PROMOTING ACCESS TO HEALTHY FOOD ENVIRONMENTS AND LOCALLY SOURCED FOOD

HEALTHY PLACES GUIDANCE

EPOA
Essex Planning
Officers Association

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LOTTERY FUNDED

KEY FACTS

- In Essex, approximately 1 in 5 children start primary school either overweight or obese and this rises to nearly 1 in 3 children being overweight or obese when they leave primary school[46].

- 63.6% of adults in our population carry excess weight with levels as high as 70.5% in some areas of our county[47].

- On average, obesity causes a reduction in life expectancy of 9 years. It is associated with certain cancers, high blood pressure and type 2 diabetes[48].

- In Essex, there are on average 69.5 fast food outlets per 100,000 of population[42]. Our highest density is found in Tendring, with 96.3 per 100,000 population and our lowest is Rochford with 25.7 per 100,000 population[49].

- Consuming food out of the home is associated with obesity as these meals tend to be higher in calories and energy density, this has led to PHE looking at strategies using the environment to reduce consumption[50].

Thanks to Chelmsford City Council

How to encourage and improve healthier food environments;

- Consider introducing a hot fast food restriction policy to ensure over-clustering and overconcentration is reduced[50,51]. Many areas across the country have successfully introduced a restriction policy that limits new hot fast food/ A5 outlets to support reducing excess weight. Several supplementary planning documents exist with excellent examples nationally. Consider restricting primary and secondary shop frontage A5 use in policies.

- Work with Public Health and local Environmental Health teams to ensure clustering and overconcentration of hot fast food/ A5 premises does not occur, supporting the reduction of obesity, reducing waste, odour and excess noise on high streets.

- Consider ensuring that fast food/A5 premises are not permitted within 400 metre walking proximity of either primary and secondary school sites or areas where children socialise/ play[51]. This should be measured via active travel routes.

- Support the promotion of healthier food options in fast food outlets including the Essex based Tuck In scheme. Details of this can be found through local environmental health teams or via local district, borough and city Public Health Practitioners.

- Consider including healthy food access as part of any community participation when applications for development are submitted to identify need or identify barriers. This supports residents to be able to access local, affordable, fresh produce and reduces food insecurity, food swamps and perceived food deserts.

- Ensure that communities can access healthy food environments through active travel modes or public transport (where able) and that these food outlets accommodate active travel measures i.e. cycle storage/cycle parking.

- Promote access to and allocate space for allotments and green space use for either individual or community use. Groups who may support these could include schools, community voluntary groups and health and/or wellbeing groups. Ensure adequate supporting infrastructure to support this provision is provided and engage with Parish Councils on requirements.

- Encourage and promote food growing with local businesses, workplaces, schools and in community shared space. As an example, Ebbsfleet Healthy Garden City has developed 'Edible Ebbsfleet'- the case study can be found in guide 7 of the TCPA Garden City Standards for the 21st Century[52].

Thanks to Chelmsford City Council

References

42 NHS England (2018) Putting Health into Place: Introducing NHS England's Healthy New Town's programme.

46 Public Health England (2018) Child and maternal health profiles

47 Public Health England (2018) Local Area Health Profile Essex County

48 Public Health England (2017) Health Matters; Obesity and the food environment

49 Public Health England (2018) Density of fast food outlets in England by Local Authority and ward: data tables ad meta data

50 Public Health England and Local Government Association (2017) Strategies for encouraging Healthier 'Out of Home' provision. A toolkit for local councils working with small food businesses.

51 London Healthy Urban Development Unit (2013) Using the Planning System to control hot food takeaways. A good practice guide.

52 TCPA (2017) Garden City Standards for the 21st Century. Practical Guides for creating successful new communities Guide 7 planning for green and prosperous places