

Food Environments and Planning

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1. Understand the power of reuniting planning and public health in promoting healthier food environments;
2. Learn from recent judgments of the Planning Inspectorate on local plan policies and planning decisions.



House of Commons
Health Committee

Public health post-2013

Second Report of Session 2016–17

HC 140

Why do we want to get health into the planning and development process?

“A major reason for transferring public health to local government was to enable **wider health and wellbeing considerations to be taken into account across the full range of social policy areas** which can have an impact on health.

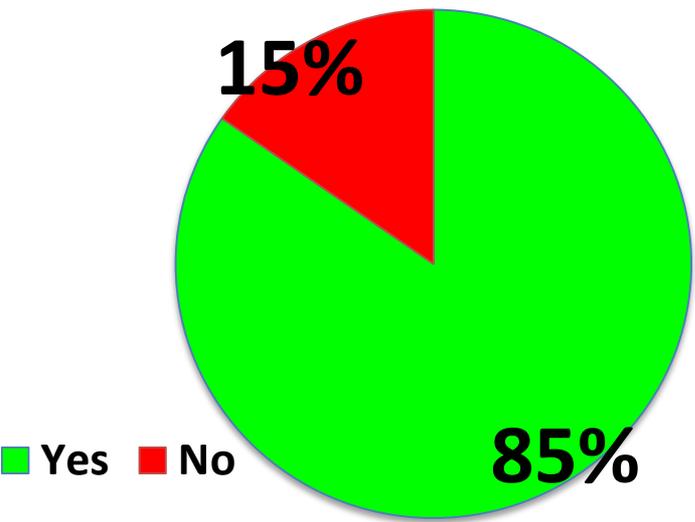
In the context of reduced funding, it is crucially important that the **right policy levers and tools are in place at a national level** to enable **local authorities to do their job** as effectively as possible.”

July 2016

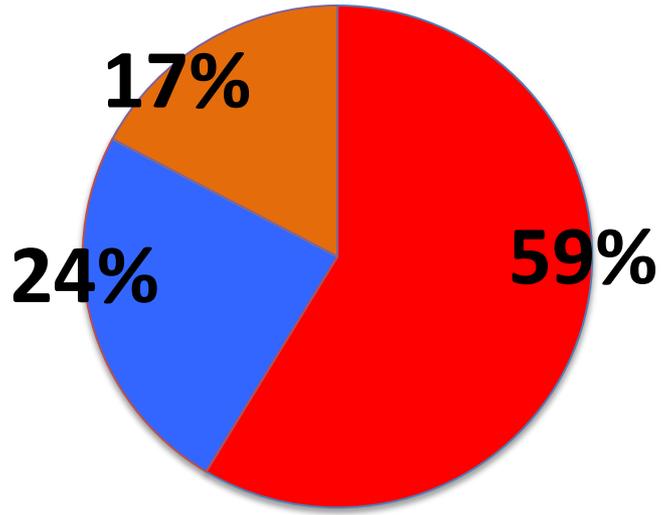
Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategies

Core Strategies/ Local Plans

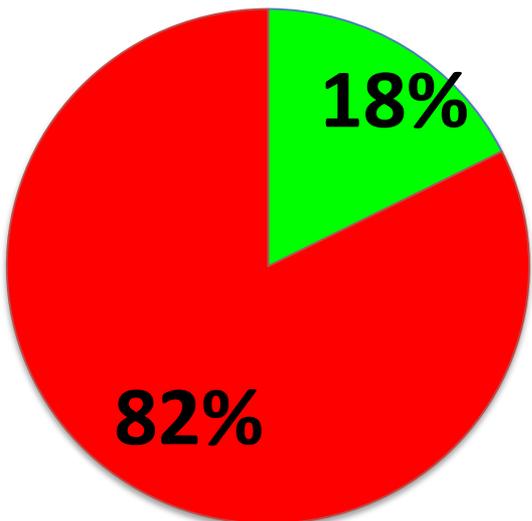
References to Obesity in JHWS



References to obesity and the built environment in Local Plans adopted post-March 2013



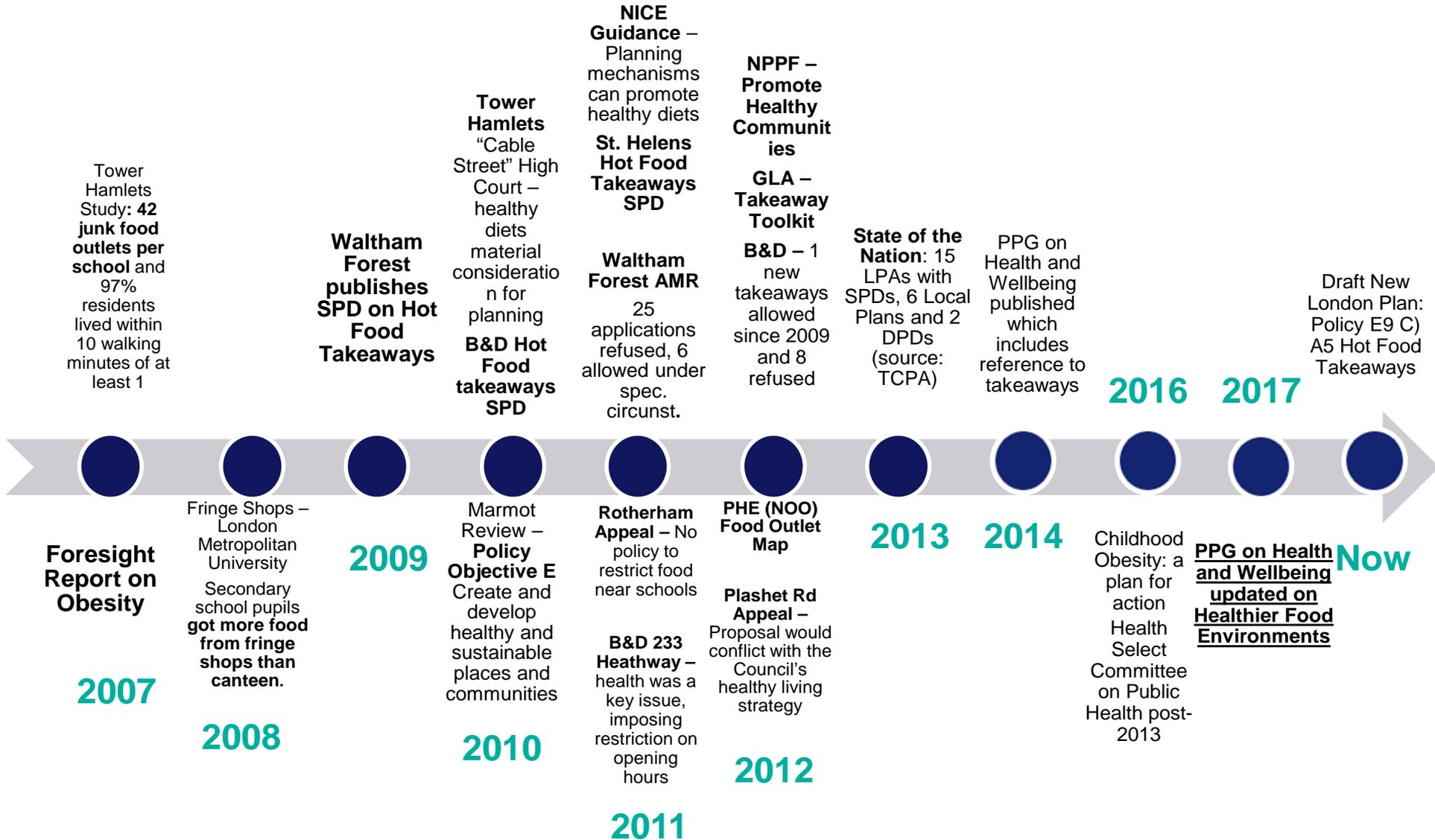
Reference to obesity AND the built environment in JHWS



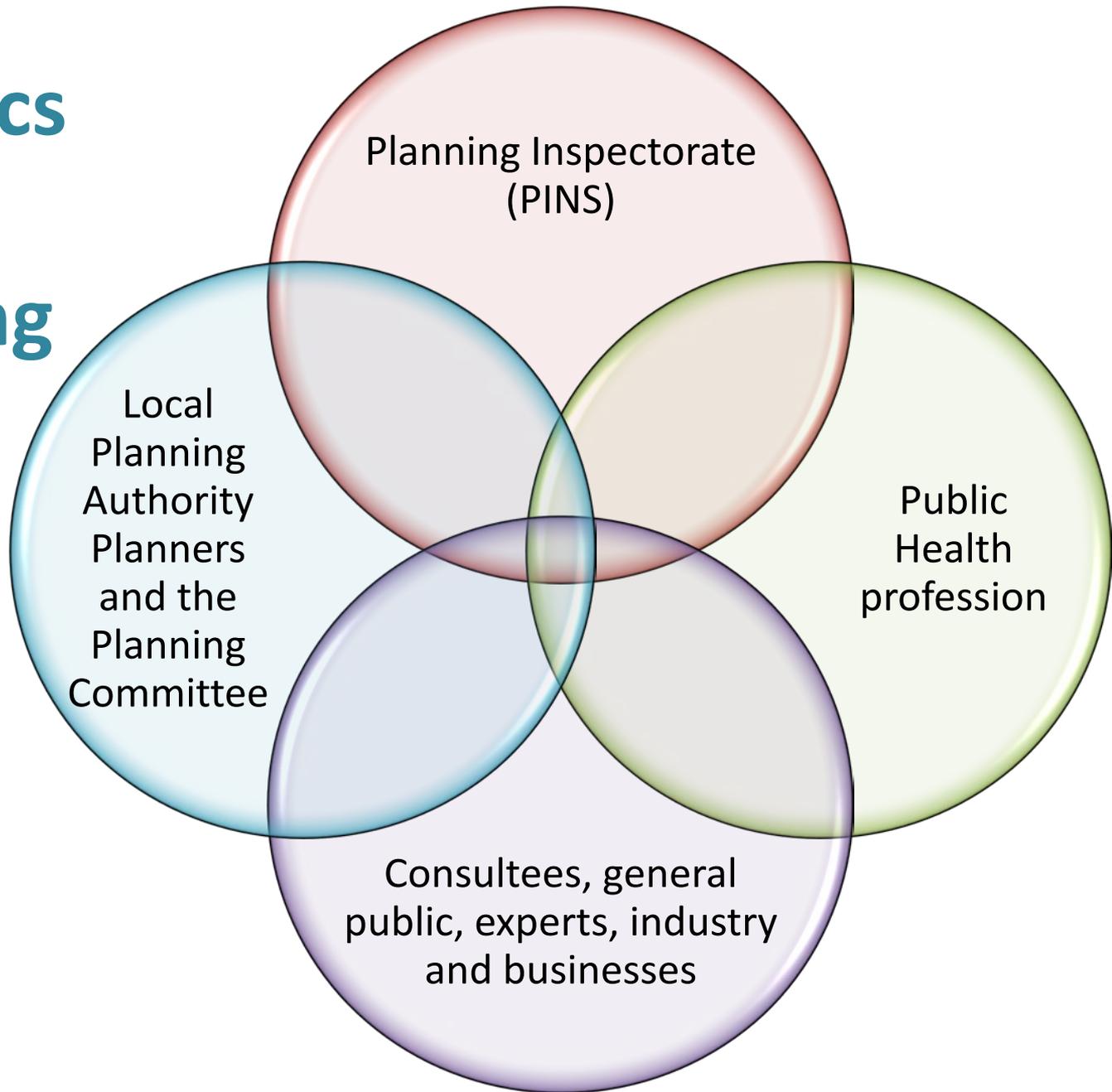
- Not at all
- In introductory sections
- In policy wording
- In policy supporting text

Source: TCPA research in 2014

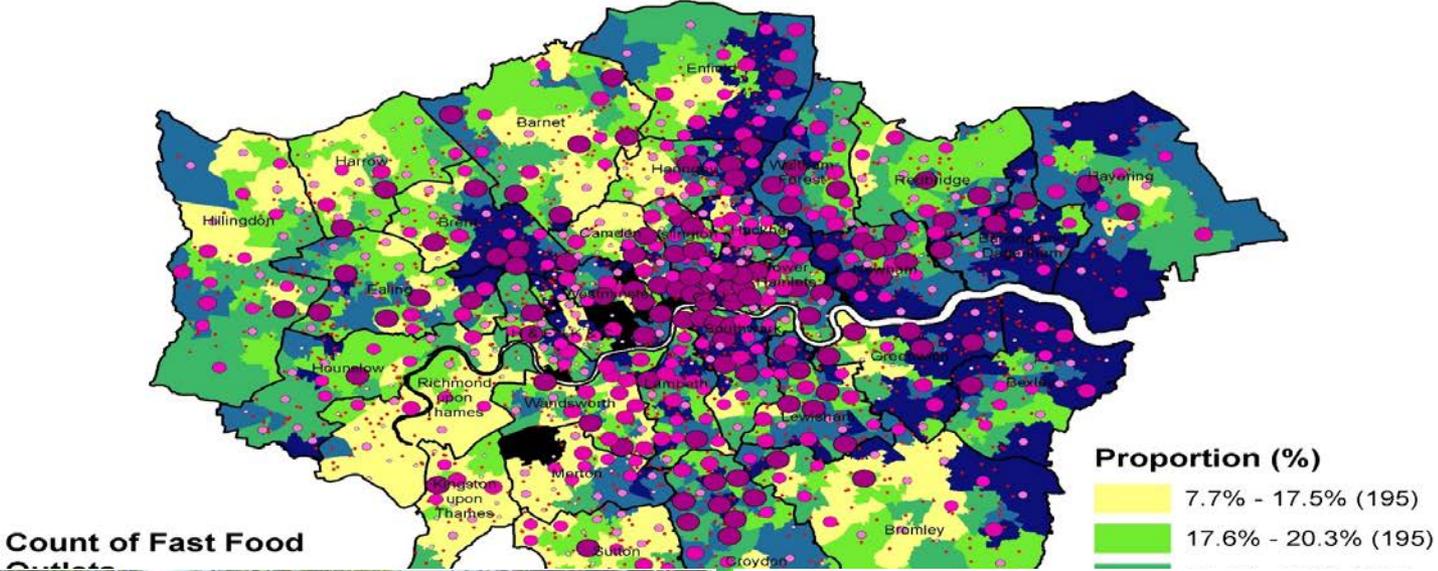
The planning for food timeline



Power dynamics in planning



When we all get it right..



Pedestrian- and cycle-friendly environment at the Woodford Garden Village development, Cheshire



Lessons from local plan examinations

- London Borough local plan examination, January 2018
“The proposed criterion to resist proposals for Class A5 uses within 400m of schools or youth centres would not prevent the consumption of high fat and high sugar food by young people. Nonetheless planning can assist in creating healthier consumption choices and the PPG encourages local planning authorities to have particular regard to the proximity to locations where young people congregate. The restriction is therefore a justified policy response to address this issue based on the specific local circumstances. Whilst this might inhibit individual businesses there is no evidence that the modified policy would be detrimental to the local economy as a whole”.
- Similar conclusions in other examinations, ie London Borough local plan examination, September 2016, Wakefield, October 2016

Lessons from appeal decisions

- A more mixed picture

Case 1: The Council has provided little in the way of robust evidence to show that children attending the church to undertake youth activities will be influenced by the presence of an additional Hot Food Takeaway in this location. Appeal allowed. 2016

Case 2: it is more appropriate to use a typical walking route as a guide rather than a direct linear measurement. This is because this is typically the route that children would take whereas a linear route may cut across roads, gardens, railway lines etc. Appeal allowed. 2017

Lessons from appeal decisions

Case 3: “Pressures on the business” could lead to less healthy food being sold, despite the “best intentions” of the appellant. He did not accept that the branding of the business would make a pivot to selling unhealthy food unrealistic, adding that a condition could not control the nature of food sold. Appeal dismissed. 2017

Case 4: It is acknowledged that the appeal proposal does offer some benefits, including bringing a vacant unit back into an operational use and offering some local employment opportunities. However, these do not significantly and demonstrably outweigh the harm that I have identified. Appeal dismissed. 2018

Concluding insights

- Clear direction and definition in national planning policy will be beneficial and has been clearly supporting PINS in appeals and local plans,
- There is a diverse range of outcomes of local plans and appeal decisions – so is the reason down to the nature of local evidence provided or the knowledge of the individual PINS inspector?,
- Different interpretation/ professional judgment between PINS in local plans and PINS on appeals,
- Policies/ decisions will carry more weight if strongly supported by JHWS and JSNA,
- There does not seem to be any material difference whether A5 policies are in local plan policies or SPD guidance,
- The importance of effective local evidence.

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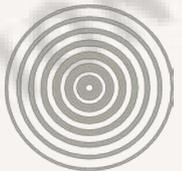
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