



GUY'S &  
ST THOMAS'  
CHARITY

# Urban health and the built environment

Jess Attard and Kieron Boyle

GUY'S &  
ST THOMAS'  
CHARITY

Urban Health Foundation

GUY'S &  
ST THOMAS'  
CHARITY

Endowment

Hospital Charity





**As an urban  
health foundation**

**We work to tackle the  
major health challenges affecting  
people in inner-city areas**





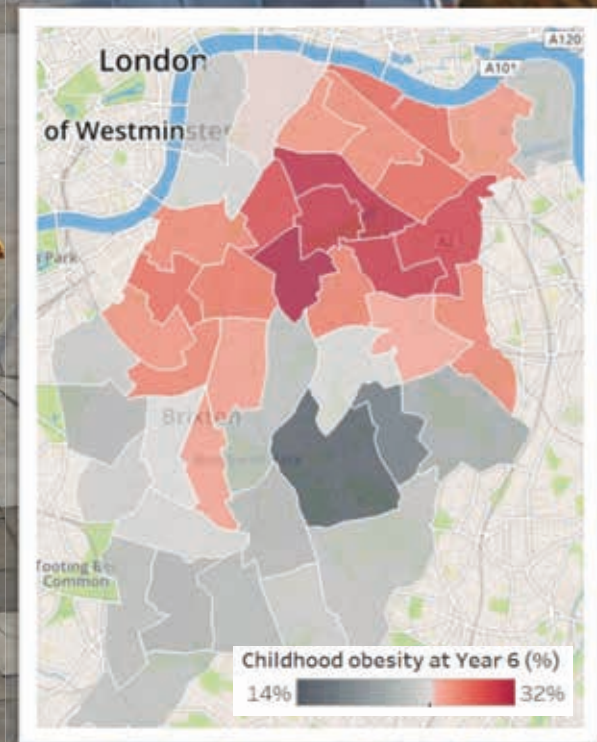
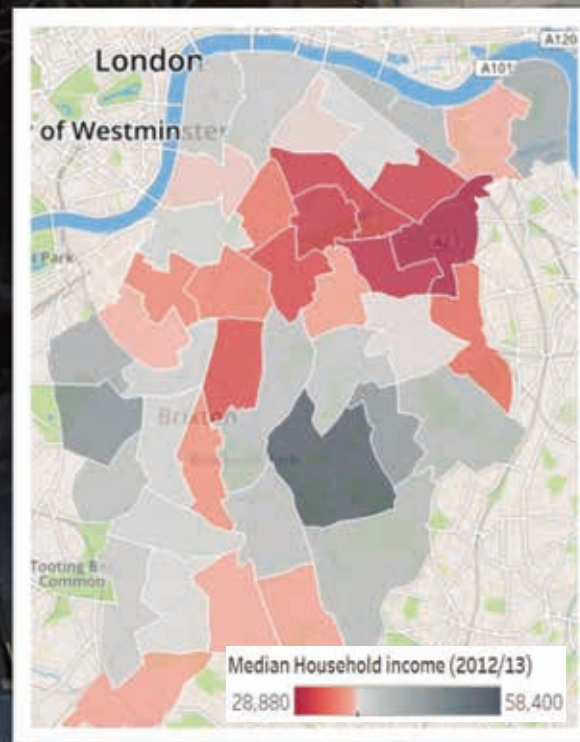
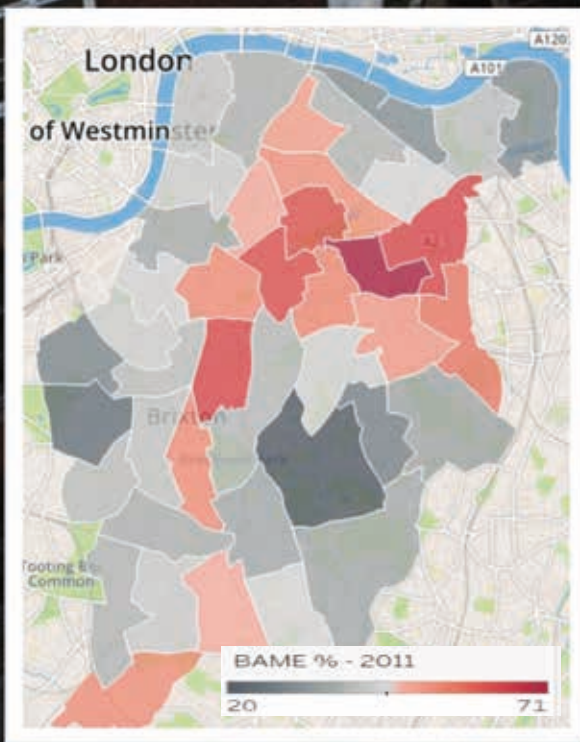
GUY'S &  
ST THOMAS'  
CHARITY



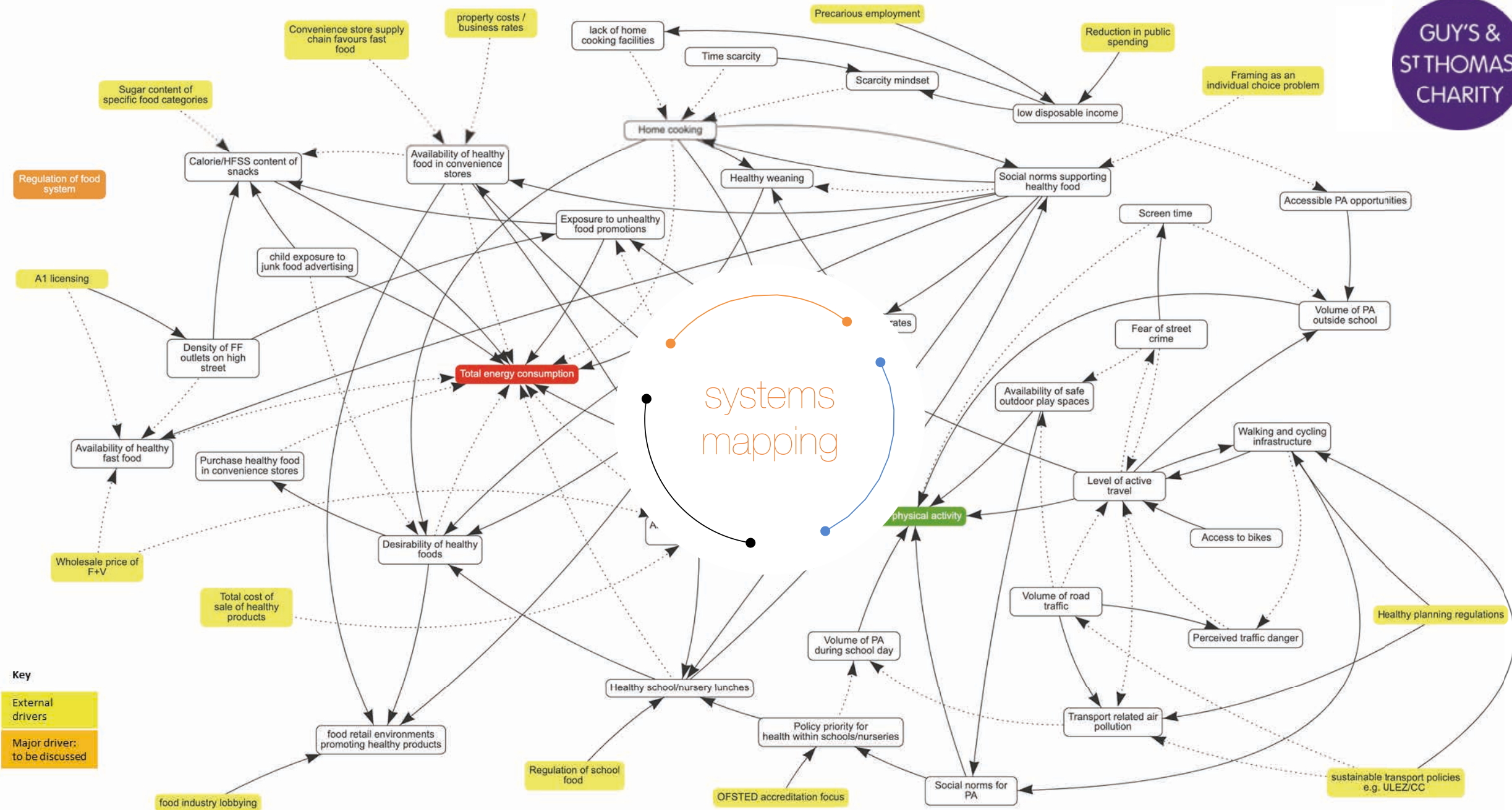
Diverse

Income  
inequality

Health  
inequality







# Principles for tackling childhood obesity

These practical principles draw together ways to develop a programme in line with the latest behavioural evidence around the drivers of obesity, paying particular attention to the interaction between the urban environment and our psychology.

They can be used to guide both overall strategy for a suite of interventions as well as more specific projects.

## Design for maximum impact

### Universal and preventative interventions

- Where possible, seek to make interventions universal across the population but more intense for those most disadvantaged.
- Universal and preventative interventions have the greatest potential for impact.

### Recognise the value of a harm reduction approach

- Adopt a strategy of harm reduction and substitution rather than expecting step changes in behaviours.
- Beware of "health halos" when encouraging

**Physical activity is secondary to calorie consumption**



evidence  
base

## Make healthy choices easier

GUY'S &  
ST THOMAS'  
CHARITY

### Make uptake and participation easy

- Ensure any intervention is as easy as possible to take part in and remain engaged with.
- Have realistic expectations of the amount of spare time and cognitive effort people have, particularly amongst people living in deprived areas for whom scarcity will have a disproportionate impact.
- Good intentions can quickly wane and interventions requiring time and effort are much less likely to be effective.

### Look for marginal gains

- Any and all progress should be encouraged.
- We should not necessarily demand that people switch to conventionally healthy choices, as long as they're improving on their previous behaviour.

### Don't only focus on education

- Purely educational interventions are less likely to be effective and have the potential to widen health inequalities.
- When information is provided it should be as easy to comprehend as possible and as close to the point of action as feasible. For example, simple signage at the point of purchase rather than a detailed nutritional information booklet in the post.

## Change the environment

### Reduce total food exposure

- Aim to reduce the availability and prominence of energy dense food in the entire food environment.
- There is now an abundance of affordable energy dense foods

### Prioritise reducing unhealthy choices

- Promoting healthier foods may encourage substitution away from less healthy options and encourage good habits.
- However, simply increasing consumption of healthier foods

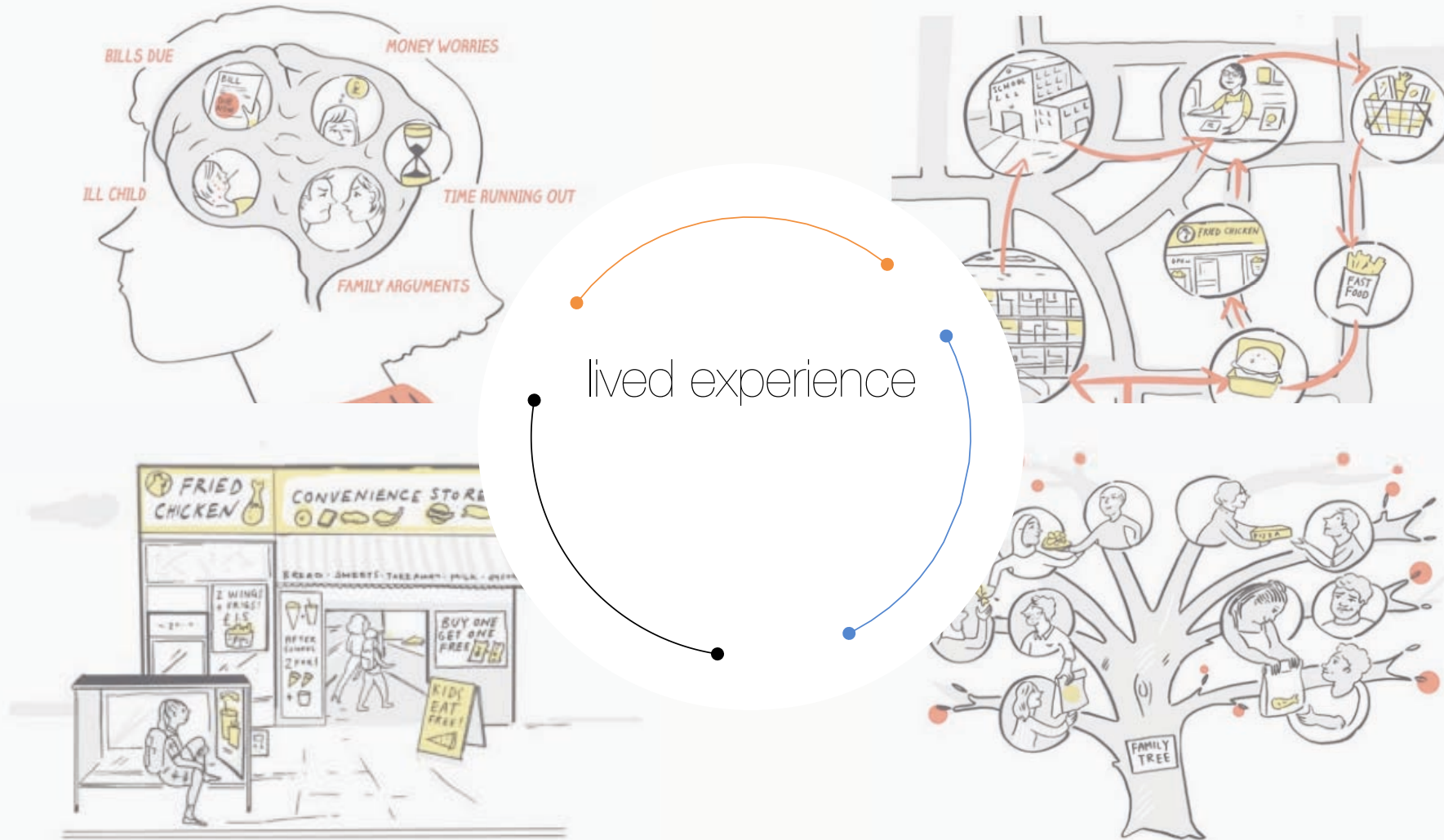
### Promote incidental physical activity

- Incidental physical activity interventions such as active travel are easy to begin and to incorporate into daily life.
- An added benefit is that the risk of compensatory

### Combine multiple interventions

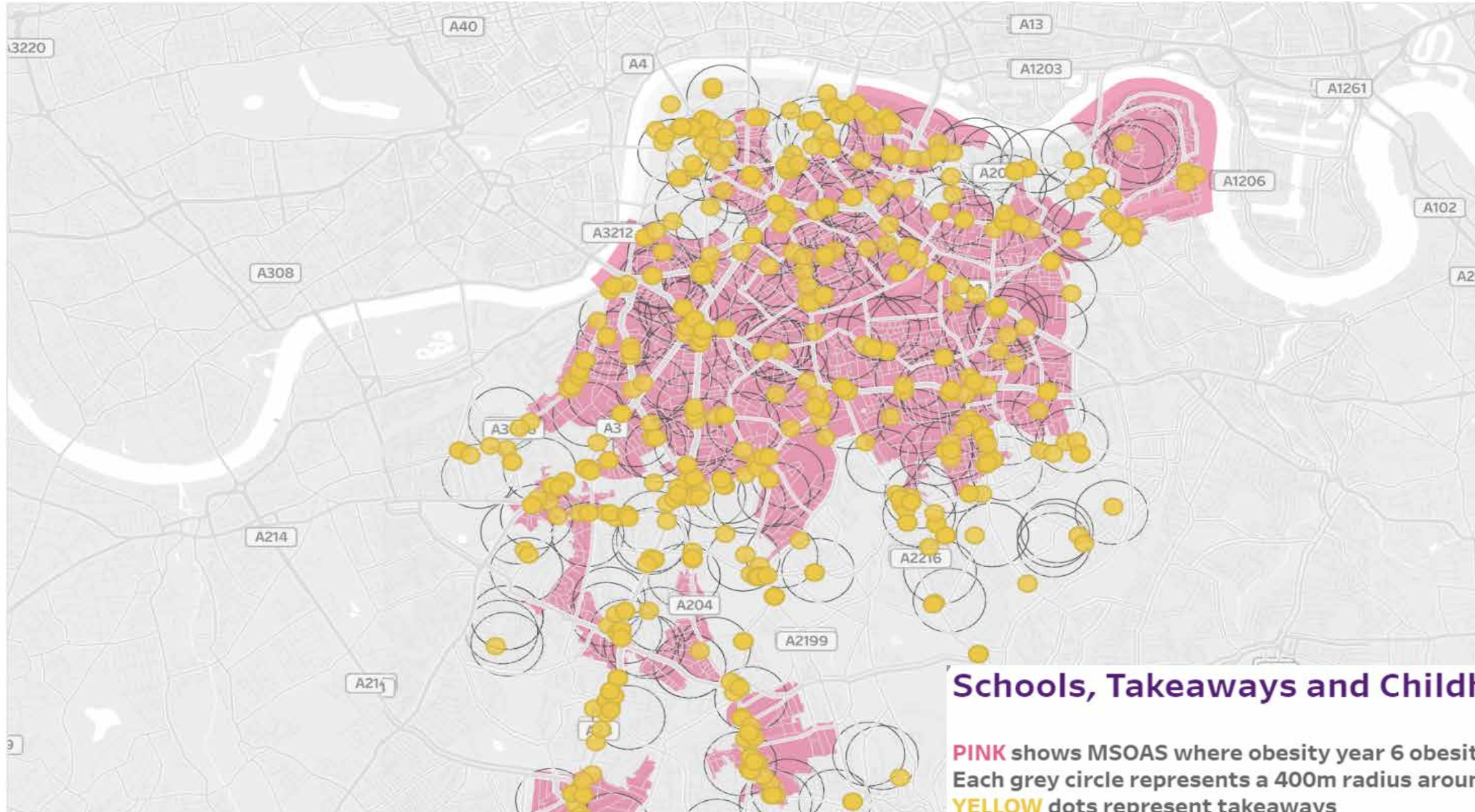
- There is no single solution to the childhood obesity problem but combining multiple, modest but meaningful interventions has the greatest potential.







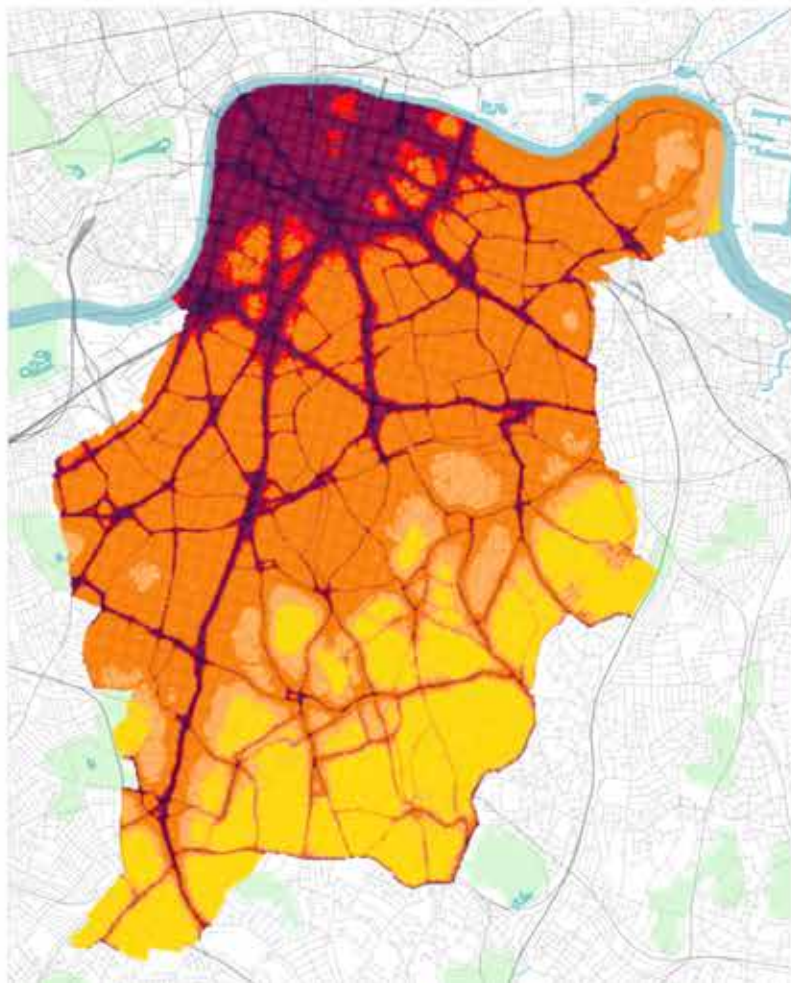
# We map the built environment to target interventions for impact



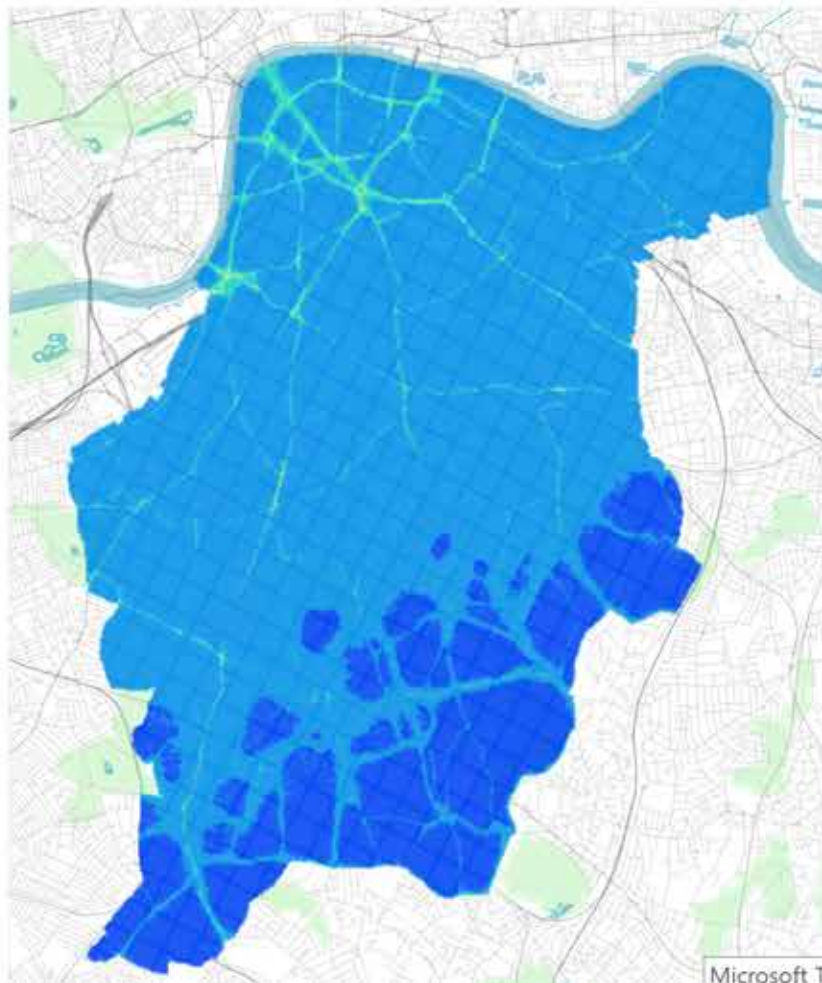


## We map the built environment to target interventions for impact

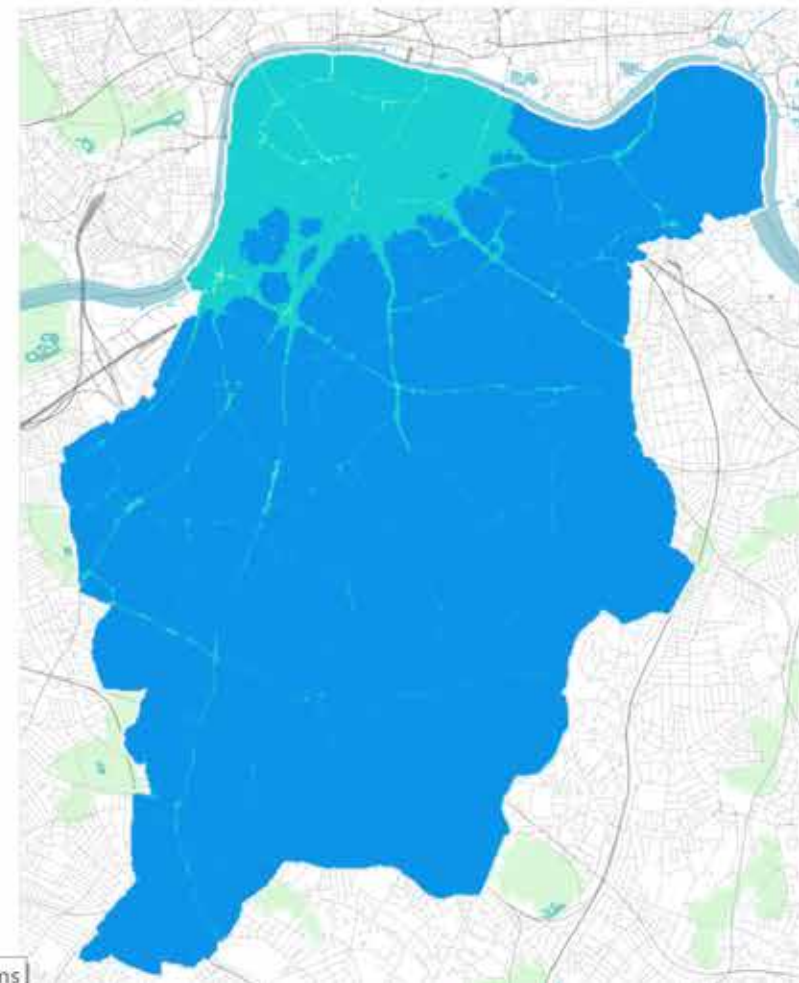
NO<sub>x</sub>



PM<sub>10</sub>



PM<sub>2.5</sub>\*





# We work with communities to redesign the public realm





# We work with communities to redesign the public realm

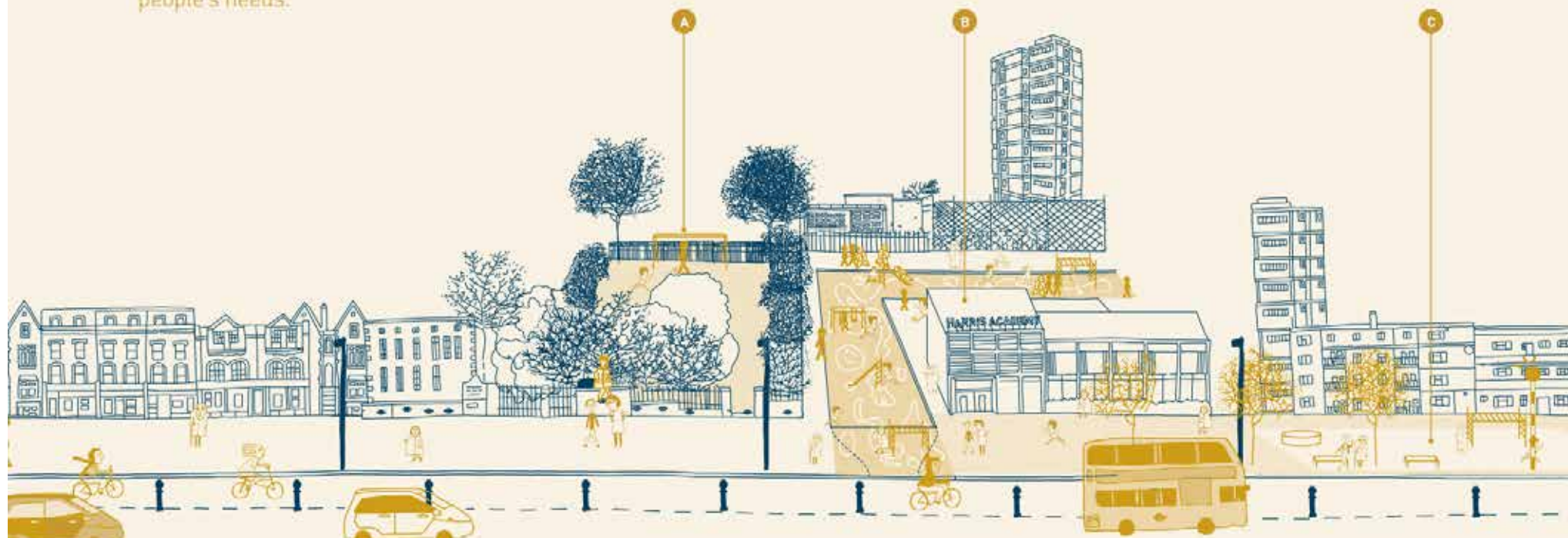
## Strengthening Networks Framework for public life

### Key Finding

High streets are overperforming, whilst parks and public spaces are under-serving young people's needs.

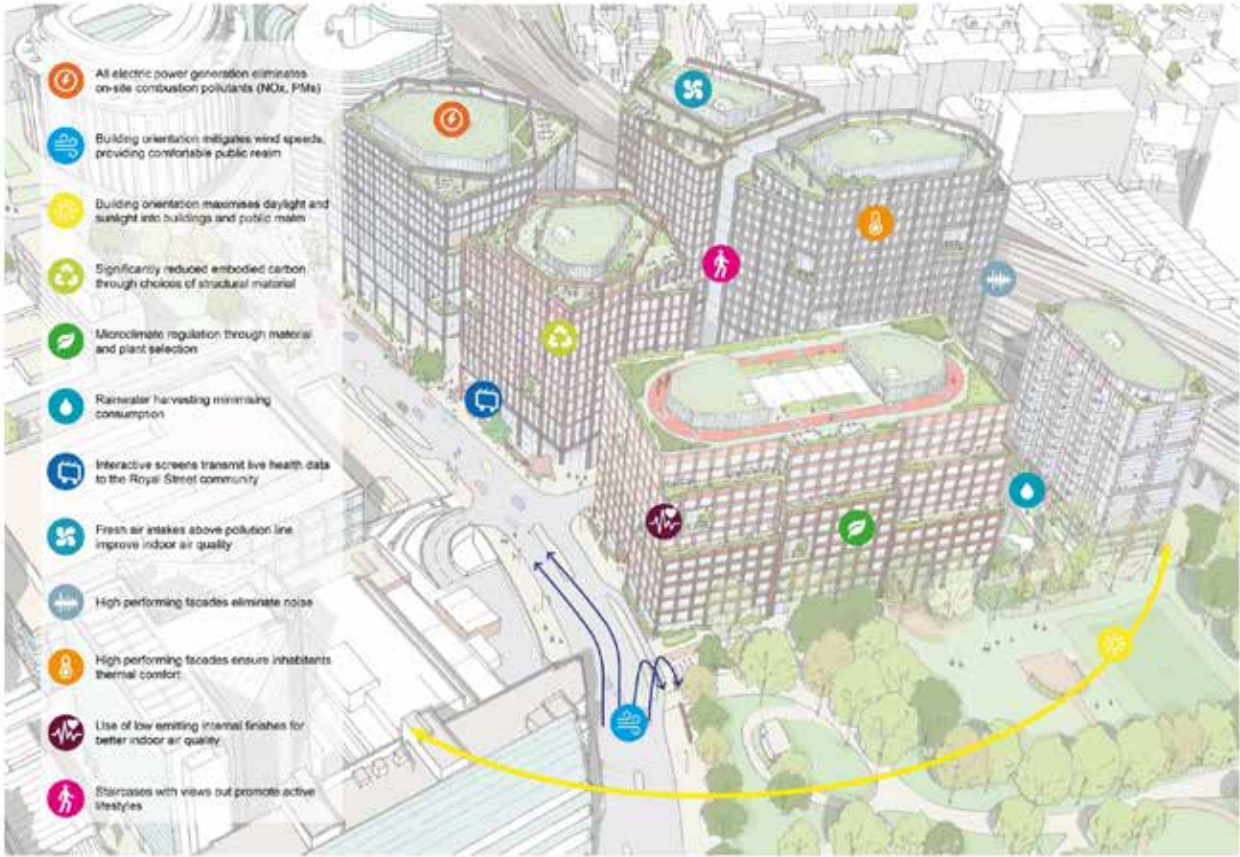
### Principles

- A. Activating existing public space.**
- B. Better connected schools.**
- C. Eye-level street quality.**





# We will seek to drive health impact through our developing property portfolio





## Summary

---

The up-front investment for changing the built environment is high, with its potential value being returned over a long and sustained period. By investing in projects that will be relatively inexpensive to roll-out, we aim to build the evidence base on the positive health impacts of changing the built environment. Our goal is to back projects that can be replicated, shared and scaled, not only in our boroughs but in similar urban environments.





@GSTTCharity



[www.gsttcharity.org.uk](http://www.gsttcharity.org.uk)



[Jessica.Attard@gsttcharity.org.uk](mailto:Jessica.Attard@gsttcharity.org.uk)

GUY'S &  
ST THOMAS'  
CHARITY

