

Thurrock Council Public Health Team

Hot Food Takeaways and Health and Wellbeing: An evidence-based review for Thurrock

Supporting development of local policy to inform the Local Plan

Introduction

The important role of planning in creating healthy places and communities - and in deepening our understanding of how the built and natural environment shapes health, wellbeing, and health inequalities - is widely recognised. Furthermore, it's well-evidenced that where we live, work and play can have a significant impact on the choices that we are able to make about our lives, including the types of food that we can consume. (1) Healthy, sustainable and affordable foods should be accessible for all, yet we know that this is sadly not the case. Planning, through delivery of local policies, has an important role to play in creating places that enable people to make healthy choices easily and to achieve and maintain a healthy weight. They can do this, for example, by restricting the number of new Hot Food Takeaways (HFTs) that are permitted within their local area, through good quality design of homes and neighbourhoods and through provision of spaces for community food growing and physical activity. (2) Such interventions are supported by the recent changes (2024) to the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). (3) The NPPF will be discussed later in this evidence review.

This evidence review is focused specifically on addressing the health impacts associated with hot food takeaways.

Purpose of this review - Aims and Objectives

- To provide the evidence base in relation to understanding the links between hot food takeaways and health and wellbeing
- To provide the evidence to meet the requirements of the NPPF and activate its use in supporting the Council to be able to restrict Hot Food Takeaways in areas where such uses would have an adverse impact on health and wellbeing and health inequalities.
- To understand what other local authority areas have implemented to address the proliferation of hot food takeaways and to examine the success of such policies in practice where this information is available.
- To inform the Development Management Policies within the Local Plan as relates to retail provision including Hot Food Takeaways.

Structure of Review

The report is structured into the following sections:

- Introduction
- Purpose of this review – aims and objectives
- Understanding the link between Hot Food Takeaways and Health and Wellbeing – the national evidence base
- National policy levers
- The local policy context
- The local picture – what is happening in Thurrock

- What are other areas doing?
- Summary and Recommendations
- Appendices
- References

Understanding the link between Hot Food Takeaways and Health and Wellbeing – the National evidence base

What are hot food takeaways?

Hot Food Takeaways (HFTs) are premises in which the primary purpose is the sale of food to be taken away, rather than eaten on the premises from which is bought.” They were classified as A5 Uses (and you will see this referenced in many of the case studies included in appendix 2) but following an update to the use classes order in September 2020 they are now classed as Sui Generis premises under the current use classes order used by Planning. (4)

Sui Generis is a term used to describe premises that do not fall within a certain use class category. The changes mean that in general any new Sui Generis use and change of use to Sui Generis would require planning permission. This change in use class from A5 to Sui Generis enables local authorities to have greater control, through use of the planning system to manage such developments and to restrict further proliferation of hot food takeaways. (5)

Why does managing proliferation of hot food takeaways matter?

Across England, year on year increases in the number of people living with excess weight and obesity mean that obesity is now considered one of the most serious Public Health concerns of the 21st century. It presents significant challenges for local authorities and the local health sector tasked with combatting the problem. The causes of obesity are complex and multi-faceted, but are most certainly related to lifestyle choices which are influenced by the environments that people live, learn, work and play in.

It is widely recognised that overweight and obesity can directly impact health in a number of ways, for example, it is associated with certain diseases such as Type 2 Diabetes and some forms of Cancer. It can lead to a shorter life expectancy and even premature mortality. Addressing childhood obesity in particular is critical as part of the prevention agenda and in reducing the future prevalence of the conditions noted above.

It is well evidenced that the way that the built environment is designed can inhibit people’s opportunities to be healthy in terms of being able to be physically active and to eat well. (1) The increasing proliferation of hot food takeaways further adds to the problem; this is because such establishments tend to sell foods that are high in salt, sugar and fat. (6) On top of this, people’s lives have become more complex and busier and this has led to people desiring or in many cases relying on ‘food to go’ to meet their needs and accommodate their busy lives. What was once seen as an ‘occasional treat’ has become the norm. Research undertaken in 2018 shows that one in four children in England have a takeaway at least once a week. In households where a higher number of children are living, research found that takeaway and fast food was consumed more frequently whether as part of children’s meals or as part of family meals. (7)

As such it is critical that action is taken to tackle obesity, through a whole systems approach. Part of this approach is addressing how neighbourhoods and the built environment are designed and in managing the number and locations of hot food takeaways. As well as directly addressing health issues such as obesity, managing HFTs can have some indirect co-benefits for health through reduced litter, waste and odours, reduced levels of noise and lower rates of anti-social behaviour.

Using policy to restrict HFTs can also increase the number and diversity of types of food retail outlets, which in turn supports the local economy. (2)

While it is important to manage the density / concentration of HFTs, the location of HFTs is also important as it can impact on health outcomes. There is a correlation between takeaway density, deprivation and levels of obesity. (6) Areas of deprivation have a higher concentration of HFTs. In areas of deprivation:

- Children are twice as likely to develop obesity by age 5, and one in three by the time they leave primary school
- There are five times as many HFTs than in more affluent areas, which limits access to healthy food options
- Research shows that exposure and proximity to HFTs is associated with less healthy dietary habits (8)

Furthermore, UK research found that children who have greater access to fast-food outlets (near their homes) are more likely to gain significant amounts of weight between Reception (age 4/5 years) and Year 6 (10/11 years). (9) This means that HFTs located near schools which are convenient and affordable contribute to unhealthy dietary habits and rising obesity levels. This is because children (and their families) may access these establishments before and after school and in some cases during lunchtime periods. This is likely to be more of an issue for secondary school aged children as primary aged children are less likely to travel to school alone and school policies likely prohibit them from leaving school premises during the school day. For example, one study explored how the introduction of a multi-national HFT into an area which previously did not have any such outlets within a 15 minute drive (at the time, the nearest multi-national HFT outlets were 6.8 miles and 15 miles away) may impact on young people's choices and food consumption.

As part of the study the participating secondary school requested that pupils complete a questionnaire on their eating behaviours at three timepoints a) prior to the new HFT opening, b) three months post-opening and c) nine months post opening. This questionnaire included both open and closed questions to gather information on perceptions of the new HFT and any impact on dietary intake behaviour and perceptions of fast-food consumption. Participants were also asked to report at which store (name and location) food was purchased, to enable detection of which store they purchased their fast-food from, at baseline, and whether the opening of the new HFT was associated with any change in where food was purchased. The questionnaire also explored more generic healthy eating questions such as about fruit and veg consumption.

Results illustrated that the introduction of a new multi-national HFT led to more visits by 11-16 years from baseline to post-study. The increase was significant within 3-9 months of opening with more children and young people reporting visiting the HFT on weekdays during that period than before it opened. This increase in visits observed highlighted a move away from visits to existing stores / restaurants in favour of this new multi-national HFT. At baseline, a higher proportion of foods were bought in existing stores / restaurants (47.5%) compared to post-opening (3 months) where nearly 66% of purchases were from the new multi-national HFT. (10)

What can local authorities do?

Local Authorities are in the unique position to be able to lead work to improve local food environments and reduce health inequalities. Many local authorities have already taken action, such as through the creation of policies aimed at restricting the proliferation of HFTs. The key to the success is the strength of working relationships between Public Health and Planning teams.

Many local authorities have opted to restrict new HFTs by implementing policy through a range of mechanisms including; their Local Plans, as Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs) through licencing regimes / restrictions such as Article 4 directions¹ and / or Public Health Policies e.g. healthy eating strategies. All of these approaches recognise the need for a coordinated, multi-agency effort to limit the growth of HFTs in town and neighbourhood centres and to build shared commitment to promoting healthy eating and lifestyles. Local Plan and SPDs restrictions tend to focus on either managing density / over-concentration and / or implementation of exclusion zones, usually around schools. While there is no standard distance from schools used by different local authorities, the majority use 400m. This is because 400 metres has been considered a reasonable walking distance and is outlined within the Urban Design Compendium 2 and Chartered Institute of Highway and Transportation (CIHT) Guidelines for providing journeys on foot. (11)

With the right policy, implemented in the right way at the right time, it is possible to halt or slow down the number of new HFTs coming forward for development. This has been seen in areas within Hertfordshire, such as Stevenage, Broxbourne and Watford, where restrictive planning policies were introduced between 2019 and 2022. This is important because research has found that even one additional HFT per square kilometre is associated with a 0.05 percentage point increase in obesity prevalence among both Reception and Year 6 pupils. This remained even after accounting for factors such as green space access, ethnicity, deprivation, school characteristics and supermarket density. This shows that restricting HFTs near schools has a meaningful impact on reducing the prevalence of children living with obesity. (12)

National Policy Levers

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

The NPPF was updated in December 2024, and it placed greater emphasis on the need to manage the density and proliferation of Hot Food Takeaways. Paragraph 97 states that:

Local planning authorities should refuse applications for hot food takeaways and fast food outlets:

a) within walking distance of schools and other places where children and young people congregate, unless the location is within a designated town centre; or

b) in locations where there is evidence that a concentration of such uses is having an adverse impact on local health, pollution or anti-social-behaviour.

This change within the NPPF came into effect immediately and is designed to:

- Recognise planning as part of a whole-system, cross-government and cross council approach to addressing healthy weight.
- Shift the decision making default to refusing hot food takeaways around schools
- Increase the confidence of local authorities when making planning decisions and managing appeals, even in the absence of local policy

¹ An Article 4 Direction is an order made by a local planning authority to remove certain permitted development rights in all, or part of, its area. When adopted, the effect of the Article 4 Direction is that planning permission is required for certain types of development that would not otherwise require an application for planning permission. (36)

- Decrease the number of new hot food takeaways around schools and in areas of deprivation; and
- Continue to support reductions in obesity prevalence. (13)

Hot food takeaways were referenced in the latest consultation version of the National Planning Policy Framework ('NPPF'). The consultation, which ran until 10 March 2026, included a dedicated section on the regulation of hot food takeaways and fast-food outlets. It is anticipated that the NPPF update, expected in late 2026, will carry forward the following proposed refinements, including:

- a clearer definition of what constitutes a fast-food outlet;
- guidance on what should be considered a “reasonable walking distance” from schools and places where young people gather; and
- a stronger emphasis on proportionate, evidence-based restrictions.

Thurrock intends to position itself to be in alignment with this emerging national policy by incorporating sections relevant to Thurrock in Place /Development Management Sections. (14)

National Planning Practice Guidance

The National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG) is an extensive online resource of policy guidance published by the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG). The NPPG complements the NPPF in setting out how government envisions the day to day working of the planning system in England. It aims to explain how the policies can be implemented in practice, making the planning system clearer for planners, developers and the public. Alongside the NPPF it forms a material consideration in planning decisions. It covers a varied array of topics from advertising and climate change through to rural housing and waste. (15) (16)

The NPPG outlines the role that planning can play in creating healthy food environments within the “Healthy and Safe Communities” topic. It highlights that Local Planning Authorities can support opportunities for people to access a wide range of healthier food production and consumption options. It outlines how Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs)² can be used, where justified to limit the proliferation of particular uses where evidence demonstrates this is appropriate. It outlines that Planning Policies and proposals may need to have regard to the following issues:

- Proximity to locations where children and young people congregate such as schools, community centres and playgrounds;
- Evidence indicating high-levels of obesity, deprivation, health inequalities and general poor health in specific locations;
- Over-concentration of certain uses within a specified area
- Odours and noise impact
- Traffic impact
- Refuse and litter

² Supplementary Planning Documents are currently undergoing significant transformation to align with new style Local Plans following Planning Reform. The final adoption date for new Supplementary Planning Documents under the current local plan regulations will be 30th June 2026. This means that many local authorities are updating their existing SPDs to align with the revised NPPF and 2026 planning reforms. (33)

Local Policy Context

The [Thurrock Health and Wellbeing Strategy](#) 2022 – 2026 focuses on six broad domains aligned to the Council's (now previous) priorities of People, Place and Prosperity and aims to address the wider determinants of health and 'level up the playing field.' The Domains are:

- 1) Staying Healthier for Longer
- 2) Building Stronger and Cohesive Communities
- 3) Person-led Health and Care
- 4) Opportunity for All
- 5) Housing and the Environment
- 6) Community Safety

At the time of writing a new Health and Wellbeing Strategy is currently being developed for 2026 – 2029 and is out for consultation. Subject to consultation feedback, it will follow a life-course approach. There are five emerging strategic themes which are:

- 1) Growing Well
- 2) Living Well
- 3) Ageing Well
- 4) Dying Well
- 5) Healthy Environments

The Healthy Environments priority focuses on three priorities under the theme of healthy place-shaping, inclusive and sustainable economies and healthy connections recognising the impact that the built, economic and social environment has on health outcomes and inequalities. (17) A healthy environment is understood not only in terms of clean air, green space and active and sustainable travel, but also in relation to the availability of healthy food choices. In terms of enabling and activating healthy-place-shaping there is a need to recognise that HFTs especially those located close to schools, youth facilities and residential neighbourhoods are consistently associated with poorer dietary habits, higher levels of childhood obesity and poor long term health outcomes.

The [Thurrock Health in All Policies Approach to Healthy Place-shaping Guidance](#) represents our aspirations for healthy place-shaping for existing and future residents, as set out in the Health and Wellbeing Strategy (2022-2026). It is deliberately ambitious to enable meaningful change in policy, guidance and practice, recognising that such change can only be achieved intergenerationally. It is centred on a Framework for Creating Change, underpinned by five key topic areas:

- Neighbourhood Design
- Housing
- Food Systems
- Natural Environments; and
- Transportation Networks. (18)

Each framework topic has a section within it entitled 'resident voice.' This section aims to collate resident feedback from a range of different Council Consultations as relates to the aforementioned topics. For Food Systems, residents reported the need and importance of "influencing the number and locations of takeaway services across the Borough." "It was felt that by doing so, this could support people to eat healthier and to halt or slow down the rise in home delivery for fast food which may be creating further challenges."

This chapter also highlighted guidance for Councils produced by Sustain, which draws on the experience of planning authorities in collecting evidence to support and defend planning policies to restrict new hot food takeaways. The guidance emphasised that despite there being national obesity targets in place, local authorities could only do so much with their existing powers. It called for a series of actions for planning, design and licencing to tackle childhood obesity. These include:

- National Government support for local areas to increase the adoption of planning restrictions and defend existing policies by critiquing evidence regularly submitted by fast food chains.
- Explore the impact of restrictions on the sale of unhealthy food to under 16s before 6pm on school days.
- Reviewing residential space standards to ensure houses have sufficient space for food preparation, cooking, dining and storage.

The report contains recommendations for next steps for local authorities, government, campaigners and organisations. (18), (19)

The Thurrock Healthy Weight Strategy is a comprehensive, evidence-based plan designed to equip individuals and communities with the knowledge, skills, resources and support needed to make informed lifestyle choices. It acknowledges that weight management is shaped by multiple factors, including nutrition, physical activity, mental wellbeing, and broader social, environmental and systemic influences. By addressing these factors holistically, we can foster sustainable and positive change.

The strategy is a commitment to collaboration, innovation, and practical solutions that make a real difference. Rather than promoting quick fixes or one-size-fits-all approaches, it focuses not only on creating lasting habits, but also on removing barriers, and ensuring that healthy choices are easy and accessible for all.

It is centred on seven key priorities under the umbrellas of People and Places:

- **People Priority 1:** Supporting our children and young people to grow and to be a healthy weight
- **People Priority 2:** Help to provide food security for all Thurrock residents and enable them to obtain, store and prepare food to provide nutritious, low-cost meals
- **People Priority 3:** Ensuring people have access to trustworthy information and resources to enable them to be a healthy weight
- **People Priority 4:** Support workplaces to help employees maintain a healthy weight and be active
- **Places Priority 1:** Using Healthy Place-shaping to support healthy weight and physical activity
- **Places Priority 2:** Encourage the population to move more by promoting and supporting physical activity, active lifestyles and active travel
- **Places Priority 3:** Promoting healthier food choices and improving the food environment across the borough. (20)

Key priorities and recommendations relevant to this evidence review include:

Priority	Key points from the Strategy	Relevant key recommendations
Place Priority 1: Using Healthy Place-shaping to support healthy weight and physical activity	Where individuals live significantly influences their ability to engage in physical activity and access healthy foods. Locally, certain environments contribute to elevated levels of excess weight; these are referred to as obesogenic environments. These environments promote obesity by encouraging behaviors that result in excessive calorie consumption, physical inactivity, or both. They are shaped by a complex interplay of physical, social, economic, and cultural factors that affect lifestyle choices and health outcomes. Spaces and settings are often not designed to support healthy lifestyles, such as ensuring access to high-quality food and opportunities for physical activity.	- Integrating health-focused planning policies to ensure health is considered in planning policies and decisions. - Encouraging active lifestyles and healthy eating through neighbourhood design. - Implementing place-based health interventions to improve health outcomes, with an initial focus on reducing childhood obesity and increasing physical activity.
Place Priority 3: Promoting healthier food choices and improving the food environment across the Borough	Nationally, a third (33%) of food and soft drink advertising spend goes towards confectionery, snacks, desserts and soft drinks compared to only 1% for fruit and vegetables.² Furthermore, proximity to unhealthy food options and exposure to their advertising are closely associated with a higher risk of excess weight.³ Locally, there is evidence of a link between the volume of fast-food outlets and prevalence of childhood obesity at Year 6.	Using relevant policy to discourage unhealthy food environments and encourage healthier food environments.

During the development of the above Strategy, Thurrock People's Overview and Scrutiny established a Task and Finish Group for Childhood Obesity. The Group produced a report outlining 16 recommendations for action which are aligned to the key priorities outlined in the Strategy. Pertinent to this evidence review, one of the recommendations was to "*Work with the Council's Planning and Regeneration departments to explore planning conditions on new fast food/take away outlets (including possible restrictions on proximity to schools and healthier food offerings).*" (21) There is an opportunity here to influence local plan making by restricting the availability of HFTs. In doing so this facilitates the realistic achievement of the outcomes set out in the Thurrock Healthy Weight Strategy.

The [Whole Systems Obesity Joint Strategic Needs Assessment](#), although published in 2017, retains useful insight on the food environment in Thurrock and makes a specific recommendation around the restriction of the proliferation of fast food outlets in Thurrock, in particular in the areas of highest childhood obesity at year 6. (22)

Local Picture

Summary for Thurrock

- People living in Thurrock have a lower life expectancy compared to the East of England and England
- There are high rates of both childhood and adult obesity
- There are pockets of high deprivation across Thurrock, along with high levels of households experiencing food insecurity. Coupled with this, there is a correlation between areas of high deprivation and high density of HFTs.
- There are areas within the borough with high numbers of HFTs.
- Local data illustrates a correlation between the density of HFTs and childhood overweight and obesity at age 10/11 (year 6) which is broadly in line with what is observed nationally.

Life expectancy and healthy life expectancy

A three-year trend illustrates that life expectancy for both males and females (at birth) is significantly worse than the East of England figure, see Table 1 below.

Table 1: Life expectancy (3-year trend) in Thurrock

Life expectancy (years)	Thurrock	East of England	England
Males	79.2 years	80.5 years	79.7 years
Females	83 years	84.2 years	83.5 years

Source: Office for National Statistics, 2023-25

Healthy life expectancy for males and females (at birth) is shown below in Table 2. The latest data shows that healthy life expectancy for both males and females is similar to both the East of England and England figures.

Table 2: Healthy life expectancy (3-year trend) in Thurrock

Healthy life expectancy (years)	Thurrock	East of England	England
Males	58.9	62.3	60.9
Females	58.2	62	61.3

Source: Office for National Statistics, 2022-24

Deprivation

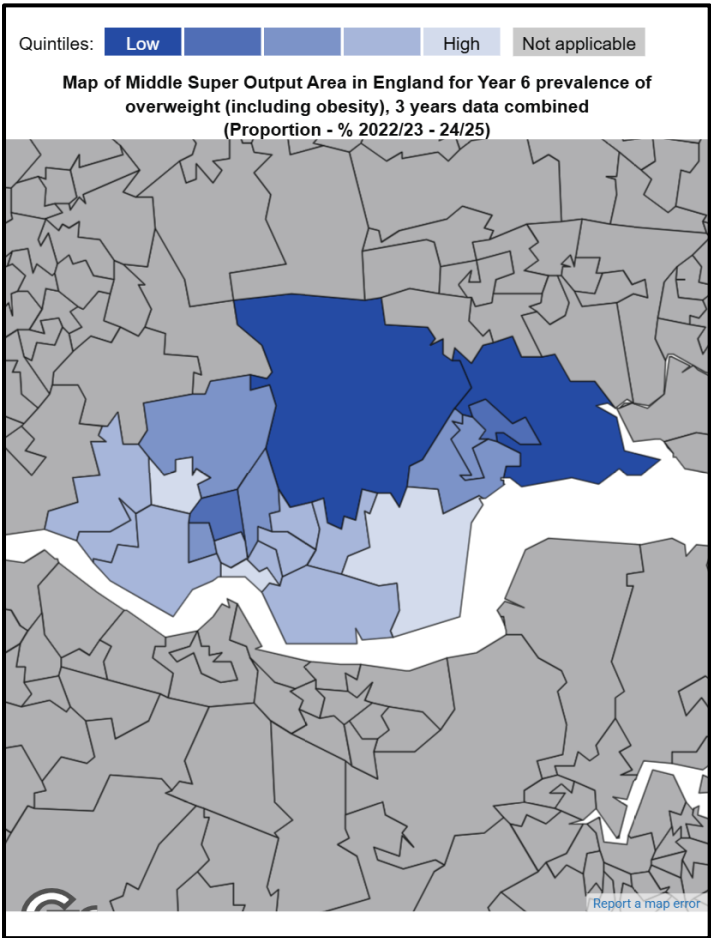
The Index of Multiple Deprivation 2025 (IMD 2025) is an overall measure of deprivation experienced by people living in an area. It is the combination of seven deprivation domains: income; employment; education, skills and training; health deprivation and disability; crime; barriers to housing and services and living environment deprivation. In Thurrock, the IMD score is 21 similar to the national score (21.8). However, it is recognised that Thurrock has pockets of

deprivation across the borough which experience health inequalities, as well as more affluent areas.

Obesity

In Thurrock, 23.5% of Reception Year (4-5 years old) are classified as overweight including obesity (three-year combined data 2022/2023 - 2024/25). This is significantly higher compared to the East of England (20.8%) and England (22.3%). Furthermore, 38.5% of Year 6 (10-11 year olds) are classified as overweight (including obesity) during the same time period. This is significantly higher than both the regional (33.8%) and England (36.2%) rates. In Thurrock, childhood obesity tends to be higher in the more urban areas to the South and West of the Borough; a map of childhood obesity by Middle Layer Super Output Area (MSOA) is shown below.

Map 1 and Table 3: Childhood obesity in England by MSOA level for Thurrock, 2022/23 – 2024/25



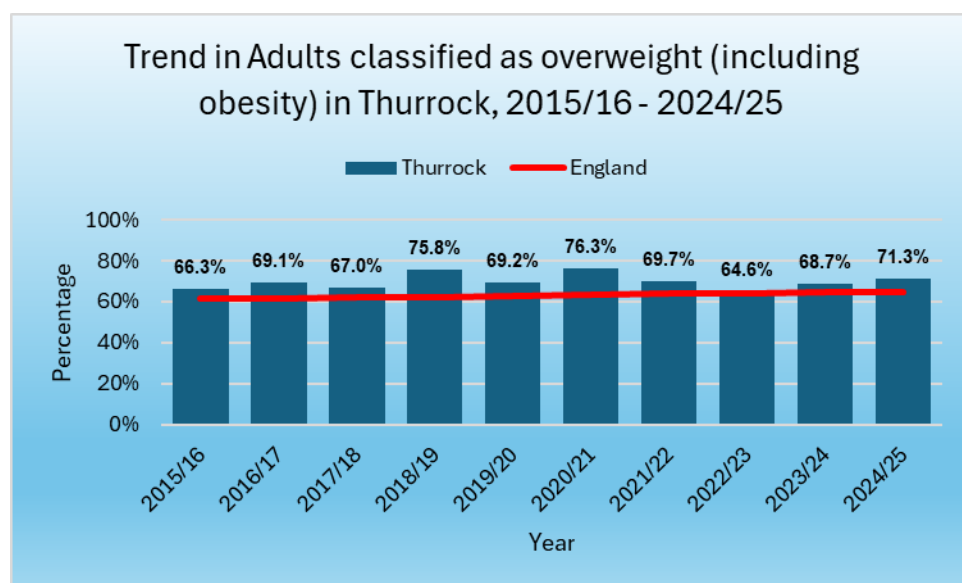
Source: Office for Health Improvement and Disparities , 2022/23 – 2024/25

Both the map and table above highlight the high-levels of childhood obesity across the Borough. Seven out of 19 MSOA areas already have childhood overweight (including obesity) prevalences above 40% and a total of ten MSOA areas are above the Thurrock average (38.5%) There is an observed year-on-year increase in childhood obesity locally which needs continuous monitoring and triggers a need for urgent action.

Thurrock - MSOA area	Prevalence of childhood overweight at Year 6
South Ockendon	46.6%
Grays Town	45.3%
East Tilbury	42.6%
Tilbury	41.5%
Purfleet	40.7%
West Thurrock	40%
Grays Chafford Gorges & Orsett Road	40%
Aveley	39.5%
Chadwell St Mary	39.1%
Little Thurrock North	39%
Little Thurrock South	38.2%
North Ockendon	37.2%
Stanford West	36.5%
Stifford Clays	34.9%
Stanford East	34.8%
South Chafford	34.8%
Chafford and North Stifford	33.3%
Corringham South	31.4%
Orsett, Bulphan and Horndon-on-the-Hill	28.6%

Across the Borough 71.3% of adults (18+) are living with overweight including obesity. A trend in adult obesity rates in Thurrock between 2015/16 and 2024/25 is provided below.

Figure 1: Trend in Adults classified as overweight (including obesity) in Thurrock, 2015/16 – 2024/25



Source: Office for Health Improvement and Disparities, 2015/16 – 2024/25

Food insecurity

In Thurrock (2022), 23.8% of the population are living in areas at highest risk of food insecurity.³ This represents the third highest local authority within the East of England Region, after Luton and Peterborough respectively. The Food Standards Agency define Food Security as ‘having access at all times to enough food that is both sufficiently varied and culturally appropriate to sustain an active and healthy life.’ (23). The impact of living in a state of food insecurity is associated with a number of negative physical, mental and social health outcomes in adults and children. (24) Studies have shown some groups are affected by food insecurity more than others, (25) and single adults with multiple children are particularly at risk. (26)

Density and location of hot food takeaways

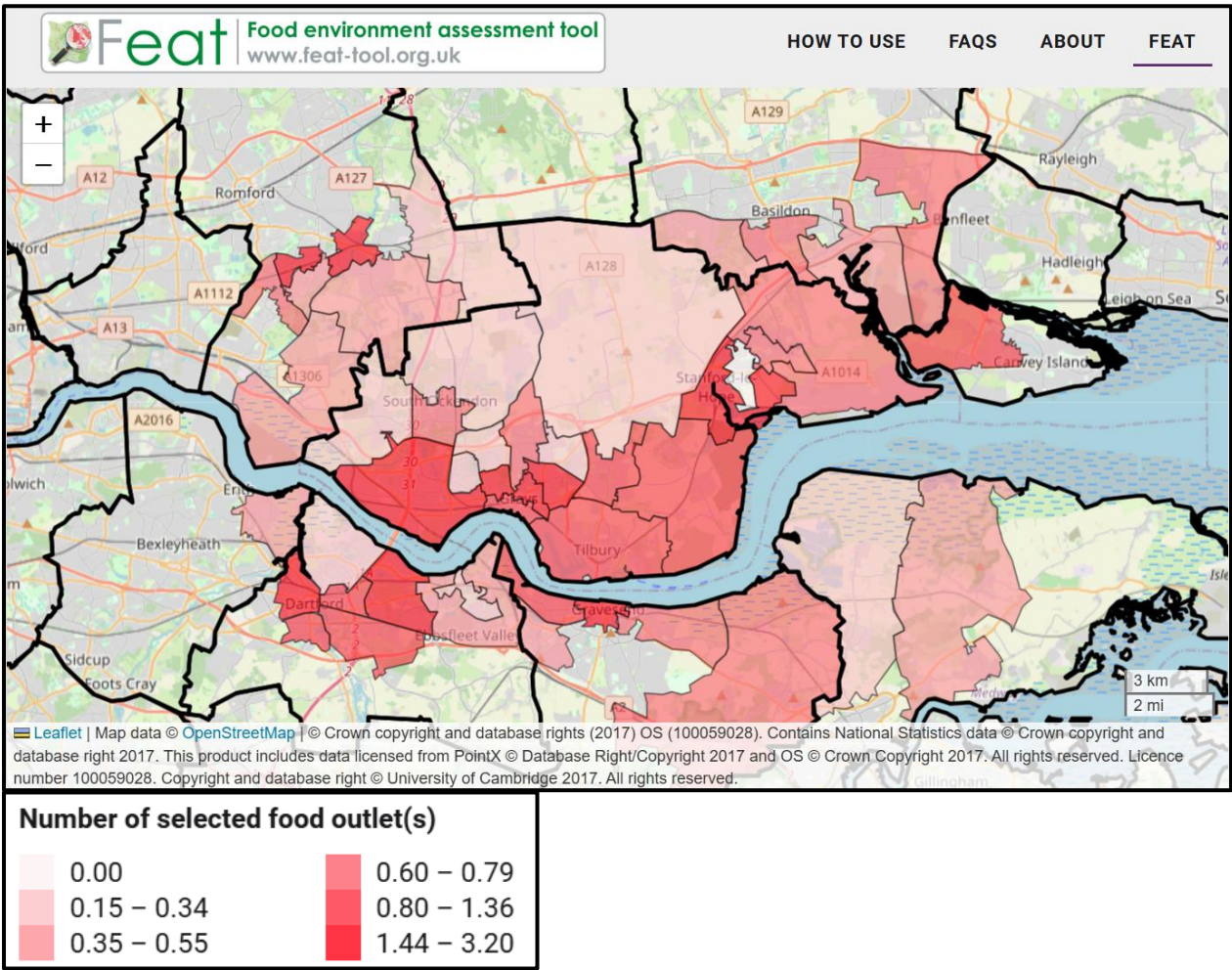
At a District level, Thurrock has one of the highest number of fast food outlets per 100,000 population of all local authorities within the East of England Region, sitting in seventh position, behind Great Yarmouth, Norwich, Stevenage, Tendring, Ipswich and Luton (see appendix one). (27)

The Food Environment Assessment Tool (FEAT) shows that in Thurrock (January 2026) there are 179 hot food takeaways, and just over 1 for every 1,000 people. The FEAT tool maps out the

³ Food Insecurity measures are defined as the percentage of the lower tier local authority (LTLA) population who live in Lower Super Output Areas (LSOAs) which score in the 20% at highest risk nationally on the Food Insecurity Risk Index. Food insecurity is commonly assessed using specific questionnaires as in the Food Standards Agency food tracker survey and the Family Resources Survey. However, these data sources do not provide estimates of food insecurity below regional level. The data (in this indicator) attempts to bridge that gap by providing local authority *estimates* of population *at risk* from food insecurity.

concentration of hot food takeaways within and around the Borough by Middle Super Output Area (MSOA), with the map below showing where the higher density of these food retailers are located.

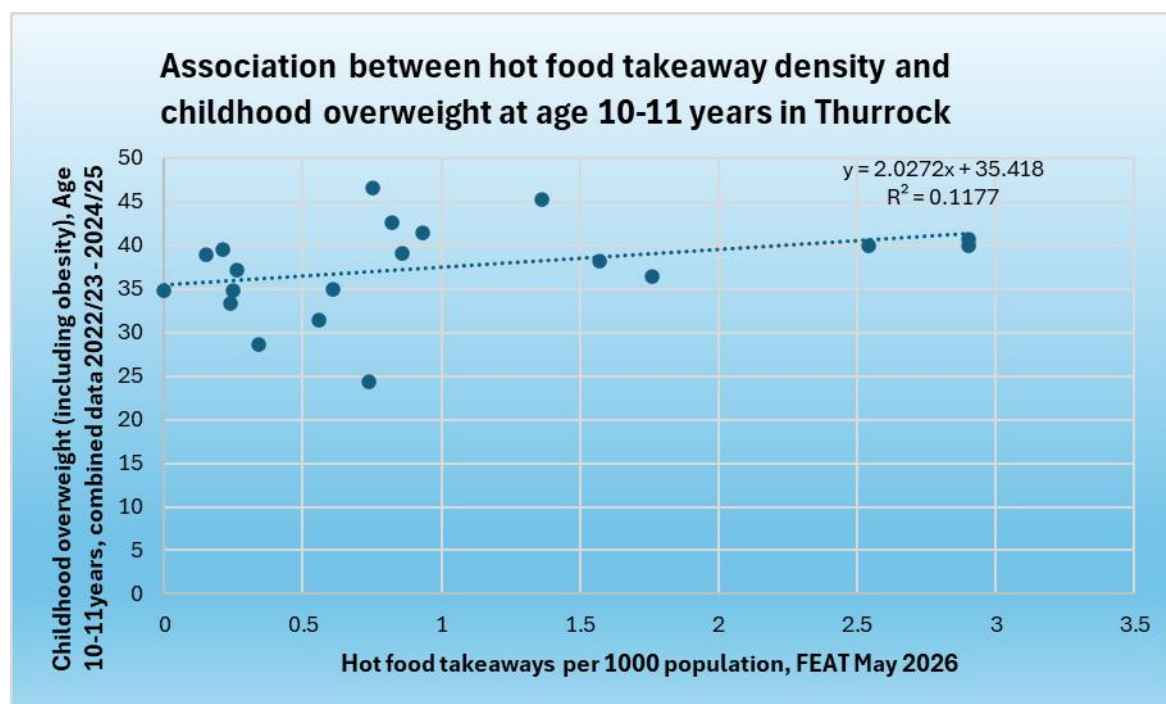
Map 2: Number of HFTs in Thurrock by MSOA level, 2026



Source: MRC Epidemiology Unit, University of Cambridge, 2017

Local data illustrates a correlation between the density of HFTs and childhood overweight and obesity at age 10/11 (year 6) in Thurrock which is broadly in line with what is observed nationally. Figure 2 demonstrates this further by showing the association between the density of hot food takeaways and childhood overweight (including obesity) at age 10 and 11. The association shows that nearly 12% of the variation in childhood overweight (including obesity) in the Borough is explained by the variation in the density of hot food takeaways. The figure shows that for every increase of one hot food takeaway density per 1000 people in Thurrock, childhood overweight and obesity increases by 2.072%.

Figure 2: Association between hot food takeaway density and childhood overweight at 10-11 years in Thurrock



Source: Food Environment Assessment (FEAT) Tool 2022/23 – 2024/25

What is the picture across Greater Essex?

Table 4 below shows the prevalence of childhood overweight (including obesity) in children aged 10-11 years (Year 6) alongside the rate of Fast Food Outlets (FFOs) per 100,000 population at District / Unitary Authority level across Greater Essex. It further highlights the association between childhood obesity and density of fast food outlets / HFTs whereby areas with higher prevalence of childhood obesity also tend to have to higher rates of FFOs per 100,000 population. Thurrock has the second highest childhood obesity prevalence and the third highest rate of FFOs across local areas in Essex.

Table 4: Percentage of childhood overweight (including obesity) at Year 6 and Rate of Fast Food Outlets per 100,000 population across Districts / Unitary Authorities in Greater Essex

District / Unitary Authority	Prevalence of childhood overweight (including obesity) at Year 6	Rate of Fast Food Outlets per 100,000 population
Harlow	39.5%	108.3
Thurrock	38.5%	125.7
Tendring	38.3%	139.7
Castle Point	36.3%	97.9
Basildon	35.9%	108.6
Southend-on-Sea	35.3%	120.2
Maldon	35.2%	122.9
Braintree	33.6%	80.6
Colchester City Council	32.4%	99.5
Epping Forest	31.8%	76.5

Rochford	31.6%	87.3
Chelmsford City Council	31%	88
Brentwood	27.8%	89.6
Uttlesford	26.6%	69.4

Sources: Office for Health Improvement and Disparities , 2022/23 – 2024/25 and OHID based on Food Standards Agency Data, 2024

What are other areas doing? - case studies

As of 2019, 41 local authorities in England have adopted ‘takeaway management zones’ or ‘exclusion zones’ policies.⁴ This evidence review provides a snapshot of a small sample size of some of these other areas to aid an understanding of what’s happening locally, regionally and nationally and to inform the recommendations of this review based on ‘standard operating models’ employed by other local authorities.

Local Authorities in Greater Essex

Table 5 below, outlines the HFT policies included within forthcoming or adopted local plans across Local Planning Authorities (LPAs) in Greater Essex. As can be seen, there is currently a variance in both the number of and proposed / adopted policies across the Greater Essex footprint. The data outlined in Table 4 above shows the prevalence of childhood overweight (including obesity) alongside the rate of FFOs per 100,000 population at district and unitary authority level across Essex. Southend-on-Sea and Tendring which have both a high prevalence of childhood obesity and high rates of FFOs, similar to Thurrock are looking to / have implemented planning policy to more effectively manage HFTs. Interestingly areas with lower childhood obesity prevalence and lower rates of FFOs, such as Braintree and Brentwood have also looked to implement HFT policy. These actions by other local authority areas in Greater Essex sets a precedent for doing something similar in Thurrock.

⁴ This is likely to be higher now, as there are some additionally known about local authorities with such a policy. However, there isn’t a more recently recorded list of the total number of local authorities with such as policy.

Table 5: HFT policy in Local Planning Authorities across Greater Essex

Local Planning Authority	Adopted Local Plan	HFT policy	Details of HFT policy (as applicable)
Basildon Borough Council	No – Draft Reg 18 Plan being prepared	No	-
Braintree District Council	Yes – July 2023	Yes	HIA required for application. Where an unacceptable adverse impact on health is established, permission will not be granted.
Brentwood Borough Council	Yes – March 2022	Yes	HIA for hot food takeaways that are not within a designated town, district or local centre and are within 400 metres of a school entrance
Castle Point Borough Council	No – Draft 19 plan being prepared	No	Reg 19 policy included
Chelmsford City Council	May 2020	No	-
Colchester City Council	Yes – July 2022	No	Reg 18 policy included
Epping Forest District Council	Yes – March 2023	No	-
Harlow Council	Yes – December 2020	No	-
Maldon District Council	Yes – July 2017	No	-
Rochford District Council	Yes – Core Strategy 2011	No	-
Southend City Council	No – currently at Preferred Approach with Options (Reg 18) stage.	Yes	Planning applications for hot food takeaways and fast food outlets will be refused where they are located within 400 metres from a school (measured from the centre point of the school site), unless the location is within a designated City, District or Neighbourhood centre.
Tendring District Council	Yes – January 2022	No	The Council will work in collaboration with partners including Public Health to avoid a concentration of fast food takeaways where the number of outlets would be likely to harm public health objectives, particularly in deprived communities, local areas of poor health and near schools
Uttlesford District Council	No – Reg 19 Plan being prepared	No	Reg 19 policy included (went through examination)

Local Authorities in East of England Region

There are a number of local authorities within the East of England Region, which are considered to have some broad similarities to Thurrock in terms of population, health needs and deprivation. These include Great Yarmouth, Ipswich, Luton, Norwich, Stevenage and Tendring. Table 6 below outlines the limited available information that has been found for each of these local authorities in terms of their plans to / implementation of HFT policies / plans. As can be seen, all of these local authorities areas are looking to / have implemented policies or plans to more effectively manage HFTs in their local areas. This further strengthens the precedent for taking similar action in Thurrock.

Table 6: HFT policy / plans in Local Planning Authorities across East of England Region, who have similar characteristics to Thurrock

Local Planning Authority	Details of HFT Policy / Plans
Great Yarmouth	Require full planning permission for new applications for HFTs which are assessed against a range of strict criteria including: residential amenity, , public health and location. Hours of operation may also be considered.
Ipswich	Require full planning permission for new applications for HFTs which are assessed against a range of strict criteria including: environmental considerations e.g. odour and, public health and proximity to schools.
Luton	Require full planning permission for new applications for HFTs which are assessed against a range of strict criteria including: town centre zoning, public health and limits near schools. The council specifically uses public health and wellbeing as a material consideration when evaluating planning applications.
Norwich	Has implemented a specific DM policy which looks to manage HFTs. Hot food takeaways (use class A5) will be permitted where: a) the proposal would not give rise to unacceptable environmental effects which could not be overcome by the imposition of conditions; and b) the proposal has safe and convenient access and would not be detrimental to highway or pedestrian safety. Where necessary, permission will be granted subject to conditions restricting hours of opening in order to protect the amenity of surrounding occupants and the vitality and viability of the area generally. This policy will also apply to applications to relax or vary conditions to allow hot food takeaway facilities in conjunction with existing restaurants, cafés and other hospitality uses.
Stevenage	Require full planning permission for new applications for HFTs which are assessed against a range of strict criteria including: high street limitations and environmental conditions / factors.
Tendring	The Council will work in collaboration with partners including Public Health to avoid a concentration of fast food takeaways where the number of outlets would be likely to harm public health objectives, particularly in deprived communities, local areas of poor health and near schools

Other local authority areas across England

Many local authorities across England have implemented policies aimed at the restricting HFTs. The table in Appendix 2 has been adapted from Coventry's HFT Supplementary Planning Document (2019) and represents the only recorded list of all local authorities (at the time of publication) who had such a policy. It is likely that other local authorities have since come forward with similar policies. It is also likely that some of the local authorities included in appendix 2 have since updated or are in the process of updating their policies (post 2019) particularly to align with the changes to Use Classes Orders and the NPPF. Updates have been included within the table in appendix 2 where these are known.

The evidence highlights that the majority of local authorities have focused on restricting clustering / over-concentration of HFTs and / or implementing exclusion zones around schools and other places where children congregate. A small number have included restrictions on opening times, but it is recognised that this can impact on the amenity, vitality and viability of local parades and centres during the daytime.

There are three examples of local authorities who have applied obesity thresholds within their policies to restrict new hot food takeaways prior to the changes to Use Classes and the NPPF. These are Gateshead, South Tyneside and North Tyneside. Summary details of the specific elements of their policies are:

South Tyneside – Adopted in 2017, their policy stated that “Planning permission will not be granted for A5 Uses in areas where the levels of obesity in Year 6 pupils is over 10%. They highlight that planning applications for A5 uses should be assessed against the most up to date annual National Child Measurement Programme (NCMP) data.” (28)

North Tyneside – Adopted in 2017 their policy looked to “prevent the development of A5 use in wards where there is more than 15% of the year 6 pupils or 10% of reception pupils classified as very overweight.” A review of the Local Plan policy was undertaken in 2022, and this found that *“After its initial adoption a range of applications for hot food takeaways that conflicted with the policy of the Local Plan were submitted and refused. Planning Inspector’s consistently dismissed such appeals.”* Further to this, in August 2025 North Tyneside published their Local Plan Policy: Hot Food Takeaways Review. They concluded that their Local Plan Policy focused on restricting hot food takeaways remains robust and suitable for managing the proliferation of HFTs.

Gateshead – Will look to refuse planning applications for hot food takeaways in Wards where 10% or more of year 6 pupils are classified as overweight / obese. Gateshead have been particularly successful with this, see the Spotlight Box below. (29)

These existing policies set a precedent for including obesity thresholds within Development Management Policies aimed at restricting Hot Food Takeaways. There is now a growing appetite to include obesity thresholds within HFT policies. For example, in 2025, **Central Lancashire Council’s** Public Health Team published a Hot Food Takeaways Public Health Advice Note for Planners which proposed that two planning recommendations be adopted by all Lancashire district local planning authorities:

- 1) Refuse new sui generis hot food takeaway uses within a 400m walking distance of entry points to schools and other places where children and young people congregate, unless the location is within a designated town centre.
- 2) Refuse new sui generis hot food takeaway uses within Wards where the most recently published NCMP data classifies 10% or more of Reception pupils or 15% or more of Year 6 pupils as obese (including severe obesity). (30)

While not in policy, this suggests that some Public Health teams in other Local Authorities are starting to consider inclusion of obesity thresholds as part of planning policy to restrict HFTs.

A further example is **Newcastle City Council**, who adopted their initial hot food takeaways policy in 2016. As of June 2024 the policy was updated and aims to enforce stricter and more robust restrictions on new HFTs in relation to proximity to school through the addition of an obesity threshold.

Original wording (2016): Hot food takeaways which are located outside of a centre in the retail hierarchy will not be permitted within a designated secondary school exclusion zone (a 10 minute walk)

Updated wording (2022): new takeaways are generally restricted within 400m (or a 10-minute walk) of schools, parks, and community centres, and in Wards where >10% of Year 6 pupils are obese. (35)

The below “Spotlight boxes” focus on good practice and provide examples of successful policies and / or examples where evaluation of hot food takeaway policies has been undertaken and provides an outline of the evaluation findings.

Spotlights on good practice

Gateshead Council

Gateshead implemented their Hot Food Takeaway Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) in 2015. It aimed to provide guidance on controlling hot food takeaways in Gateshead focused on supporting health and wellbeing. It forms a material consideration in planning applications, complements their Local Plan and is aligned to national policies (at the time of adoption). It aimed to refuse planning applications for hot food takeaways (A5 / Sui Generis use classes) based on:

- *Proximity to schools* – no A5 / Sui Generis uses within 400m of entry points of schools
- *High obesity areas* defined as Wards where 10% or more of year 6 pupils are classified as overweight / obese
- *Over-proliferation* - where a Ward exceeds the national average of HFTs per 1,000 population
- *Clustering* – limits on the consecutive number of A5 / Sui Generis uses and overall percentage in shopping areas
- *Residential amenity* – no A5 / Sui Generis uses which share a party wall with homes
- *Operational Controls* – in terms of hours of operation, odour / noise controls and anti-social behaviour
- *Waste and litter management* – adequate bin provision and grease traps
- *Transport considerations* – no negative impact on highways
- *Health Impact Assessment* – required for any application for A5 / Sui Generis uses. (31)

At a recent event focused on restrictive policy for hot food takeaways a Gateshead Officer reported a 100% success rate in refusing applications for new hot food takeaways in areas where any of the above criteria applied. They also reported a 100% success rate in winning appeals, where their decision to refuse an application had been challenged by the Developers. (29)

Sheffield Council

Sheffield's policy on hot food takeaways includes the following clauses:

- a) New hot food takeaways, extensions to, or increases in the opening hours to existing hot-food takeaways, will not be permitted where the application is within 800 metres of a secondary school and where it would be open for business anytime between 8am and 5pm.
- b) New hot food takeaways (or extensions into adjoining units) will not be permitted in a District or Local Centre where existing hot food takeaways already make up more than 25% of the units within the centre

All hot food takeaways should provide suitably sized, screened waste storage systems, appropriate extraction systems for the removal of odours and public waste bins when these are lacking within the vicinity.

A report from the British Medical Journal (BMJ) published in 2026 reported that Sheffield were successful in blocking plans for a new chain hot food takeaway after arguing that it would undermine their efforts to tackle childhood obesity. (34)

Tower Hamlets Council

Tower Hamlets implemented their policy to restrict HFT in 2019. They undertook a five year review of this Local Plan Policy to evaluate its effectiveness in 2024. The key Policy D.TC5 restricted hot food takeaways within 200m of schools and in areas of higher concentration, although this was superseded in 2021 by the London Plan Policy E9 which enforced a 400m radius around schools.

Findings from the review show that **68%** (17 of 25) of HFT applications were refused between 2019–2024. **58%** were refused under Policy D.TC5 and **11%** under the London Plan Policy E9. Proximity to schools was the main reason for refusal. This highlights that the policy has been effective in reducing the number of new HFTs opening in close proximity to schools, in turn supporting healthier environments, particularly for children and young people. The review identified several key opportunities and challenges. Opportunities included:

- Expanding the policy to implement a whole systems approach focused on healthy places, healthy settings and healthy services.
- Working with existing local businesses using an incentives approach to encourage them to serve healthier food options (e.g. Food for Health awards)
- Supporting and enabling access to healthy affordable food, for example through the provision of food vouchers and food pantries.

Challenges included:

- Needing to balance public health outcomes with local business needs
- Use-class changes (A5 → Sui Generis) require policy updates in 2020. (32) (32)

Summary

The evidence presented within this report demonstrates that:

- Planning in collaboration with Public Health has an important and unique role to play in creating health promoting places including improving the food environment and in reducing health inequalities.
- HFTs contribute to unhealthy diets as they tend to predominantly sell food which is high in fat, salt and sugar.
- Proximity of HFTs to where people live, play and work impacts and increases use of such establishments, particularly for children and young people.
- Frequent takeaway consumption is now common with one in four children in England eating at least takeaway per week.
- Areas of deprivation are associated with higher density of HFTs and with higher rates of childhood obesity.
- Locally, there is a high prevalence of childhood obesity alongside a high density of HFTs (one of the highest in the entire East of England Region). Childhood overweight (including obesity) at age 10-11 years and density of HFTs are not evenly distributed across the Borough; there is an association between HFTs and rates of childhood overweight (including obesity) in Thurrock.
- Seven MSOA areas already exceed 40% and 10 MSOA areas exceed the Thurrock average (currently 38.5%) of Year 6 pupils being classified as overweight (including obesity). Due to observed year on year increases in obesity prevalence, without action this is only likely to increase and in turn further impact on health and wellbeing outcomes and widen health inequalities.
- Both national and local policy and guidance advocate for action to be taken to better manage HFTs in terms of both density and location, particularly near to schools. Moreover, the NPPF explicitly supports refusal of HFTs located within close proximity to schools and in areas where concentration affects health and wellbeing.
- From a review of the evidence base and best practice, it is recommended that a 400m exclusion zone is used for both primary and secondary schools.
- The evidence also highlights that many other local authorities have been successful in implementing policies aimed at managing HFTs. Evidence also demonstrates that areas such as Gateshead, South Tyneside and North Tyneside and other local authorities have successfully restricted the proliferation of HFTs in areas where there are high levels of childhood overweight and obesity in Year 6 aged children.

In conclusion it is imperative to take action to manage HFTs locally as one intervention within a broader part of a whole systems approach to tackling obesity (and in particular childhood obesity). The evidence shows that this can be achieved locally through the introduction of a Development Management policy delivered as part of the emerging Thurrock Local Plan.

Recommendations

This evidence review should be used to inform local Development Management Policy within the forthcoming Local Plan which is focused on restricting hot food takeaways. It should form one intervention within a Whole Systems Approach to tackling obesity. Based on the evidence presented in this review the policy should include the following clauses:

1. Outside of designated town centres / parades (in line with current NPPF, 2024 guidance) setting an exclusion zone whereby HFTs will not be approved if they are

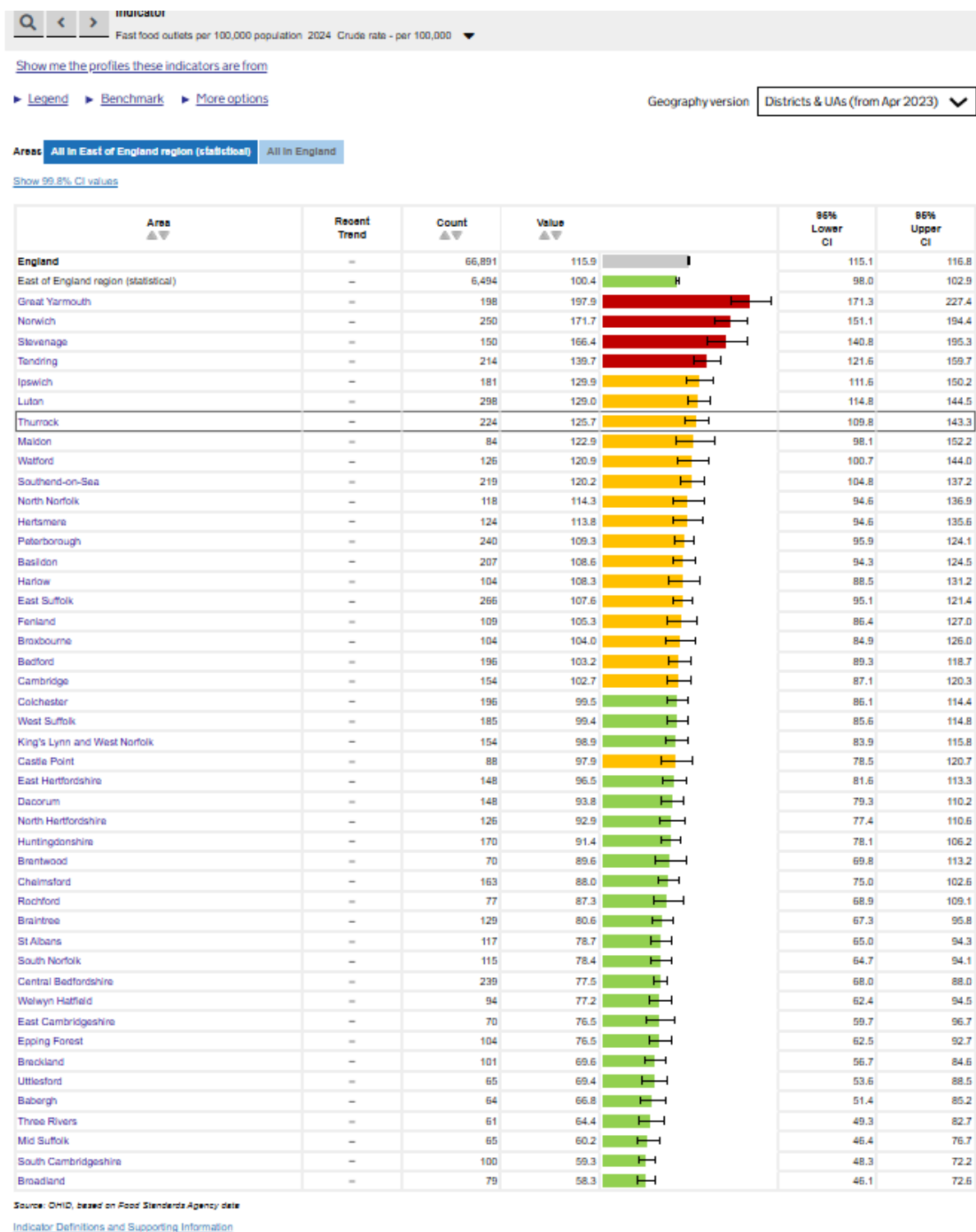
within 400m of the main entry point of primary and secondary schools, sixth forms and colleges, youth facilities and children's play spaces.

2. In District Centres, Local Centres and Larger Neighbourhood Parades, no more than 10% of units are to be in use as a hot food takeaway to limit the overconcentration of HFTs. In Smaller Neighbourhood Parades, there should be no more than one hot food takeaway per parade.⁵
3. HFTs should only be approved where there are less than the Thurrock average or 40% (whichever is lower) of children at year 6 (age 10/11) who are classified as overweight (including obesity) in the local area (classified as Middle Super Output Area - a ward or MSOA).⁶. Map 1 and Table 3 above provide further details about prevalence of childhood overweight (including obesity) at MSOA level in Thurrock.

⁵ **The District Centres** at Corringham, South Ockendon, Stanford-le-Hope, Tilbury and Purfleet-on-Thames (once established). **The Local Centres** at Aveley and Socketts Heath. **Larger Neighbourhood Parades** include: Chadwell St Mary: Defoe Parade and Riverview; Chafford Hundred: Armada Centre; Corringham: Lampits Hill; East Tilbury: Stanford House; Grays: Southend Road; Little Thurrock: Broadway; and Stifford Clays: Crammavill Street. **Smaller Neighbourhood Parades** include: Aveley: Hall Road and Romford Road; Corringham: Woodbrooke Way / Gardener Avenue; Grays: Lenthall Avenue, Kingston Parade and Jesmond Road; Linford: East Tilbury Road; Purfleet-on-Thames: Garrison Parade; South Ockendon: Canterbury Parade, South Parade, Aire Drive, Garron Lane and Broxburn Parade; and Tilbury: St Chads Road.

⁶ *Note: Thurrock average is defined as the most recent three-year average for Thurrock as a whole published by Office for Health Improvement and Disparities (OHID) in the Public Health Profiles. For the years 2022/23 – 2024/25 this is reported as 38.5%.

Appendix 1: Number of fast food outlets per 100,000 population by District across the East of England Region (2024)



Appendix 2: Summary of Local Authority Hot Food Takeaway Policies (adapted from Coventry HFT SPD, 2019)

Local Authority	Year	Restrictions on concentration & clustering of HFTs	Restrictions on proximity to schools	Restrictions on opening hours	Updates (where applicable)
Barking & Dagenham	2010	No more than 5% of the units within the centre or frontage being hot food takeaways No more than two A5 units being located adjacent to each other. There being no less than two-no A5 units between groups of hot food takeaways	400m around primary & secondary schools (measured from the school boundary)		
Barnsley	2019	No more than two A5 units are located adjacent to each other; no less than two non-A5 units between groups of A5 unit	400m around primary & secondary schools or Advanced Learning Centre		Proposed updates went out to consultation in 2025: Hot Food Takeaways Supplementary Planning Document Updates to reflect the December 2024 changes to the National Planning Policy Framework, and updates to the use classes with hot food takeaways no longer falling under Class A5. Updates to the text concerning concentration and residential amenity, including replacement of references to Class A5, with hot food takeaways.
Birmingham		No more than 10% of units within the centre or frontage to be A5			
Bolton	2013		Applications within 400m of a secondary school may be refused		

Local Authority	Year	Restrictions on concentration & clustering of HFTs	Restrictions on proximity to schools	Restrictions on opening hours	Updates (where applicable)
Bradford	2014		Outside district centres, applications for hot food takeaways will not be allowed within 400m of the boundary of an existing primary or secondary school, youth centred facility, recreation ground or park boundary	If the application is granted, opening hours will be given as a condition dependent on a variety of factors	
Brent		Applications will be refused if they will result in: • More than 6% of the units within a town centre frontage in A5 uses. • More than 1 unit or 15% of the units within a neighbourhood parade, whichever is greater, in A5 uses. • Less than two non-A5 units between takeaways	An A5 application will not be approved if it is within 400 metres of a secondary school or further education establishment entrance / exit point		
Bristol			Limiting A5 applications within close proximity (up to 400m) of a school		
Bromley		Proposal should not result in an over concentration of food and drink establishments		The opening hours must not cause any harm, or loss of amenity to nearby residents	

Local Authority	Year	Restrictions on concentration & clustering of HFTs	Restrictions on proximity to schools	Restrictions on opening hours	Updates (where applicable)
Central Lancashire		All applications must not result in an over concentration in the centre	400m or primary or secondary, special school or sixth form college will not be approved		In 2025, a Hot Food Takeaways Public Health Advice Note for Planners was published which proposed that two planning recommendations be adopted by all Lancashire district local planning authorities. 3) Refuse new sui generis hot food takeaway uses within a 400m walking distance of entry points to schools and other places where children and young people congregate, unless the location is within a designated town centre. 4) Refuse new sui generis hot food takeaway uses within wards where the most recently published NCMP data classifies 10% or more of Reception pupils or 15% or more of Year 6 pupils as obese (including severe obesity).
Dudley	2013	No more than 5% of the frontage to be A5 uses No more than two A5 uses will be permitted adjacent to one another	400m of an existing primary and secondary school or other youth centre facility will not be approved		

Local Authority	Year	Restrictions on concentration & clustering of HFTs	Restrictions on proximity to schools	Restrictions on opening hours	Updates (where applicable)
Gateshead	2015	Permission will not be granted where the number of approved A5 establishments within the ward, equals or exceeds the UK national average, per 1000 population. No clustering of A5 uses to the detriment of the character and function or vitality and viability of a centre or local parade or if it would have an adverse impact on the standard amenity for existing and future occupants. Two consecutive A5 uses in any one length of frontage not permitted (where A5 uses already exist, a gap of at least two no A5 uses is required before a further A5 uses is permitted in the same length of frontage)	Applications will not be approved in a 400m radius of entry points to secondary schools, youth centres, leisure centres and parks. Permission will not be granted in wards where there is more than 10% of the year 6 pupils classified as obese.		
Greenwich		25% limit on the non-A1 frontage	Applications will not be approved within 400m around primary & secondary schools (measured from school boundary)		
Halton	2012	No more than 1 unit or 5% in a defined primary frontage or 2 units or 10% in a defined secondary shopping frontage No more than 2 A5 units adjacent to each other and no less than 2 non-A5 units between hot food takeaways	Applications will not be approved within 400m of primary, secondary schools, playing fields and children's play spaces	Proximity to primary schools, secondary schools or sixth form colleges to be considered for hours of operation	

Local Authority	Year	Restrictions on concentration & clustering of HFTs	Restrictions on proximity to schools	Restrictions on opening hours	Updates (where applicable)
Hammersmith and Fulham		No more than 20% of the length of the local shopping centre frontage as a whole will be permitted to change to food and drink uses (A3, A4, A5)	Areas where children are likely to congregate – schools, parks and youth facilities		
Islington	2016		Restrict potential harmful uses such as takeaways when they are in close proximity to schools; or where they are over concentrated		
Knowsley		The following must not be exceeded: a) More than 10% of units within town centres being hot food takeaways; b) More than 20% of units within district centres, local centres and shopping parades being hot food takeaways; c) More than two directly adjoining hot food takeaways in a single centre's frontage; and d) Less than two non-hot food takeaway units between individual or groups of hot food takeaways units		Conditions on opening hours will consider: a) The likely impacts on residential amenity; b) The existence of an established late night economy in the area; c) The existence of a primary or secondary school within close proximity of the proposal; and d) The character and function of the immediate area.	
Lambeth	2013	Centre specific restrictions for clustering	Applications will not be approved within 400m of secondary or primary school boundary		

Local Authority	Year	Restrictions on concentration & clustering of HFTs	Restrictions on proximity to schools	Restrictions on opening hours	Updates (where applicable)
Leeds	2019	a) No more than two consecutive A5 uses should be located adjoining to each other. b) Between groups of existing A5 uses, there should be at least two non A5 uses. c) Where the parade has fewer than 20 units, no more than 4 A5 units will be permitted in total.	New hot food takeaways will not be permitted within 400 metres of a secondary school main school building except within the boundaries of designated centres		
Lewisham	2014	a. The percentage of hot food-takeaway shops in Major and District Centres does not exceed 5% and in Local Centres does not exceed 10% b. The number of hot food take-away shops in Local Parades of nineteen units or less does not exceed one hot food take-away shop c. The number of hot food take-away in Local Parades of twenty or more units does not exceed two hot food take-away shops	The Council will not grant planning permission for new hot food take-away shops that fall within 400 metres of the boundary of a primary or secondary school (the exclusion zone).		

Local Authority	Year	Restrictions on concentration & clustering of HFTs	Restrictions on proximity to schools	Restrictions on opening hours	Updates (where applicable)
Manchester	2017	An A5 application will not be approved if it increases the concentration of hot food takeaway ground floor frontages in a centre to more than 10% of all non-residential ground floor frontages. An A5 application will not be approved if it creates a cluster of more than two hot food takeaways together or reduces the number of units between hot food takeaway clusters to less than two non-A5 uses.	Limited within 400m of primary & secondary schools	Restriction of opening hours when near primary schools (3pm – 5.30pm) and secondary schools (closed until 5.30pm)	
Medway	2014	Have restricted A5 uses to 10% in town centres and 15% in neighbourhood and local centres	Buffer zone is set at 400m from both secondary and primary schools. This distance is equivalent to a five-minute walk and it is widely used across the country.	Restriction to the hours of operation of hot food takeaways within 400 metres of schools	

Local Authority	Year	Restrictions on concentration & clustering of HFTs	Restrictions on proximity to schools	Restrictions on opening hours	Updates (where applicable)
Newcastle SPD	2016	Regard will be had to: • The potential benefits of the proposal to the wider community; • The number of existing hot food takeaway premises in the local area and their proximity to each other; • The role and character of the centre or shopping parade and the importance of the number, function and location of shops and other services that would remain to serve the local community; and • The existence of vacant shop units and general retail health of the centre or shopping parade Clustering and concentration of hot food takeaways will be a consideration when reviewing planning applications, certain criteria must be met: • Between an individual or multiple, adjacent hot food takeaways, there should be at least two non-hot food takeaways shop units.	Hot food takeaways which are located outside of a centre in the retail hierarchy will not be permitted within a designated secondary school exclusion zone (a 10 minute walk)	Considerations include: • The likely impacts on residential amenity; • The existence of an established evening economy in the area; • The character and function of the immediate area; including existing levels of night-time activity and noise.	As of June 2024 in a new Healthier Food Environments SPD Newcastle added in the following clause: New takeaways are generally restricted within 400m (or a 10-minute walk) of schools, parks, and community centres, and in wards where >10% of Year 6 pupils are obese.

Local Authority	Year	Restrictions on concentration & clustering of HFTs	Restrictions on proximity to schools	Restrictions on opening hours	Updates (where applicable)
Newham			New applications within 400m around secondary schools will not be approved		
Nottingham	2017		Located at least 400m from secondary schools		
North Tyneside	2017	Prevent the development of A5 use in wards where there is more than 15% of the year 6 pupils or 10% of reception pupils classified as very overweight. Proposal for A5 uses will be permitted unless: - It would result in a clustering of A5 uses to the detriment of the character, function, vitality and viability of the defined centres or it would have an adverse impact on the standard of amenity for existing and future occupants of adjacent land and buildings. - There are two or more consecutive A5 uses in any one length of frontage. Where A5 uses already exist in any length of frontage, a gap of at least two non a% use shall be required before a further a% use will be permitted in the same length of frontage.	Prevent the development of a% use within a 400m radius of entry points to all middle and secondary schools, as shown on the Policies Map.		In August 2025 North Tyneside published their Local Plan Policy: Hot Food Takeaways Review. They conclude that their Local Plan Policy focused on restricting hot food takeaways remains robust and suitable for managing the proliferation of HFTs.

Local Authority	Year	Restrictions on concentration & clustering of HFTs	Restrictions on proximity to schools	Restrictions on opening hours	Updates (where applicable)
North West Leicestershire		No more than 10% of the total commercial units in specified centres, to be A5 units. No more than two A5 units to be located adjacent to each other			
Nuneaton & Bedworth	2019	The proposal will be permitted provided they (...) do not increase the number of units under the A3-A5 use class to over 30% of the centre's total usage	The proposal will be permitted provided they (...) are not within 400m of the boundary of a secondary school		
Rochdale		a) More than 5% of the total ground floor units within a defined Primary Shopping Area being hot food takeaways; b) More than 10% of the total ground floor units within a defined Secondary or Central Shopping area being hot food takeaways; c) More than 20% of the total ground floor units within an area of a defined centre, outside the above areas, being hot food takeaways; d) More than two hot food takeaways being located adjacent to each other; and any fewer than two non-A5 units being hot food takeaways.	No new Hot Food Takeaways within a 400m Buffer of a secondary school	Restrictions on hours of opening may be imposed as a condition	

Local Authority	Year	Restrictions on concentration & clustering of HFTs	Restrictions on proximity to schools	Restrictions on opening hours	Updates (where applicable)
Rossendale	2011	Regard will be had to the number of existing hot food takeaway establishments in the immediate area and their proximity to each other.	With regard to proposals which fall outside town centre and local parade locations, hot food takeaways will be resisted where the proposal would fall within: 1. 200m of the boundary of an existing school or youth centred facility 2. 200m of a park boundary.		
Rotherham		Hot Food takeaways will be permitted within town, district and local centres (outside Primary and Secondary Shopping Frontages) where they: a) Would not result in more than 10% of the ground floor units within a defined town or district centre being hot food takeaways; or b) Would not result in more than 25% of the ground floor units within a defined local centre being hot food takeaways; and c) Would not result in more than two A5 units being located adjacent to each other.	Hot food takeaways (including A3 restaurants with takeaways facilities) will not be permitted where they are within 800m of a primary school, secondary school or college (measures in a straight line from any pedestrian access to the school or college)		

Local Authority	Year	Restrictions on concentration & clustering of HFTs	Restrictions on proximity to schools	Restrictions on opening hours	Updates (where applicable)
Salford	2016	When considering whether a proposed hot food takeaway would result in an over-concentration of such uses, regard will be had to a variety of fields, including: a) the number of existing hot food takeaway establishments in the immediate area and their proximity to each other; b) The importance of the location for local shopping; c) The type and characteristics of other uses	To control the availability of hot food takeaways near schools so that "Where a hot food takeaway is proposed within 400 metres of a secondary school, planning permission will only be granted subject to a condition that premises are not open to the public before 5pm Monday to Friday and there are no over the counter sales before that time." The 400 metre control zone is set as the equivalent of a 10 minute walk from the school.	To limit hours of opening so that "Within an area that is primarily residential in character, the hours of opening will be restricted to 8am – 10pm Mondays to Saturdays, with no opening on Sundays and bank holidays."	
Sandwell	2016	Percentage Limit of Hot Food Takeaways in Centres and Parades of Shops: a) Centres with 40 or more units to have no more than 7% of frontages occupied by hot food takeaways; b) Centres with less than 40 units to have no more than 12% of frontages occupied by hot food takeaways c) No more than 2 adjacent HFTs (at any location)	No new hot food takeaway developments will be permitted where they are within 400m of secondary school or college site (as measured in a direct line from the school entrance(s) used by pupils/students)		

Local Authority	Year	Restrictions on concentration & clustering of HFTs	Restrictions on proximity to schools	Restrictions on opening hours	Updates (where applicable)
Sefton	2017	Planning permission will only be granted provided that it will not result in the percentage exceeding 5% of total commercial units of the centre. Where there are less than 20 units in a centre or parade, no more than 1 unit of the specific use (i.e. one hot food takeaway and one betting shop) will be permitted.		Restriction zone established around secondary schools and colleges (400m restriction zone) limits opening hours until after 5pm Monday to Friday. Hours of operation to be established on a case by case basis.	
South Tyneside	2017		Planning permission will not be granted for A5 uses in areas where the levels of obesity in Year 6 pupils is over 10%. Outside of designated town and district shopping centres, proposals for new A5 hot food takeaway uses will only be permitted where the premises are not within 400m of a secondary school boundary.		
Southwark	2018	Not to be above 1 per 21 premises (10 on either side of the proposal) The number of A5 premises are not more than 5% of the total number of units in the protected shopping frontage.	To be further than 400m from any secondary school boundary		
St Helens	2011	No more than 5% of units in the centre or frontage being A5. No more than two adjoining? Frontages to be A5.	400m around primary and secondary schools and sixth form colleges either within or outside Local Education Authority control		

Local Authority	Year	Restrictions on concentration & clustering of HFTs	Restrictions on proximity to schools	Restrictions on opening hours	Updates (where applicable)
Stockton-on-Tees		Within designated centres, applications for hot food takeaways will be supported providing this will not result in harmful over-concentration in the area.			
Stoke	2013	Restrictions include: • Within primary frontages in the City Centre and town centres, no more than 10% of the frontage will be in A5 use. • Within secondary frontages in the City Centre and town centres no more than 20% of the frontage will be in A5 use. • No more than 2 hot food takeaways being located adjacent to each other • At least 2 non-hot food takeaway units between a group of hot food takeaway units.	Planning permission will not be granted for a new hot food takeaway premises within School Exclusion Zones i.e. within 400m of all secondary schools. The 400m distance will be measured from the school's main entrance.	In determining planning applications for hot food takeaways it may be necessary to control the opening hours by planning condition, to minimise any impact on the local environment and amenity.	
Tower Hamlets	2019	No more than 5% of units to be A5 within the defined areas No less than two non-A5 units between groups of hot food takeaways	200m around primary and secondary schools, youth clubs and/or local authority leisure centres	200m – 400m from schools may be permitted with hours of operation conditioned	

Local Authority	Year	Restrictions on concentration & clustering of HFTs	Restrictions on proximity to schools	Restrictions on opening hours	Updates (where applicable)
Wakefield		5% limit on A5 units and/or frontage Must not create a continuous frontage of more than 3 non-retail (A3-A5) uses No more than two adjoining frontages to be A5; at least two non-A5s between groups of A5s Must not result in more than 25% of the total length of primary shopping frontage in any one street or of any one block being in non-retail use.	Proposals for hot food takeaways located within 400m of schools and outside centres identified on the Policies Map will not be supported.		

Local Authority	Year	Restrictions on concentration & clustering of HFTs	Restrictions on proximity to schools	Restrictions on opening hours	Updates (where applicable)
Waltham Forest	2009	Appropriate concentrations of A5 uses will be assessed based on the following: a) Within Primary, Secondary and Retail Parade Zones - no more than 5% of the units shall consist of A5 uses b) Within Tertiary Zones, outside designated centres - no more than 1 A5 unit will be allowed within 400m of an existing A5 unit Clustering • No more than two A5 units should be located adjacent to each other. • Between individual or groups of hot food takeaways d)there should be at least two non A5 units	Hot food takeaway shops will be resisted where the proposal will: 1. Fall within 400m of the boundary of an existing school or youth centred facility (e.g. YMCA, after school clubs). 2. Fall within 400m of a park boundary.		
Wandsworth			Applications for hot food takeaways will not be approved where they would result in an over-concentration of A5 uses within walking distance of schools or colleges (400m) where this could undermine their healthy eating initiatives.		

Local Authority	Year	Restrictions on concentration & clustering of HFTs	Restrictions on proximity to schools	Restrictions on opening hours	Updates (where applicable)
Warrington	2013	In Primary Shopping Frontages, hot food takeaways will not be permitted if they: a) Create a continuous frontage of more than three non-retail uses (A3 – A5), or more than 20 metres of non-retail uses; b) Result in more than 25% of the total length of primary shopping frontage in any one street or in any one block being in non-retail use	Proposals for hot food takeaways located within 400 metres of schools and outside centres on the Policies Map will not be supported.		

Local Authority	Year	Restrictions on concentration & clustering of HFTs	Restrictions on proximity to schools	Restrictions on opening hours	Updates (where applicable)
Wolverhampton	2018	• In all centres – no more than two consecutive ground floor shop units in the centre should be occupied by Hot Food Takeaways • In centres with 40 units or more - no more than 10% of ground floor shop units in total and no more than 10% of ground floor shop units in any frontage should be occupied by Hot Food Takeaways; • In centres with less than 40 units - no more than 15% of ground floor shop units in total and no more than 15% of ground floor shop units in any frontage should be occupied by Hot Food Takeaways	New applications within 400 m of a secondary school “as the crow flies” will not be approved.		

Local Authority	Year	Restrictions on concentration & clustering of HFTs	Restrictions on proximity to schools	Restrictions on opening hours	Updates (where applicable)
Worcester		The proposed use must not cause the proportion of units in food/drink (use class A3) use to exceed 20% in areas defined as approach corridors and St John's district shopping centre as shown on the proposals map. The proposal must be compliant with the Local Plan policies (Appendix 4) with regards to the proportion of units within a geographical area (e.g. in some of the centres proposed use must not result in a continuous frontage of more than two non-retail units (units are defined as a shopfront width of about 6 metres (20 feet) larger units will be assessed in terms of unit lengths)			

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