pleasant and accessible routes for walking and cycling. When planning for campus sites, arrangements for public transport and active travel with a range of potential routes should be made available from the outset.

Open and green space

Access to high quality open spaces and opportunities for sport and recreation can make an important contribution to the health and well-being of communities. The NPPF requires local planning authorities to pro-actively create policies that enable communities to be more active, and to base these policies on a thorough understanding of local needs.

Local Authorities will normally undertake studies to satisfy NPPF Paragraph 96 for robust and up-to-date assessments of this need for open space, sport and recreation facilities (including quantitative or qualitative deficits or surpluses) and opportunities for new provision. Sport England has published guidance on effective methodologies for assessing these needs (59) and planning for sport (60). Open space policies aim to:

- determine appropriate standards for the provision of open space, sports and recreation facilities
- provide an assessment of the provision of open space, sports and recreation facilities in terms of quantity, quality and accessibility
- provide an assessment of the suitable uses for identified open spaces, for example identifying opportunities for the installation of fixed play equipment where there is a shortage of play spaces
- identify areas of surplus and deficit in open space, sports and recreation facilities with regards to quantity, quality and accessibility
- be concise and present factual evidence to meet NPPF requirements

The open space study normally follows the 5 key stages which are:

- Step 1 – identifying local needs
- Step 2 – audit of existing open space assets
- Step 3 – setting local standards
- Step 4 – applying local standards
- Step 5 – drafting policy recommendations

Any loss of open or green space should be considered very carefully, and its effects on the local community assessed, particularly the least well off and least healthy. In some cases, poor quality green space which is replaced by smaller higher quality space may provide greater benefits on balance. The quality of the provision of replacement green space should be assessed, for example by the use of:

- Building with Nature (61) – 6 wellbeing standards including accessible, seasonal enjoyment and socially sustainable
- Accessible Natural Greenspace Standard (ANGSt) (62) which addresses amount, access and quality
- Outdoor Recreation Valuation Tool (ORVaL) (63) investigates how altering the land cover, features or the area of existing recreation sites will change usage and welfare values – this allows a comparison between existing and proposed sites
- Green Flag Award standard (64) which is a framework for assessing the quality of public green spaces of all types and sizes

Good design should ensure that any open space, sports and recreational facilities are appropriate for all populations and be accessible through the life course. Local public health teams should engage with local planning authorities to ensure public health can participate in future consultations.

Allotments and community growing

Allotments can provide options for physical activity, social connectivity as well as green space, and are in high demand (65). These assets can be utilised as part of a social prescribing programme and can have benefits for individual health and community cohesion. The Fruit and Vegetable Task Force (66) found that local food growing can help people understand food's origin and seasonality, be mentally and physically beneficial, support school curricula and develop young people's skills. It recommends an increased amount of land, and infrastructure such as soil quality, is allocated for fruit and vegetable production in planning proposals.

Statutory provisions exist that specifies the requirement and scale of provision of allotments by local authorities such as the duty on local authorities provide allotments under Section 23 of the Small Holdings and Allotments Act 1908. Additionally, redevelopment of existing allotment sites for other uses will not be permitted unless alternative, suitable provision is provided.

The design of the new allotment site should be carried out in consultation with the plot holders and their association, and with relevant national and regional organisations, especially the National Allotment Society. It should incorporate features and designs to enable access and use across the life course. Additional advice can be found in the LGA guide Growing in your community (67).

Public realm

Development proposals for the public realm should prioritise public transport and the kinds of high quality infrastructure that support active modes of transport, along with the creation of ‘walkable environments’. The evidence of effectiveness is strongest for town or citywide approaches, often made up of several interventions working together to connect across a whole place (68). This evidence tells us that improved active travel also helps reduce poor air quality, improving community connectedness and therefore mental health and wellbeing.

The physical characteristics of the environment can encourage regular physical activity by enabling active travel between homes, jobs, services and leisure opportunities, either as a complete journey or as part of a longer journey. Higher levels of residential density, public transport density, street connectivity and public parks all promote physical activity. These have the potential to contribute to individual’s daily physical activity, equating to 60% of an adult’s recommended target of activity per week. The Transport for London, Healthy Streets (69) publication and Canal & River Trust planning (70) tools provide further guidance.

Summary

The use of the planning system to promote health and reduce inequalities is well established and efforts to promote a healthier food and more active environment are still developing. This guidance provides practical support to those local authorities looking to develop policies and approaches including a SPD to promote a healthy weight environment, in particular where it is proportionate to safeguard vulnerable and at-risk populations.

Actions to promote a healthy weight environment should form part of a wider, long term systems approach to promoting a healthier weight in the local area, which can be supported by PHE guidance on whole systems approach to obesity (1). Other examples of integrated place-based approaches include the NHS England Healthy New Towns (71), Sport England Local Delivery Pilots (72) and the DHSC Childhood Obesity Trailblazers (73) programmes.

Local authorities can provide leadership and take positive action to promote a healthy weight environment by taking a joined-up approach across relevant functions, including planning, transport, environmental health, public health, social care, leisure and economic development.

At the local strategy and policy levels, connections can be made between:

- joint strategic needs assessments; health and wellbeing, and obesity strategies
- local and neighbourhood development plans
- transport and local walking and cycling investment plans
- community sports and physical activity plans
- open space and green infrastructure plans
- clinical commissioning groups (CCG), sustainability and transformation partnerships (STP) or wider integrated care systems (ICS) strategic plans
- economic regeneration plans

Local authority public health teams can work closely with local planning authorities to ensure health and wellbeing is an important consideration in the planning application process. To further strengthen policy and guidance on healthy weight environments, these relationships can also be extended to other organisations including Sport England, Canal & River Trust, local transport authorities, third sector bodies and businesses.

This guidance describes how planning, as part of a place based whole systems approach, can help improve the local environment and contribute towards addressing the drivers of obesity. The SPD is one lever which, supported by local evidence and data on a wide range of environmental determinants, can enable a local authority to use planning to ensure greater equal opportunities to a healthier food environment for better lifestyle options, and for active travel for increased physical activity.

Glossary

These definitions describe various terms used in this document.

Examination in Public	A process undertaken by the Planning Inspectorate to consider the validity of a development plan document, its policies and evidence base before adoption.
Health inequalities	Preventable, unfair and unjust differences in health status between groups, populations or individuals that arise from the unequal distribution of social, environmental and economic conditions within societies, which determine the risk of people getting ill, their ability to prevent sickness, or opportunities to take action and access treatment when ill health occurs.
Local Planning Authority (LPA)	A public authority whose duty it is to carry out specific planning functions for a particular area. All references to local planning authority apply to the district council, London borough council, county council, Broads Authority, National Park Authority and the Greater London Authority.
Material consideration	Any consideration which relates to the purpose of planning legislation which is to regulate the development and use of land in the public interest, and fairly and reasonably relates to the application concerned.
National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)	The government's planning policies for England and how these should be applied in plan-making and making planning decisions. It was updated in February 2019.
Planning Practice Guidance (PPG)	The government's web-based resource which brings together planning guidance on various topics to support the National Planning Policy Framework.
Social prescribing	Healthcare professionals referring patients to non-clinical services to improve their physical or mental health.
Soundness	Key criteria set out in the National Planning Policy Framework when development plan documents are examined by the Planning Inspectorate before adoption.
Supplementary Planning Document (SPD)	Produced by Local Planning Authorities to build upon and provide more detailed advice on the policies contained in a local plan.
Use Class Order	Uses of land and buildings are put into various categories known as 'Use Classes'.
Whole systems approach	A local whole systems approach responds to complexity through an ongoing, dynamic and flexible way of working. It enables local stakeholders, including communities, to come together, share an understanding of the reality of the challenge, consider how the local system is operating and where there are the greatest opportunities for change.

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Appendix 2: Template Healthy Weight Environments Supplementary Planning Document

Local authorities can use this template as the starting point to create guidance to meet local policy requirements on healthy weight environments, reflect the makeup of the local retail environment and present localised evidence base on health and wellbeing. The approach taken by this template SPD can also be adopted in creating up to date evidence base for local and neighbourhood plans and help support decision-making of planning applications.

How to use this template SPD
It sets out a combination of explanatory context such as on strategic issues, national policy and evidence which can be retained, and detailed contents for local adaptation. Where it is appropriate to add or replace with local content or adapt to local policy, it is indicated by [LOCAL]. Local content can be provided in the form of additional text or in graphic form such as maps or graphs. Final text within the SPD should be referenced and updated links provided to key publications, national and local policies, and read in conjunction with the guidance.

The template SPD

Chapter 1 – Introduction and background information

1. Role of the Healthy Weight Supplementary Planning Document (SPD)

1.1 The purpose of the Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) tool is to provide a blueprint for local authorities to use to develop their own local SPDs designed to support local people to achieve a healthy weight.

1.2 SPDs can be produced to provide detailed guidance on planning policies. This additional detail will guide applicants and will be a material consideration when determining planning applications, thereby helping to provide a transparent, consistent and efficient development management system. Compliance with SPDs will promote planning applications that have the best chance of achieving planning permission.

1.3 SPDs should be prepared only where necessary and be written in accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). They should help applicants to make successful planning applications and should not add unnecessarily to the administrative and financial burdens on developments.

2. Key objectives of the Healthy Weight SPD
2.1 The key objectives of this SPD are to:

- inform pre-application advice of any potential health-related issues and be a material consideration when determining applications, as well as providing

information and guidance that can be used to support a Health Impact Assessment [LOCAL if the local plan has such a policy]
- promote opportunities for people to live healthier lifestyles and encourage healthier options relating to food and physical activity
- improve local people's health and reduce the demand on the NHS, health professionals and local authority services
- provide an evidence-based resource with supporting information and guidance
- inform the preparation of future plans, strategies, development briefs, and policy decisions
- inform communities and provide guidance to aid with the preparation of Neighbourhood Plans
- inform the allocation and use of developer contributions by way of Section 106 agreements or the Community infrastructure levy (CIL) [LOCAL if CIL is adopted]

3 Relationship to the Local Plan and national planning policy

3.1 The NPPF sets out the responsibility of local planning authorities (LPA) to promote healthy communities. Local plans should 'take account of and support local strategies to improve health, social and cultural wellbeing for all'.

3.2 Chapter 8 Promoting Healthy and Safe Communities Para 91(c) states: "…enable and support healthy lifestyles, especially where this would address identified local health and well-being needs – for example through the provision of safe and accessible green infrastructure, sports facilities, local shops, access to healthier food, allotments and layouts that encourage walking and cycling…"

3.3 The NPPF has a presumption in favour of sustainable development, with 3 dimensions to the concept: economic; social; and environmental. The social role comprises 'supporting strong, vibrant and healthy communities, by creating a high quality-built environment, with accessible local services that reflect the community's needs and support its health, social and cultural well-being'. The NPPF highlights the importance of promoting competitive town centre environments and sets out that 'the planning system can play an important role in creating healthy, inclusive communities'.

3.4 The Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) refers to planning for an environment that supports people of all ages in making healthy choices, helps to promote active travel and physical activity, and promotes access to healthier food, high quality open spaces, green infrastructure, play, sport and recreation.

3.5 The PPG confirms that planning can influence the built environment to improve health and promote healthy weight in local communities. Local planning authorities can have a role in enabling a healthier environment by supporting opportunities for communities to access a wide range of healthier food options. Policies may also request the provision of allotments or allotment gardens, to ensure the provision of adequate spaces for food growing opportunities.

3.6 The inclusion of health and wellbeing in planning policy and decision-making is clearly supported by both the NPPF and the PPG. Healthy weight environments are also clearly relevant matters for determining local policy and the outcome of applications.

3.7 Health is a cross-cutting issue across planning and connects into many areas within the Local Plan and other policies and strategies. This is because the wider determinants of health have multiple dimensions across the economy, environment and society. Of particular importance to note are: [LOCAL ***Local authority with local content should be added, including links to local plans, policies and wider priorities set out in health strategies***].

4 The rationale (policy context and evidence) for promoting healthy weight environments through planning.

Demographic data and local needs assessment

4.1 Nationally, nearly two thirds of adults and a third of all primary school children are overweight and obese, and that trend is increasing. Diet, physical activity and a healthy weight are key factors in determining the future health of an individual. The national data is reflected in local areas in the National Child Measurement Programme and Health Survey for England data. The figures are worse in areas of high deprivation.

4.2 **[LOCAL *Local data should be used to set out the position in a local authority area, referencing the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment, PHOF, locally collected data, including obesity figures, and strategies].***

National policy context

4.3 The Foresight report: Tackling Obesities: Future Choices Project Report sets out the drivers and complexity of obesity, together with scientific and other evidence, which confirmed that energy intake and expenditure is determined by a complex multifaceted system of determinants (causes).

4.4 Changes to our environment (including both the activity and food-related environment) are a necessary part of any response to support behaviour change and appropriate behaviour patterns. Solutions to address the obesogenic environment such as changes in transport infrastructure and urban design can be more difficult and costly than targeting intervention at the group, family or individual. However, they are more likely to affect multiple pathways within the obesity system in a sustainable way.

4.5 The Local Government Association case studies on the use of planning powers to limit hot food takeaway encouraged local authorities to use existing planning regulations to control more carefully the number and location of fast food outlets. The National Institute for Clinical Excellence (NICE) Public Health Guideline on Cardiovascular Disease Prevention (PH25) recommends action to encourage local planning authorities to restrict planning permission for take-aways and other food retail outlets in specific areas (for example, within walking distance of schools). NICE Guideline - Physical activity and the environment outlines best practice to promote physical activity.

4.6 The Government obesity plans highlighted the need to tackle a major health issue with children starting school overweight. Among a range of measures, they include ambitions for mandatory calorie labelling in the out of home sector, a restriction on price promotions on less healthy foods and a ban on the sale of energy drinks to children.

4.7 Government Buying Standards for Food and Catering Services provide a framework for procuring healthier and more sustainable food by the public sector and PHE has published an out of home food environment toolkit to support work with local businesses to provide a healthier food offer.

Defining a healthy weight environment

4.8 A healthy-weight environment supports people in maintaining a healthier weight and avoid becoming overweight or obese through the way in which a place is designed and the facilities it provides. It promotes physical activity, provides opportunities for sustainable transport which prioritise active travel, which helps people build physical activity into daily life, helps people access or choose healthier food options and access support services.

4.9 In planning healthy weight environments, the Town and Country Planning Association (TCPA) set out 6 elements to help achieve healthy weight environments through the planning process. These provide a useful framework for local authorities and developers to consider the impact of new developments and the ways in which they can be designed to support people to maintain a healthy weight. The 6 elements are: **movement and access; open spaces, recreation and play; food environment; neighbourhood spaces; building design; and local economy**.

4.10 Key features of these elements are creating places that:

- **prioritise walking, cycling and mass transit** through simple changes such as dedicated cycle lanes, well-placed bike racks and wide, well-lit pavements, which encourage individuals to leave their cars at home
- **provide communal spaces** that support wellbeing and encourage active behaviour in children and adults
- **create buildings which are able to promote a healthy lifestyle**, such as building homes with kitchens big enough for people to store, prepare and cook meals and eat together, or commercial building design that encourages the use of stairs
- **tackle the food environment** such as limiting clustering of takeaways close to schools, working with local retail outlets to provide healthier options and providing local spaces for food growing

4.11 This SPD provides expectations of how planning applications for development can be considered within the context of the 6 elements to help achieve healthy weight environments identified by the TCPA.

Chapter 2 – Priority areas for action

5 Priority 1 - Provision of a balanced local food environment, which promotes healthier options

5.1 This section highlights that planning can influence the built environment to improve health and promote healthy weight in local communities. It states that local planning authorities can have a role in enabling a healthier environment by supporting opportunities for communities to access a wide range of healthier food production and consumption options.

[LOCAL Local Authority to add details of links to relevant local plan policies]

Takeaways and local retail food provision

5.2 The majority of hot food takeaways offer food [and drink] which is energy dense and high in fat, salt or sugar. Hot food takeaways within easy walking distance, provide a less healthy but often attractive and affordable food options for school pupils and could be a contributing factor to poor eating habits in children and counter healthy eating programmes within schools.

5.3 In order to create a local environment, which promotes and supports the local community's health, the Council wishes to minimise the proliferation of hot-food takeaways, particularly in the vicinity of schools and community centres.

5.4 There are publications and research papers that identify a need to limit the availability of hot food takeaways as part of a strategic approach to promote healthy weight and the subsequent costs to society and health care services. These publications include details of the evidence base on which their findings and recommendations are based. For example, NICE Public Health Guideline on Cardiovascular disease prevention (PH25) recommends action to encourage local planning authorities to restrict planning permission for takeaways and other food retail outlets in specific areas (for example, within walking distance of schools).

5.5 Studies have found that takeaway food outlets are often located in areas of higher socioeconomic deprivation. PHE's data on fast food outlets by local authority found that there is a strong association between deprivation and the density of fast food outlets, with more deprived areas having more fast food outlets per 100,000 population.

5.6 Improving the quality of the food environment around schools has the potential to influence children's behaviour through their food-purchasing habits. It is important to note that taking action on hot food takeaways is only part of the solution, as it does not address confectionery and other food that children can buy in shops near schools.

5.7 Less healthy food is typically sold from and at a range of premises within a variety of other businesses, such as coffee or sandwich shops, bakeries etc. A1 (Shops) and A3 (Restaurant and Cafes) may also sell less healthy food, although this tends to be a smaller proportion of the goods on offer and these businesses can provide an essential service to local communities providing local access to food, provide part of the local community infrastructure and improve the vitality of local centres. The local authority will work with food business to promote healthy eating through its out of home food environment approach. The degree to which the sale of hot food take away items are ancillary to the main use within A3 premises is not defined, but appeal decisions have held this to be 4 - 10% of total sales.

5.8 ***[LOCAL Local authority to supplement with details of numbers and location of existing outlets using the Feat tool or other local studies].***

5.9 LOCAL

The following criteria will be used for managing planning applications which have an element of fast food to promote healthier food environments:

Concentration and Clustering of Hot Food Takeaways

- **Applications for new A5 hot food takeaways should not lead to an overconcentration of A5 uses within any one individual locality by overly dominating the street scene or have an adverse impact on the standard of amenity for existing and future occupants of land and buildings. It is also appropriate to control the number of outlets where there are concerns regarding levels of obesity or where it exceeds average densities.**

- **Decisions regarding appropriate concentrations of hot food takeaways will be based on the following factors:**
  - **within primary frontages, no more than X% of the frontage will be in A5 use**
  - **within secondary frontages, no more than X% of the frontage will be in A5 use**
  - **within Local Centres or Neighbourhood Centres, no more than X% of the frontage will be in A5 use**
  - **at all locations no more than 2 hot food takeaways being located adjacent each other**
  - **at least 2 non-hot food takeaway units between groups of hot food takeaway units**
  - **locations where there are high levels of obesity, planning permission will not be granted for A5 use in wards where there is more than X% of the year 6 pupils classified as obese**
  - **planning permission will not normally be granted for A5 use where the number of approved A5 establishments, within the ward, equals or exceeds the UK national average, per 100,000 population**

Location of hot food takeaways

5.10 LOCAL

Applications for A5 hot food will not be granted at locations closer than 400 metres from an entrance to a primary or secondary school, youth centre, or similar location.

5.11 The 400m distance is recognised as a reasonable walking distance, which equates approximately to a 5-minute walking time and is suitable given the length of normal school break times.

5.12 The evidence and publications suggests that limiting the availability of takeaways within walking distance of schools can contribute to tackling the rising levels of obesity and other health impacts such as cardiovascular disease. 400 metres has been considered a reasonable walking distance and is outlined within the Urban Design Compendium 2 and CIHT Guidelines for providing journeys on foot. The 400-metre zone is an accepted standard across many planning policies.

5.13 This principle includes primary schools even though it is acknowledged that the majority of primary school pupils are not permitted out of the school grounds during the school day, and pupils are likely to be accompanied by a supervising parent, guardian or adult, during the journeys to and from school. Some primary school children, such as those in year 6, are allowed to walk to and from school on their own, in preparation for the transfer to secondary schools. It is noted that families may use fast food outlets on the way home from school and the presence of an adult does not necessarily mean that take away food will not be purchased and subsequently consumed by children. The Council

considers the issue of primary school children using A5 units is a concern that should be addressed alongside secondary school pupils.

5.14 Each application will be considered on its own merits and the 400m zone must be considered in the context of the local topography and context of the individual application. There are mitigating factors that can be considered, for example the potential for natural or man-made barriers that limit accessibility from schools, even within the 400m direct line exclusion zone.

Operational control

5.15 LOCAL

In order to minimise impact on the local environment, amenity and promote a healthy weight environment it may be appropriate to control the operational and opening hours of the premises.

5.16 Where an application for a hot food takeaway has been granted within an exclusion zone the business shall not be open during school breaks and at times covering the beginning and end of the normal school day.

5.17 In cases where planning permission is granted, it may be appropriate to restrict opening hours in order to support the provision of a healthy weight environment. Where planning permission is granted, operating hours will be controlled via planning condition (acceptable hours therefore vary depending on the location of the takeaway).

5.18 Premises selling hot food may also require a Premises Licence. It must be noted that restrictions placed on the hours of operation of premises through a planning permission may be different to those granted in a Premises Licence.

Availability of healthier options

5.19 Operators of takeaways are encouraged to support the local authority healthy eating priorities and to provide healthier food options and nutritional information at the point of sale. Although planning cannot directly relate to the type of food being sold, it is appropriate to highlight the issue to food operators during the planning process. PHE has published an out of home food environment toolkit to support work with local businesses to provide a healthier food offer.

Allotments and Community Food Growing Spaces

5.20 LOCAL

Developments should provide an appropriate space for the provision of allotments and spaces for local food growing.

5.21 The provision of allotments on new developments will assist the local authority in meeting its duties and assist with local waiting lists.

5.22 A National Allotment Society survey of allotment waiting lists held by the English principal local authorities were surveyed in January 2013, and 321 responded. The main findings were that nationally allotment waiting lists remain high. ***[***LOCAL ***Local Authority to add relevant local evidence].***

5.23 The growing of food in any new developments must be seen as a normal option to be integrated into other green space. Housing developments (including mixed-use schemes) exceeding [LOCAL X] dwellings are required to contribute towards the provision of allotments, community green space and edible green space. This should be accessible to all members of the local community.

5.24 Redevelopment of existing allotment sites for other uses will not be permitted unless alternative, suitable provision is provided.

5.25 The local standard for allotments is [LOCAL X] hectares per 1,000 population, within a [LOCAL X] minute walk time/ Km distance, with a minimum size [LOCAL X] hectares. Smaller provision can be considered on a case by case basis. The term allotments' may be widely interpreted, but it must be protected as an allotment/food growing space for current and future residents.

5.26 Allotment and community growing opportunity can be challenging in high density situations, but new developments create the potential to incorporate food growing opportunities in their design. The standard provision of gardens and allotments will continue, but the creative use of roofs, walls and balconies where external space is limited should be considered. It might also include landscaping with edible plants rather than ornamental trees and shrubs.

5.27 The design of the new allotment site should be carried out in consultation with the plot holders and their association, and with relevant national and regional organisations, especially the National Allotment Society. It should incorporate features and designs to enable access and use across the life course. Guidance is available from the National Allotment Society. Raised Beds are also an acceptable as a way of providing growing space where there is poor ground, hardstanding or on rooftops. Raised beds should be designed to be accessible for wheelchair and sitting gardening.

6.0 Priority 2 - Promoting active travel, physical activity and connectivity

6.1 ***[LOCAL Local authority to add details of links to relevant local plan policies]***

6.2 When considering development proposals, the local authority will take a positive approach that reflects the presumption in favour of sustainable development contained in the NPPF. Sustainable development includes promoting accessibility to everyday facilities, especially those without a car. NICE Guidelines covering physical activity and the environment will form the basis of good design.

6.3 As well as encouraging physical activity, access to open and green space, spaces for play, sports and other recreation facilities promotes better mental health and wellbeing by providing opportunities for relaxation and stress reduction through facilitating social interaction within communities including those people who may feel 'excluded' for particular reasons. Public open spaces are the 'glue' that binds a place and community, making it accessible, attractive and safe and an easy place to move around. It is considered that the provision of functional open space is necessary in order to achieve active, healthy and integrated communities.

6.4 In addition to benefits of improving the physical and mental health of residents, access to well-designed open and green space, promotes increasing bio-diversity in cities, reduces

carbon emissions associated with long distance food distribution, and helps to green the urban landscape. Green walls and roofs can contribute to reducing the effects of urban heat islands, energy savings and reduced carbon emissions.

Provision of green space

6.5 LOCAL

Developments should provide an appropriate quality, quantity and variety of open space, including new and improved existing open green space, allotments, community gyms, leisure and recreation facilities to achieving better health and well-being for the population.

6.6 Open spaces should be designed to be accessible to all and follow lifetime neighbourhood principles. Children's play areas and outdoor community uses, will be encouraged and should be placed in accessible locations that within a reasonable travel distance. Commercial sites should provide accessible space that promotes physical activity by those employed on the site, e.g. walks, trails or communal open space.

6.7 When assessing open space provision and usage reference will be made to existing open space policies in order to determine appropriate standards for the provision of open space, sports and recreation facilities. This takes into account the multiple benefits delivered through the various functions of open space including: strategic functions; urban quality; promoting health and well-being; havens and habitats for flora and fauna; as a community resource; and as a visual amenity.

6.8 Any new or redevelopment of open or green space should be assessed. In some cases, poor quality green space which is replaced by smaller higher quality space may well provide greater benefits on balance. The quality of the provision of green space should be assessed, for example by the use of:

- Building with Nature
- Natural England's ANGSt standards
- ORVaL tool
- Natural Capital Planning Tool
- Green Flag Award standard

[LOCAL Local Authority to add details of any local open space assessments, standards or guidance]

Design of the built and natural environment / public realm

6.9 LOCAL

Development proposals should enhance opportunities to use public transport and the provision of high quality infrastructure to support active travel (e.g. walking and cycling) and also incorporate the creation of lifetime neighbourhoods and 'walkable environments'.

6.10 Proposals linked to existing walking and cycling networks (such as public rights of ways, towpaths etc) and improvements will be looked on favourably. Developments should include travel plans and include links to existing walking and cycling networks where possible. Travel plans should anticipate transport impacts of the development and establish measures to promote and encourage sustainable and active travel, such as

promoting walking and cycling. Travel Plans should be integrated into the design and occupation of the new site rather than retrofitted after occupation.

6.11 Travel Plans, should positively contribute to:

- encouraging sustainable and active travel
- lessening traffic generation and its detrimental impacts
- reducing carbon emissions and climate impacts
- creating accessible, connected, inclusive communities
- improving road safety
- reducing the need for new development to increase existing road capacity or provide new roads

6.12 Developers should set out within a Design and Access Statement how they have addressed accessibility. This can be by way of appropriate designs, choice and siting of street furniture, road design and pedestrian interaction, adequate lighting and other actions to ensure an area which is not only safe but free from the fear of crime and disorder. This should be used to develop physical and social features that support lifetime neighbourhoods. The Active Design guide contains useful checklists to help assess the ability of developments to deliver more active and healthier outcomes.

6.13 When considering the detail of development, proposals should:

- give priority to pedestrians and cyclists through the design and layout of development including traffic calming measures
- connect major new residential development to existing walking and cycling networks, and in particular consider convenient, safe and attractive access to employment, homes, schools and public facilities
- promote ‘active travel’ in the design of major new housing and commercial developments, i.e. bike storage, showers, clothes drying facilities
- seek to reduce noise and air pollution along active travel routes
- ensure design of places and spaces allows direct and safe movement for people and that public spaces are well maintained and safe to encourage their use
- consider natural surveillance in the design of development proposals
- design recreation areas and natural green spaces to encourage human interaction for all ages and abilities
- as far as is reasonably practicable ensure that everyone at every life stage has the facilities and services they require, for example, public toilets, appropriate street furniture design and shading
- where possible, ensure new employment developments should include attractive and safe outdoor areas or good links to existing outdoor areas that will give employees opportunities for recreation

7. Priority 3 - Building design

7.1 LOCAL

The buildings in which we live and work should promote physical activity as part of our normal routine and promote healthy eating.

[LOCAL Local authority to add details of links to relevant local plan policies]

7.2 In order to meet the aims of this guidance buildings should be designed and constructed, where possible, with reference to the following:

- homes should have adequate access and spaces for secure cycle storage
- developments include private or semi-private outdoor space, such as a front or back garden, and/or adequate-sized balconies
- car parking spaces per dwelling are minimised, and on-street car parking does not compromise safe walking and cycling networks
- non-domestic buildings or communal areas have attractive, highly visible and signed stairwells close to the entrance or exit points. Internal design and layout should promote physical activity
- Developments should create opportunities to create healthy workplaces, which make the most of opportunities to encourage physical activity, healthy eating and positive mental wellbeing. This may include access to sports facilities/gyms (indoors and outdoors), informal areas for employees to relax or for social interactions
- non-domestic buildings, such as work places include cycle racks/ cycle storage and changing/shower facilities
- developments should include a travel plan that promotes sustainable transport
- as far as is reasonably practical ensure that everyone at every life stage has the facilities and services they require, including breastfeeding facilities, baby changing, public toilets, appropriate street furniture

7.3 Schools are a key environment to promote a healthy lifestyle and as such the design and operation of schools is important. Schools should:

- develop school travel plans that encourage active travel to schools, for example walking buses
- develop healthy eating policies
- develop safe routes to school and as such schools should be orientated and have a lay out away from high traffic volumes and makes best use of the cycle and walking network. Where possible schools should separate pedestrian and vehicular access around schools
- consider safe drop off points away from the school. This is to encourage some physical activity and also to reduce congestion and vehicle emissions adjacent to schools. Traffic congestion is exacerbated by children being driven short distances to school
- have sufficient access to well designed and maintained green space, play areas and sporting facilities

8. Priority 4 - Local economy.

8.1 Having neighbourhoods with sustainable travel and an appropriate mix of businesses will support economic activity but also promote health. Retailers report an increase in trade of 40% when places are made more attractive for walking. The need to travel can be a barrier to employment or training and therefore wider social opportunities.
[LOCAL Local Authority to add details of links to relevant local plan policies]

8.2 LOCAL

Local centres should be designed and constructed with reference to the following:
Town centres and high streets

- **development enhances the vitality and viability of the local centre by providing a more diverse retail offer including a range of food options, within 400-800m of the majority of the housing development**
- **the centre should be easy to get to by public transport and is on walking and cycling networks**
- **facilities are provided for people walking and cycling, such as conveniently located benches, toilets and secure bike storage**

Job opportunities and access

- **offices and other employment sites should be easy to get to by public transport, walking or cycling**
- **development improves sustainable transport access to existing jobs**

9. Priority 5 - Neighbourhood spaces

9.1 Well connected and attractive public places and streets can encourage more people to exercise and make active travel options.
[LOCAL Local Authority to add details of links to relevant local plan policies]

9.2 Feeling unsafe within a neighbourhood is associated with a series of negative health outcomes and can prevent people from using the built and natural environments to undertake exercise. An attractive and well-designed public realm promotes use and enhances safety.

9.3 LOCAL

Developments should be designed to promote the use of community space and lifetime neighbourhoods.

9.4 In order to promote the use of community space and lifetime neighbourhoods, and following Active Design principles, developments should:

- provide community facilities early as a part of new development to help people feel connected and to provide a local destination. This should be achieved in consultation with residents where possible
- ensure community facilities such as healthcare services and leisure centres are co-located if appropriate
- provide community facilities that are easy to access from where people live, well signposted, close to public transport and on walking or cycling networks

- be designed to allow public spaces that are flexible, durable and support civic, cultural and community functions, such as local markets and food stalls
- have public spaces that are easy to get to by public transport and are on walking and cycling networks
- have connected street patterns, with short trip distances between common destinations. Street patterns should minimise the distance between origins and destinations by active travel means, and allow for several possible routes
- provide areas that are attractive and easy to find your way around. Areas are more walkable if they are 'legible' – i.e. if they have characteristics such as landmarks, boundaries, nodes where paths meet, which are distinctive and that enable people to find their way around
- residential areas designed to give priority to the needs of pedestrians, cyclists and children. Fear of traffic and 'stranger danger' are the 2 major reasons why parents are reluctant to allow children to play outside
- designing residential environments to allow children to play safely outside, for example by providing playgrounds which have natural surveillance, using shared space and 'Home Zone' principles

10. Priority 6 - Developer Contributions

10.1 Section 106 planning obligations and where the local authority has the Community Infrastructure Levy are levers that have the potential to be used to help secure a healthy environment when granting planning permission.

10.2 These financial contributions can include initiatives to tackle childhood obesity, such as providing facilities in green spaces and play areas to encourage physical activity and improvements to the walking and cycling environment, healthy eating campaigns and promoting healthier food options.

11. General approach

11.1 Planning applications in relation to existing and new A3 uses which intend to have an increase or new element of A5 hot food takeaway use, will also be considered in the light of the above guidance proportionate to the extent of the overall impact of the 'A5 aspect'.

12 Monitoring and review

12.1 It is essential to check that the SPD is being implemented correctly, that the desired outcomes are being achieved and if not, what corrective action needs to be under taken. Given the complexity of delivering healthy weight environments monitoring should be considered as part of a wider systems approach to obesity.

12.2 This will be done through a regular process of monitoring against a set of indicators, reported in the Authority Monitoring Report (AMR) or other processes as agreed with the relevant departments such as public health and environmental health. [LOCAL ***Local authority to highlight relevant AMR and other indicators***].

12.3 Such indicators may include:

- obesity among young children and young people (4-11 year olds), measured in reception aged children (4-5 year olds) and those in year 6 (10-11 year olds)
- numbers of children rating their health as good or very good through local surveys; or frequency of hot food takeaways usage
- proportion of children consuming at least 5 portions of fruit or vegetables a day
- levels of physical activity
- number of new permissions for A5 use class
- density of A5 units per 100,000 population at authority and ward levels
- evaluations involving the use of section 106 contributions
- success at appeals

12.3 This document will be reviewed in accordance with policy timelines, changes in national or local planning policy or as a result of the monitoring of this SPD.

Appendix 3: Local authority planning policy and decisions examples

Examples of local plan policy wording

Draft New London Plan – intend to publish version, December 2019
Policy E9 Retail, markets and hot food takeaways
C Development proposals containing A5 hot food takeaway uses should not be permitted where these are within 400 metres walking distance from the entrances and exits of an existing or proposed primary or secondary school. Boroughs that wish to set a locally-determined boundary from schools must ensure this is sufficiently justified. Boroughs should also carefully manage the over-concentration of A5 hot food takeaway uses within town centres and other areas through the use of locally-defined thresholds in Development Plans.

D Where development proposals involving A5 hot food takeaway uses are permitted, these should be conditioned to require the operator to achieve, and operate in compliance with, the Healthier Catering Commitment standard.

Plymouth Plan, adopted March 2019
Policy HEA1 Addressing health inequalities, improving health literacy.
5. Supporting healthy eating and improving access to good food through:
i. Promoting access to food growing opportunities and allotments.
ii. Ensuring access to healthy catering at sporting, leisure and cultural facilities and events across the city.
iii. Using planning powers to protect the food environment within a 400-metre radius of providers of secondary education. iv. Promoting and supporting breastfeeding and ensuring that all children get the very best nutritional start throughout the city

Examples of supplementary planning documents

- Coventry Hot Food Takeaway, adopted August 2019
- Leeds Hot Food Takeaway, adopted April 2019
- Rochdale Guidelines & Standards for Hot Food Takeaway Uses, updated February 2017

Examples of local authority approaches

- London Borough of Camden; Local Plan Evidence Report, Fast food takeaways and health (February 2016)
- London Borough of Hackney – Healthier Fast Food, Mapping the Fast Food Environment in Hackney (2017)
- Blackpool Council Local Plan Evidence Base - The use of the planning system to control hot food takeaways (November 2018)

Planning appeal decisions

Local authorities have had planning decisions challenged through the appeals process. Some appeals have been allowed, but many have been dismissed. Healthy eating and proximity to a school has been a consideration in a number of planning appeals. It has often not been the only determining factor in the decision. But healthy eating and proximity to a school have been given substantial weight when there is an adopted local plan policy or SPD in place, local

evidence on childhood obesity and healthy eating initiatives, and representations from the relevant school.

It should be noted that planning appeals for new A5 hot food takeaways are usually decided on the outcome of a number of considerations in the 'planning balance', and not solely on public health grounds. However, the adoption of policies restricting new A5 hot food takeaways near schools by an increasing number of local planning authorities following examination in public, and evidence from planning appeals, demonstrates that the Planning Inspectorate supports such policies where the appropriate evidence has been provided to support those policies. Applications may be allowed where conditions can mitigate the concerns of children's access to takeaways during school breaks. In these cases, a separate policy regarding the over concentration of takeaways can still be important.

APP/C5690/A/14/2228987 Lewisham Way, London, SE4 1UY
An application was refused for a change of use from retail to a hot food takeaway within 400m of 4 primary schools. The Inspector appreciated that, although the local policy did not prove a direct link between the proliferation of hot food takeaways and the causes of obesity it sought to manage the proliferation of hot food takeaways as a method of combating their impact on the health and wellbeing of the community, in particular children. Having regard to Lewisham Council's planning policy relating to the location of hot food takeaways, which seeks to limit access to unhealthy foods which can reduce obesity levels and associated health concerns, and the aims and objectives of promoting healthy eating and lifestyles expressed in national, regional and local guidance and initiative; the Inspector concluded that the hot food takeaway being proposed would materially harm the health and wellbeing of local residents. The appeal was dismissed.

APP/Z5060/A/10/2136264 - 233 Heathway, Dagenham, Essex RM9 5AN
The appellant submitted that the nutritional qualities of their Pizzas differ from other takeaway foods as they are oven baked and low-fat cheese is an option. Furthermore, the appellant's business model did not include children's portions or toys, but the inspector considered that these were not matters which could be effectively controlled by conditions. The appellant was willing to accept a condition requiring its counter service to close between 15.00hours and 16.30hours each afternoon on schooldays. The inspector concluded that if enforced, it would prevent over-the-counter sales to parents and children immediately after school, although telephone and internet sales would not be affected. As such, it would have a neutral effect on the health and wellbeing of local residents but would further harm the vitality of the shopping frontage. The appeal was dismissed.

APP/P4415/A/11/2159082 – Canklow Hotel, Canklow Road, Rotherham
The application concerned a premises within 40m of a primary school and the Council had ongoing healthy eating projects and the school itself had a Healthy School Certificate. There were concerns that the application would undermine this work. The planning inspector accepted that health and wellbeing was a relevant matter, even though there was no planning policy in place to restrict the location of takeaways. The inspector found that the children from the primary school would not be allowed to leave during the school day and as such would not have access to the business without parents, who have the responsibility for their childrens diet. As such the appeal was allowed.

APP/G5750/A/11/2162904 – London Borough of Newham
The London Borough of Newham won an appeal against its refusal to grant planning permission for a hot food takeaway. The appeal decision identifies the need for healthy eating to take account of the cumulative impact of hot food takeaways. It is identified in the justification to the policy that the number of hot food take-away premises is a matter of public concern. It indicates that a 400m exclusion zone around existing or proposed secondary schools for such take-away uses would help influence young people's access to such food. The appeal was dismissed.