

Councillor Eddie Dryden
Chair, Middlesbrough Council's Health Scrutiny Panel
C/o Town Hall
Middlesbrough
TS1 9FT

Councillor Lewis Young
Executive Member for Economic Development and Infrastructure

1st October 2018

Dear Councillor Lewis Young,

HEALTH SCRUTINY RESPONSE TO LOCAL PLAN: PREFERRED OPTIONS

As you're aware on 28th September 2018 the Health Scrutiny Committee, as the body responsible for Middlesbrough's statutory health scrutiny function, met to discuss the power of planning policy in reducing health inequalities and tackling childhood obesity. As stated in a recent Local Government Association (LGA) briefing on Childhood Obesity,

"Councils take childhood obesity seriously. Today's obese children will be tomorrow's obese adults, and with this come a range of costly and debilitating major health conditions. To tackle this issue, councils across England have adopted a variety of methods to reduce childhood obesity in their areas.¹

In addition, "the National Planning Policy Framework makes it clear that the planning system can play an important role in creating healthy, inclusive communities."²

Over the course of the summer 2018 the panel has received evidence from the Council's Department of Public Health and the Department of Planning. The panel has been informed that the current confinement of takeaways to commercial centres provides for an effective control and that the Local Plan seeks to include the limitation of new takeaways by a percentage value within the commercial centres. The panel was also advised that other local authorities in the North East have, in recent years, introduced restrictions on the proliferation of fast food outlets.

In terms of overweight and obesity rates in reception (4/5 year olds) and Year 6 (10/11 year olds) the panel was provided with a breakdown of the figures by ward. The England average obesity figure for reception aged children in 2014/15 to 2015/16 was 9.34 per cent. The Middlesbrough average was 12.67 per cent, with some wards including Bewick Hills and Pallister (15.34 per cent), Brambles and Thorntree (15.3 per cent) and North Ormesby (17.7 per cent) all above 15 per cent. Similarly Year 6 pupils in 2014/15 to 2015/16 was 19.64 per cent. The Middlesbrough average was 22.67 per cent, with some wards including Central (26.90 per cent), Newport (27.99 per cent), and Berwick Hills and Pallister (25.65 per cent) all above 25 per cent.

¹ Local Government Association briefing, Childhood Obesity, House of Lords debate – 17 April 2018

² Ibid

In light of the above, at its meeting on 12th June 2018 the panel advised that it wished to submit a formal response to the Local Plan preferred options consultation, in order to strengthen local policy on improving access to healthier food and reducing access to unhealthy food outlets.

At a further meeting on 4th September 2018 the panel emphasised the need for the Council to have a robust policy in place that would provide a strong evidence base and help back up the planning decisions that are made locally. In response to the information provided Members expressed the view that the Council should adopt a similar to other Local Authorities, as well as develop a Hot Food Takeaway Supplementary Planning Document (SPD).

The panel is keen to put forward the following recommendations to the Executive:-

Recommendation 1: That Policy EG7 on Hot Food Takeaways, as detailed in the Local Plan, be fully endorsed by the Health Scrutiny Panel following the inclusion of additional point e. applications for A5 uses will be required to be accompanied by a Health Impact Assessment, and, where an unacceptable adverse impact is established, permission will not be granted.

Recommendation 2: That the Council prepare a Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) to control Hot Food Takeaway proposals, particularly from the perspective of improving the health and well-being of Middlesbrough's population.

On behalf of the panel I would also like to thank you for attending the Health Scrutiny Panel meeting on 28th September 2018 and partaking in the important discussion on this topic.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Eddie Dryden', with a horizontal line underneath it.

Councillor Eddie Dryden - Chair of Middlesbrough Council's Health Scrutiny Panel