

**CABINET  
9 MARCH 2021**

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**SUPPORTING THE CHILDHOOD HEALTH WEIGHT PLAN FOR DARLINGTON**

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**Responsible Cabinet Member –  
Councillor Alan Marshall, Economy Portfolio**

**Responsible Director –  
Ian Williams, Director of Economic Growth and Neighbourhood Services**

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**SUMMARY REPORT**

**Purpose of the Report**

1. To gain Cabinet approval to commence a review of the available planning powers that could be used to support the Council's objectives of achieving the targets set in the Childhood Healthy Weight Plan for Darlington.

**Summary**

2. Planning can influence the built environment to improve health and reduce obesity and excess 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 production and consumption choices.
3. Local planning authorities can consider bringing forward, where supported by an evidence base, local planning policies and supplementary planning documents, which limit the proliferation of certain use classes in identified areas, where planning permission is required. In doing so, evidence and guidance produced by local public health colleagues and Health and Wellbeing Boards may be relevant.
4. Policies may also request the provision of allotments or allotment gardens, to ensure the provision of adequate spaces for food growing opportunities.
5. Local planning authorities and planning applicants could have particular regard to the following issues: -
  - (a) proximity to locations where children and young people congregate such as schools, community centres and playgrounds
  - (b) evidence indicating high levels of obesity, deprivation and general poor health in specific locations
  - (c) over-concentration and clustering of certain use classes within a specified area
  - (d) Residential amenity – odours and noise impact
  - (e) traffic impact
  - (f) refuse and litter
  - (g) Over proliferation – where the number approved establishments within the Ward equals or exceeds the UK national average per 1000 population

(h) Opening hours

**Recommendations**

6. It is recommended that:-

- (a) Cabinet request officers explore the merits of adopting the available planning powers through the development of an evidence base and the analysis of good practice elsewhere in the country which will assist in addressing childhood obesity.
- (b) in conducting the review, officers consult with the Health and Wellbeing Board.
- (c) a report be brought back to a future Cabinet meeting.

**Reasons**

7. The recommendations are supported as they will contribute to the further health and wellbeing of the Town.

**Ian Williams**  
**Director of Economic Growth and Neighbourhood Services**

**Background Papers**

Childhood Healthy Weight Plan for Darlington

Mark Ladyman: Extension 6306

S17 Crime and Disorder	No direct impact
Health and Well Being	Potentially positive impacts for health and wellbeing
Carbon Impact	No direct impact
Diversity	No direct impact
Wards Affected	All
Groups Affected	All
Budget and Policy Framework	This decision does not involve any change to the budget and policy framework
Key Decision	No
Urgent Decision	No
One Darlington: Perfectly Placed	Potentially positive impacts for health and wellbeing
Efficiency	No direct impacts
Impact on Looked After Children and Care Leavers	Potentially positive impacts for all children including Looked After Children or Care Leavers

## MAIN REPORT

### Information and Analysis

8. Tackling obesity requires a whole system approach, with local authorities, health services and commissioners all playing their part. The health and wellbeing of local communities is affected by a wide range of factors. The built environment is a key factor that spatial planning can be used to improve. There are existing powers within the planning system which can be adopted to support health and wellbeing and several local authorities have adopted Supplementary Planning Documents (SPD) to assist in managing the number of hot food takeaways.
9. The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), published in February 2019 is a material consideration in the determination of planning applications. The NPPF states that the purpose of the planning system is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development. Paragraph 8 explains that there are three dimensions to sustainable development – 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. Poor health also impacts on economic outcomes.
10. Paragraph 91 of the NPPF focuses on promoting healthy communities emphasizing how planning can play an important role in facilitating social interaction and creating healthy, inclusive communities.
11. It is important to note that the NPPF aims to ensure the vitality of town centres by encouraging local planning authorities to set out policies for the management and growth of centres, including making clear which uses will be permitted in certain locations and promoting competitive town centres that provide customer choice and a diverse retail offer. The NPPF states that planning policies and decisions should aim to achieve amongst other things, strong neighbourhood centres and active street frontages. This section of the NPPF also requires planning decisions to guard against the loss of valued facilities and services.
12. The range of issues that could be considered through the plan-making and decision-making processes, in respect of health and healthcare infrastructure, include how: the local planning policies promotes health, social and cultural wellbeing and supports the reduction of health inequalities and considers opportunities for healthy lifestyles (e.g. 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 and opportunities for play, sport and recreation).
13. It should be noted for the proposed work will be carried out in conjunctions with the Health and Wellbeing Board to ensure any spatial planning policy changes are informed through evidence and intelligence of impact of hot food takeaways on childhood obesity the local area. A clear evidence base and justified policy wording should result in the policies being found to be 'sound' by the Planning Inspectorate and subsequently become the adopted policy. It is important that any adopted policy provides strong grounds that enable the policy to be used as grounds for

refusal in planning application decision making and that the decision is capable of being upheld at any subsequent appeal proceedings.

14. Future policy initiatives also need to reflect and adopt good practices that exist across the country. In the interim the Director of Public Health will be consulted when planning applications are received until there is further detailed work done on this issue. The response from the Director of Public Health would identify or not any specific issues regarding public health that may be material to the determining of any given application, in any given locality.

### **Financial Considerations**

15. There are no financial implications to this report at this moment.

### **Consultation**

16. The Council is strongly committed to involving as many people as possible in the preparation of any planning policy changes to ensure that stakeholders and the community have an opportunity to have their say. The Council is legally required by Regulations 11 to 16 of the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulation 2012, alongside the Darlington Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) to carry out early engagement during the scoping exercise and formally consult on the draft planning policy.