



Krupesh Hirani AM
Chair of the Health Committee

The Lord Khan of Tooting
Mayor of London

(Sent by email)

1 October 2026

Dear Lord Khan,

Draft London Plan consultation response – healthy high streets

I am pleased to share the Health Committee's response to the Draft London Plan consultation, focusing on the theme of 'healthy high streets'. This follows an evidence-gathering meeting on the topic held on 16 June 2026.

At our meeting, we heard from several experts who highlighted the role of high streets in improving the health of communities. High streets can provide access to healthy food, facilitate active travel and enable social interaction. Thriving high streets boost local economies, which in turn contribute towards positive health outcomes.

Conversely, high streets can also contribute towards adverse health outcomes and exacerbate health inequalities, particularly where there is a high concentration of outlets such as betting shops and fast-food takeaways. Failing high streets are also associated with increased crime and unemployment, further adding to health inequalities.

William Roberts from the Royal Society of Public Health argued that there are several features that constitute a healthy high street. These include: being tailored to the needs of local communities; ensuring they are safe and accessible; providing social spaces; and ensuring they include access to services as well as retail.¹

¹ London Assembly Health Committee, [Healthy High Streets - Panel One](#), 16 July 2026, pp. 1-2

We heard about several initiatives on London's high streets which could have a positive impact on people's health. Louise Duggan and Tim Rettler discussed projects funded by the GLA which have sought to increase access to healthy food and improve the public realm, thus making high streets more attractive places to visit and socialise in.² Dr Agatha Nortley-Meshe from NHS England told us about the work the NHS is doing in London to embed a neighbourhood health model in communities, including by establishing neighbourhood health centres on high streets.³

Rob Anderson from Centre for London discussed the role of Business Improvement Districts (BIDs) in creating healthy places, highlighting "the possibility of physical activity and active travel, access to healthy food, community connections, the improvements of well-being that comes from strong social connections."⁴ Cllr Rags Sandhu from Bexley Council told us about the work of Bexleyheath BID and the importance of focusing not just on traditional retail, but on activity such as night markets and summer markets.⁵ It is clear that on high streets and town centres across London there are a wide range of initiatives having a positive impact on the health of communities.

The role of planning in healthy high streets

We heard that the planning system can play an important role in building healthy high streets. Policy E9 of the London Plan 2021 states that "over-concentrations of some uses [...] such as betting shops, pawnbrokers, pay-day loan stores, amusement centres and hot food takeaways, can give rise to particular concerns regarding the impact on mental and physical health and wellbeing [...]."⁶ It goes on to state that "the proliferation and concentration of these uses should be carefully managed through Development Plans and planning decisions."⁷

Policy E9 also includes specific restrictions for hot food takeaways seeking to open near schools:

"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."⁸

The Committee heard that Policy E9 has been incorporated into local plans and has influenced planning decisions. Harry Burchill from the London Borough of Brent told us that Brent had two policies in its Local Plan which are aligned with Policy E9 and the saturation of uses.⁹ He went on to explain that "Policy E9 does as much as it can to set the framework for our own policy" and that "from a strategic perspective the regulatory policies probably do as much as they can."¹⁰

² London Assembly Health Committee, [Healthy High Streets - Panel Two](#), 16 July 2026, pp. 1-2

³ London Assembly Health Committee, [Healthy High Streets - Panel One](#), 16 July 2026, p. 14

⁴ London Assembly Health Committee, [Healthy High Streets - Panel One](#), 16 July 2026, p. 2

⁵ London Assembly Health Committee, [Healthy High Streets - Panel One](#), 16 July 2026, p. 7

⁶ Mayor of London, [The London Plan 2021](#), pp. 270-271

⁷ Mayor of London, [The London Plan 2021](#), p. 271

⁸ Mayor of London, [The London Plan 2021](#), p. 269

⁹ London Assembly Health Committee, [Healthy High Streets - Panel Two](#), 16 July 2026, p. 7

¹⁰ London Assembly Health Committee, [Healthy High Streets - Panel Two](#), 16 July 2026, p. 15

It appears that these restrictions have not prevented an increase in hot food takeaways. Gerard Burgess from the GLA told us that in between 2017 and 2024, there has been a 38 per cent increase in the floor space associated with hot food takeaway uses in London.¹¹ However, he also explained that “the approval rate for hot food takeaway uses is significantly lower than the average across all types of planning applications in London.”¹² This indicates that planning regulations do have an impact in limiting the growth of outlets with negative health consequences for communities.

Data shared with the Committee by GLA officers after the meeting shows that “Schools, Health and Obesity Policies” is one of the most common reasons for hot food takeaways being refused in London, including for being “within 400m of schools” and “conflict with London Plan Policy E9”.¹³

It is therefore important that these provisions are retained and strengthened in the new London Plan, given that they have been well-used by councils and have had a positive impact. We reviewed the Draft Plan with this in mind.

Draft London Plan 2026: Policy ‘PV3 Town centres and high streets’

We welcome the inclusion of Policy ‘PV3 Town centres and high streets’ in the Draft London Plan 2026, which aims to “promote and enhance town centres and high streets as vibrant, resilient, accessible and inclusive places”.¹⁴ It highlights public realm improvements and supporting greening as “strategic objectives” for local plans.¹⁵ We welcome these aims and the ambition of promoting healthier high streets.

Policy PV3 also includes stipulations that local authorities should cover the following when developing policies for town centres:

“Restrictions on concentrations of specific and cumulative sui generis uses (such as betting shops, adult gaming centres, pawnbrokers, pay day loan shops and hot food takeaways) that can have a negative impact on town centre diversity, community safety and/or the health and well-being of Londoners.”¹⁶

We welcome these provisions and their application to all town centres, and not just areas around schools. However, we also note that the Draft London Plan 2026 does not contain the specific provisions from Policy E9 of the London Plan 2021, that restricted hot takeaway outlets opening within 400m of a school.

Given that the GLA’s own data indicates that this policy was the reason for several applications for hot food takeaways being refused, we believe that this 400m restriction around schools should be explicitly stated in the new London Plan. The Committee asks that this recommendation be considered in addition to the proposed policy restricting the

¹¹ London Assembly Health Committee, [Healthy High Streets - Panel Two](#), 16 July 2026, p. 10

¹² London Assembly Health Committee, [Healthy High Streets - Panel Two](#), 16 July 2026, p. 10

¹³ Background paper provided by GLA officers to Health Committee: Refused applications relating to hot food takeaways, betting shops and adult gaming centres across London LPAs

¹⁴ Mayor of London, [Draft London Plan 2026: PV3 Town centres and high streets](#), July 2026

¹⁵ Mayor of London, [Draft London Plan 2026: PV3 Town centres and high streets](#), July 2026

¹⁶ Mayor of London, [Draft London Plan 2026: PV3 Town centres and high streets](#), July 2026

concentration of specific and cumulative uses, as specified in PV3 of the Draft London Plan.

Policies that support healthy developments on high streets

As well as restricting the expansion of ‘unhealthy’ premises on high streets, it is important that the planning system supports the growth of premises that provide public health benefits. These could include gyms and leisure centres, health facilities and outlets serving healthy food.

We were pleased to hear that there have been some positive developments in this area. Gerard Burgess told us that there was “particularly strong growth” in indoor leisure floor space – which includes gyms and leisure centres – in between 2017 and 2024.¹⁷ He also noted that there was a 30 per cent increase in health-related uses, including GPs, dentists, health centres and health clinics, in between 2017 and 2024, although this increase was from a low base.¹⁸

We welcome the increase in these premises that bring public health benefits, and would like to see this growth continue on London’s high streets. **We would therefore like to see more explicit emphasis placed on the importance of these uses in the new London Plan, and policies to encourage their growth through the planning system.**

Active travel and car use on high streets

Guests at our meeting, including Rob Anderson and William Roberts, highlighted the benefits of active travel on high streets.¹⁹ However, Cllr Rags Sandhu, referring to Bexley, told us that “a huge amount of our local residents are dependent on their cars, because [...] what works in inner London does not work in outer London simply because the infrastructure and the transport links are not there.”²⁰

Organisations such as Living Streets have kept updating their research into the value of active travel, with the Pedestrian Pound report last updated in 2024.²¹ Meanwhile the guidance on Healthy Streets published in the evidence base for the new London Plan was last revised in 2017.

Policy ‘MBUL9 Healthy streets and public realm’ of the Draft London Plan draws on TfL’s ‘Healthy Streets Approach’, which aims to encourage walking, cycling and public transport use.²² It is important that policies related to active travel are evidence-based, including for their impact on London’s high streets.

As part of the development of the London Plan, the GLA and TfL should carry out research on the impact of the Healthy Streets Approach and other active travel policies on London’s high streets. This should consider the impact these policies have had on access

¹⁷ London Assembly Health Committee, [Healthy High Streets - Panel Two](#), 16 July 2026, p. 8

¹⁸ London Assembly Health Committee, [Healthy High Streets - Panel Two](#), 16 July 2026, pp. 8-9

¹⁹ London Assembly Health Committee, [Healthy High Streets - Panel One](#), 16 July 2026, pp. 1-2

²⁰ London Assembly Health Committee, [Healthy High Streets - Panel One](#), 16 July 2026, p. 11

²¹ Living Streets, [The Pedestrian Pound](#), November 2024

²² Mayor of London, [Draft London Plan 2026: MBUL9 Healthy streets and public realm](#), July 2026

to high streets, as well as the economic impact on high streets. This should also include a literature review of research from a wide range of organisations.

I would be grateful if you could respond by Monday 30 November 2026. Please send your response to Diane Richards, Committee Officer, at Diane.Richards@london.gov.uk. I look forward to hearing from you.

Yours,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Krupesh Hirani', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Krupesh Hirani AM
Chair of the Health Committee