Planning applications assessment and monitoring framework

Purpose of the checklist

This checklist can be used by internal consultees to assess the potential impacts of a planning application on the healthy food environment. It is complementary to the Cheshire and Merseyside Planning toolkit which provides options for local plan policy makers.

The checklist covers five themes which are each divided into topics. This offers the possibility for Council departments to respond to the most relevant sections according to their responsibilities.

Many formal assessment tools are used in the planning system. This checklist is not a substitute. Non-planning professionals requested a tool which would be easy to use with limited resources. This approach will enable more planning applications to be assessed and more monitoring data to be collected.

The assessment criteria should be easy for a non-planning professional to identify from the submission documents such as the design and access statement or landscape plans.

The indicators allow the assessment to capture data which can be collated for monitoring and subsequent policy review.

In an ideal world, the planning policies for a healthy food environment would list specific attributes required in any particular type of development, according to the priorities of a local area. Where such policies have been adopted, those criteria should be used on the checklist. In this scenario, applicants will have seen the planning policies and have decided what to include in their application. The Planning Officer will assess how the proposal meets Local Plan policies as a whole, and may be able to ask for improvements.

Where Local Plan policies are more generic, the criteria listed in this checklist help to explain how to evaluate a proposed development. In this scenario, the planning officer may be able to suggest to the developer how the development could be improved.

Consultee departments will have the best chance of getting amendments to the proposal, the earlier they can feedback to the Planning Officer. It is more difficult to ask for amendments later in the day because the applicant will be continuing with detailed design work, costings and programming.

Checklist developed by:

Health Equalities Group

FOOD ACTIVE

sustain
the alliance for better food and farming

Funded by:

Cheshire & Merseyside Cancer Alliance

The checklist has been compiled by:

- Staff from the charity Sustain: The Alliance for Better Food and Farming (https://www.sustainweb.org)
- Staff from the Food Active team at Health Equalities Group (www.heg.org.uk & www.foodactive.org.uk)
- Planning officer and public health officers from local authorities in Cheshire & Merseyside.

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Key theme 1

Key theme 1 Food Growing and Production

Topic 1.1 Edible Landscaping

Aim

In a healthy food environment, edible landscaping will raise awareness of the value of food, encourage healthy eating and increase understanding of fruit and vegetables. People will see food growing around them in the public realm as they move around their neighbourhood.

Does the proposed development:	**Positive (p) or negative (n) impact**	**Level of impact – strong (s), moderate (m) or weak (w)**	**Indicators**	
Include edible planting in landscaping schemes.			Landscape & management plans submitted Area of edible planting provided(m2)	Yes/No m2
Create green networks with edible plants to provide routes between homes and community facilities.			Landscape & management plans submitted Yes/No Length of route with edible landscaping (m)	Yes/No metres

Key theme 1 Food Growing and Production

Topic 1.2 Allotments and Community Gardens

Aim

In a healthy food environment, the provision of space for communities to grow food will raise awareness of the value of food, encourage healthy eating and increase understanding of fruit and vegetables. People will have the ability to grow their own in shared growing spaces or on private growing plots

Does the proposed development:	Positive (p) or negative (n) impact	Level of impact – strong (s), moderate (m) or weak (w)	Indicators	
Provide amenity space for communal food growing such as allotments, market gardens, community orchards urban farms and communal food gardens			Landscape & management plans submitted Area of edible planting provided(m^2)	Yes/No m^2
New residential development with space for food growing (balcony, planters, roof garden etc.)			Number of households with access to food growing space Design award awarded for residential development that incorporates space for food growing	Yes/No metres
Provide space suitable for food growing at new school sites.			Number of new schools with food growing space	
Protect food growing spaces from development			Area of growing space lost to new development (m^2)	m^2
New residential development with space for food growing (balcony, planters, roof garden etc.)			Number of households with access to food growing space Design award awarded for residential development that incorporates space for food growing	

Key theme 1 Food Growing and Production

Topic 1.3 Agriculture and Horticulture, Growing Enterprises / Food Production, Land / Soil Protection

Aim

Best and most versatile agricultural land as well as land in close proximity to cities will grow fruit and vegetables in harmony with nature, shortening supply chains, bringing food closer to consumers and building a better understanding of how food is produced.

Does the proposed development:	Positive (p) or negative (n) impact	Level of impact – strong (s), moderate (m) or weak (w)	Indicators	
Protect the best and most versatile (BMV) agricultural land.			Area of BMV agricultural land (grade 1 to 3a) lost to development (Ha)	Ha
Avoid development which undermines the viability of an agricultural or horticultural land holding.			Change in land use from food production	Ha
Designate space for environmentally beneficial fruit and nut tree planting, community food and small farm enterprises, and horticulture.			Area of land used for food growing/ area in nature friendly farming (Ha)	Ha
Support infrastructure which enables growers to supply local markets e.g. farm shops.			Number of food producers supported through planning consents	
Support farms and rural enterprises to create viable businesses.			Number of food producers supported Number of Local living wage employers supported[1]	

1 https://www.livingwage.org.uk/accredited-living-wage-employersbusinesses.

Key theme 1 Food Growing and Production

Topic 1.4 Intensive Livestock Production

Aim **Work towards a transition to more sustainable food production that is climate and nature friendly.**

Does the proposed development:	Positive (p) or negative (n) impact	Level of impact – strong (s), moderate (m) or weak (w)	Indicators	
Have a comprehensive greenhouse gas assessment and waste management strategy.			Environmental Impact Assessments submitted with planning applications	
Assess the impact of intensive livestock production on the climate, rivers, wildlife and the economy.			% Reduction in pollutants % jobs paying living wage or above in the sector	
Avoid the expansion of existing, or development of new buildings for intensive animal agriculture.			Avoid the expansion of existing, or development of new buildings for intensive animal agriculture.	Ha
Deliver climate adaptation measures.			Number of measures undertaken & impacts	

Key theme 2 Retail

Topic 2.1 Markets and Other Alternative Food Outlets

Aim **All urban communities should be able to access healthy food within a 10 minute walk from their home.**

Does the proposed development:	Positive (p) or negative (n) impact	Level of impact – strong (s), moderate (m) or weak (w)	Indicators	
Support temporary use of land and buildings for pantries, community groceries (or similar).			Reduction in area identified as food desert (Environmental health records) Number of residents to be served by proposal	
Support temporary and permanent market stalls or alternative forms of community retail.			Reduction in area identified as food desert Proportion of residents able to access a shop or a market selling healthy food within a 10 minute walk from their home (ie living in a compact and walkable neighbourhood).	%
Protect markets or provide sites for farmers markets in new developments.			Protect markets or provide sites for farmers markets in new developments.	

Key theme 2 Retail

Topic 2.2 Local Shops

Aim **All communities should be able to access healthy food within a 10 minute walk from their home.**

Does the proposed development:	Positive (p) or negative (n) impact	Level of impact – strong (s), moderate (m) or weak (w)	Indicators	
Ensure residents of major residential development will have access to local services including a protected convenience store;			Proportion of residents able to access healthy food within a 10 minute walk from their home (i.e. living in a compact and walkable neighbourhood).	
Identify and protect from change of use isolated shops;			Map of food deserts	
Protect and retain sections of high street in retail use where their loss would result in areas of deficiency of local services;			Reduction in vacancy rate of units and reduced long term vacancies.	
Encourage food retail diversity to attract local/ independent businesses;			Diverse mix of retailers operating within centres.	

Key theme 2 Retail

Topic 2.3 Hot Food Takeaway

Aim

Communities at risk of poor health will be protected from being targeted with highly processed food that is high in fat, sugar and salt and is lacking in nutrients.

Does the proposed development:	Positive (p) or negative (n) impact	Level of impact – strong (s), moderate (m) or weak (w)	Indicators	
Increase access to unhealthy food.			Number of applications with conditional consent or informative notes promoting healthier options	
Lie within close proximity of premises where children or young people meet.			Number of refusals of hot food takeaways v number supported at appeal	
Include new retail units in a hybrid use whereby hot food to takeaway is available and becomes a dominant use.			Number of conditional approvals Health inequalities maps Map of food deserts / access to healthy food	

Key theme 3 Economy

Topic 3.1 Food Economy

Aim — **The food supply chain will act in a more equitable fashion supporting viable businesses that can pay living wages to provide nutritious food.**

Does the proposed development:	Positive (p) or negative (n) impact	Level of impact – strong (s), moderate (m) or weak (w)	Indicators	
Support small and medium size food and farming businesses and social enterprises to diversify.			Number of businesses and social enterprises supported	
Allow diversification of farms to enable the sale of local produce on site or to be hubs for local markets.			Number of businesses and social enterprises supported	
Protect established and support provision of food infrastructure such as agricultural land, local processing and wholesale businesses, food markets, abattoirs, and small independent retailers, food hubs and distribution networks.			Number of food producing businesses lost through development Number of businesses and social enterprises supported	
Impact on the food supply system.			Number of suitable premises lost	

Key theme 4 Access to Healthier Food in the Home, at School and in the Workplace

Topic 4.1 Space Standards

Aim Enabling access to healthier food and avoiding routes to poverty are addressed through good design

Does the proposed development:	Positive (p) or negative (n) impact	Level of impact – strong (s), moderate (m) or weak (w)	Indicators	
Provide enough space for food storage, food preparation, cooking and dining by occupants			% new residential units meeting nationally described space standard Number of developments granted Home Quality Mark Number of new schools with adequate kitchens and dining halls granted consent	

Key theme 5 Access to Healthier Food in the Public Realm

Topic 5.1 Drinking Water Fountains

Aim — Enabling access to healthier food and avoiding routes to poverty are addressed through good design

Does the proposed development:	Positive (p) or negative (n) impact	Level of impact – strong (s), moderate (m) or weak (w)	Indicators	
Include drinking water fountains in public spaces.			Landscape plans Increase in local sites listed on the refill app (www.refill.org.uk)	Yes / No

Key theme 5 Access to Healthier Food in the Public Realm

Topic 5.2 Advertisements

Aim — Exposure to unhealthy food advertising in the public realm will be reduced, significantly impacting on consumption choices and improving the health and well-being of residents, particularly children.

Does the proposed development:	Positive (p) or negative (n) impact	Level of impact – strong (s), moderate (m) or weak (w)	Indicators	
Result in over-concentration of development which carries advertisements (eg telephone kiosks and bus shelters).			Number of consents refused where a legitimate operational need cannot be proved Number of redundant phone kiosks removed through planning enforcement powers.	