

# Annex C: Hot food takeaway non-statutory planning guidance

## Background paper

### Purpose

1. Following discussion at the Planning Policy and Local Plan Advisory Group (9 June), this paper seeks to provide further evidence in support of the requirements contained in the Hot Food Takeaway planning guidance. The guidance provides detail to clarify how planning applications for hot food takeaways (sui generis use) will be assessed in York, and in relation to policy in the National Planning Policy Framework.

### National Planning Policy Framework

2. The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) is the primary rulebook that shapes land use and development in England. The latest NPPF (2024) states in relation to hot food takeaways that:

*97. Local planning authorities should refuse applications for hot food takeaways and fast food outlets: - within **walking distance** of schools and other places where children and young people congregate, unless the location is within a designated town centre; or - 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.*

3. This policy was newly introduced in the 2024 version of the NPPF. The reference to 'walking distance' is the only one in within the Framework and must be interpreted for decision-making.
4. The [2025 draft consultation version](#) of the NPPF proposes to make a minor change to the policy to include the word 'reasonable' before 'walking distance'. The consultation document associated with the draft NPPF notes that the word 'reasonable' has been included in the hot food takeaway policy 'to avoid any ambiguity that the policy

*could apply to hot food takeaways and fast food outlets which are a considerable but still 'walkable' distance away.'*

5. Although the draft version of the NPPF references 'reasonable walking distance' several times, it does not provide further clarification as to what a 'reasonable walking distance' constitutes. Consequently, it is for Local Planning Authorities to make an evidenced judgement as to the distance they consider appropriate.

### **Why do we use 800m as a proxy for walking distance?**

6. Given the NPPF does not provide detail on how far a 'walking distance' might be, each Local Planning Authority must demonstrate this based on the available evidence.

### **Evidence for use of 800m**

7. The 800m walking distance is an established distance used by a number of bodies to equate to approximately 0.5 miles or 10min walking time which represents a comfortable distance for most people on foot. Amongst the documents using this measurement are:

<b>Document</b>	<b>Year</b>
Department for Transport ' <a href="#">Manual for Streets</a> '	2007
Transport for London ' <a href="#">The Planning for walking toolkit</a> '	2020
<a href="#">National Design Guide</a>	2021
Active Travel England ' <a href="#">Standing advice note: Active travel and sustainable development</a> '	2024
Response to written parliamentary question to <a href="#">Matthew Pennycook, Minister for Housing, Communities and Local Government</a>	2026

### **What distance do other LPAs use?**

8. There is no consistent approach taken by differing Local Planning Authorities. Examples set out in Table 1 identify that walking distance has been equated to either 400m or 800m.

**Table 1: Other Local Authority Examples**

<b>LPA</b>	<b>Reference</b>	<b>Distance</b>	<b>Year</b>
City of Bradford Council	Hot food takeaway SPD	400m (from primary & secondary schools, youth clubs and parks)	2014
Leeds City Council	Hot food takeaway SPD	400m (secondary schools only)	2019
Rotherham Council	Hot food takeaway SPD	800m (from primary & secondary schools, special schools or tertiary colleges)	2020
Doncaster Council	Local Plan	400m (from primary & secondary schools, colleges, community centres and playgrounds; subject to a opening restriction after 1700hrs weekdays)	2021
Kirklees Council	Hot food takeaway SPD	400m (from primary & secondary schools)	2022
Sheffield City Council	Draft Local Plan	800m (from secondary schools)	2024
Bristol City Council	Draft Local Plan	5 mins walking (from primary & secondary schools, or other places young people gather)	2024
Barnsley Council	Planning advice note: Hot food takeaways	800m (from primary & secondary schools, community centres, playgrounds, parks and leisure centres)	2026

### **Considering the impacts of a 400m buffer versus an 800m buffer**

9. Policies introduced prior to 2021 generally used 400m and have had the longest time to be evaluated and measured. Since this time, obesity prevalence has gone upwards and evidence of effectiveness of HFT policies is getting stronger. Table 1 shows that most recent guidance is more likely to have implemented 800m as the walking distance as authorities have likely responded to the monitoring data.

10. We have mapped the cumulative impact of both a 400m and an 800m buffer around all schools, colleges and playgrounds. For the educational establishments the centre point is taken as the main entrance to the site; for playgrounds it is a buffer around the polygon representing the entire playground.
11. We recognise that the buffers represent an 'as the crow flies' distance rather than real world walking distances. Where a planning application comes forward for a hot food takeaway then it will be fully assessed in relation to proximity to schools and playgrounds with the 800m buffer taken as a starting point for that assessment.
12. In both instances the district centres (Acomb and Haxby) and city centre are excluded from the buffers.
13. The results are in the attached maps (at end of document):
  - Option A showing a 400m buffer – buffers are shown 400m around the entrance point to educational establishments, and 400m around the boundaries of play areas; the designated district centres of Haxby and Acomb, and the city centre, are excluded. The buffers are merged to show the total area excluded.
  - Option B showing the 800m buffer - buffers are shown 800m around the entrance point to educational establishments, and 800m around the boundaries of play areas; the designated district centres of Haxby and Acomb, and the city centre, are excluded. The buffers are merged to show the total area excluded

### **How have the schools and other places children congregate been chosen?**

14. The NPPF policy requires that Local Planning Authorities refuse planning applications within walking distance of **schools and other places where children and young people congregate**.
15. For the purposes of the guidance we have chosen to include
  - All primary and secondary schools

- Colleges
16. Children's playgrounds

17. There is clear evidence from multiple sources that density of hot food takeaways is associated with higher rates of childhood obesity. Sometimes this evidence is viewed as surprising, given the universal access of delivery companies, but it is persistently recorded. Across a lifetime this puts our young people at significant additional risk of preventable chronic disease at an early age. This health harm is already visible in the national datasets in primary school age children. This is why the planning guidance pushes hot food take-aways away from places where children might congregate, and back into high density locations like the city centre.
18. Access to hot food takeaways in York is relevant to child weight at any age, not only when children are secondary school age and walking independently from their parents. School travel data from the [National Travel Survey \(2024\)](#) shows that nationally 83% of 5-10 year olds are walking to school when the distance to and from school is less than 1 mile; for 11-16 year olds this rises to 92%.
19. We have chosen to include playgrounds as the only other type of development where children might congregate. For the purposes of the mapping we have used the boundary of the playground (not the boundary of a wider park or open space) as the starting point for the 800m buffer.

### **Why only hot food takeaways?**

20. The NPPF [paragraph 97](#) refers specifically to hot food takeaways and fast food outlets. In terms of the Use Class Order these types of businesses do not fall within any defined use class and are therefore 'sui generis' – within a class of their own. Hot food takeaways are defined as businesses for the sale of hot food where consumption of that food is mostly undertaken off the premises.
21. Businesses which fall within other use classes (eg coffee shops or bakeries – both Class E) simply do not fall within the provisions of paragraph 97 of the NPPF, so cannot be considered under this guidance.

## **Conclusions**

22. There is no specifically consistent approach between local planning authorities when considering buffer distances around schools and other places young people congregate. It is therefore for York to demonstrate and evidence its proposed approach.
23. Whilst there is debate regarding 400m vs 800m, the planning guidance proposes to use an 800m buffer. This is within the typical range of existing planning guidance from other authorities and is considered justified by the higher than national average density of hot food takeaways in York and the evidence around impacts on children's health.
24. The choice of including all schools, colleges and playgrounds as a starting point for the buffer zones is justified by the higher than national average density of hot food takeaways in York and the evidence around impacts on children's health.
25. The 800m distance is in line with the high ambitions in the York Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2022-2032 to reverse the rise in adults and children living above a healthy weight.

## Annex 1: Current childhood obesity data in York

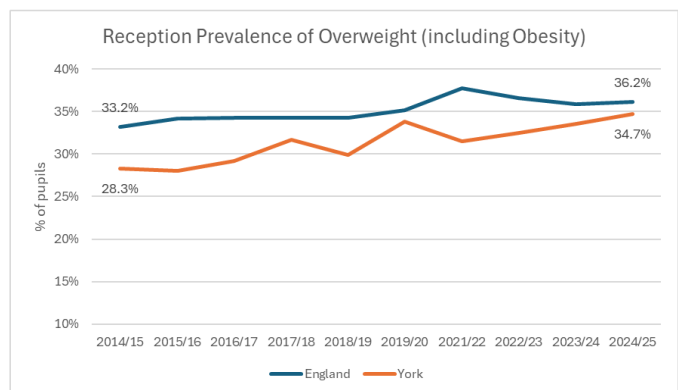
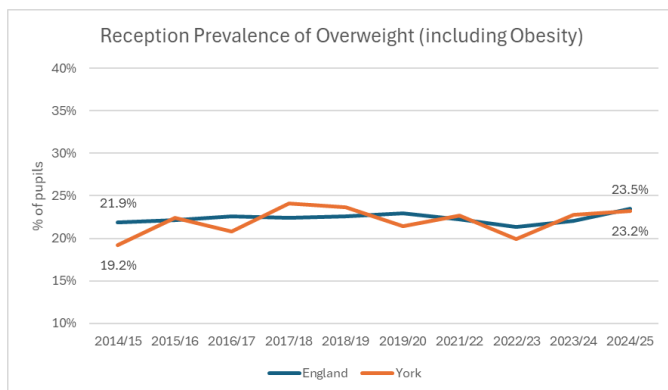
Unhealthy weight in children is one of the key public health challenges facing York, affecting 1 in 4 reception-aged children and 1 in 3 year six-aged children in York.

Data correlates living near a density of hot food takeaways and raised levels of childhood obesity<sup>1 2</sup>. Over the life course, this is associated with higher levels of preventable chronic disease, and preventable ill health at an earlier age. An estimate 23% of all deaths are attributable to obesity, which overtook smoking as the leading cause of death during the last decade.<sup>3</sup>

This data is collected through the NCMP, a nationally mandated national program. It provides reliable comprehensive weight data on all children attending state funded schools. York data is below:

	Overweight	Obesity	Combined
Reception (5 years)	14%	9%	23%
Year 6 (11 years)	15%	19%	35%

Childhood obesity rates in York have risen considerably over the last decade:

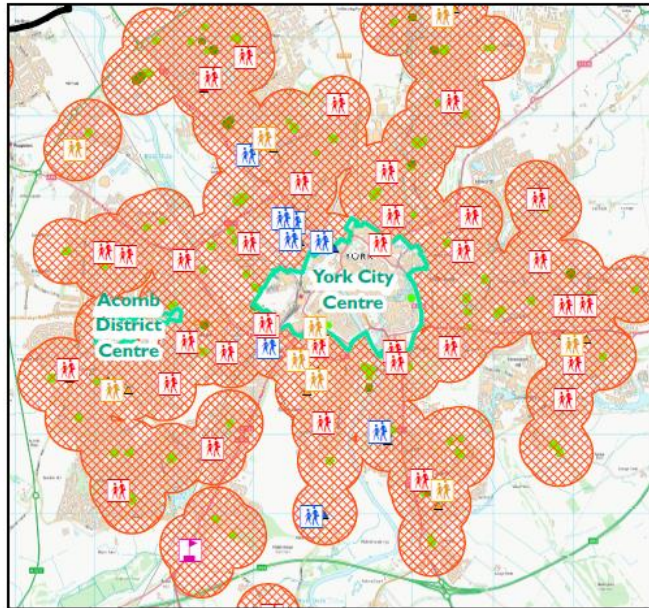


<sup>1</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/health-matters-obesity-and-the-food-environment/health-matters-obesity-and-the-food-environment--2>

<sup>2</sup> <https://link.springer.com/article/10.1186/s12966-017-0589-5> .

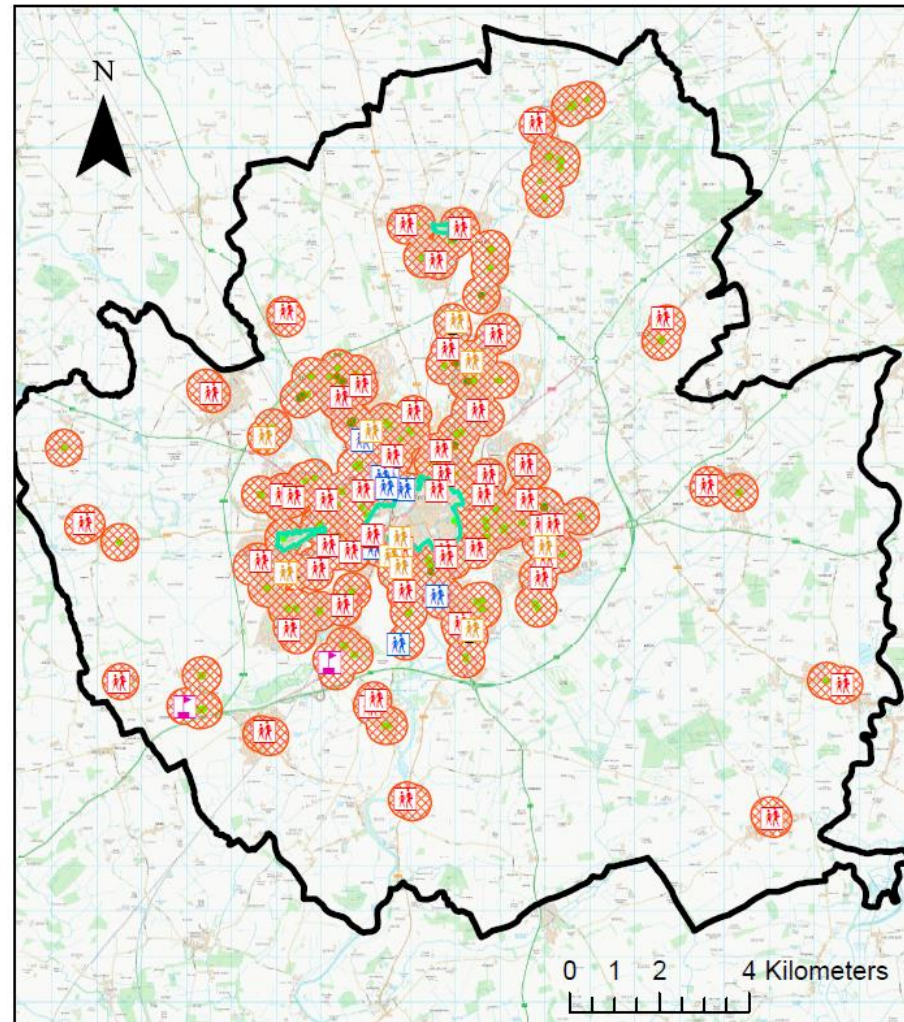
<sup>3</sup> [Changes over 15 years in the contribution of adiposity and smoking to deaths in England and Scotland | BMC Public Health | Springer Nature Link](#)

## Healthy Places Guidance: Hot Food Takeaways Exclusion Zones Map (Option A - 400m Buffers)



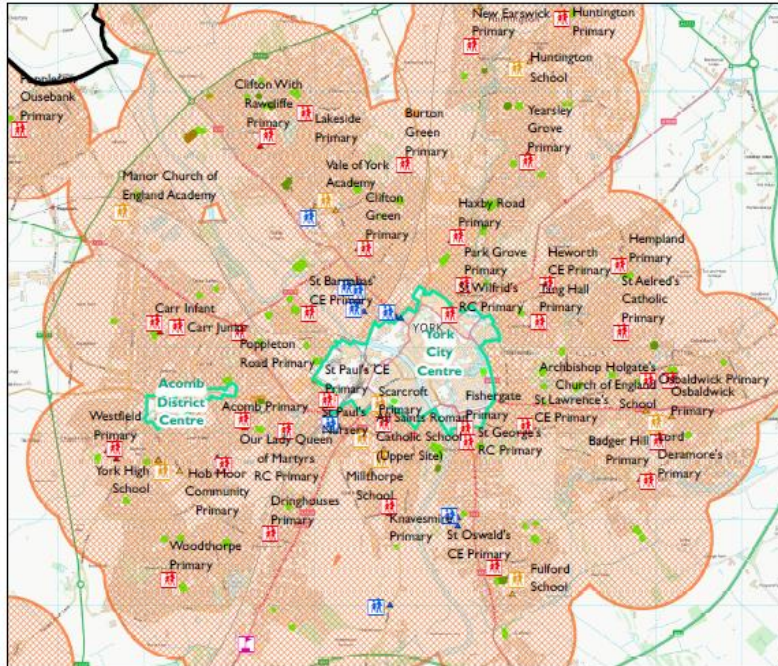
### Legend

- |   |                                  |
|---|----------------------------------|
| City of York LA Boundary                | Primary Schools Entry Points     |
| Further Education Colleges              | Independent Schools Entry points |
| Secondary Schools                       | City Centre                      |
| Primary Schools                         | District Retail Centre           |
| Independent Schools                     | HFT Exclusion Zone (400m)        |
| Further Education Colleges Entry Points | Young persons openspace          |
| Secondary Schools Entry Points          | Childrens openspace              |



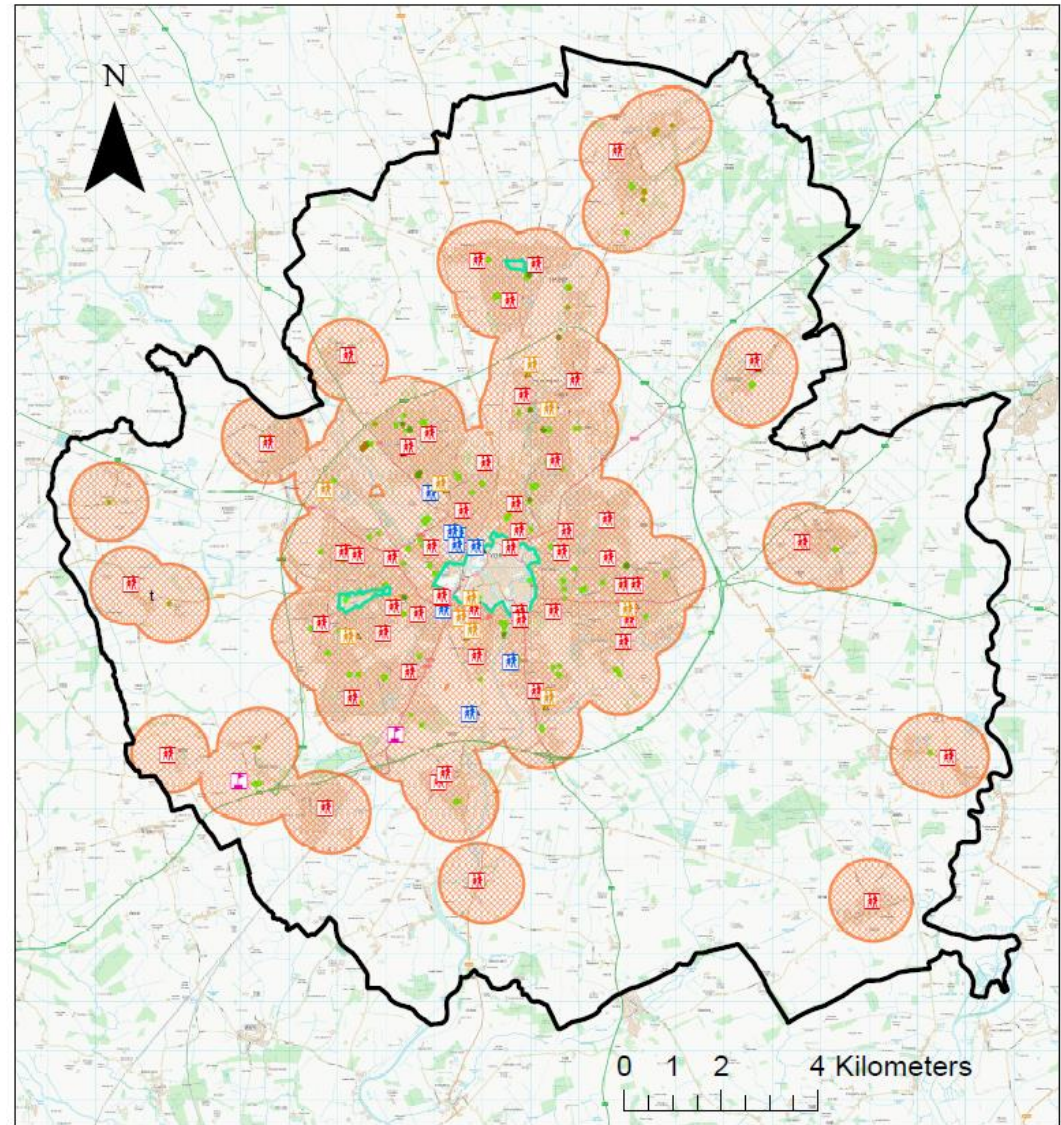
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# Healthy Places Guidance: Hot Food Takeaways Exclusion Zones Map (Option B - 800m Buffers)



### Legend

- City of York LA Boundary
- Further Education Colleges
- Secondary Schools
- Primary Schools
- Independent Schools
- Further Education Colleges Entry Points
- Secondary Schools Entry Points
- Primary Schools Entry Points
- Independent Schools Entry points
- City Centre
- HFTE Exclusion Zone (800m)
- Young persons openspace
- Childrens openspace



Date: 18/06/2026