

LB Enfield Directorate of Public Health response to the draft London Plan

Background

LB Enfield Directorate of Public Health (LBE PH) is the lead agency within the London Borough of Enfield for improving the health of those who live, work or play in Enfield. It works closely partners both internal and external to the Council including the Enfield Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG), the North Middlesex University Hospital as well as the Royal Free and Barnet and Chase Farm Hospitals.

Response

LBE PH strongly welcomes the scale and ambition outlined in the London Plan which if implemented will significantly improve health across the capital, increase healthy life-expectancy and reduce demand upon the NHS. In particular LBE PH welcomes:

- The commitment to 'good growth' including a systematic approach to improving the mental and physical health of all Londoners and reducing health inequalities
- Design policies that promote active travel, good quality housing, green and open spaces, free drinking water and prevent or mitigate noise and poor air quality
- Housing policies to increase both overall supply and the supply of affordable housing
- Social infrastructure policies that encourage Local Authorities and Health organisations to work together to identify and address health and social care needs, ensure good quality education, childcare facilities, healthy routes to schools, play and informal recreation and free publicly accessible toilets.
- Restrictions on A5 hot takeaway developments near schools
- The commitment to develop the night-time economy
- Policies to develop Green infrastructure
- Transport policies to encourage active transport and healthy streets, car-free developments and Londoners undertaking two 10-minute periods of active travel per day.
- Healthy Streets which will be fundamental to raising prevalence of physical activity as they will encourage everyday movement through attractive and accessible environments
- Policies to improve air quality and reduce greenhouse gases

LBE PH would however ask for caution in relation to:

- 'Health impact assessments' (HIAs) within the production of 'good growth'. Whilst they can be useful the production of a HIA is often more useful than the end document itself. Also, it is unfeasible for a HIA to be undertaken for every development. The principles of 'good growth' should be integrated into planning with HIAs used for major developments.

- More work is required on what is meant by 'affordable housing'. Definitions of affordable housing relating to market prices within a market that is overheated may still mean that housing is essentially unaffordable to any but the more wealthy.
- The provision of free water fountains is welcomed as a cooling feature, focus of interest, a means of reducing use of plastic. However, it should not be used as a means of promoting the myth that people need to constantly drink in order to remain healthy.
- The restriction on A5 hot food takeaways is welcome. However, legislation needs to be revised to ensure that premises bought under one use are not subsequently changed to A5 usage. This is particularly important given the Mayors statutory duty to promote health and prevalence of both adult and childhood obesity in London.
- Within the concept of healthy streets, the Mayors Transport Strategy etc it would be useful for schools to have targets relating to travel to school. This should include teachers and other staff who have a leadership responsibility within their community.
- The Board would like to emphasise the need to provide for unsupervised play and recreation, and independent travel for children to build resilience and independence.
- Whilst the Board is strongly supportive of the London plan there remain concerns of how and when it will be implemented. Clarity on this would be welcomed.