



February 2020

BEXLEY FOOD PROFILE REPORT

*Produced by GCDA for
Bexley Public Health*



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Introduction

Aims and objectives

GCDA was commissioned by Public Health, Bexley to complete a food profile of the borough to encompass a wide range of elements from household eating habits to the local food offer and procurement with reference to improving health and sustainability. This was in response to the growing demand for healthier eateries and cooking education and the need to reduce levels of obesity among children and adults as highlighted in the Bexley's Obesity Strategy consultation (August 2019)

The brief included 4 objectives:

- **Food outside the home**
 - Reviewing the food served in a sample of restaurants, fast food outlets and cafes
 - Reviewing proximity of fast food outlets to primary and secondary schools
 - Analysis of a healthy shopping basket in convenience stores compared to supermarkets
 - Reviewing access to supermarkets for those living in the most deprived wards
- **Food at home**
 - Reviewing people's food at home, food insecurity, food culture and ways to which households can be supported to increase the number of meals cooked from scratch
- **Food in community settings**
 - Analysis and review of food offered in community settings
 - Review of the quality and sustainability of the food served in these settings
 - Review how food has been contracted in settings controlled by the Council
- **Sustainability**
 - Explore whether community growing/allotments are taking place in the borough
 - Identifying opportunities to reduce food waste in the home and for food businesses

Due to time limitations and, we were unable to address every element in the brief, but have made recommendations for these elements based on our knowledge and understanding of other boroughs and the broader food environment

Background

Bexley is a mainly affluent borough, with none of its LSOA (Lower Super Output Areas) falling within the 10% most deprived areas and a number of LSOAs falling within the least deprived 10%, however, there are still a number of more deprived areas that fall within the bottom 20% most deprived areas – see map below. For those struggling to make ends meet, accessing and preparing healthy meals is increasingly challenging. A wide range of factors combine to produce highly complex and stressful situations that are hard to manage or resolve. Financial problems make buying healthier food more difficult, and this can be compounded by a lack of food-related knowledge and skills, which restricts the ability to purchase the foods required for a healthy diet on a limited budget. Physical access is also a problem. A number of deprived areas of the borough have been identified where it is hard to access affordable and healthy foods, transport links are poor, and unhealthy foods are readily available to local residents (see findings below).

Indices of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) deciles

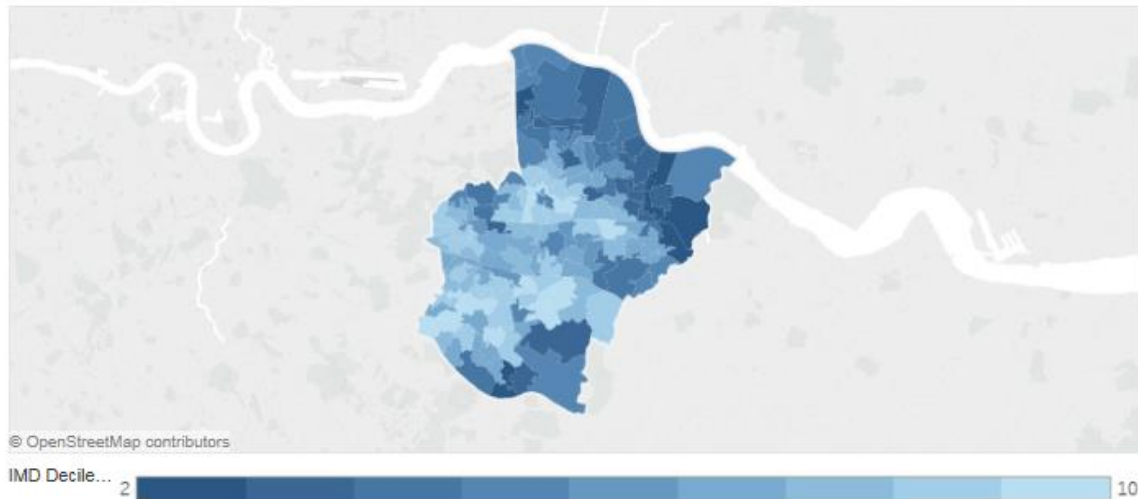


Figure 1 Indices of Multiple Deprivation deciles map from Bexley JSNA 2018, the deeper the blue, the more deprived the area

In addition, Bexley has among the highest rate of excess weight in London for reception aged children and is the highest amongst its closest and most similar neighbours. Nearly three in ten children (23.4%) are classified as overweight or obese when they start primary school which increases to 36.6% by the time they leave primary school in year six. Children who are overweight or obese are more than likely to become overweight adults, and in Bexley 64.6% of adults aged 18 and over carry excess weight, greater than London and England (*Bexley Obesity Strategy 2019*).

There are multiple drivers of obesity, but we know that the wider determinants such as social, economic and environmental factors have a major impact on our ability to choose, access, prepare and eat healthier food. Changes to our food environment mean we are encouraged to be more sedentary and cheap food high in fat, salt and sugar is easily accessible at all times of day and night. An increasing number of people are eating outside of the home, consuming foods that are high in calories and purchasing hot food from takeaways selling foods high in fat, salt and sugar. These energy dense foods are dietary risk factors for obesity, and it is widely recognised that the food environment influences individual behaviour and has a large role to play in addressing obesity and improving the landscape of the food offer (from the Bexley Obesity Strategy).

These issues are reflected across London, and nationally, and increasingly councils are looking to find ways to address some of these issues impacting on our health. Councils have a key role to play in making the environment an easier place to access healthy, affordable food, both by supporting small-scale, values-driven and community-led food enterprises to thrive.

Methodology

Approach overview

GCDA was commissioned to complete a food profile mapping of the borough of Bexley. A timeframe of one month placed challenges on conducting a blanket asset surveying. We undertook desk-based research activities and 'on the ground' engagement and assessment.

A variety of community engagement tools and research methods were employed to update, to collate and to analyse relevant information on social and physical assets in the borough of Bexley to inform food profile and food offer.

Explanation of research and engagement tools undertaken follows in this section with key findings

Summary of tools –

- **Mapping of assets associated with food**

A desk-based mapping activity was completed to illustrate a list of key social cultural and business assets, venues and community settings in the borough of Bexley, which are directly or indirectly associated with food. For easier identification, the food businesses assets spreadsheet (*appendix 1*) has been grouped into wards, and the social and cultural assets spreadsheet (*appendix 2*) into themes. Both include up-to-date information on type of activities and services. The mapping sheets can easily be edited and kept current.

- **Shopping basket survey tool**

We used an objective, nutrient-based, healthy eating indicator shopping basket (HEISB) tool for use in studies of access to healthy food, which was used in a piece of evaluated research conducted in Lewishamⁱ. This tool (*appendix 3*) contains 23 items, including fruits and vegetables, meat and fish, milk, bread, tinned baked beans, spaghetti, oven chips, porridge oats, Weetabix and rice; taking into account UK healthy eating guidelines.

- **Audit Menu Tool**

The audit menu tool (*appendix 4*) employed was adapted from the Healthier Catering Commitment (HCC) criteria, which are used to assess and award independent food businesses across London who comply with the criteria. The HCC is a free scheme and award that supports independent businesses to make cost neutral small changes to their menu to increase healthier options. Most London councils are currently rolling out this scheme.

We created an audit menu tool, based on selected criteria from the Healthier Catering Commitment scheme. And we utilized this tool when completing a visual assessment of the food on offer at food businesses, located in profiled areas, by looking at what is available on the menu, over the counter or on a menu board.

- **Asset survey tool**

This tool (*appendix 5*) was developed to collect a range of data to ascertain any food initiatives or offers available across council, community and social assets, and to determine barriers/challenges to accessing healthy affordable food in Bexley borough

- **Food-in-the- home questionnaire**

A-Food-in-the-Home questionnaire (*appendix 6*) was developed, based on validated tools, to collect data on people's food at home. This included access to, and use of food banks to support evidence of food insecurity/food poverty in the borough, and to explore food culture at home i.e. cooking from scratch to ultimately identify ways in which households in Bexley can be supported to increase the number of meals cooked from scratch. However, despite circulating the survey widely, we received no responses so were unable to progress this objective. However, the tool is ready to go and can be circulated at a later date, perhaps as part of another initiative.

Areas profiled

The areas profiled were chosen using a number of mechanisms. These included the [IMD maps](#) of 2019 which tell us the areas of highest deprivation (the areas focused on are all in the lowest 20% or 30% IMD). We took into account [Transport for London Webcat](#) maps which showed us areas with the best and worst transport provision. We also considered the Food Insecurity map developed by the GLA using evidence

from the Trussell Trust, and the ward map showing levels of excess weight in children from the National Childhood Measurement Programme.

Using the above data, and in consultation with the commissioners, we decided the most relevant wards and LSOAs (Lower Super Output Areas) to focus on were as follows:

- Erith
- Belvedere
- Thamesmead East
- Slade Green
- Footscray
- Albany Park
- Northumberland Heath
- Crayford

Due to limitations of time, we were unable to profile every objective in every ward but have significant data to support the findings, choosing LSOAs based on distance to supermarkets and pockets of deprivation.

A further limitation was that we did not have the housing information to map against the ward/LSOA choices.

Findings

Food outside the home

For this section of the report we looked at our objectives within 7 wards/LSOAs across the borough; these were:

- Erith
- Belvedere
- Thamesmead East
- Slade Green
- Footscray
- Albany Park

The objectives profiled were:

- Shopping basket analysis
- Proximity of FBOs (Food Business Outlets) to schools
- Transport links to most deprived areas of the boroughs
- Menu analysis of FBOs in studied wards/LSOAs

Shopping Basket Analysis

For many people with limited mobility, such as the elderly or those on a low income, the importance of the local convenience store in the supply of groceries is magnified. Nationally, of all convenience stores, 38% are located in areas with no other businesses, and over 70% are located in small parades with five or fewer shops; 54% of people travel to the shops on foot and 80% travel less than one mile (Food Research Collaboration). This pattern seemed true of Bexley where we found either shops on their own or in small parades (Maylands in Albany Park, or Premier in Colyers Lane being lone shops in the area, or Londis in Parkside Parade, one of two convenience stores in that parade of shops.)

To evaluate access to a healthy diet, a basket of representative healthy food items was surveyed in local shops in areas of higher deprivation. We visited 13 shops in the areas already stated and compared these with 5 larger supermarkets; detailed in the table below along with the Food Hygiene rating and whether they accept healthy start vouchers.

Number	Shop	Address	Ward	Food Hygiene rating	Accept Healthy Start Vouchers?
1	Premier	Colyers Lane, DA8 3PB	Erith	5	Yes
2	TK Best One	Lincoln Road, DA8 2DX	Erith	5	
3	Londis	Parkside Parade, DA1 4RA	Erith	2	
4	Budgens	Rainbow Road, DA8 2EQ	Slade Green	4	
5	Premier Slade Green Super Store	Bridge Road, DA8 2BX	Slade Green	1	No
6	Shabz	Picardy Road, DA17 5QH	Belvedere	5	No
7	Kwiksave	Picardy Street, DA17 5QQ	Belvedere	3	
8	Omo's Market	210 Yarnton Way, DA18 4AX	Thamesmead	2	
9	Rafik's	Lime Row, DA18 4HW	Thamesmead	5	
10	Tari's Yarnton Way Stores	Yarnton Way, DA18 4AX	Thamesmead	5	Yes
11	Maylands Store	50 Kimberley Dr, Sidcup DA14 4QF	Sidcup	?	
12	Maidstone Convenience Store	Maidstone Road, DA14 6QL	Sidcup	5	
13	McColls	170 Halfway St, Sidcup DA15 8DL	Sidcup	5	
14	Tesco	Online		5	
15	ASDA	Crook Log, DA6 8DZ	Bexleyheath	5	
16	Morrison's	James Watt Way, London DA8 1BA	Erith	5	
17	Lidl	20 Broadway, DA6 7LN	Bexleyheath	5	
18	Sainsbury's	Online		5	

The shopping basket tool, taken from a piece of evaluated research conducted in Lewisham contains 23 items, including fruits and vegetables, meat and fish, milk, bread, tinned baked beans, spaghetti, oven chips, porridge oats, Weetabix and rice.

The basket, based on nationally recognised research, takes into account UK healthy eating guidelines and we surveyed shops in areas of higher deprivation, more than 500m to a large retail supermarket and compared these to larger retailers Tesco, Sainsburys, Lidl, Morrisons and ASDA. The list of items is presented in the table below.

Availability and prices of the 23 food items were collected in 13 shops in the selected areas and for comparison, availability and prices were also collected in the large supermarkets in Bexley – Lidl, Asda, Sainsbury's, Tesco and Morrisons.

Using the data collected, prices of a healthy food basket were generated for all shops using only food items found in each shop; i.e. foods not found in all shops were removed from all baskets in order to make a direct comparison.

Audits of shops in areas of higher deprivation considered likely to be experiencing poor access to affordable, healthy food confirmed that in all areas it is relatively easy to purchase less healthy foods from cafes, takeaways and convenience stores. Although the availability of items in the basket was generally good in all areas, there were items that couldn't be found in any of the shops. In addition, the cost varied significantly, and in many of the convenience stores, the healthier foods were at the back out of the way and necessitated walking past walls of sweets, crisps, chocolates and fizzy drinks to access. As found from the [Scottish Grocer's Federation Gold Standard & Healthy Living Programme](#), it is crucial to position good quality, healthier products in the store to support uptake, for example at the till or at the front of the store.



Figure 2 'Wall of sweets' Premier in Bridge Road

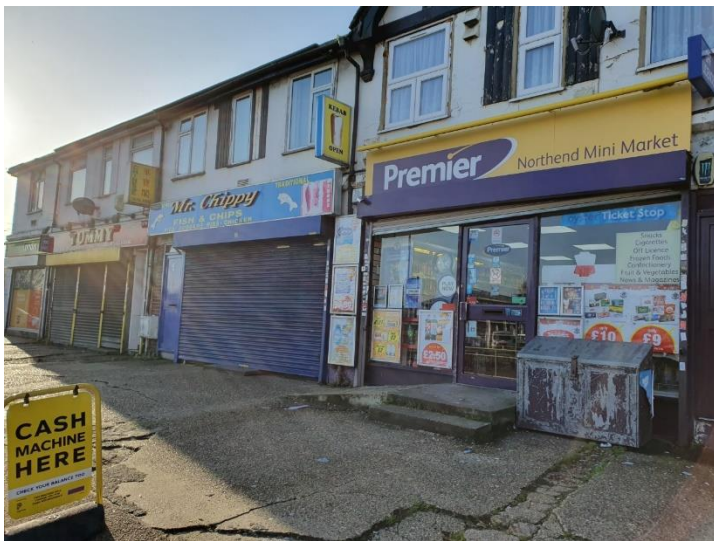


Figure 3 Row of shops and restaurants, Northend Rd and Parkside Avenue, Erith. The row consisted of 2 convenience stores, a chip shop, Chinese takeaway and Parkside Café; an establishment selling fried breakfasts, sandwiches and other meals.



Figure 4 The 'wall of drinks' in the Premier on Northend Road

Findings

Of the 23 items in the basket, only the main supermarkets had all the items. The most and least commonly available items are shown in the table below. The least available items were salmon fillets and frozen berries; only 25% of the shops visited stocked these items and only the big supermarkets had all the items. Best One, Omo's, Shabz and Mayland's Store all only stocked 11 of the 23 items.

Food Item	Availability in all 17 stores visited
Baked beans	100%
Wholemeal bread	88%
Spaghetti dry	100%
Oven chips	100%
Porridge oats	88%
Weetabix	100%
White rice, long	100%
Potatoes	94%
Semi-skimmed milk	94%
Low fat yoghurt	63%
Low fat PUFA spread	81%
Veg oil	100%
beef mince, frozen	44%
beef mince, fresh	50%
Chicken breast, fresh	38%
Chicken portions, frozen	44%
Salmon fillets	25%
Eggs	100%
Apples	88%
Grapes	56%
Frozen berries	25%
Onions (loose)	94%
Fresh tomatoes (loose)	88%
Lettuce - Iceberg	44%
Peppers	81%

The graph below shows the cost per basket. In order to make a direct comparison, only items found in every shop were used. The average cost of the basket was £10.43, but we can see that Tari's Premier in Thamesmead was nearly triple the cost of the same items in Lidl and all the shops were significantly more expensive than Lidl. The orange line is the average line at £10.43



Figure 5 Table showing direct comparison of foods in convenience stores

In addition to high prices for healthier foods in these shops, many of the areas of highest deprivation were ranked lowest in terms of transport accessibility according to the TfL Transport maps (see pages 13 – 16 below) so, although there are bus routes into those areas, the buses are infrequent meaning people living there will have more difficulty traveling to larger supermarkets. In addition, people with no money for a bus pass or Oyster card top-up may also be limited to using the local shops with limited availability of affordable, healthy food.

The graph below shows the cost of the most common items in the different shops and reveals the huge price variation especially for apples – nearly 3 or 4 times more expensive in the areas of highest deprivation. Milk had the least variation in price across the shops.



Figure 6 Item price comparison of common items found in stores. Prices reflect per 100g of an item or per 1 unit of an item (for example 100g of baked beans in Sainsburys cost £0.08 and 1 apple in Premier cost £0.50.) Apples were more expensive in convenience stores compared to supermarkets. The average cost of milk was £0.09, with the most expensive milk per 100ml was found at Londis for £0.14.

In addition, we looked at the price of beef mince in the different shops as a deep dive to compare quality of food in the supermarkets and local convenience stores. The findings are in the graph below and show that fresh beef was not always available, and where beef was available (fresh or frozen), none of the convenience stores sold low fat beef.

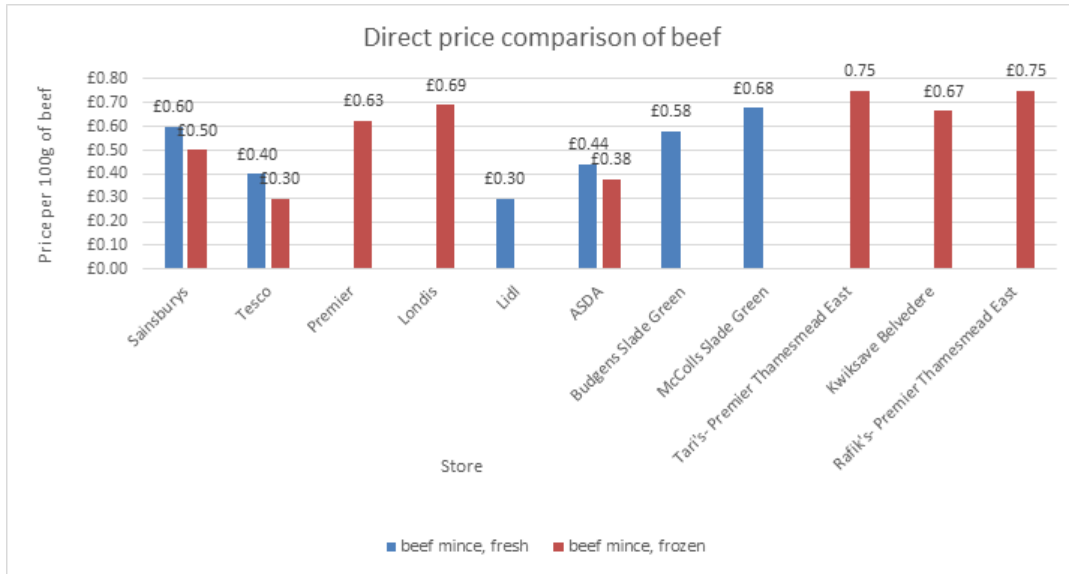


Figure 7 Comparing prices of beef, fresh and frozen for every 100g. Beef was found to be more expensive in local convenience stores compared to larger supermarkets and generally higher in fat and lower in quality - see figure 4 below

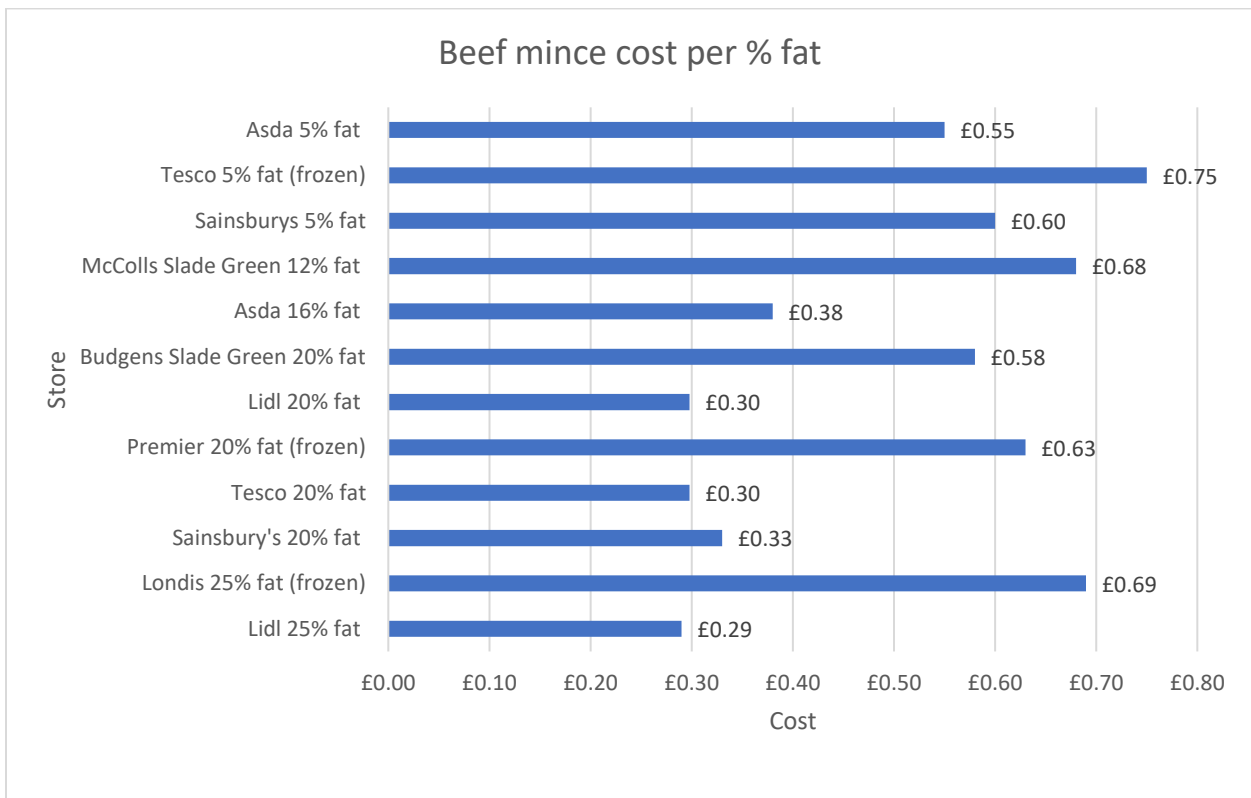


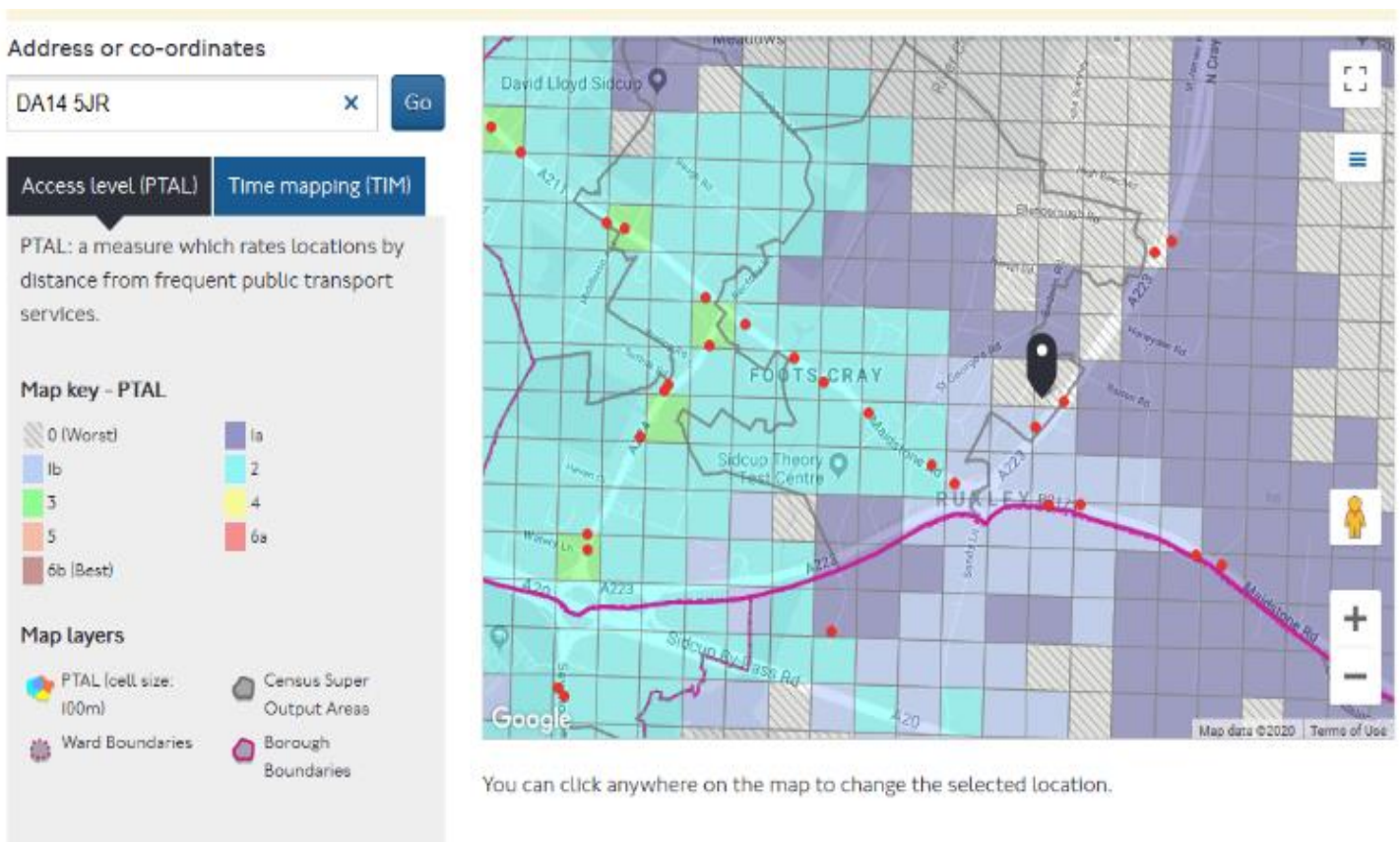
Figure 8 Comparing the prices of beef per 100g and the fat content. The lower the fat content in the beef, the higher the price. Local convenience stores sold beef at higher prices, despite the high fat content

Transport Links

Using the Transport for London Webcat mapping tool, we were able to profile the PTAL in areas. PTAL is the Public Transport Accessibility Level and is a measure of access to the public transport network. For any given point in London, PTALs combine walk times from a chosen point to the network (stations and bus stops, for example) together with service frequency data at these locations. This provides an overall access index which can be allocated to nine accessibility levels between 0 and 6b. For this part of the profile we chose areas in the most deprived LSOAs and mapped them using Webcat. We then researched any other larger retailers and chose areas the furthest away from these supermarkets.

The areas and postcodes we chose to map are as follows:

Davis Way, DA14 5JR – Footscray, ranked in the 30% most deprived neighbourhoods in the country. Transport PTAL is 0, 1a & 1b. The nearest supermarkets are Tesco Superstore 1.1km away and Lidl 1km away



More maps can be seen on the subsequent pages

Hemsted Road, DA8 3LA; in the 20% most deprived neighbourhoods in the country. We also conducted a shopping basket near here at the Premier in Colyers Lane and the total comparable basket price was £12.24 (compared with £6.08 in Lidl). Transport links are also poor with mostly 1a and 1b PTALs. Large supermarkets were all some distance away with Morrisons the closest at 1.1km, but Asda in Belvedere 3.8km (20 min public transport) and Asda in Erith 4.5km away.

Address or co-ordinates

da8 3la

Access level (PTAL) Time mapping (TIM)

PTAL: a measure which rates locations by distance from frequent public transport services.

Map key - PTAL

Map layers

- PTAL (cell size: 100m)

Scenario

Base Year



You can click anywhere on the map to change the selected location.

PTAL output for Base Year
1b

Raleigh Close, Slade Green, DA8 2PG, ranked in the 20% most deprived neighbourhoods in the borough; transport links are 1a & 1b and distance to large supermarkets is 800m

Address or co-ordinates

DA8 2pg

Access level (PTAL) Time mapping (TIM)

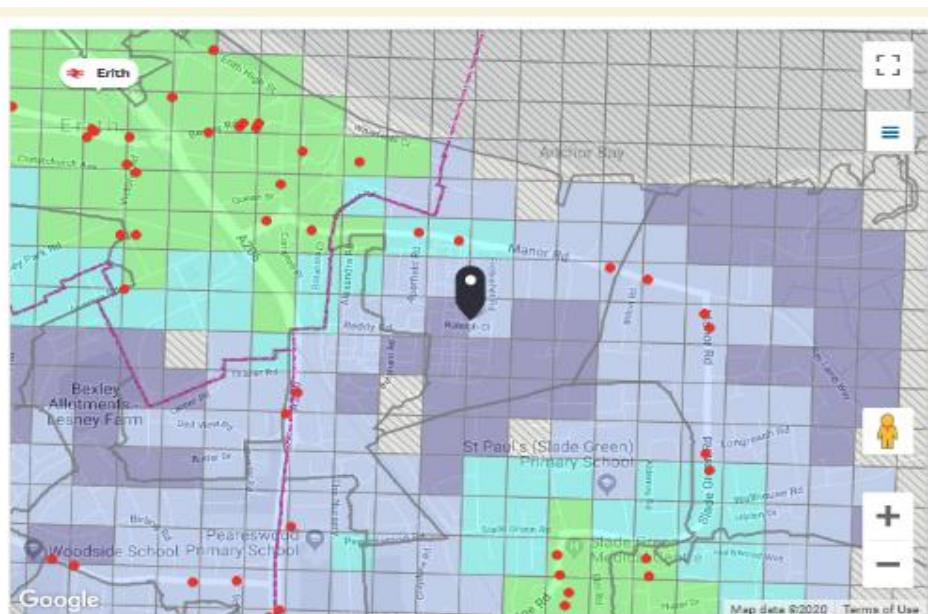
PTAL: a measure which rates locations by distance from frequent public transport services.

Map key - PTAL

Map layers

- PTAL (cell size: 100m)
- Census Super Output Areas
- Ward Boundaries
- Borough Boundaries

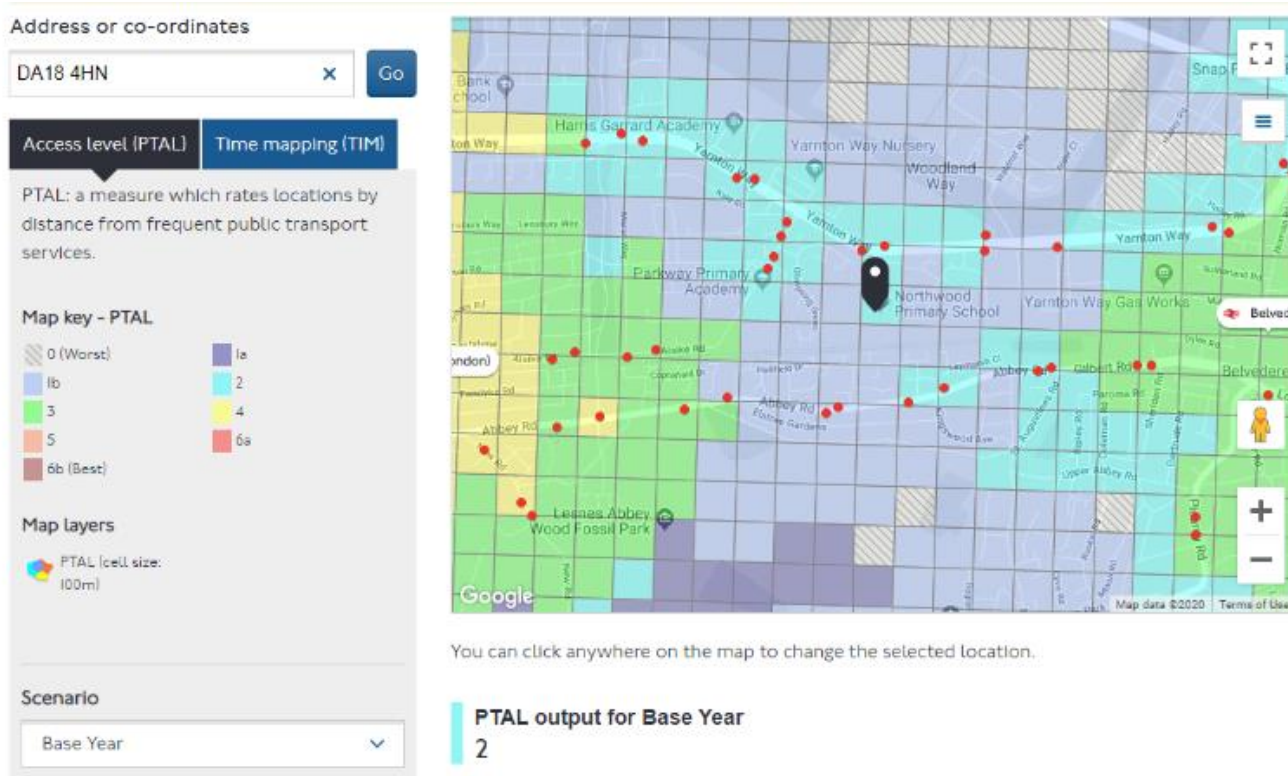
Scenario



You can click anywhere on the map to change the selected location.

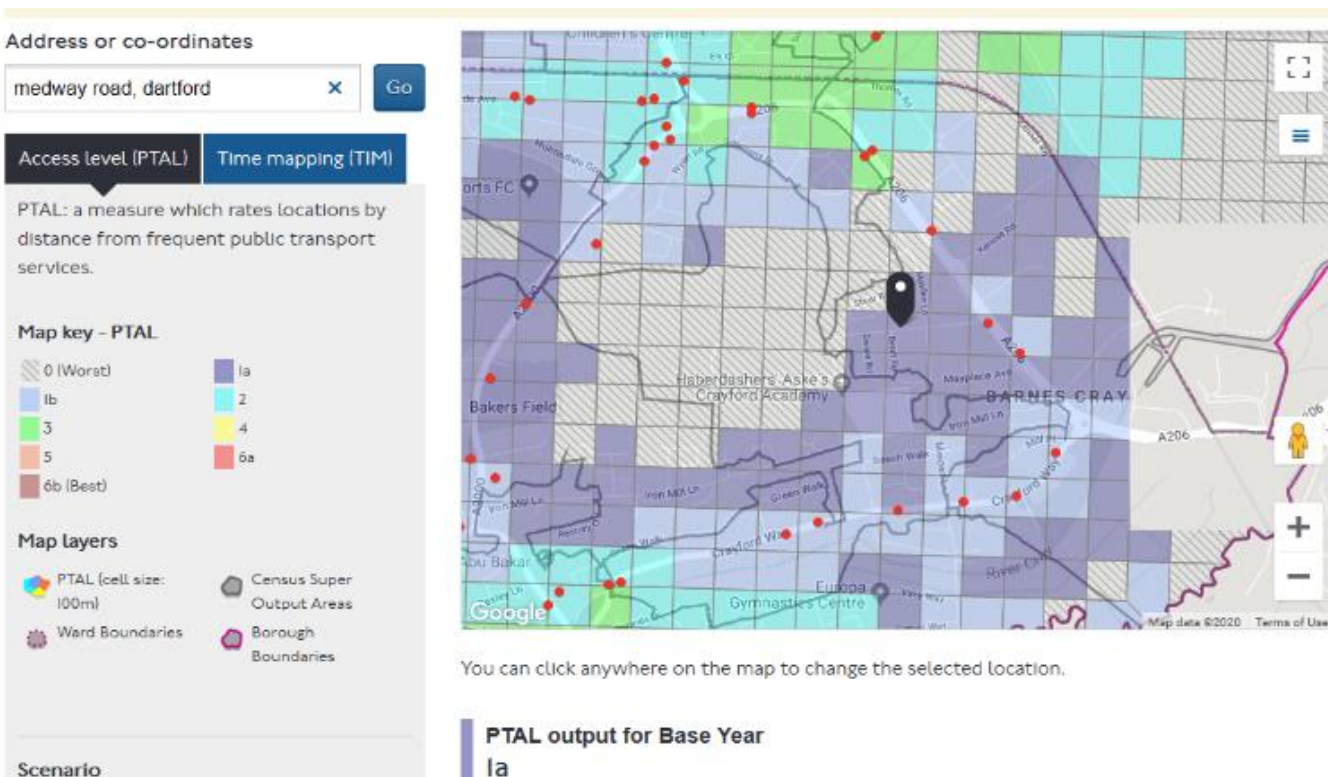
PTAL output for Base Year
1b

Northwood Place, Thamesmead East DA18 4HN; ranked in the 20% most deprived neighbourhoods, transport links are 1b and 2, so slightly better, but still not great. In addition, larger supermarkets are all a mile away (Asada Belvedere superstore 1.1 miles, Sainsbury's 1.0 mile, Lidl 1.0) and this area is in close proximity to the most expensive shops in the shopping basket survey – Tari's and Kwicksave



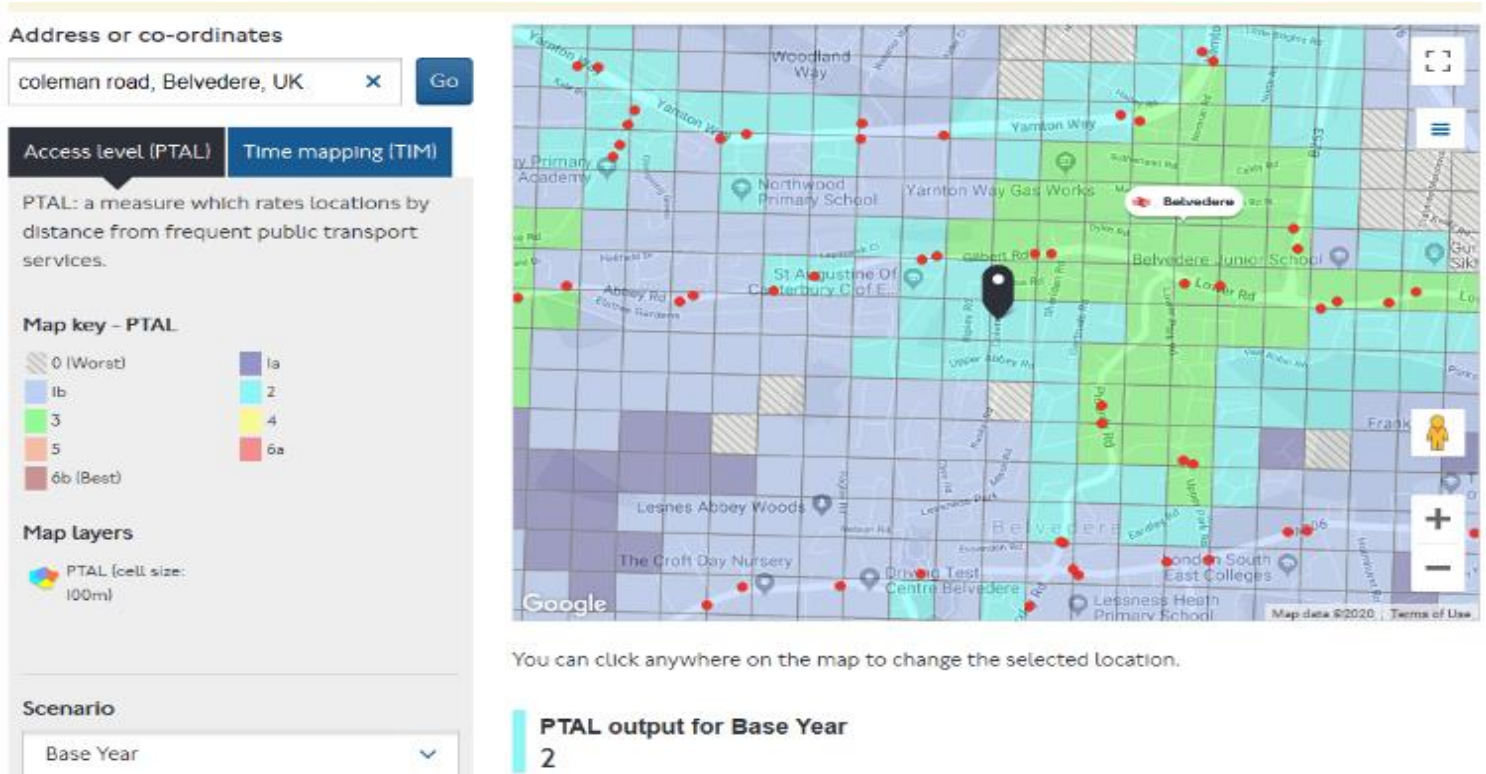
You can click anywhere on the map to change the selected location.

Medway Road, Crayford, DA1 4PN; in the 20% most deprived neighbourhoods in the country, but this sinks to being in the 10% for deprivation affecting children. Transport PTAL 1a, with no large supermarkets nearby; Sainsbury's in Crayford is the nearest and is over 2km away.



You can click anywhere on the map to change the selected location.

Coleman nr Gilbert Road in Belvedere, DA17 5AN; has a PTAL of 2 which is slightly better, but still poor. It is in the 20% most deprived neighbourhoods of the country and is 800m away from the nearest supermarket (ASDA in Belvedere)



Proximity of Food Business Outlets (FBOs) and convenience stores to schools

For this objective we mapped the proximity of FBOs to schools in the following wards:

- Slade Green
- Sidcup
- Thamesmead East
- Belvedere
- Crayford
- Erith

Accessibility to food retailers was measured in terms of walking distance, defined as 500m distance from the retailer to the school; the maximum distance deemed viable for young people to walk during a lunch break.

We have mapped all schools and a 500m radius from them and the takeaways and convenience stores that fall within that radius. However, for the table below, we have only taken the secondary schools and listed the number of takeaways and convenience stores within a 500m radius

Ward	School	Number of takeaways within 500m	Number of convenience stores within 500m
Crayford	St Catherines Catholic School for Girls	1 (Twin Palace Chinese)	0
Crayford	St Columba's School for Boys	As above	1 (Lidl)
Crayford	Habersasher's Aske's Crayford Academy	0	4
Belvedere	Trinity Church of England Secondary	2, but Lower Road with significant number of takeaways is just outside the 500m radius	1, but Lower Road is just outside the 500m radius with a number of convenience stores
Erith	Garrard Harris Academy	0	2
Erith	King Henry Secondary School	7	8
Sidcup	Cleeve Park School	0	1; Robert's Convenience Premier Store
Sidcup	Hurstmere	0	0
Sidcup	Chislehurst & Sidcup Grammar	9	3
Sidcup	Blackfen School for girls	7	2

From the data we can see that most of secondary schools have none or only 1 or 2 takeaways within easy walking distance from them. This is encouraging and means that for those schools that allow pupils off the premises at lunchtime, there is little for them to access in terms of unhealthy food within easy walking

distance. In addition, with the introduction of the London Plan, no additional takeaways will be opened within these radii. However, there are 3 secondary schools that have 7 or more takeaways within the radius; this is a considerable amount and is more concerning. Ideally any healthier retail plan would target these takeaways to work towards the Healthier Catering Commitment or equivalent award.

More schools have convenience stores within the 500m radius, and this means those children and young people will be exposed to cheap products high in fat, salt and sugar. These products are also quite aggressively marketed as being very low price (see image on the right).



Figure 9 Marketing of cheap drinks at shop within 500m radius of secondary school



Figure 10 Queue of young people outside Greggs

Although there were only a few schools within easy walking distance of takeaways, we observed many young people in Bexley town centre at the end of the school day – see image on the left. If they are passing through town centres to get home, they will be exposed to significant numbers of takeaways and other eateries and shops. More research is needed to understand the eating patterns and habits of young people in Bexley.

The links below are to maps which plot all the schools in the ward with a 500m radius circle drawn round them. Also plotted are the convenience stores and FBOs in the wards. We have taken out any FBOs that don't open until 6pm as these would not be open when children are leaving school or after school clubs.

[500m Radius around schools in Sidcup](#)

[500m Radius around schools in Belvedere](#)

[500m Radius around schools in Crayford](#)

[500m Radius around schools in Erith](#)

[500m Radius around schools in Slade Green](#)

[500m Radius around schools in Thamesmead](#)

Access to Fruit and Vegetable Stalls

Fruits and vegetables are an important component of a healthy diet, contributing significant benefits to our health and wellbeing. Despite the well-known 5-a-day campaign, in Bexley only 57% of adults consume 5 a day, but less than half of all 15-year olds report consuming 5 a day (Bexley Obesity Strategy, 2019)

There are limited traditional markets or farmers markets in operation in the borough due to legal issues regarding market boundaries (Bexley Obesity Strategy 2019). We only learned of 2 stalls – 1 in Bexley Town Centre and 1 in Erith Town Centre. Both stalls had a good array of good quality produce and said they did a good trade.



Figure 11 Market stall in Erith town centre



Figure 12 Bexley Town Centre Market Stall

We interviewed the trader in Bexley who trades Monday - Saturday – see case study below. We found his stall brought a real vibrancy to the area. He had issues with accessing the road with his van because of restrictions that made it difficult for him to trade. He also told us that the white British population were more likely to complain that the fruit had gone off as they bought it and left it in the fruit bowl but didn't eat it. He said his best customers were Eastern European and thought their culture meant they were more used to eating more fruit and vegetables. He was not interested in running any other stalls in the borough.

Case Study: Gary, Market Trader in Bexley Town Centre

“My stall brings loads of business to all the shops. When I was moved because of works going on, the shop keepers in the shops near where I was said their trade went down because we were moved. Also, the shop near us in the new place said their trade went up! It shows that people are stopping and looking at my stall and it's really supporting the other traders.

The main problem is access for the van; there's nowhere to park and I can only access the street at certain times, then I've got to take my van and park it – it's a real hassle.

My main customers are Eastern European – I think it's coz their culture is much more used to eating lots of fresh fruit and veg. The Brits always complain that the fruit has gone off, but I find out it's because they've left it in the fruit bowl all week! They're just not in the habit of eating it.



Figure 13 Queen Mary Hospital fruit and veg stall

Additionally, Queen Mary's Hospital opened a 'Five a day Healthy Living Stand' in March 2019; a fantastic initiative to support staff and patients to access affordable fruit and vegetables. Whilst a great initiative operational since April 2019, very busy, open 2 days per week there are some feelings of animosity from other traders in the borough who feel it is unfair that the grocers in the hospital 'don't have to pay any rent' (they make a donation to the trust). We would recommend consulting with current traders in the borough before rolling it out.

Menu Audit Survey

We visited 24 independent food businesses (*appendix 7*) within the wards profiled in this report and conducted a review of their food offer. We completed visual assessments of food displayed at counter, menu and menu boards, drinks displayed in fridges and a central location storage for sauces and seasonings. We assessed menus, for example, for cooking and preparation options other than frying, for healthier sandwich filling, for availability of diet drinks and low sugar snacks and we looked at what type of food is available on children’s menu. We visited principle assets with high footfall: Queen Mary’s hospital, Erith Leisure Centre, Bexleyheath cinema (Cineworld) and Greyhound Track to also assess the food offer. The objective was to assess whether these businesses provide healthier food and drink options, which supports customer to make healthier choices.



Figure 14 Kebab Ye in Sidcup

Key Findings from menu audit survey

Some of the independent food businesses, which fried, offered grilled options too. Often the healthier version, determined by cooking method, carried a price premium and may preclude some customers from choosing the more expensive healthier meal option (*Table 1*)

Business	Menu item	Price £
Kebab Ye	Chicken kebab	6.50
	Chicken burger & chips	3.70

Healthier sandwich options were not available at most cafes and takeaways that were assessed, whereas all businesses offered a selection of diet drinks. Amongst the businesses assessed was a vintage tea shop, which served very large portions of cake. Whilst working on the ground, we noticed that tea and cake shops are

prevalent, and community centres and libraries running activities such as Befriending cafes at which tea and biscuits are served, and tea dances which include cakes and biscuits as refreshments. Most of the food businesses had a children’s menu, of which only one of the business assessed offered a healthier option for children. Typically, children’s menus consisted of nuggets and chips, and some included these meals with a can of drink. Even when the business had a healthier food option on the main menu, the children’s menu only offered a choice of unhealthy items (*Table 2*). One of the children’s centres’ locality managers reported that families with young infants tend to go to cafes and supermarket cafes because they are perceived as safe places. This raises concerns when food offered on a children’s menu is not mostly unhealthy.

Business	Menu item	Price £
Lezzet	Chicken doner	6.45 (s)
	Nuggets & Chips (kid’s menu)	3.95



Figure 15 Example children's menu



Figure 16 Example children's menu

Low sugar snacks were unavailable at the majority of food businesses we assessed. We found that most of the cafes serve desserts e.g. ice-cream, apple pies with custard and similar sweet sugary desserts.



Figure 18 Very popular cafe, Erith serving English breakfasts

Thames Café, Erith, off Yarnton Way, a busy 'A' road, was very popular and full when we visited to complete a menu assessment. It appeared to be one of the only food establishments in the area serving English breakfasts to a range of people from young to old people and tradesmen. It was noted that food portions were large.

We also carried out a visual menu audit assessment of assets with high footfall, such as places of interest Hall Place, and places of entertainment Cineworld, and Greyhound dog track.

These places offer food and drinks that are high in sugar and in fat whereas Hall Place Riverside café menu offer was overall good with a choice of healthier options.



Figure 17 Bubble & Squeak flyer for burger and ice-cream meal



Figure 19 Cineworld food counter



Figure 20 Greyhound Track cafe menu



Figure 21 Hall Place breakfast menu

In addition, we surveyed the café and Friend's café in the Queen Mary's Hospital. The café, called 'Think Healthy' had grilled options and some healthier options available but no children's menu. The Friend's Snack Bar is run by volunteers and sells a selection of snacks and sandwiches. There were no healthy options, mainly foods high in fat and sugar – chocolate bars and cakes.



Figure 22 Friend's Cafe at Queen Mary's hospital



Figure 23 Sweet display at Friend's cafe

The photos above show the Friends' café – the picture on the right shows a large array of sugary sweets on offer, and on the left can be seen the fridge counter full of chocolate bars and crisps and other unhealthy snacks available. This café raises money for the hospital and was very popular.

On speaking to people on the Healthier Catering Commitment London group, they are finding that places like this are failing the HCC on the sugar content of foods; this is clearly displayed here. Initial work with the volunteers to explore alternative, healthier options should be a priority. See recommendations regarding Food in Institutions.

Proposed pan London changes impact on fast food and restaurant businesses

The new London Plan, to be published in March 2020, proposes restriction of unhealthy takeaways within 400 metres walking distance of an existing or proposed primary or secondary school. And where development proposals involving A5 hot food takeaway uses are permitted, these should be conditioned to require the operator to achieve, and operate in compliance with, the Healthier Catering Commitment (HCC) standard, to help reduce child obesity.

A Tier 2 Healthier Catering Commitment award is currently being developed for larger businesses with 200 or more outlets. It was developed in response to interest from larger food businesses and includes new, ambitious and robust criteria. This is in development and we don't have any timeframes for when it will go live.

Certainly, there is enormous promise that when the above London plan and tier 2 HCC scheme is finalised and adopted, food business chains will need to provide healthier food options at their venues and shops.

Food at home

The Food-in-the Home food survey was uploaded to survey monkey and distributed by the council (Public Health) to a range of stakeholders and partners. This was performed several times, nevertheless the response to the survey was insufficient. This may be due to the period over which it was disseminated (festive season), to shortened time allocated to running survey, and it is proposed that this survey is revised and run to add contextual data to our findings in this report

Food in the community settings and institutions (social, community assets)

We contacted a range of social and community assets across the profiled wards who supply food for sale or provide free food and/or refreshments to local residents.

Below are summarized findings in response to the asset survey returned by community settings and institutions, arranged in types of assets.

Assets, where food is a primary service, were not necessarily aware of any food standards relevant to their settings. Some assets reported following principles of healthy eating, either by displaying information at their settings or reporting that their menus offered healthy options.

In response to what measure would improve and/or make the borough of Bexley's food environment healthier:

- most of the assets suggested that less takeaways should be allowed to open in areas already densely populated with fast food businesses
- some assets working with families and children proposed that a choice of healthier options for children in cafes and restaurants ought to be available

Libraries

There are 12 libraries in Bexley borough, including six community managed libraries. The community libraries offer food across some of the activities and / or through cafes located on site. All the council run libraries have no food-related activities other than what groups using the library may offer to their participants, which is normally tea, coffee and biscuits.

Settings	Food offer	Comments about food initiatives
6 libraries	No cafes or food initiatives at any of the library sites, no activities for adults or children which include food/healthy eating. Tea and biscuits available, usually at adult activities. Befriending cafes at the libraries offer hot drinks and biscuits only. Water and /or coffee machine available at most of the libraries	Lack of kitchen to run food activities and the rise of food allergies were main reasons given why food projects, sessions or workshops are not included in the settings
6 community libraries	Monthly or weekly activities e.g. Cinema club, afternoon teas at which food is available. Participants/volunteers can bring food to these sessions. Those libraries with halls get booked for parties and people bring their own food.	Café at Slade Green & Howbury Community Library was operating until recently and was run by a volunteer. Families from neighbouring primary school would visit library and eat at the café after school. Food offer and favourite jacket potatoes with salads

Leisure Centres

Erith, Sidcup and Crooklog, run by Parkwood & Lex Leisure with Bexley Council, provided information on their food offer.

Users of the leisure centres can purchase light refreshments from a no-cook-to order café located in each leisure centre. Food available from these cafés' consists of light snacks; croissants, snack bars, pasta pots, baguettes (with salad cream/mayonnaise), porridge pots, hot drinks, fruit juice, flavoured water drinks and as advertised by Sidcup's Vita Café 'indulgent handmade cakes'. These leisure facilities also have vending machines, which offer drinks and snacks, mostly high in salt, sugar and fat. The centres are required to layout drinks and snacks exactly as per the supplier's diagram, and the best selling and profit-making snacks and drinks are at eye-level, which are not normally the healthier options e.g. sugary drinks at eye level

We were told that the best-selling food and drink are hot drinks (e.g. coffee), cookies (bars etc) and food and drink from the vending machines.

Food offered at Children's parties consist of nuggets and chips or sandwiches and crisps with either ice-cream or fruit bags. The manager at Erith leisure centre reported that families and children used to exclusively opt for ice-cream, whereas now fruit bags are increasingly popular at children's parties



Figure 24 Erith Leisure Centre Cafe counter

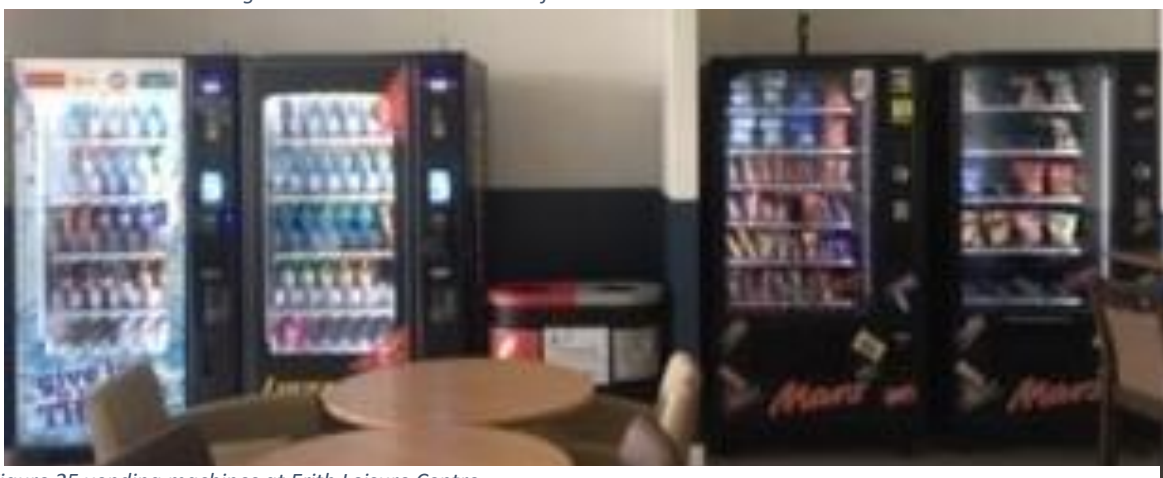


Figure 25 vending machines at Erith Leisure Centre

Children's Centres

There are three Children and Family Localities in Bexley, located in the north, south and centre of the borough. Although each locality co-ordinates a whole range of local activities across different sites for families, there are no projects, sessions currently running which directly involve food such as cooking session, food tasting workshop. Barriers mentioned include lack of facilities, inadequate kitchen facilities, and lack of resources and capacity. The centres provide water for families and children.

The staff at some of the children centres report witnessing unhealthy snacks and drinks being brought in by families for their infants. It appears that no food policy is in place, or effective, at the children centres.

Activities supporting healthy eating at Children's Centres

All localities reported quarterly sessions run by an oral health promoter who covers advice on sugary drinks. South locality runs an introduction to solid foods workshop, which consists of guidance and advice.

Some of the children centres have posters on display on healthy eating and/or sugar smart. North and south locality managers reported addressing issues relating to food when required in a one-to-one parenting support. The Health Visiting service (delivered by Bromley Healthcare) does have Unicef Baby Friendly Stage 2 and there are a few breastfeeding cafes in the borough, of which some are located in Crayford, Northumberland Heath and Sidcup children centres.

Successful Programmes at Children's Centres

We were told about past programmes and projects, which included practical healthy eating sessions for families and pregnant women, were popular and well attended

Kids make u bake, Mini Chefs - These cooking sessions were run in-house by a staff member who had relevant knowledge and skills. Staff member left and sessions stopped

A successful antenatal workshop was run by Queen Elizabeth hospital for pregnant women with high BMI, or for women with a high BMI trying to get pregnant. Recruitment to the workshop was high, and the women who participated obtained free access to a gym. This workshop won an award. It connected the participating women with children's centres, and it encouraged healthy eating during, and after, pregnancy, and supported mums to continue with making healthy eating habits and choices for themselves and their children

Barriers and challenges to accessing healthy affordable food in Bexley sited by children's centres:

Staff are aware of families (~35%), at south locality children centres, who use foodbanks. These families are mainly from working households, and there is a lot of stigma associated with accessing foodbanks in this part of the borough e.g. Welling.

Parents bring in processed foods to give to their infants attending the programmes. The staff report that parents lack cooking skills. Some of the families accessing live in shared accommodation, temporary housing and this impacts on their ability to cook from scratch due to lack of, and the need to, share facilities. Over Christmas the children centres collected and donated to food banks, and they noticed that use of foodbanks is mainly by white British

Pre-schools and Nurseries

We sent surveys, and made follow up calls, to 39 pre-schools in the borough. We had 20 responses and initial findings were very positive, with many of them citing 'healthy, nutritious meals' as fundamental to their provision. Twelve of the settings had a food policy or statement about food. Time constraints limited the depth in which we could delve into the policies, but initial assessment showed widely varying levels of cover. Some had very comprehensive policies detailing different elements of the food provision, whereas others had only a brief statement covering all provision. For example, the Walton House Nursery website states: All our meals are prepared by our chef on the premises we provide a well-balanced and multi-cultural menu, catering for all the children's nutritional/dietary needs. One thing noted was the ubiquitous use of the terms 'healthy' and 'nutritious'. Two of the nurseries followed the Pre-School Learning Alliance Guidelines, but none of the others were aware of any guidance. Our concern is that without evidence-based guidance, un-trained staff may not fully understand the nutritional needs of toddlers and babies.

Other settings reported the inadequacy of food given to children by their parents, and having to supplement food for the children to make sure they had enough to eat. Many of the settings included advice to parents on healthy lunch boxes; but again, these were not necessarily evidence-based guidance.

With the dizzying array of information out there, there seems to be a real opportunity to send all pre-schools and nurseries some practical, evidence-based guidelines they could easily refer to, to ensure they are providing healthy and nutritious meals.

All settings cited the importance of food hygiene and catering for allergies; these statutory standards ensure that all settings comply. Perhaps there is partnership with Environmental Health to find ways for EHOs to disseminate information about guidance available for early years settings.

Additional research to look into would be to map the nurseries against the IMD maps to find out where those with better provision are located.

All findings are in Assets Collection Sheet; appendix 2

Nursing Homes

We telephoned all 30 nursing homes to ask them about their food provision. We spoke to six setting and all those spoken to make their food in-house. Most of them reported to work with the service users to design the menu with the residents to ensure it was acceptable to them. Many of them talked about healthy eating being important and they claimed their in-house catering teams were delivering to the range of challenging requirements of the residents.

One nursing home reported that they had some support from the Dietetics and Speech and Language team at the hospital. They also said they had been invited to training on healthy eating by the council, but that the training was often far away, and they couldn't afford for the staff to be away as they had to pay replacement staff.

None of the nursing homes used or were aware of any guidance for food preparation, and as with the pre-schools and nurseries, a concern is that without guidance, do they fully understand the sometimes-complex nutritional needs of elderly people. As with the pre-schools, could EHOs be trained to sign-post nursing homes to the guidance available to them.

Detailed findings are Assets Collection Sheet; appendix 2

Other assets

Other assets such as faith groups, community centres, youth clubs were contacted (*appendix 2*) and sent the asset survey to complete. Only a handful of responses were returned, and below are examples on the food activities and matters which take place across these settings.

Belvedere community centre run food-related activities that support food insecurity. This includes weekly lunches for different groups using food surplus donated by supermarkets. Lunches vary according to weekly food donation, and the café volunteers prepare lunch. The centre also hosts a community fridge, which hands out to local residents 10-14 shopping bags of food weekly that would otherwise go to waste. The quantity of food distributed varies weekly, but no figures were available for this report. They have obtained funding in the past for a nutritionist to run cookery clubs on healthy eating.

Guru Nanak Darbar Sikh Temple provides free vegetarian food daily and serves over 150 meals per day during the week and up to 500 meals on Saturdays and Sundays. This free food service is accessed by Bexley residents, principal recipients being those from the Sikh communities. Food is purchased from funds donated by the worshippers of the temple. It was reported that food provided at the temple's Saturday school for young people will be food from local takeaways e.g. pizza, chips, this is considered a treat for attending. The temple also offers a twice weekly outreach service providing free meals to the homeless outside Woolwich Arsenal DLR station. This initiative is run by volunteers from the temple who reported that they go where the need presents and would like to carry out similar work in Bexley.

Youth Action Diversity Trust YADT run 6 cooking sessions per quarter, and AQA courses on cooking, lunch club for adults in isolation. Welling youth centre stated that young people accessing their club report being hungry. Both would like to do more either run a foodbank (YADT) and/or have access to surplus food for their users.

Reducing food waste has been one of the Waste recycling team's main focus over the last decade. They have been delivering Love Food Hate Waste campaign messages to residents across different initiatives such as running cooking demonstrations and activities and holding talks on how to reduce waste. These activities take place at libraries, gardening clubs, schools and at numerous events. The messages incorporate healthy eating, menu planning portion sizes, storage dates and labelling, and using up leftovers. They report that the ease of accessibility to cheap unhealthy food is a temptation and a barrier to residents and impacts negatively on addressing unhealthy eating behaviour, and on reducing food waste. Ideas on improving and making Bexley's food environment healthier range from working with food retailers to increase healthier menu options to embedding healthy eating, sustainability into policies and academic curricula.

The Learning and Enterprise College in Bexley offer free cookery courses for adults and teenagers, however we were not able to find out if these were healthy cookery courses.

Foodbanks

There are a number of food banks that address food insecurity in the borough.

Bexley Trussell Trust foodbanks (4) has food donated by supermarkets and Fareshare and are staffed by a manager and an administrator (paid posts) and over 150 volunteers. They are open 2-days per week, two hours per day.

They report donating a 3-day emergency food supply to 9000 users to date. (Data collection runs between April 2019 to April 2020 and they estimate that the final number will be 10,000). The food banks in order of most use are as follows:

1. Queen Street, Baptist church, Erith DA8 1RP

2. Trinity Baptist Church Bexleyheath DA6 7AY
3. Avery Hill Christian Fellowship, Sidcup DA15 8EA
4. New Community Church, Sidcup DA15 7DU

Visits to both Avery Hill and New Community church foodbanks at which volunteer staff reported 6-8 users accessing food from these foodbanks during weekly opening times. The beneficiaries receive a mix of mainly non-perishable and some perishable items. Toiletries and sanitary products are also distributed. The foodbanks will signpost users to services to help with benefit and finance guidance.

Faith groups and other centres such as the Big Local in Slade Green, Belvedere community centre, Community fridges located at Belvedere Community Centre and Bostall Community Library also distribute free emergency food, which has been donated by supermarkets. This service sits outside the Trussell Trust foodbank model and is dependent on volunteers and community centre staff making these food initiatives work

Further information on range of food initiatives that address food insecurity were beyond the scope and time allocated to this project work. Therefore, the following initiatives represent some of the activities /lunch clubs which take place across the borough of Bexley:

- Guru Nanak Darbar Sikh Temple – free vegetarian meal daily
- Sidcup Baptist Church run monthly lunch club which is free
- Irish Community Centre at Falconwood Community Centre and Bexley Turkish Elderly Day Centre, Welling run a weekly lunch club, unknown whether free or charge made
- Geddes Place United Reformed Church runs lunch weekly (Thursdays) cost £3 (United Reform Church)
- Belvedere Community Centre run weekly lunch (£3). Surplus donated food used to prepare food for a weekly lunch.
- New Community church collaborate with Crayford Mosque to collect donations for the homeless e.g. shoebox of toiletries

In Woolwich, Clockhouse Community centre, runs a weekly drop-in universal credit hub advice session, which provides advice and signposting to claimants. Partners include Citizens Advice, Advocacy Now (over 55s), Lewisham And Greenwich Migrant Hub, Welfare Rights (universal Credit), Greenwich Housing Rights and GCDA. The hub is funded to provide advice to Greenwich residents but will not turn away people from outside the borough. Between April to Dec 2019, 15 individuals from borough of Bexley accessed the universal credit hub for advice.

Sustainability

Community Growing and Allotments

For this objective we were asked to explore whether community growing/allotments are taking place in the borough.

The physical and mental benefits of growing are well documented and evidenced through a number of studies. They are becoming increasingly recognised as a way to encourage good health by addressing the intertwined social, economic and environmental determinants of health, such as building a sense of community, increasing physical activity, improving our mental health and improving our natural environment. Alaimo et al. (2016) "summarise the research into these areas which are condensed below.

Socio Economic Mediators	Health Benefits	Outcomes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Self efficacy and attitudes • Autonomous motivation • Tactile experience e.g. to explore, to get one's hands dirty • Skill acquisition and self sufficiency • Perhaps improved food security • Increased social interaction and support networks • Ownership and care of environment and green space 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased fruit and vegetable consumption • Increased exposure and willingness to try new foods • Increased physical activity 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Indirectly associated with self-rated health • Research to suggest gardeners likely to have a lower BMI • Potential impact on chronic disease risk e.g. type 2 diabetes • Improved mental health status
Impacts of community gardens outlined by Alaimo, et al. (2016)		

Bexley has 106 parks and open spaces attracting over 4m visitors each year. Attractions include 33 children’s playgrounds, sports facilities, places to eat, Sites of Special Scientific Interest, listed buildings and landscapes, lakes, ponds, rivers, fitness equipment gyms and trim trails, wildflower meadows, Local Nature Reserves and approximately 270,000 trees. There are over 950 organised events in parks and open spaces each year including a free 5k Parkrun held every Saturday at 9.00am at Danson Park and there are a number of free health walks in the parks (*all from Bexley JSNA 2018*)

The upkeep of the parks are supported by the great practical work carried out by the seven friends groups at [Foots Cray Meadows](#), [East Wickham Open Space](#), Danson Park and the [River Shuttle](#), Riverside Gardens, Erith, Sidcup Place and [Lesnes Abbey](#). The [Thames 21](#) river group help look after the waterways that flow through the parks, such as the River Cray and the River Shuttle, carrying out important conservation and drainage works. Through these groups there are a variety of ways to get involved in gardening, but not growing food.

Bexley owns 30 allotments around the borough and 5 that are under delegated management: Alers Road, Love Lane, Old Farm Avenue, Orchard and Rosemary Road with over 2,000 plots available for rent.

We also found the following additional Gardening sites

- [Sidcup Community Gardening Group](#) – a group of people who get together to plant and maintain the historic walled garden at Sidcup Place
- St John’s Churchyard Team
- [Friends of the Shuttle in Danson Park](#) - a group of volunteers keen to conserve and promote the wildlife and biodiversity of the River Shuttle and to give people a chance to get involved.
- [Sidcup Horticultural Association](#)
- [Woodlands Farm Trust](#)

Bexley took part in the Pocket Parks project that ran from 2013 – 2015 at The Link and Steeple Memorial Gardens. However, this was nearly 5 years ago, and we couldn’t find any evidence that the work has been maintained. Steeple Memorial Gardens is in an LSOA that falls within the top 50% of neighbourhoods in the IMD maps.

All the above projects encourage gardening, but none of them are specifically focused on growing food.

Identifying opportunities to reduce food waste in the home and for food businesses

UK households waste 6.5 million tonnes of food every year, **4.5 million** of which is edible. Aside from the environmental catastrophe this contributes to, it also costs the average family of 4 over £700 per year (*Love Food Hate Waste*).

There are numerous national campaigns, toolkits, food sharing apps and initiatives to support families and businesses to waste less food, listed below. In addition, discussions with the Food Waste Team highlighted they are currently writing a Reduction and Recycling plan 2020-2025 required by the Mayor of London. Ambitious targets include:

- Workshops with volunteers using the Community Fridges
- Workshops with residents on Love Food Hate Waste
- Work with partners during this campaign to set up cookery workshops where viable to encourage residents to use up their free vegetables and find out about portion control.
- Waste team to work with local food businesses to increase the number that have food waste recycling from their premises.
- Work in partnership with public protection team to provide information on food waste whilst inspecting premises.
- Change the food boxes provided for the food waste recycling service to a fox resistant type with a 2 litre larger capacity to allow an increase in recycling
- Provide a food waste leaflet with all new food boxes that are delivered.
- Investigate the inclusion of packaged food waste in the food recycling service.

Please note, these are DRAFT actions, not finalised and may be subject to change.

Initiatives, apps and campaigns already running

For homes:

- [Love Food Hate Waste](#)
- [Feedback](#)
- [Olio](#)
- [Too Good to Go](#)
- [Karma](#)
- [Farm Drop](#) - box schemes that connect producers direct to consumers
- [Oddbox](#) – as above

For Businesses

- [TRIFOCAAL](#) – resources for community groups, schools, businesses to reduce avoidable food waste in the capital and increase awareness of more healthy and sustainable eating
- [WRAP](#) – resources for reducing packaging, working across the supply chain to create value from reducing food waste and tackling issues around water scarcity
- [FareShare](#) – food redistribution charity diverting food surplus from landfill to charities and social enterprises
- [Plan Zheroes](#) – Food donation platform
- [Olio](#)
- [Too Good to Go](#)
- [Food Cloud](#) – a platform connecting businesses to charities to redistribute food

Limitations

Inevitably there were certain limitations to the report. These were:

- Time constraints. We only had 30 days, so this meant we did not have sufficient time to implement all the methodology across all the areas and assets, nor did we have enough time to run the survey/questionnaire or to do ‘deep dives’ into all areas in every location. Not enough time to
- Lack of housing information and data – this meant we couldn’t map the areas in relation to information about social or sheltered accommodation. If we had had this data, we would have chosen areas that also coincided with social or sheltered housing
- No responses from some assets or from food at home survey – this meant we could not fulfill the objective of food inside the home.

Recommendations

We have made some initial recommendations that we feel are essential to create a more positive food environment; these are below. We have then made a series of further recommendations grouped under the headings from the London Food Strategy, as this framework has been tested and fits with the report’s objectives. The table below lists all the recommendations stating whether we think they are short or long-term goals.

Overarching recommendations

Initially we recommend the council creates a food policy which includes statements on buying and procurement; supporting the population to access a healthy, sustainable diet; to lobby and campaign regional and national government; and raise awareness of a healthy and sustainable food.

Our next recommendation is to lead or support the creation of a Food Partnership. The food environment is made up of the public, private and third sector and individuals in the community, so in order to support a positive food environment, it is essential to have a joined up, collaborative approach including a diverse range of attendees committed to making sustainable changes. In order for this to be achieved, it requires senior council understanding and involvement; for example the Bexley Obesity Strategy and the Town Centre Strategy. There already exists a wide network of third sector, public and private organisations and this can be drawn on to create a partnership.

We recognise that resources are limited, but in order for this work to be carried forward, we think a funded post is essential to drive the work on. We consider the best solution to this is for all departments to commit to finding nominal amount ie. £5k - £10k to fund the position as these issues are cross-cutting across the council and all departments will benefit. There will of course have to be agreement about who manages the post. In our experience, it is best if the post is not situated in Public Health as this may help move work forward in other departments and contextualise it as more than a ‘public health’ domain.

Recommendations by area

Area per the London Food Strategy	Potential short-term actions	Potential long-term actions	Strategy/Report/Guidance
Food in the home & reducing food insecurity	Convene a group to examine and discuss recommendations in ' Empowering Good Infant Nutrition in London '	Achieve Unicef Baby Friendly across all settings covered by the initiative Take up all actions suggested in 'Empowering Good Infant Nutrition in London' – many of which can be achieved through other recommendations	Empowerment Good Infant Nutrition in London
	Re-run the 'food at home' questionnaire to establish eating patterns and behaviours	Use this information to inform action plan on how to support people to access and eat more healthy food	Sustainable Food Cities Toolkit for LAs to implement Good Policy for Good Food
	Convene a food poverty action group with representatives from across the borough	Create and implement a food poverty action plan	As above
	Borough-wide promotion of healthy start including to retailers, the general public and to all agencies so there is a joined-up approach		
		Adoption of 'The Low-Income Family Tracker' produced by Policy in Practice to target promotion to those on benefits	Greenwich Council uses this tool and has offered to discuss with anyone at Bexley if desired.
	Sign-up and commit to be a London Living Wage borough	Create incentive schemes to encourage local businesses to be LLW e.g. rate relief	Living Wage Report: https://www.livingwage.org.uk/sites/default/files/BAR_LivingWageReport%20cropped%2021%2001.pdf

Area as per the London Food Strategy	Potential short-term actions	Potential long-term actions	Strategy/Report/Guidance
		Building on and strengthening work to improve access to affordable, healthy food in deprived neighbourhoods as part of wider social regeneration and community development in the borough – can be done through the Healthier Retail Strategy – see below	
	Map and promote existing availability of meals for vulnerable groups	Supporting access to meals for the vulnerable in the borough through increasing the provision of lunch clubs, meals on wheels, community & holiday meals	
	Understand the levels of food insecurity in the borough	Help tackle food insecurity by maximising opportunities for low income households to improve their financial situation and manage conflicting demands on income e.g. promote LLW, pantries, work with Welfare Rights & other agencies to maximise benefit uptake, maximise uptake of healthy start vouchers, free school meals & breastfeeding.	GLA Food insecurity map
	Meet with Bexley college to discuss their family cookery classes to understand content, participation levels and capacity to expand.	Depending upon capacity of college commission a cookery club programme to run across the borough for all ages (adult community learning)	Learning and Enterprise College, Bexley prospectus: https://www.lecb.ac.uk/Content/Images/uploaded/A4%20Full%201920%20sm.pdf
	Map the holiday meal provision currently available in the Borough. (some Kitchen social – see resources).	Develop and evaluate a pilot holiday meals service supported by the Borough	The Mayor’s Fund, Kitchen Social: https://www.mayorsfundforlondon.org.uk/kitchen-social-great-things-to-eat-and-do/

Area as per the London Food Strategy	Potential short-term actions	Potential long-term actions	Strategy/Report/Guidance
Food economy, shopping and eating out	Convene a Good Food Retail working group to develop a healthier retail strategy	Adopt a healthy retail strategy that can inform future planning decisions and help improve existing retail provision	Sustain Good Food Retail https://www.sustainweb.org/londonfoodlink/good_food_retail/Good Food Retail Plan
	EHOs to promote Healthier Catering Commitment Scheme & Award. On-line HCC Training course for Local Authorities will be available later this year and will support EHOs to roll out scheme whilst visiting premises	Create a business charter that encourages and supports local action that will include local support e.g. BIDs Initially work with takeaways identified as located within 500m of schools	Good Food in Greenwich Business Charter
	Encourage convenience stores to sign up to Healthy start scheme	Adopt or create a charter for retailers to sign-up which could cover a broader offer such as healthy tills, product placement and availability Initially work with convenience stores and takeaways identified as located within 500m of schools	Association of Convenience Store how to video https://www.acs.org.uk/advice/healthy-start For more information on Healthy Start https://www.healthystart.nhs.uk/ Scottish Grocers' Federation Healthy Living Programme began in 2004 GLA Good Food Retail investigating scheme similar to HCC for retail
	Sign up to the Local Government Declaration on Sugar Reduction and Healthier Food	Create policies pertaining to sponsorship and advertising to restrict advertising of food and drinks that are high in fat, sugar and salt	Local Government Declaration on Sugar Reduction and Healthier Food https://www.sustainweb.org/londonfoodlink/declaration/
	Sign up to national campaigns Sugar Smart, Veg Cities and promote through Bexley Council website	Encourage schools, early years and other settings to take part in this schemes	Sugar Smart https://www.sugarsmartuk.org/ Veg Cities https://www.vegcities.org/

Area as per the London Food Strategy	Potential short-term actions	Potential long-term actions	Strategy/Report/Guidance
	Direct current fruit and veg street traders to local business support services	Create more street trading licenses to encourage more fruit and veg stalls	Bexley For Business business support programme: https://arena.yourlondonlibrary.net/web/bexley/business-support https://www.bexleyforbusiness.co.uk/
		Work with street trading to find a scheme that will enable current fruit and veg stalls to register with healthy start	Woolwich market Greenwich fruit and veg stalls https://prod.goodfood.gcda.webarch6.co.uk/2018/08/20/woolwich-market-signs-up-to-healthy-start-vouchers/
	Encourage Food Business Outlets to show calories of dishes on menus	Develop access to an online tool for access by independent food businesses in order	
	Evaluate the cost of rate relief if a certain number of independent businesses meet charter/ scheme standards	Consider rate relief for businesses that adhere to the scheme or charter	Example of rate relief programme for HCC compliant businesses https://barnet.moderngov.co.uk/documents/s43791/Business%20Rates%20-%20Revaluation%20Support%20a%20new%20discretionary%20rate%20relief%20scheme%20-%20implementation%20progre.pdf
	Consider ways to celebrate Bexley's food culture e.g. encourage the Big Lunch, Great Get Togethers	Aim to create a positive food culture to move away from fast-food eating as the norm; Supporting a change in a culture that doesn't see fast, unhealthy food as the obvious choice towards wanting to eat healthy food because it is delicious.	

Area as per the London Food Strategy	Potential short-term actions	Potential long-term actions	Strategy/Report/Guidance
Food in community settings	Support BVSC (or another third sector organization to convene a group across the third sector and community centres to identify and share best practice.	Encourage this group to develop and deliver a charter across the sector, to network groups and facilitate an action plan.	
	Create and adopt a food charter for community settings. The charter would cover healthy eating, environmental and sustainability criteria	Work with current providers to adopt HCC and setting specific charters	E.g. GFIG Charter but could include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create a space for growing vegetables for the local community • Offer a free space 3 times a year for food related activities • Use healthy, sustainable catering guidelines when procuring food for an event • Expect hirers to commit to healthy, sustainable catering guidelines when putting on events at the centre • Recycle and compost waste
		Embed charter specifications within procurement and commissioning processes for future tendering	Example of a strategy of how the third sector can deliver health, embedded in their commissioning process: https://www.croydonccg.nhs.uk/news-publications/publications/Documents/Voluntary%20and%20Community%20Sector%20Strategy%200000-00%20(January%202014).pdf
	Map and promote community meals across the borough	Convene existing and potential volunteers and groups to grow provision (could be part of the group described above)	

Area as per the London Food Strategy	Potential short-term actions	Potential long-term actions	Strategy/Report/Guidance
	Develop training for third sector linked to the commissioning model described	Delivering Training to third sector organisations to help them to embed healthy, sustainable practice and messaging within their current work	Be Inspired training programme http://beinspiredlewisham.org/ https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/beinspired-2-day-healthy-eating-and-physical-activity-training-tickets-77278458951
	Adopt a Healthier Vending policy for all council run buildings	Write Healthier Vending criteria into all future procurement and tendering documents	Southwark Council Leisure Centres are contractually obliged to provide health options for users Southwark Healthier Vending

Area as per the London Food Strategy	Potential short-term actions	Potential long-term actions	Strategy/Report/Guidance
Food in public institutions, early years and nursing homes	Identify procurement opportunities e.g. leisure centres, children centres, libraries throughout the council and timescales of renewal	Embed best practice within the tendering process	Voluntary Food and Drink Guidelines for Early Years Settings in England Healthy Early Years London Healthy Schools London Government catering buying standards School Food for Life
	Council Offices Sign up to the Healthy Workplace Award		

Area as per the London Food Strategy	Potential short-term actions	Potential long-term actions	Strategy/Report/Guidance
	<p>Council Offices Implement free fruit and vegetables for staff and ‘cake on occasion’ to encourage healthier choices at work</p>		
	<p>The nursing homes were already doing a lot, but there was no guidance for them to follow. We recommend convening regular events for nursing and care homes to network, identify and workshop ideas to implement in their setting</p>	<p>Disseminate existing guidelines that support healthy, sustainable food in the settings Support with training to settings to help them adopt this</p>	<p>Food for Life Better Care – a comprehensive whole settings approach to prevent malnutrition and loneliness, to enhance wellbeing to build capacity within the care sector around food, and to bring communities together through food. This holistic, co-design approach works with older people to tackle more than just nutritional outcomes but has the potential to prevent wider social consequences of malnutrition in care homes.</p> <p>The Food for Life; Older People website contains useful tools and resources including the Food for Life Handbook for Care Homes to attain Food for Life accreditation.</p>
		<p>In-house training for nursing homes. Some reported that they couldn’t afford to release staff, so ideally training would be delivered inhouse where possible</p>	

Area as per the London Food Strategy	Potential short-term actions	Potential long-term actions	Strategy/Report/Guidance
	Convene regular events for early years settings to network, identify and workshop ideas to implement in their setting	Create a post that can deliver this work across early years including support with Healthy Early Years London	
	Deliver training to EHOs so they can sign-post nursing homes and pre-schools to guidance to support evidence based nutrition in their settings <i>(note; the training is purely for sign-posting, not to deliver healthy eating guidance)</i>		
	<p>Schools</p> <p>Promote and encourage all schools to sign up to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sugar Smart, veg cities campaigns, Fairtrade fortnight • Food growing schemes • Healthy Schools London scheme and awards (free) • Food for Life accreditation (cost involved) <p>Ensure that the schools follow the principles laid out in the School Food Plan, encouraging take up of school meals</p> <p>Ensure that the mandatory food-based standards are implemented</p>	<p>Develop training for school staff to recognize and address food insecurity</p> <p>Bexley council to develop and promote a school charter which could include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All children should be able to cook at least 5 savoury dishes from scratch that they enjoy and are affordable • Healthy tuck shops • Ensure that consistent messages about food and health are given across the school day • Ensure the food and drink available across the school day reinforces the healthy lifestyle message and food and drink brought in are in line with healthy food choices provided in the school • Make children aware of their food choices and sustainability 	<p>Food for life - catering, schools early years, hospitals and get together https://www.foodforlife.org.uk/early-years/criteria</p> <p>Healthy Schools London https://www.london.gov.uk/what-we-do/health/healthy-schools-london/awards/home</p> <p>Healthy Early Years London https://www.london.gov.uk/what-we-do/health/healthy-early-years-london/about-healthy-early-years-london</p> <p>Bexley Healthy Schools Programme Health Eating policy <i>appendix</i></p>
	Work with hospitals to embed standards in hospital food and retail on hospital premises to include the Friend's Café in Queen Mary Hospital		Scottish Criteria for the Healthcare Retail Standard

Area as per the London Food Strategy	Potential short-term actions	Potential long-term actions	Strategy/Report/Guidance
Food growing & urban farming	Map all open access community gardens in the Borough and publish on Bexley council website	Encourage gardens to engage in events that promote community engagement.	Examples of growing projects: https://www.bigdig.org.uk/ https://www.sustainweb.org/londonfoodlink/uff/ https://www.opengardens.co.uk/new_open_gardens.php
	Sign Up to capital growth and Encourage existing gardens to sign-up to Capital Growth	Provide advice and support for the development of community gardens Commission gardening support (adult community learning)	Capital Growth https://www.capitalgrowth.org/ Examples of how to set up a community garden https://lewisham.gov.uk/myservices/environment/allotments/community-gardens
	Through the Food Partnership, Convene a food growing/gardening subgroup to network the growers and share resources etc Capitalise on the many allotments to engage with growers to join the growing network		
Area as per the London Food Strategy	Potential short-term actions	Potential long-term actions	Strategy/Report/Guidance

	Identify local planning or supplementary planning guidance that can support food growing	Use planning development opportunities to incorporate food growing and improve physical access to good food in local plans using supplementary planning guidance	Guidance for planning https://www.sustainweb.org/planning/guidance-to-developers/ http://www.sharedassets.org.uk/policy/urban-food-growing-the-new-london-plan/
	Meet with parks and open spaces to discuss an increase in the planting of fruit and nut trees in parks, green spaces and institutional grounds	Adopt/adapt a tree management policy across all green spaces to grow more edible – including street trees	Tree Policy example: https://www.camden.gov.uk/documents/2014/2/4823269/Trees+CPG.pdf/d8724d18-1cc6-d07e-c3d9-61e6f734bc20
	Identify and evaluate any informal social prescribing taking place e.g. Woodlands Farm	GPs, healthcare commissioners and healthcare providers should consider the benefits of social prescribing – referring patients to sociable food growing	Food Growing on Prescription from Sustain: https://www.sustainweb.org/publications/food_growing_on_prescription/
The environment	Convene a group through the partnership to focus on the environmental issues caused by food and drink	Support the council to declare a climate emergency	link to Greenwich Declaration
	Continue to work with London Waste and Recycling Board, Resource London and Love Food Hate Waste and TRiFOCAL to help residents and businesses reduce food waste	Provide business support to help reduce food waste building on the work of WRAP and Trifocal 'Your food is business – don't throw it away'.	Wrap resources for businesses: https://www.wrap.org.uk/content/your-business-food-don%E2%80%99t-throw-it-away-0
	Council website to host a page promoting food sharing apps and Love Food Hate Waste		

ⁱMaster's Thesis No 107277 (Supervisor: Steve Cummins). *Assessing Neighbourhood Accessibility to a Healthy Diet in Inner London: a Cross-Sectional Study Using Food Price Data and Geographic Information Systems*. London School of Hygiene & Tropical Medicine; 2014

ⁱⁱAlaimo, K., Beavers, A., Crawford, C., Snyder, E. and Litt, J. (2016). *Amplifying Health Through Community Gardens: A Framework for Advancing Multicomponent, Behaviorally Based Neighborhood Interventions*. *Current Environmental Health Reports*, 3(3), pp.302-312.