Obesity is an issue of global concern. Around the world obesity rates have risen rapidly in the recent past, with an associated increase in the number of related health conditions. The basic equation of obesity is simple - too much energy consumed, too little energy expended. However, the courses are complex and multifactorial, including biological, psychological, sociological and economic factors.

The 2007 Foresight Report (Tackling Obesities: Future Choices, government Office for Science, London) stated that there was enough expert evidence to implicate the built environment in the obesity crisis. However, establishing causal networks between the built environment and obesity has been notoriously difficult. Our research, has attempted to unravel some of the complexity, by trying to understand the way in which the built environment influences the choices we make in terms of food consumption and the ways in which it might encourage, or constrain, physical activity. The work has included a number of reviews of evidence, pilot and full research projects. The results of these have been communicated through a series of publications (see below) to an academic audience, however, importantly have also been communicated to practice based audiences through a series of seminars, conferences and dissemination events - in particular reaching out to both public health and planning audiences.

The work has been cited in a number of policy and guidance documents - both local and national government, such as:

- London Borough of Barking and Dagenham (2009) Saturation Point: Addressing the health impacts of hot food takeaways

Current work involves a research project which seeks to examine the relationship between overweight and obesity prevalence and factors within the broad environment (land use, school, home etc.) of children aged 10-11 years. The results of which will be fed back to participating schools, along with wider target audiences.

Exploring the build and food environments.