

Hot Food Takeaway Evidence Paper

1 National context

- 1.1 Changes to our environment (including both the activity and food-related environment) are a necessary response to support behaviour change and appropriate behaviour patterns. It is necessary to address the obesogenic environment in order to act at a population level.
- 1.2 The national health policy context now sets a clear ambition for taking decisive action for healthy weight. The Prevention Green Paper ‘Advancing our health, prevention in the 2020s’ⁱ recognises that obesity is a major health challenge and commits the Government, through working with its system partners, to address the issue. Supporting healthy diets and a healthier weight is a priority in the PHE Strategic Plan 2020-2025ⁱⁱ. The Government’s Second Walking and Cycling Investment Strategy sets out the ambition to make cycling and walking the natural first choice for many journeys with half of all journeys in towns and cities being cycled or walked by 2030.ⁱⁱⁱ
- 1.3 The Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) paragraph 96, states that planning policies should:
 - 1.4 “enable and support healthy lifestyles, especially where this would address identified local health and wellbeing needs – for example through the provision of safe and accessible green infrastructure, sports facilities, local shops, access to healthier food, allotments and layouts that encourage walking and cycling.”
 - 1.5 The PHE and IHE Guidance “Healthy High Streets: good place-making in an urban setting” sets out how access to healthy food is a key factor in health high street development, but that this access is inequitable:
 - 1.6 “For instance, ‘food deserts’ are known to occur in some areas of deprivation where smaller independent food retailers have failed to flourish. This is, in part, due to supermarket competition which favours car-owning customers with stable incomes who complete larger shopping loads in a single trip away from the local high street ... There is also strong evidence that the density of fast food shops that sell produce that is high in fat, salt and sugar content increases by level of deprivation”
- 1.7 Local planning policy is being used by around half of all Local Authorities to support access to good foods by reducing the establishment of new fast-food takeaways in specific locations. As of 2020, approximately 50.5% of local authorities had policies or SPDs to restrict new hot food takeaways^{iv}. B&NES

currently has no such policy.

- 1.8 The Planning Practice Guidance for Health and Wellbeing supports the use of planning by local authorities to limit hot food takeaways in Paragraph 004, especially through exclusion zones: “Planning can influence the built environment to improve health and reduce obesity and excess weight in local communities. Local planning authorities can have a role by supporting opportunities for communities to access a wide range of healthier food production and consumption choices. Planning policies and supplementary planning documents can, where justified, seek to limit the proliferation of particular uses where evidence demonstrates this is appropriate (and where such uses require planning permission) ... Planning policies and proposals may need to have particular 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”
- 1.9 From 1 September 2020, the Use Class Order (UCO) in England has been changed so that hot food takeaways are now classed as sui generis. This means that any change of use to a hot food takeaway will require planning permission. Under the previous use class order cafes and restaurants and drinking establishments could make that change without requiring planning permission
- 1.10 The Government obesity plans highlighted the need to tackle a major health issue with children starting school overweight. Among a range of measures, they include ambitions for mandatory calorie labelling in the out of home sector, a restriction on price promotions on less healthy foods and a ban on the sale of energy drinks to children.
- 1.11 A paper evaluating the effect of planning policy on the local food environment in Gateshead^v, showed that their Hot Food Takeaway SPD led to a decrease of the density of fast food in Gateshead by –12.45 per 100,000 of the population compared to control areas, and a reduction of 13.88% in the proportion of fast-food outlets compared to other type of food outlets. Initial findings from a follow up study suggest that this ultimately led to a statistically significant reduction in childhood overweight and obesity for children in the 2nd and 3rd most deprived deciles.

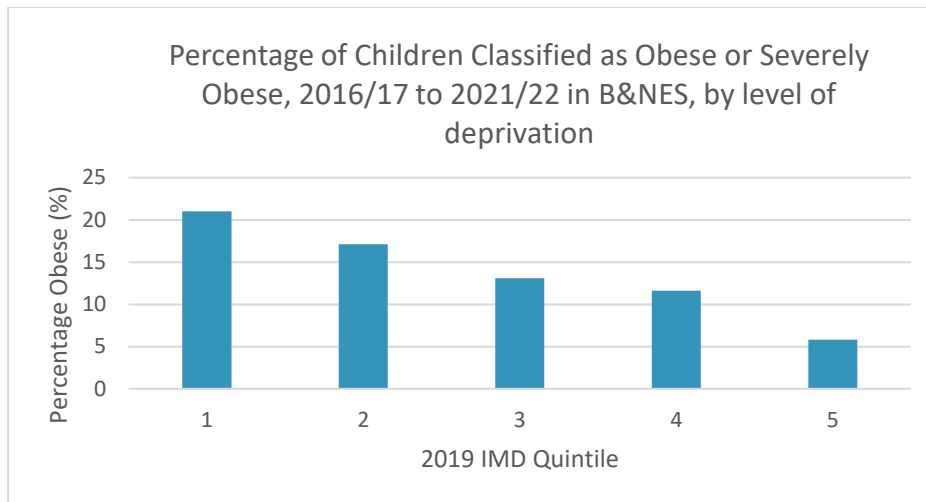
2 Local Policy

- 2.1 The B&NES Health and Wellbeing Strategy, adopted in 2023, promotes creating health places. Priority 3.2. states that the council must enable and encourage healthy lifestyle practices, whilst priority 4 is about creating health promoting places. Priority 4.1. specifies that the local plan must be used to deliver health places and reduce inequalities.
- 2.2 B&NES new Economic Strategy makes a commitment to the development of a Food Plan for B&NES, and B&NES Integrated Health improvement strategy (in development) will promote the use of planning and other wider determinants to support a reduction in obesity.

3 Evidence base

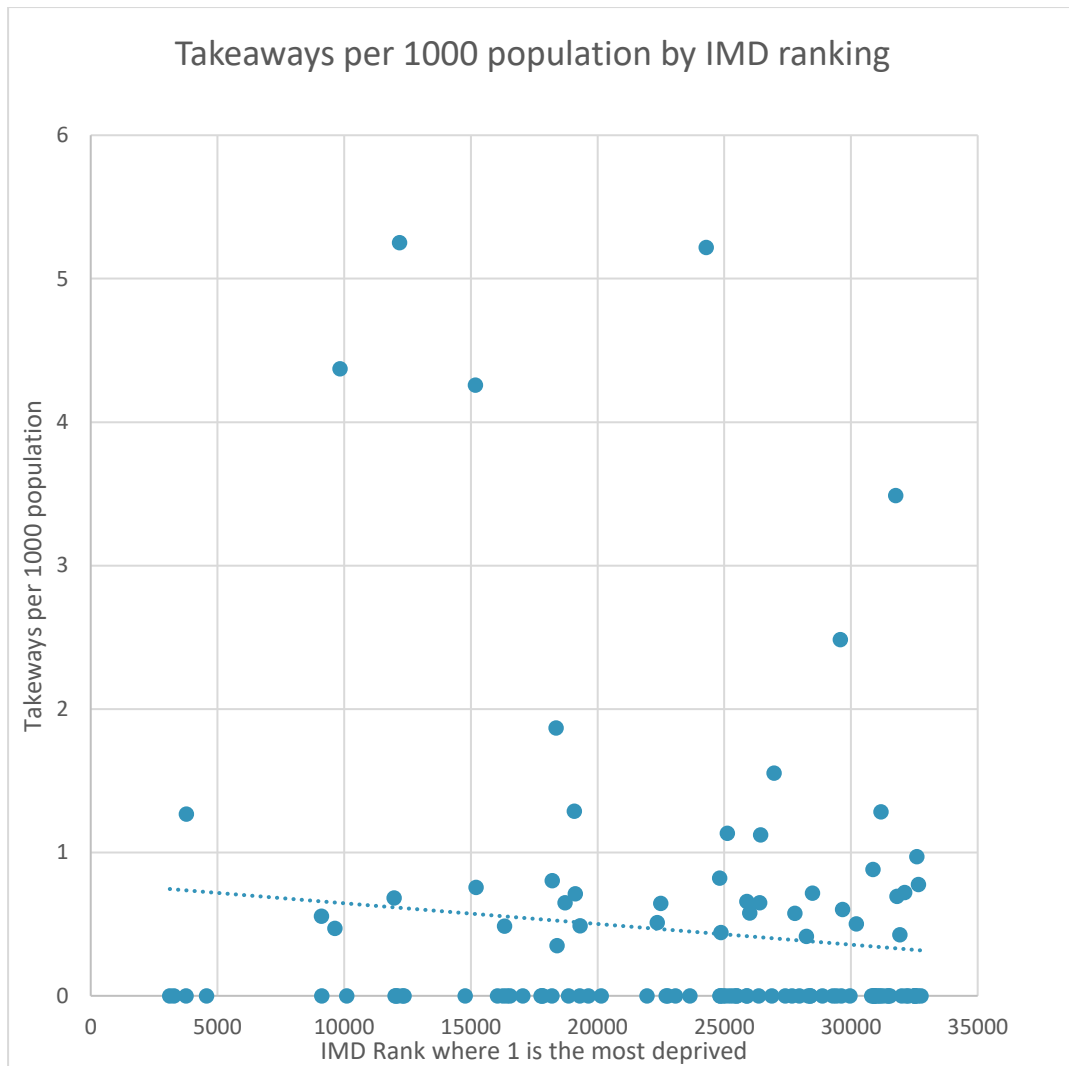
Obesity and inequalities

- 3.1 In 2019/20, B&NES has some of the lowest levels of adult overweight and obesity in the South West with a prevalence of 55% compared to the England rate of 63%. However, this is still more than 1 in 2 adults carrying excess weight and is higher in comparison to many economically developed countries, and so the impact of obesity in B&NES remains very high. There is also variation in within B&NES with some wards having higher than England average levels of obesity.
- 3.2 Whilst B&NES as a district has lower numbers of childhood obesity than England as a whole - 28.9% of year six pupils are overweight or obese in B&NES compared to 37.8% in England, again if compared to other economically developed countries this is high. There is also inequality on a socioeconomic gradient, which has been getting worse, especially in year 6 boys, with 50% of year 6 pupils in Twerton being overweight or obese, compared to 14.3% in Newbridge. The B&NES Health and Wellbeing Strategy commits to using the Local Plan to reduce inequalities.



Hot food takeaways and inequalities

- 3.3 In the UK, 27% of adults and 19% of children eat meals out of the home at least once a week, and takeaway food consumption peaks in young adults aged 19-29 years. Takeaway foods tend to contain high levels of fat, saturated fats, sugar, and salt, and lower levels of micronutrients, and therefore regular consumption of takeaway food over time has been linked to weight gain.^{vi} Severely
- 3.4 This impact is worsened by high exposure to hot food takeaways. Adults with increased exposure to hot food takeaways have increased takeaway consumption, and as such have a higher average body weight. This relationship is especially pronounced in groups with lower levels of education^{vii}, as therefore is a contributor to health inequalities.
- 3.5 More deprived areas have higher rates of fast food outlets, with the poorest areas seeing 5 times more takeaways than the most affluent areas ^{viii}. Trends in B&NES are consistent with this. The below graph demonstrates that more deprived areas in B&NES tend to have a higher ratio of takeaways per 1000 population.



3.6 Takeaway food can be seen as a low-cost option to the consumer, and hence groups with low incomes, including children, are more likely to have health outcomes impacted by increased exposure. Children are price sensitive and have been found to perceive school meals as poor value for money when compared to that food that can be purchased from a takeaway^{ix}. Therefore, improving the quality of the food environment around schools has the potential to influence children’s behaviour through their food and drink purchasing habits.

Policy

3.7 There are currently three main types of policy used to restrict development of hot food takeaways:

- a) School Exclusion Zone: new HFTs will not be allowed within a certain radius of a school. This is usually 400m, which has been considered a reasonable 5-minute walk, or 800 metres which is a 10-minute walk. The 400-metre distance is outlined within the Urban Design Compendium and the guidelines for providing journeys on foot as a

reasonable walking distance.

- b) Limiting the density of fast-food outlets: planning permission for new fast-food outlets will be rejected if a concentration of fast-food outlets has been reached (between 5% to 20% of retail space, or no more than two next to each other).
- c) Restricting new fast-food outlets based upon local childhood obesity rates: permission will be denied if a new outlet is proposed to be in a ward where childhood obesity is over a certain threshold, such as 15% of year 6 pupils.

Proximity to Schools

- 3.8 Planning policy restricting hot food takeaways commonly use 400m exclusion zones around places where there are likely to be high numbers of children. This always includes secondary schools, often includes primary schools, and sometimes includes other youth-centric locations, such as youth centres.
- 3.9 As noted above, exposure to hot food takeaways is associated with increased consumption and body weight. Where hot food takeaways are located near to schools, especially on key routes to and from the school, children and their parents may be influenced to purchase and consume less healthy food options.
- 3.10 Within B&NES, nearly half (47%) of all existing takeaways are within 400m of a school, whilst 28% of schools in B&NES have a takeaway within 400m.
- 3.11 This is more common of HFTs in local centres. 40 hot food takeaways in B&NES are within a local centre. Of these 33 are within 400m of a school. 82.5% of takeaways in local centres are within 400m of a school.
- 3.12 There are 55 takeaways in B&NES that are not in designated local centres. 12 of these are within 400m of a school. More than 1 in 5 hot food takeaways outside of local centres are within 400m of a school.
- 3.13 The below maps show local schools (primary in red, secondary in blue, and special schools in green) and their proximity to hot food takeaways (yellow). Where there are hot food takeaways within 400m of a school, the 400m radius around the school is shown.

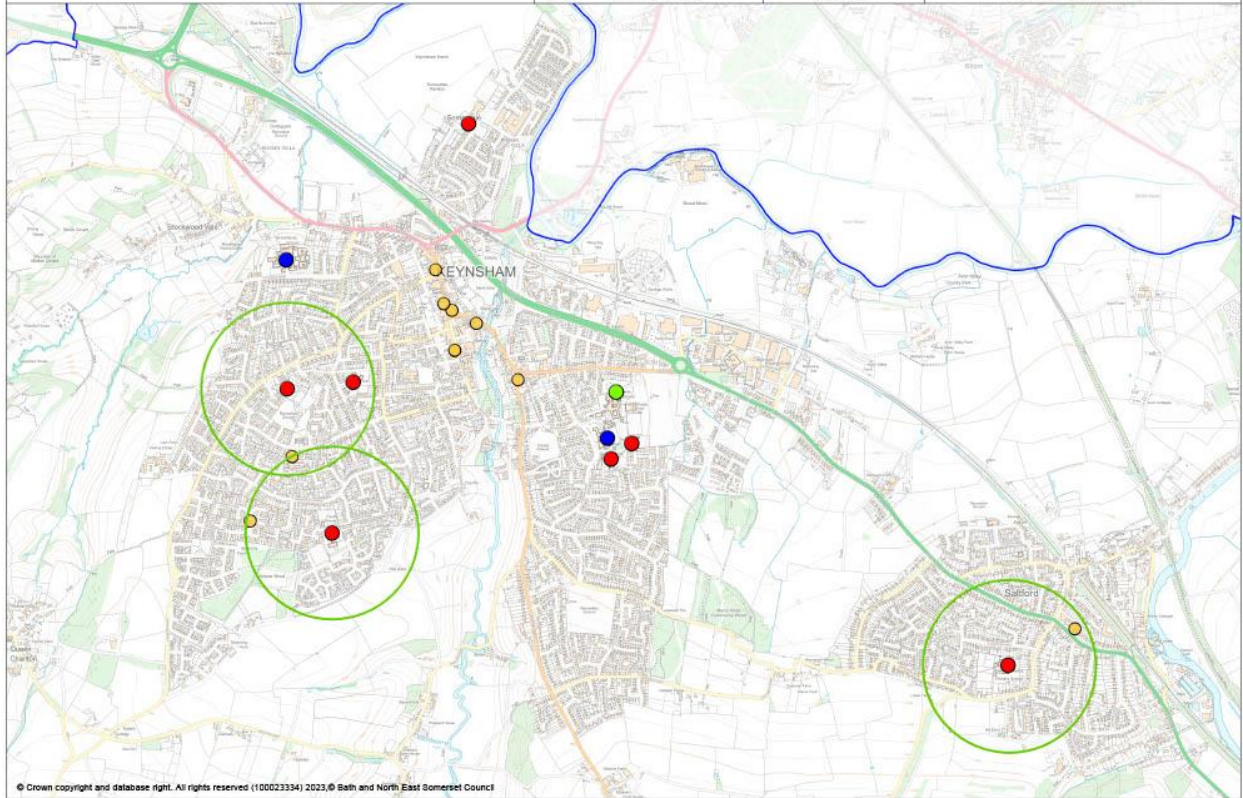
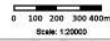
Keynsham all schools

Bath and North East Somerset

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Improving People's Lives

A map depicting all schools in Keynsham and Saltford and their proximity to hot food takeaways

Author: C. Williams
Date: 22/05/2023



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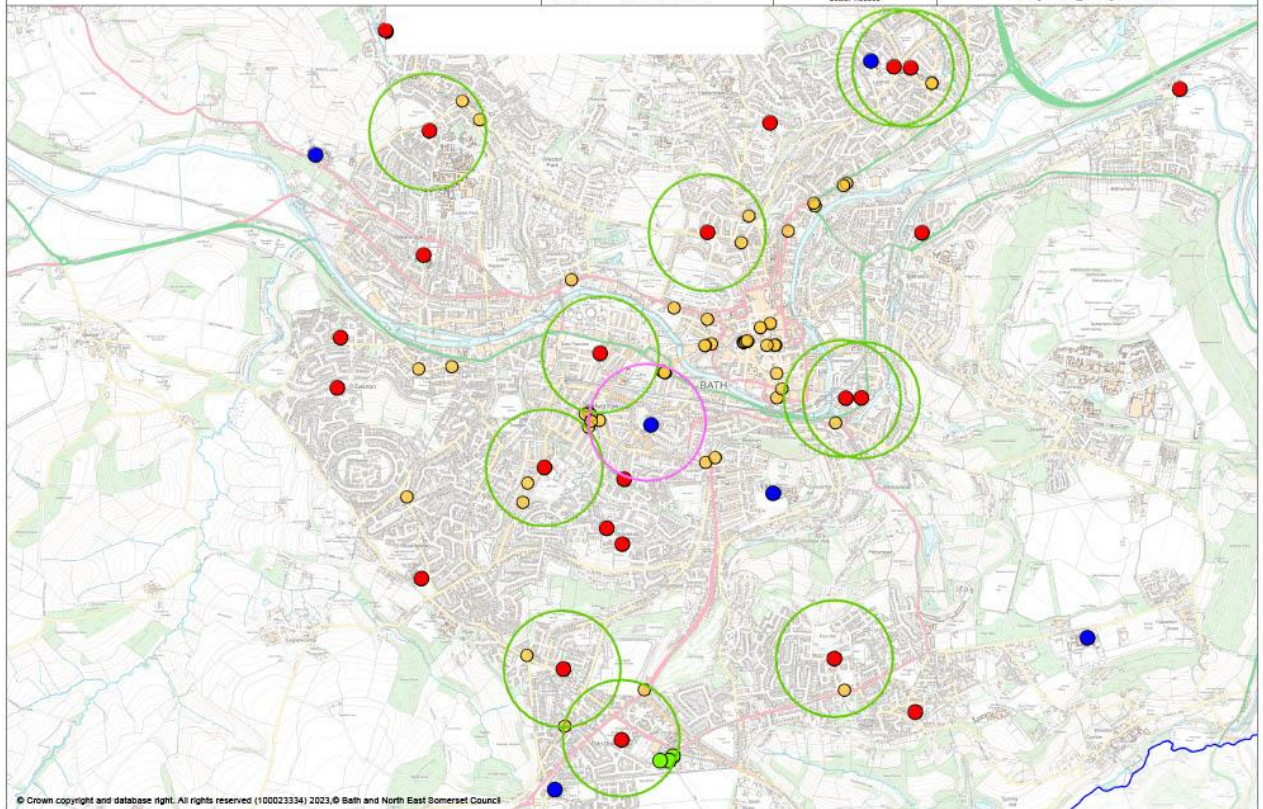
Bath all schools

Bath and North East Somerset

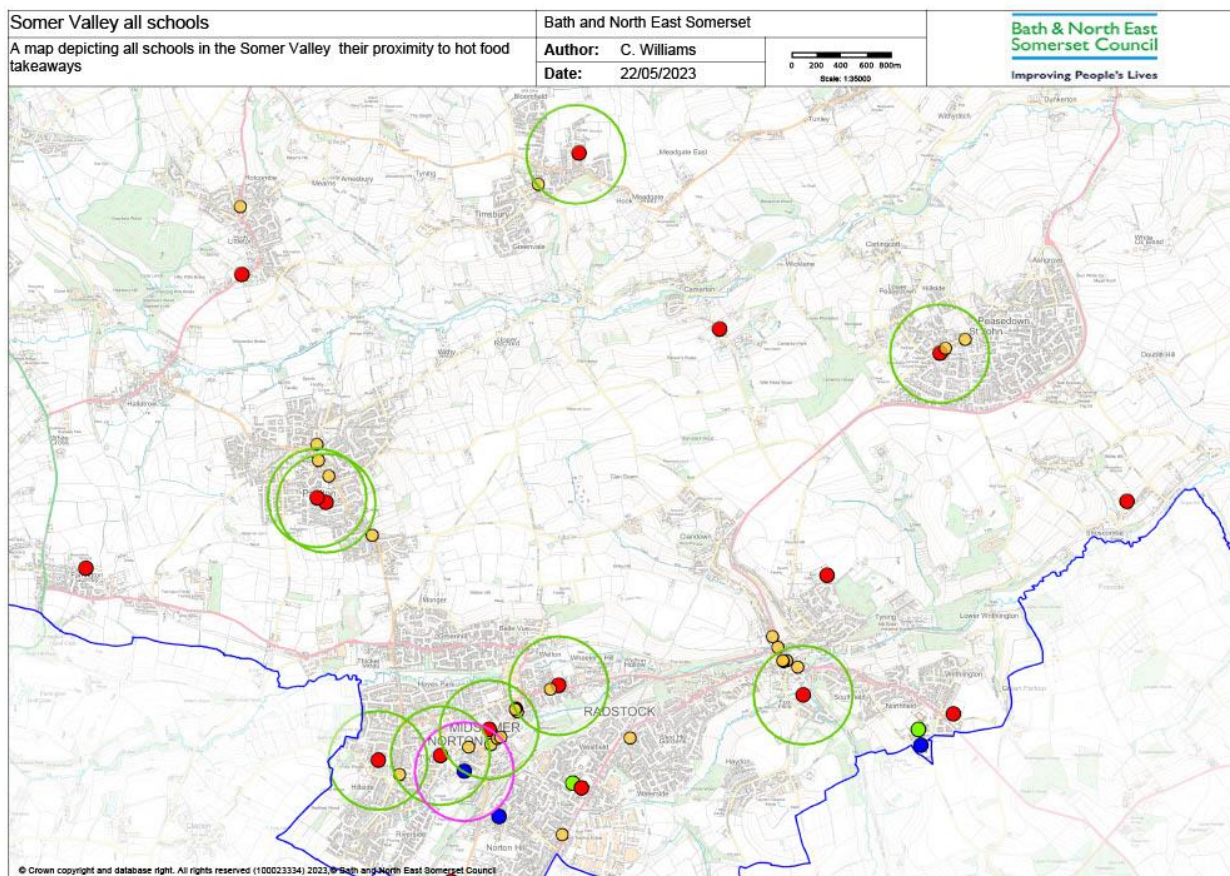
Bath & North East Somerset Council
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A map depicting all schools in Bath and their proximity to hot food takeaways

Author: C. Williams
Date: 22/05/2023

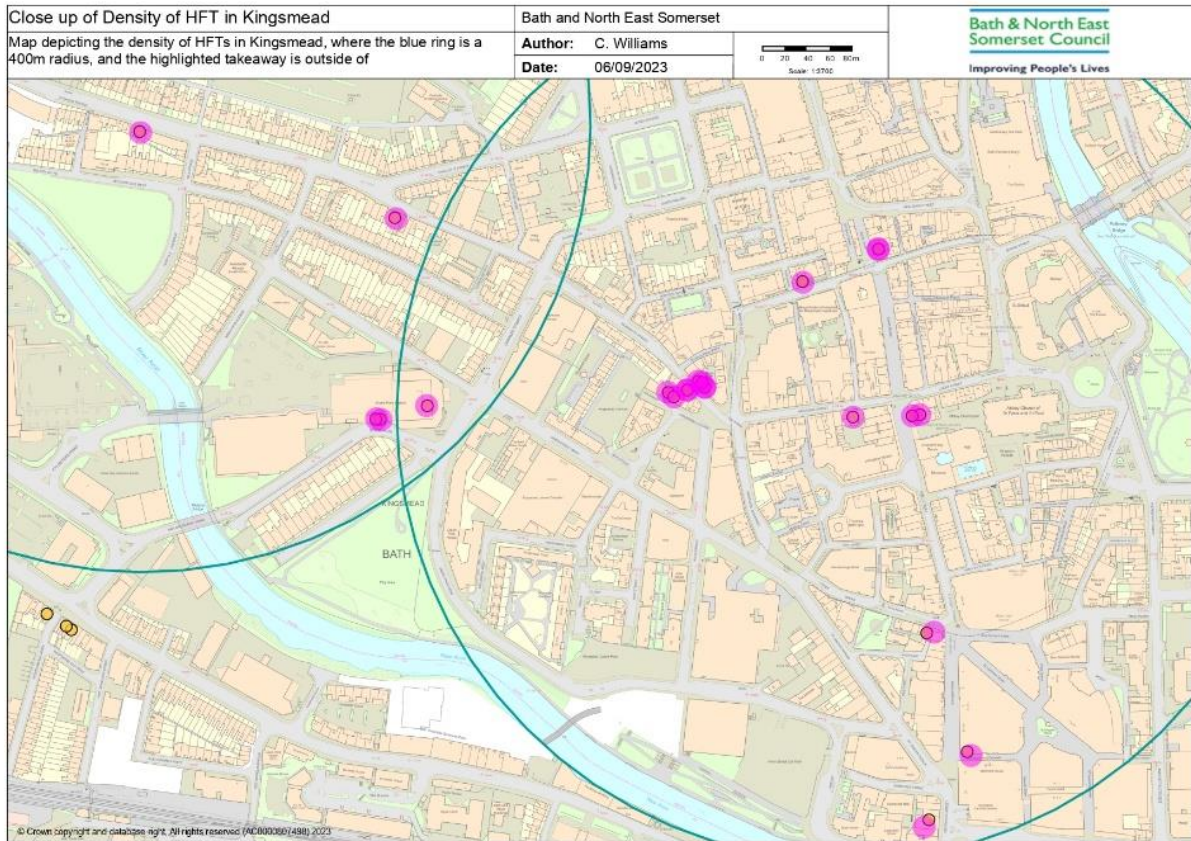
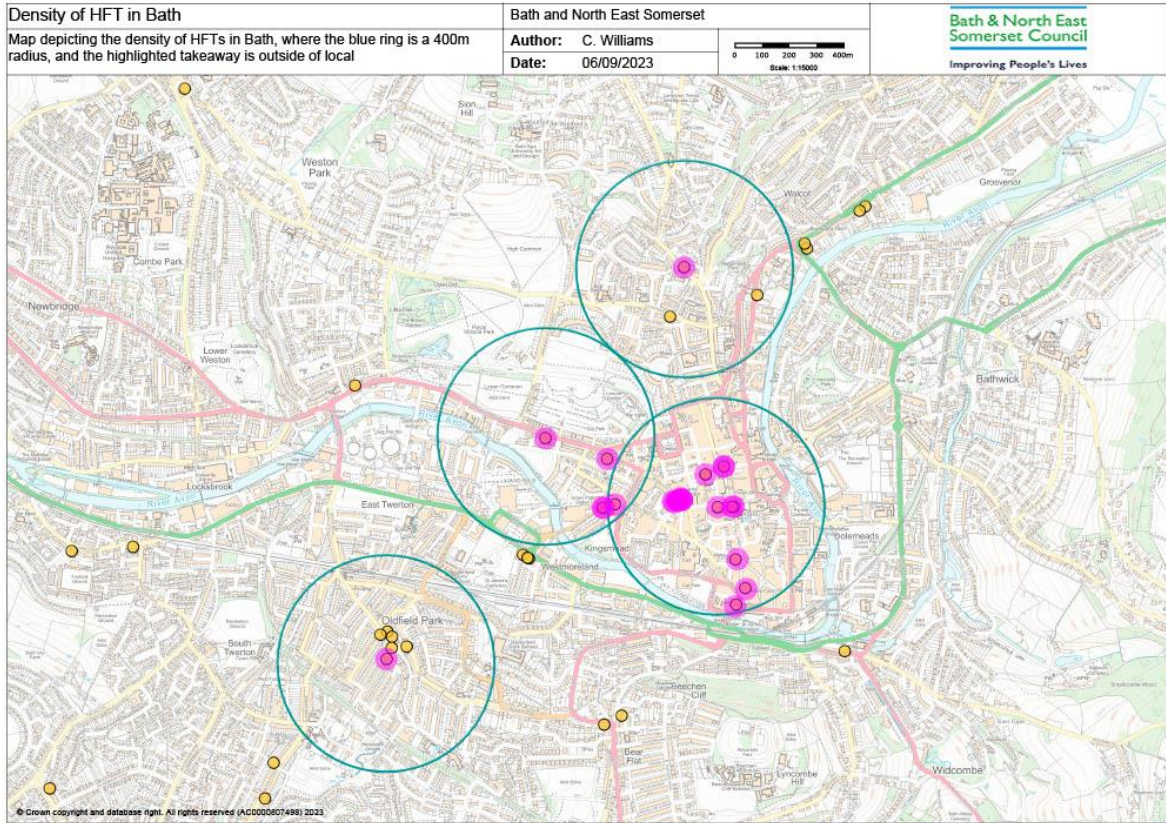


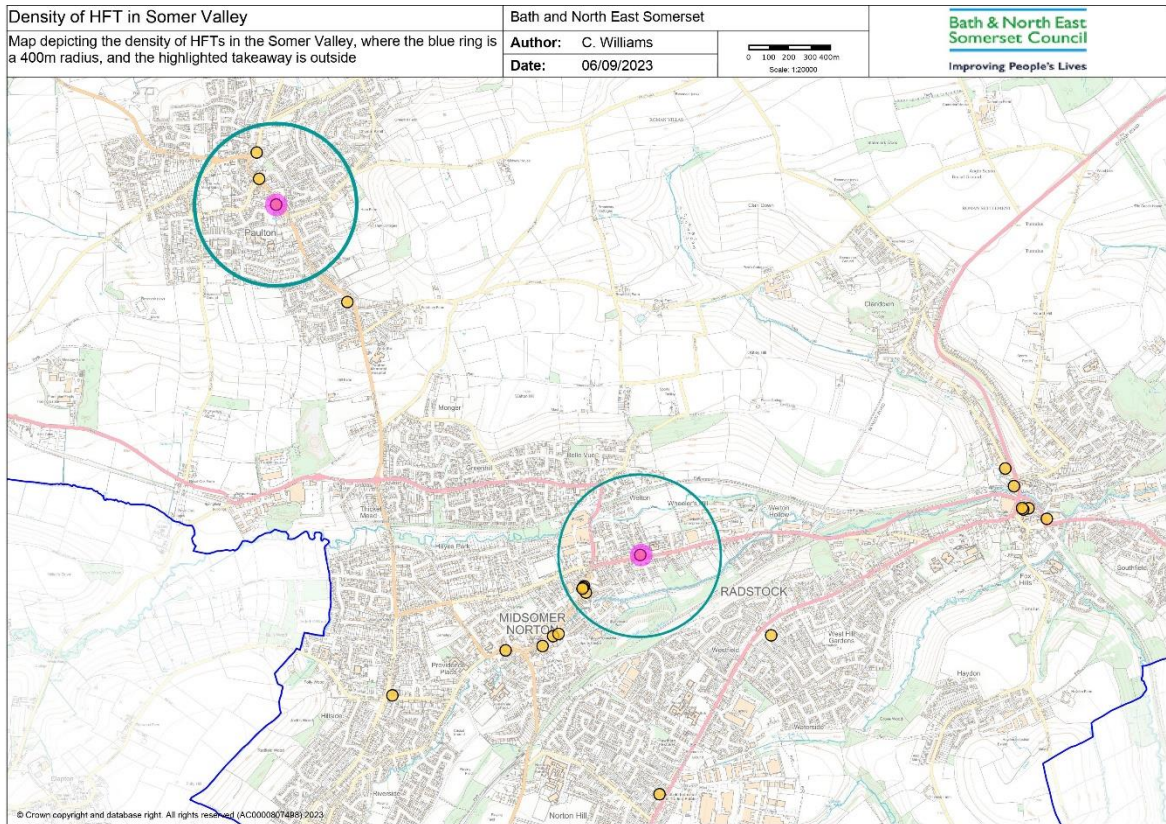
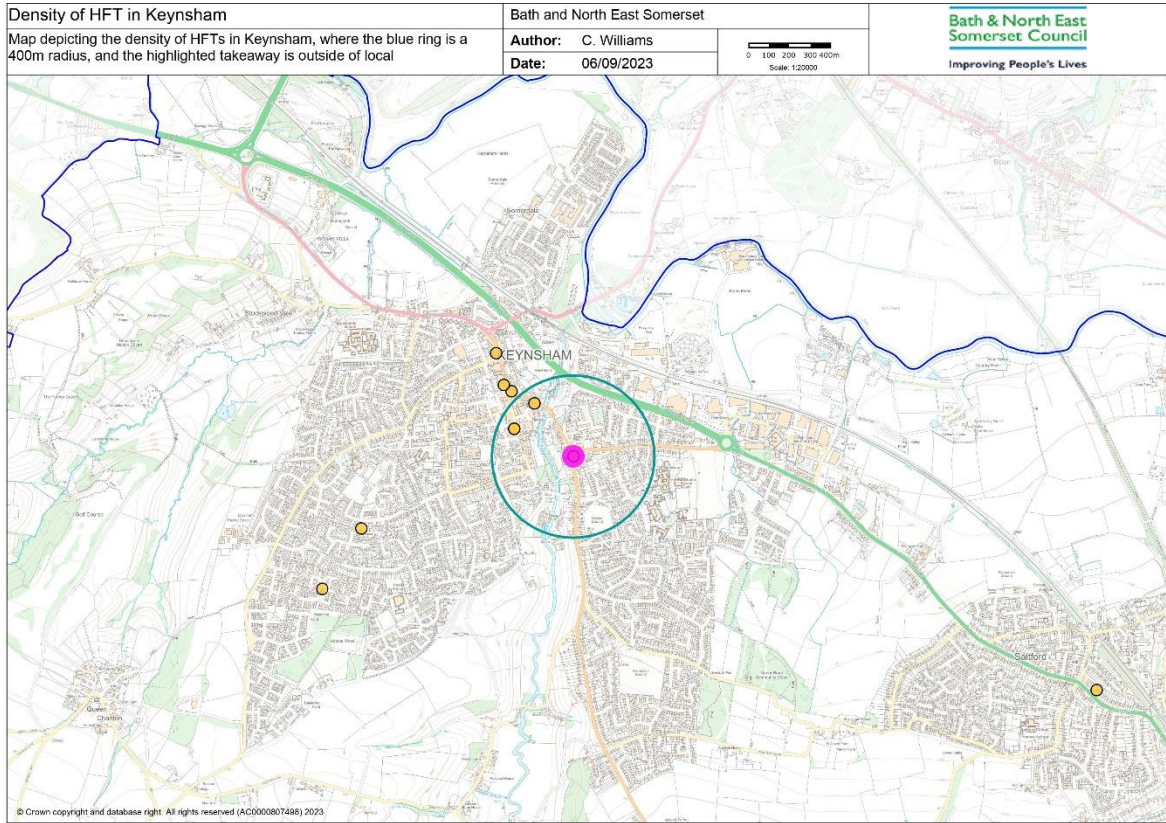
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Density

- 3.14 Of the 34 local centres in B&NES, 17 (50%) have more than 5% of units in HFT use, 10 (29%) have more than 10% of units in HFT use, and 2 (6%) have more than 20%. The local centre with the highest proportion of hot foot takeaway units (37.5%), Queens Road in Keynsham, has seen a 200% increase since 2015.
- 3.15 Outside of local centres, hot food takeaways in B&NES still tend to cluster together, leading to high densities. Of the 55 hot food takeaways outside of local centres, more than half are within 400m of at least two others of the same use class.
- 3.16 The below maps highlight takeaways outside of local centres that are within 400m of at least two other takeaways. The blue ring shows a 400m radius, whilst the pink highlighted dots are the affected takeaways.





Childhood obesity rates

- 3.17 There are 33 wards in B&NES, however 6 of these do not have a high enough sample size for the year 6 obesity rates from the National Childhood Measurement Programme to be available. Of the 27 wards with available data, only Twerton had a year 6 obesity rate higher the England average of 21.6%, though it is 60% higher, with 34.6% of year 6 pupils in Twerton being obese or very obese.
- 3.18 Policies in the Gateshead SPD, North Tyneside Local Plan and part two of the Blackpool Local Plan restrict hot food takeaways where year 6 obesity is more than 15% or reception obesity is more than 10%. Were B&NES to adopt this policy, 15 wards would not be eligible for new takeaways. Some wards with high levels of hot food takeaways, such as Kingsmead, which has 24 takeaways (1 in 4 of all HFTs in B&NES), have too small a sample size for accurate obesity data.

4 Conclusions and Recommendations

- 4.1 The B&NES Health and Wellbeing Strategy commits to using the Local Plan to reduce health inequalities, and the NPPF recognises the importance of using the planning system to enable and support health lifestyles, including access to healthier food. Further, the planning practice guidance limiting particular uses, especially locations where children congregate, specific locations high levels of obesity and health inequalities, and in areas where there's an over concentration of that use.
- 4.2 It is clear that within B&NES, there's a disproportionate concentration of takeaways within close proximity of schools. Whilst some of this may relate to the locality of schools to designated centres, more than 1 in 5 of takeaways outside of these centres are within a 5-minute walk of a school. Further, there has been a worsening of obesity in year 6 children throughout the district, which has in turn led to more extreme health inequalities. It would therefore be in direct conflict with the health and wellbeing strategy not to address this issue in planning.
- 4.3 Further, there is clear evidence of clustering of hot food takeaways, even outside of local centres. Whilst we could expect to see such clustering within local centres and could argue that local centres are a sustainable location for such uses, there's also clustering of hot food takeaway uses outside of local centres.
- 4.4 There is considerable variation in childhood obesity levels across the district, and whilst there is a correlation between childhood obesity and deprivation and hot food takeaways and deprivation, it does not always follow that the wards with the highest childhood obesity levels have higher hot food takeaway density. This which makes it more difficult to justify a blanket ban of

hot food takeaways across wards based upon childhood obesity levels only
i.e. without consideration of clustering.

- 4.5 Therefore, based on the findings of this report, it is recommended that B&NES Council adopts planning policy to A. restrict hot food takeaway uses on the basis of proximity to schools and to B. prevent high concentrations and clustering of hot food takeaways.

References

ⁱ <https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/advancing-our-health-prevention-in-the-2020s/advancing-our-health-prevention-in-the-2020s-consultation-document>

ⁱⁱ https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/831562/PHE_Strategy_2020-25.pdf

ⁱⁱⁱ <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-second-cycling-and-walking-investment-strategy/the-second-cycling-and-walking-investment-strategy-cwis2#the-strategy>

^{iv}

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/863821/PHE_Planning_healthy_weight_environments_guidance_1_.pdf

^v <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0277953622004324>

^{vi} PHE (2020) "Using the Planning system to promote healthy weight environments"

^{vii} Burgoine, T., C. Sarkar, C. Webster, and P. Monsivais, Examining the interaction of fastfood outlet exposure and income on diet and obesity: evidence from 51,361 UK Biobank participants. *International Journal of Behavioral Nutrition and Physical Activity*, 2018. 15(71): p. 1-12.

^{viii} https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/741555/Fast_Food_map.pdf

^{ix} Caraher, M. Lloyd, S., and Madelin, T., The "school foodshed": schools and fast-food outlets in a London borough. *British Food Journal*. 2012, 116, 472-493