

Comments

Background

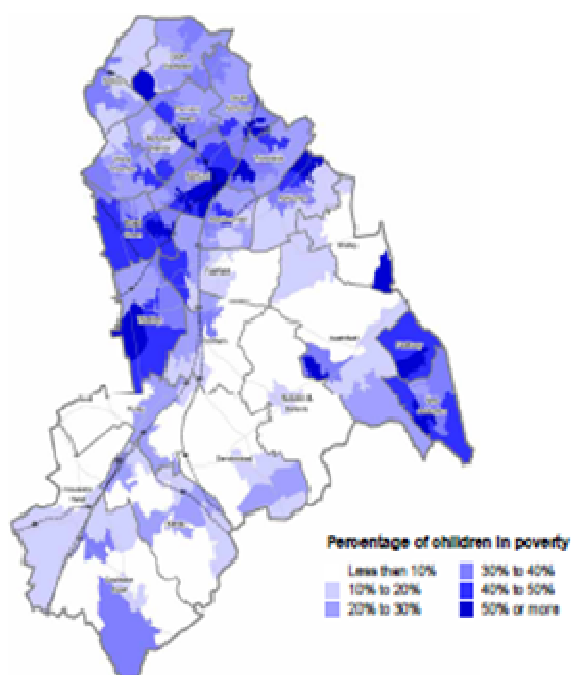
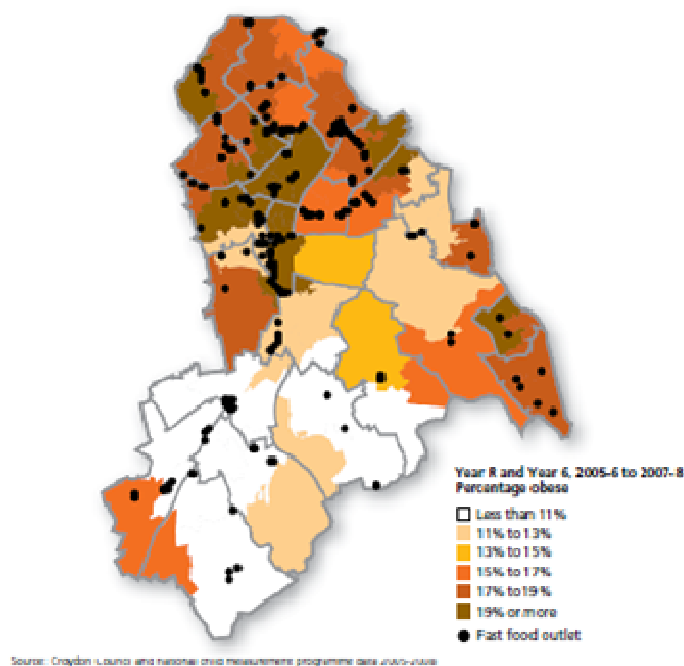
The Healthy Eating and Being More Active Programme Group (HEBMAPG) is a multiagency group which oversees local initiatives to tackle the rising trends of overweight and obesity within Wrexham County Borough. Obesity and overweight is considered within Our Joint Plan (the combined local Health, Social Care and Well-being Strategy and Children and Young People's Plan) as the priority public health issue as a pre-determinant of Coronary Heart Disease, diabetes, cancers and other chronic health conditions and resulting mortality. The HEBMAPG reports through a Public Health Commissioning Group to the Health, Social Care and Well-being Partnership Board and as such is a high level strategic group and its membership is drawn from experts in public health, health visiting, school nursing, dieticians, sports professionals, workforce development and community planning and regeneration.

In terms of evidence base, the environment is a powerful determinant of an individual or family's ability to make healthy choices. Cultural and environmental changes over the past decade have led to individuals adopting a sedentary lifestyle centred around car dependency and leisure pursuits such as computer games coupled with a reliance on convenience foods. Much of this is not attributable completely to individual choices, but to environmental factors such as availability of healthy food locally, hectic lifestyles and busy main roads which make it almost impossible for some to choose active transport and a healthy diet. The effects are magnified in areas of deprivation.

The HEBMAPG has developed a strategic approach which consists of tackling the obesogenic environment through influence of policy and practice, putting in place a range of interventions across community, workplace and school settings aimed at prevention and a range of secondary and tertiary level clinical and non-clinical interventions to support those already overweight and obese. The Healthy Eating and Being More Active Strategy is provided as Appendix A, the evidence base for the approach is clearly referenced within that document and it would only serve as duplication to repeat the same herein.

In Croydon the local authority had mapped the incidence of childhood obesity against the density of fast food outlets, the diagrams from "Croydon Weights and Measures 2009" are reproduced below and demonstrate clearly the geographical distribution of overweight and obesity, linked to density of fast food outlets and material deprivation.

Figure 20: Location of fast food outlets and prevalence of obesity in Croydon



Healthy Public Policy

As part of the HEBMA PG work to develop healthy public policy, the group researched best practice in other local authority areas across Wales and England. A number of areas had like Wrexham invested significantly in healthy school meals and improving the diet of school aged children, their efforts were undermined the presence of fast food outlets close to the school. A number of authorities particularly in South of England have looked to regulate fast food outlet proliferation close to schools through the introduction of local planning regulations. Some areas have also had their policy tested and upheld through appeals processes. Faced with overwhelming evidence of the

links between availability of fast food and childhood obesity, the expert multiagency group looked to formation of healthy public policy to curb the promotion of obesogenic environments locally.

The HEBMA PG worked closely with the Wrexham County Borough Planning Department to develop Local Planning Guidance Note 9 Hot Food Takeaways which prohibited the development of new hot food takeaways within 200m of a school. LPG Note 9 is included as Appendix B.

Political Context

The initiative was presented through an academic poster displayed at the Welsh National Public Health Conference 2012 and was judged the best intervention by a panel of leading experts. The prize was presented by the Chief Medical Officer to members of the HEBMA PG at the plenary in front of hundreds of delegates. Many other local authorities across Wales are now considering adoption of similar policy objectives as a result of the publicity. The Welsh Government through the CMO has recognised the value of the adoption of LPG 9 within Wrexham, it is hoped that the WG through the Planning Directorate will uphold these values. The poster is presented as Appendix C.

Rationale for Objection.

The LPG Note 9 was developed through a multiagency response to the rising levels of overweight and obesity; the approach of using the Planning system to create an environment conducive to supporting individuals to make healthy choices is based on a robust evidence base and the success of cases in other local authority areas.

The LPG Note 9 is clear in that it states that *“New Hot Food Takeaways should not be located within 400m of the boundaries of a school or a tertiary educational establishment.”* The premises on Llangollen Road, Acrefair are just 100m from the gate of Acrefair Primary School and therefore the application is in direct conflict with the LPG 9.

The Appellant asserts that LPG 9 can be complied with by a condition restricting opening hours (Design and Access Statement 5.3). This would not alter the location or the distance from the Acrefair School. In addition consideration should be given to secondary school children accessing public transport to and from both Ysgol Rhiwabon and Ysgol Dinas Bran after 4pm and also for families accessing and leaving nursery and playgroup during the lunchtime period. It is the view of the HEBMA PG that allowing the development subject to opening hour restrictions would undermine the policy advocated through LPG 9 and would do nothing to mitigate the effects of the development.

This area is not designated as a District Shopping Centre in the current UDP, and therefore Policy S6 applies in terms of Local Need Shopping. This location has already got a public house and the provision of a hot food takeaway in the locality would add to potential noise and disturbance for local residents, along with potential for cooking smells. With respect to current usage of property in the area it is predominantly residential use. There is a potential link between the clients of the public house and using hot food takeaway late at night, this creates a further increase in opportunist

consumption of unhealthy food by adults leaving the public house and would not be conducive to supporting healthy choices.

In addition there is no parking on site, customers accessing shops on Llangollen Road frequently park on the road causing obstruction on the busy A539. This in turn poses an additional hazard to pedestrians particularly children; there have been accidents on this road in the recent past despite the presence of a pedestrian crossing nearby. Despite assertions to the contrary (Design and Access Statement 4), the yellow lines do not always deter on road parking and this poses a particular hazard to pedestrians. The proposal fails to concord with Policy S6.

There are existing Hot Food Takeaways at Bethania Road and Plas Madoc Acrefair, and on Railway Road and Crane Street Cefn Mawr. In total there are 5 premises already trading within neighbouring communities, individuals making a choice to consume hot food takeaways have ample opportunities to do so through existing provision locally and there is no need for an additional outlet. The Appellant states in the Design and Access Statement (1.3) that *“other takeaway food establishments currently trade in the adjacent village of Cefn Mawr, however, nothing exists along this stretch of road”* is inaccurate as the takeaway on the junction of Bethania Road is less than ten minutes’ walk away from the proposed development.

UDP S6 states that *“development should be safely accessible on foot, not harm residential amenity or give rise to traffic or parking problems”*. The proposals do not concord with this policy statement.

In conclusion we feel that the Appeal should be dismissed as the proposals are contrary to both the Wrexham UDP and Local Planning Guidance Note 9, as well as being contrary to local strategy and policy.