

The 'Canny Planners' Resource Pack

The 'Canny Planners' workshop is designed for use with young people between the ages of 9 and 13. In its most abbreviated form, 'Canny Planners' can be delivered in a 2 hour timeframe, but alternatively, each of the workshop activities (i.e. the Diamond Ranking, the 'Healthy High Street' game, and the Mock Planning Committee) could all be run separately, supported by additional teaching and student enquiry to extend learning and enhance its local relevance. This pack is designed to help you deliver the activities. It contains:

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‘Canny Planners’: Aims and Objectives

The number of Hot Food Takeaways (HFTs) has grown significantly in recent years¹. Whilst the density of this HFT distribution varies across the country, Public Health England has found that their concentration coincides with some of the more deprived areas². The National Health Service has also identified that many deprived areas exhibit childhood obesity levels of twice the national average and that the gap across those levels between the most and least deprived areas is widening³. In separate research, obesity levels have been also been clearly linked to the growth of HFTs¹.

Although the relationship between obesity levels and diet are complex, their link to the planned environment is of increasing concern to Local Planning Authorities (LPAs), which are now beginning to promote environments that encourage healthier lifestyles. This has also included taking action that includes the control of HFTs. Some of the planning policy initiatives surrounding HFTs are introduced in pages 4 – 6 of this resource pack. The ‘Canny Planners’ workshop offers young people the opportunity explore the relationship between personal lifestyle choices and planning policy, in a holistic manner, using the example of the HFT industry.

Aim:

- The ‘Canny Planners’ workshop aims to promote young people’s knowledge and understanding of and involvement in the planning system whilst examining the issues relating to Hot Food Takeaways.

Objectives:

- To introduce the concept of the local built environment, and particularly the high street, as being ‘planned’.

- To allow young people to articulate their own views on what Planning should achieve in their local area.

- Through the ‘Healthy High Street’ game, to discuss and reflect on the impact that hot food takeaways can have on the environment, behaviour and lifestyles.

- Through the Mock Planning Committee, to understand the process by which planning decisions are made in relation to hot food takeaways.

- To practice justifying and articulating personal and collective opinions and listening to others’ points of view as part of a decision making process.

Overview of Planning

Planning ('town', 'urban', 'town and country' or even 'regional' planning) is a professional discipline and government function that aims to deliver good quality and sustainable environments. Planning does this through a process that promotes suitable development that meets the needs of today's society whilst also anticipating the needs of the future. The current planning system dates back to the Town and Country Planning Act of 1947⁴, but has been revised several times since then. People may have come across planning in different ways:

- By being consulted by the LPA on a neighbour's planning application for an extension or boundary wall ,or on a large development in the local area.
- By submitting a planning application for a site which is then considered by a Council's Planning Committee. The Committee is informed by the expert professional opinion of the Planning Officer which then makes the decision on the planning application. The Planning Officer's professional opinion will be informed by the planning policy for the area, by their local knowledge and by the opinions of those who have been consulted.
- By being consulted on a 'development plan' produced by the LPA which shows how the local area will be planned over the subsequent 15 year period.
- By being involved as a member of the community in the preparation of a Neighbourhood Plan (Localism Act, 2011)⁵.
- By seeing and hearing Planners in the media who work outside of government, in consultancies and campaign/ pressure groups, or in research organisations.

Traditionally, it has been difficult for children and young people to voice their opinions in plans or proposed developments for their area. No specific provision is made for their opinion to be heard, despite Article 12 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989) which establishes their right to express a view in matters that affect them⁶.

The 'Canny Planners' workshop offers the potential for young people to learn about the planning process, allowing them an opportunity to create, develop and articulate their points of view on those environmental matters that affect them.

Planning for Healthy High Streets

The Town Planning system in England aims to promote healthy environments that encourage people to lead healthy lifestyles. Some key principles are set out in the National Planning Policy Framework , 2019, where it states in Section 8, that the Government will “enable and support healthy lifestyles, especially where this would address identified local health and well-being 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”⁷.

Hot food takeaways normally require planning permission because they involve a ‘Change of Use’ (see also Page 5)⁸. In the Planning Policy Guidance note, “ Healthy and Safe Communities” (revised 2019), Central Government advises that LPAs and those applying for planning permission for such uses should have regard to their proximity to where children play or go to school; where there is local poor health, deprivation or high levels of obesity; where they may create possible clustering together of such uses, create noise and smells; and where there would be a likely impact from litter and traffic ⁹.

Other organisations that promote healthier lifestyles through careful planning of the environment include Public Health England ¹⁰and the National Health Service¹¹. Many LPAs are considering how policy at local level can help to promote healthier environments and lifestyles for its residents. In addition ,there is a well recognised growing academic body that continues to research the impact of diet on health and life expectancy, which will in turn inform future national and local policy.



Source: Public Health England, 2018

Planning and Hot Food Takeaways

1. How Decisions are made on Planning Applications

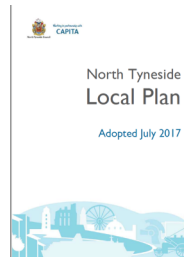
Many LPAs have now introduced planning policies that guide Developers, Planners and Planning Committees on where new HFTs will be considered acceptable in their local areas. These policies discuss and assess locations such as larger shopping centres (in towns and cities), neighbourhood centres and small parades of shops, setting out the guidelines for whether new HFT applications should be approved or refused in those places. The issues which these policies address, and around which they are formulated, go on to guide the LPA's decision on the planning application. They also draw on the guidance given in national planning policy, as explained on Page 4. In addition to the influence of planning policy, the LPA will normally consult local residents on any new HFT planning application.

If there are HFTs already in the location, then the additional affect of a new outlet will need to be considered. If the application for the new HFT is refused by the Planning Committee, the applicant/ developer can appeal to the Planning Inspectorate against the decision. The decision may be overturned on appeal, so the LPA must make sure that it has used robust and defensible reasons for refusing planning permission in the first instance. Issues such as increased competition for existing business or a preference for the sale of a certain types of food are not considered to be 'material considerations' in determining a planning application (Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act, 2004, 38(6))¹².

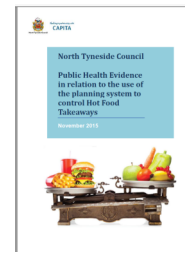
The use of an outlet as a HFT is what is known as a 'Class A5' use, which is different to a shop for the sale of cold food 'for consumption off the premises' (Class A1, 'Shops'); and also different to the sale of food and drink 'for consumption on the premises' (Class A3, 'Restaurants and cafes'); and to 'drinking establishments' (Class A4) (The Use Class Order 1987, as amended)⁸. If a business owner wishes to change the nature of their sales from those that involve cold food for consumption away from the premises to consumption of hot food away from the premises, this is known as a 'Change of Use' planning application.

2. Examples of Hot Food Takeaway Planning Policy

Local planning policies for HFTs may be included in the Local Plan for the area, such as in the case of North Tyneside Council's Policy DM3.7 (2017)¹³. This policy recognises the detrimental effect that HFTs can have on local shopping centres and on people's health. The policy also supports the LPA's wider aim of reducing obesity and changing eating habits to those that are more healthy. This policy is supported by a detailed evidence base document that explains the context for the policy¹⁴.



Source: North Tyneside Council , 2017



Source: North Tyneside Council , 2015

Newcastle and Gateshead LPAs have produced a joint strategic level plan (2015)¹⁵ as well as their own separate Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs) on HFTs^{16,17}. The strategic level plan considers the issue of obesity in relation to wider planning issues for communities and transport¹⁵. Gateshead's policy on HFTs in its 2015 SPD, specifically addresses its aim to reduce Year 6 obesity levels to less than 10% by 2025 (page 3)¹⁷.

Other examples of SPDs for Hot Food Takeaways include Leeds (2019)¹⁸ and the older, 'pioneering' examples in London, including Waltham Forest (2009)¹⁹ and Barking and Dagenham (2010)²⁰, both of which addressed the concerns of allowing new HFTs close to where children and young people gathered, by introducing a HFT exclusion zones of 400 metre radius from schools.

There is now an increasing number of local policy documents being produced by England's LPAs, written with the aim of controlling the spread and location of HFTs. The Scottish and Welsh planning systems are beginning to take similar steps as they experience rising numbers of HFTs and obesity levels (especially in children and young people).

Healthy and Unhealthy Eating and Lifestyles

The promotion of healthy eating and an increase in regular activity and exercise has recently become the focus of health and community based strategies. Whilst organisations such as the National Health Service^{11,21,22} and Public Health England² offer guidance relating to diet and exercise, national planning policy promotes interventions that allow communities to live healthier lifestyles through better designed high streets and other urban development^{7,9,10}.

The 'Canny Planners' activities and workshop aim to highlight the positive link between the planned environment and promoting a healthy lifestyle. The workshop creates a space for a discussion around personal and collective responsibility for healthy eating and active lifestyles. It also allows young people to consider the decisions and purchases that they make when visiting their high street, in a broader, health - related context.

During the piloting of the 'Canny Planners' workshop it has been useful to give illustrative examples of the calorific content of some takeaway meals and compare these with those of some typical home cooked meals^{11, 21}. Pilot workshops have also involved discussions centred around how we can burn, say 500 calories, by undertaking short bursts of activity²². This information has helped to enforce the notion that maintaining a healthy lifestyle involves taking personal and collective responsibility and making lifestyle choices.

In the pilot workshops, we have also taken time to explore why having a healthy lifestyle is important. The young people have offered suggestions of 'being able to do fun things', 'being able to keep active when older', 'not having to go to the doctor as often' and 'living longer' as being potential and desirable benefits, as they see them. This longitudinal perspective, as an outcome for the workshop, could be transformative to young people's thinking and decision making.

Discussing lifestyle issues within the context of the local environment prepares the young people for their planning committee role play as they consider a possible new HFT outlet on their local high street. Page 13 offers some prompts for the types of arguments that might be considered in relation to any new HFT.

Workshop Activity One

Diamond Ranking (1)

This introductory activity gives an insight to the concept of places being planned.

Activity Aim: To discuss within a group of young people, the things that would be most important to them if they were planning the local neighbourhood in which they live. This might be the area around the school or community centre, the town centre area, or a particular local high street.

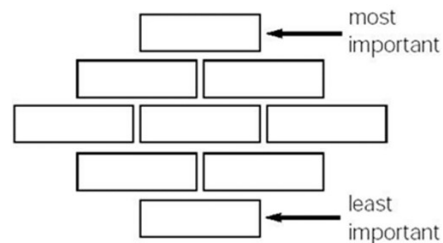
What to do: Use the 9 photographs from Page 9, enlarge, print and cut them into individual images. They would work as black and white images but you may wish to source your own.

Working in small groups of 4–6 young people, ask the class to create a diamond pattern from the images. They must agree which aspect of the planned town is the most important, which is the next, those in the middle, then those that are least important at the bottom of the diamond. When they have decided which photographs should go where on the diamond, the young people should stick them down on a large piece of paper and then write notes to explain the reasons for their decisions.

Ask the young people to discuss what criteria they used to decide how the images should be ranked. Why have they chosen that image to go to the top of the diamond? Did they use the same criteria for selecting the photos to place at the bottom of the diamond?

When you have finished:

Based on these criteria, ask the young people to write a 'vision' for the future of their local area? What sort of place do they want their neighbourhood to be like, in say 15 years' time? What do they want the neighbourhood to be known for and what values will it reflect?



Workshop Activity One

Diamond Ranking (2): Photographs

Images Source: Authors Own



Good quality houses



Parks and open spaces



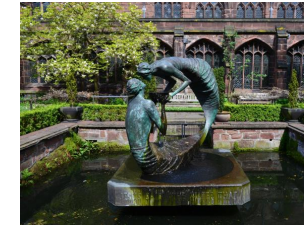
Local shops



Community facilities



Medical services



Public art



Public transport



Hot food takeaways



Cycle lanes

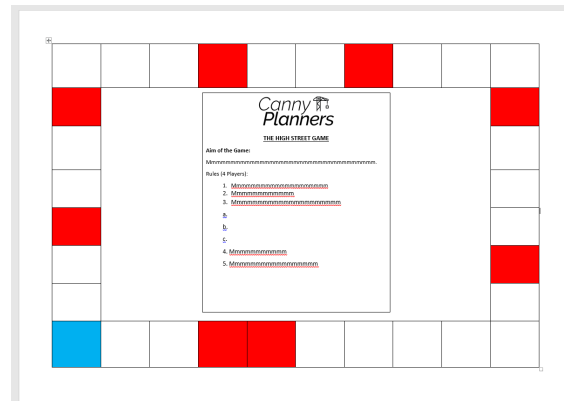
This sample of images indicates the range of urban components that the activity might include. Either use these examples to photocopy (colour copies are not essential) and enlarge, or source alternative images. Printing them at postcard size works well for group work exercises. You could provide eight images and ask the young people to choose their ninth, or just provide nine for the young people to work with.

Workshop Activity Two

The Healthy High Street Game (1)

This game has been devised to allow young people to replicate the experience of visiting a local high street.

Activity Aim: Working in groups of 4–6, the young people complete a circuit of the High Street, with the winner of the game being the person to have the least litter at the end.



Indicative figure of Healthy High Street game. Source: YES Planning students, Newcastle University

What to do:

A pdf copy of the copyrighted game is available from: teresa.strachan@newcastle.ac.uk

You will also need the dice, some counters and a 'Promise Card', that also doubles as a score card (see Page 11).

Cut up small squares of coloured card to create **Calories** (each calorie card should count for 500 calories for simplicity) and **Litter** penalties within the board game. Penalty cards can be picked up when players land on a square containing an instruction. Full instructions are given on the board.

When you have finished:

Ask the young people to total up the Calorie and Litter scores on their Promise Cards and ask the young people to take these home to discuss with their family.

Workshop Activity Two

The Healthy High Street Game (2): Promise Card



The High Street Game – my Promise card – what this means for me!

My Name:

NOW <i>(after the classroom High Street game)</i>		FUTURE <i>(my promise for the changes I will make)</i>
Litter	How many pieces of litter did you collect by the end of the game? Total:	What will you do about your takeaway litter in the future? I promise to:
Calories	How many calories did you collect from your visits to the different takeaways in the game? Remember that each card is 500 calories. Total:	What action can you take to make a healthy change to your lifestyle? <i>(for example, try a more balance diet, do more energetic exercise, or limit the number of takeaways you have each week?)</i> I promise to:
How has this game changed the way in which you think about: 1. The High Street 2. Hot Food Takeaways		1. 2.

Workshop Activity Three

The Mock Planning Committee (1)

This is the main activity within the workshop, where views are formulated and aired, in response to a fictitious proposal for a new hot food takeaway. This page gives you an overview of what is involved.

Activity Aim: To create a focused discussion around the advantages and disadvantages of a new HFT for the local high street.

What to do: Obtain an image of what the proposed HFT shop might look like. This could be created in Photoshop, or more simply by using an existing image of a HFT and then pasting it alongside an existing view of the local high street.

On the basis of running 1 Committee per class, you will need the following roles:

1 Chair Person **A**; an even number of Councillors so that the voting gives a clear decision and the Chair has a casting vote (say 4)**B**; 1 Planning Officer **C**; 1 Traffic Engineer **D**;
1 Developer **E**; a range of interest groups who want to make comments on the proposed HFT **P**.

Set up the room with a 'top table' where the committee members will sit and where everyone can see and hear the committee. These seats/ roles should **not be filled until after the first discussion exercise**.

D	C	B	A	B	B	B
Committee 'Top Table'						

Public Gallery				
E	P	P	P	P

Before allocating the roles, split the larger class into groups. Those groups should then appoint a scribe who will write a list of 'good' and 'bad' points about the proposed new HFT, reflecting the contents of the group discussion. See Page 13 for opinion suggestions. This starts to get some discussion going whilst you are thinking about suitable candidates for the committee roles. Some young people can feel daunted by taking on a role, even in a mock committee situation. Others will rise to this challenge. An individual who is comfortable speaking to the class, who can keep a running order and exercises fairness with some self - composure, will make a good Chair person. Allocate roles to the class in which ever way works best and hand out Pages, 14—17 to help them focus on the task.

When you have finished: Remind the young people that this is a fictitious planning application and that it is not really being proposed.

Mock Planning Committee (2): 'Good' and 'Bad'

These prompts are actual young people's examples of what might be the 'good' and 'bad' effects of a new hot food takeaway in their local high street. These are not meant to be exhaustive, but only to act as a starting point. It is better to only use these when the young people can't think of any ideas of their own, which is very unlikely to happen.

Encourage the group to fully explain fully 'why?' for each point made. You could also ask them to try to think of a counter argument to each point raised, so that they learn to strengthen their arguments in case they are challenged in the committee.

Good aspects of having a new HFT

- You can buy hot things to eat close to school/ home.
- For people who cannot cook
- You can meet up with friends there
- You can try some new food
- There is a good choice of food
- New jobs for people
- Good use of a vacant unit
- It could make the area look smart
- Can save on effort of cooking

Bad aspects of having a new HFT

- Not good for people who have difficulty walking, although deliveries might be available
- Litter could be dropped making it untidy
- Rats and birds picking up dropped food and litter
- Can make you unhealthy
- It makes the area smelly
- Late night noise and disturbance
- Extra traffic and parking

Mock Planning Committee (3): Interest Groups

Your role as part of an Interest Group

As a member of an interest group you will discuss and develop a group opinion about the planning application for the new takeaway outlet. You need to think about the role that you are in and what their likely opinions would be. These may, or may not, be the same as your real personal opinions, so you have to be sure that you are truly representing the Interest Group for the area around where the application is being considered. Try to put your self in the shoes of others when imagining what their opinions would be. The Chair Person will ask a spokesperson to explain the group's views to the Committee.

The Interest Groups

- **Parents of children at a local school**
- **Local elderly people in a residential home**
- **Local young people from the school** (primary or secondary)
- **Local businesses**

The Main Issues for the Interest Groups to consider

Use these issues only as prompts or a guide for discussion:

- How do you think the new takeaway will affect the area immediately around the school and around the new hft outlet, the school and around your home?
- What environmental issues are important to you, to other members of your family, to other residents, to businesses etc?
- Would the outlet be good for the area, the community as a whole, and for their health?
- What sort of image will it create of the area?
- Would there be any potential issues of road safety?
- To what extent would the outlet affect younger or older children and different age groups?
- Will it change people's behaviour in the street (daytime and evening) and people's lifestyles?
- Have you got any questions to ask the committee, who will in turn ask the Developer?

Mock Planning Committee (4): Professional Officers

The Planning Officer

Your role is to weigh up the advantages and disadvantages of the planning application, putting the interests of the local community first and thinking longer term about the sort of place you are helping to shape for the future. You may also have relevant planning policies (rules) that will influence how you consider the application. Use your skills and the list of questions below to help you make that assessment.

You describe the planning application to the Committee (where the outlet will be, what it will look like, etc). You then give a professional opinion of whether you think the planning consent should be approved or refused and give clear reasons why. You then advise the committee that in your professional opinion planning permission should be 'approved' or 'refused'. Explain why you have come to this recommendation. You do not vote on the application.

The Traffic Engineer

Your role is to weigh up the planning application and its affect on traffic safety, in the interest of the wider community, pedestrians, cyclists, public transport and road users. Use your skills and the list of questions below to help you make that assessment. You then advise the Planning Committee whether or not you have any objections to the planning application. You do not vote on the application.

Issues for the Planner and the Traffic Engineer to consider:

- where the outlet will be located, how it will look, the number of jobs it will create.
- the times of the day and the days of the week that it will open.
- if there are other takeaways in the area and the additional effect of this new one.
- the likely effect of the takeaway on noise levels from customers and delivery vehicles to and from the outlet.
- how people enjoy and perceive the local area, especially if they are residents, business people or visitors.
- specific traffic safety issues such as impact on parking space, pedestrian safety, traffic levels.

Mock Planning Committee (5): The Councillors. The Developer

The Councillors

You will represent the views and concerns of local people at the Planning Committee because they have voted for you to be their representative within the Council. You may also have your own interests and knowledge about certain issues which you will use to ask questions about the planning application. Before you come to vote on the application, the Committee Chair Person will ask you if you wish to raise any points about the new takeaway. You will also have the opportunity to ask the Developer of the new takeaway outlet any questions that you think would be helpful to find out more about what they have in mind and to address the concerns of the Interest Groups. You have a responsibility to your voters/ community to find out as much as possible before the Committee makes its decision on the application. Use the pointers below to help you formulate your thoughts.

The Developer

The Planning Committee will hear about the application that you have made from the Planning Officer. The Councillors and Interest Groups may ask you questions about the application and the proposed takeaway. You need to be prepared with the answers to give you the best chance of the Planning Committee granting you planning permission when they vote. Make some notes in case they ask you to give an explanation. Use these pointers to help you formulate your thoughts.

- what the new takeaway will look like?
- how many jobs will be provided?
- how long it will stay open until in the evening?
- its effect on the local area.
- the impact on traffic, parking, pedestrian safety.
- how litter from customers will be managed.
- how cooking smells will be reduced.

Mock Planning Committee (6): Order of events

As the Chair Person of the Planning Committee, you have two important roles: - to keep order during the committee and to lead the committee to making their decision. The following is what you will need to say. You can add extra words and comments, if you wish, as you are in charge!

1. Welcome everyone to this special meeting of the Planning Committee, which is going to consider a planning application for a new hot food takeaway in the area.
2. Ask different people to speak in order and to give their views:
 - Planning Officer** – they will present the details of the application and their professional opinion about the proposed new takeaway.
 - Traffic Engineer** – presents their professional opinion about the effect of the proposed takeaway on traffic issues.
 - Local **Interest Groups** who have opinions both for and against the proposed takeaway.
 - **Parents of children at a local school**
 - **Local elderly people in a residential home**
 - **Local young people**
 - **Local businesses**
 - Councillors** who will explain their opinion on the proposed new takeaway.
3. Invite the Councillors to ask the Developer questions so that they can form an opinion about the application.
4. When everyone (including you as the Chair Person) has had an opportunity to speak, you will ask the Councillors to vote by raising their hands and saying:
Firstly, who would like to **approve** planning permission? (*count the number of votes*)
Secondly, who would like to **refuse** planning permission? (*count the number of votes*).
5. You will announce the result of the vote (that planning permission has either been **granted or refused**) by taking the biggest score from the Councillors' voting. If the application has been refused, you then need to give the reasons why. Ask your Planning Committee to give these reasons. The Planning officer and Traffic Engineer can also help in this exercise.
6. Thank everyone for attending and declare the committee 'closed'.

Typical Lesson Plan for 2 hour Workshop

Timings	Activity	Resources
10 mins	<p>Introductions to the workshop, topic and any helpers</p> <p>What do we think planning is about?</p>	<p>Whiteboard, pens</p> <p>Screen, PC, Projector, power point for information.</p>
20 mins	<p>Activity 1: Diamond Ranking</p> <p>If you were planning your local area, what sort of services and facilities would be important to you? Cut printed images, stick down and annotate.</p>	<p>9 Photos per group</p> <p>Scissors</p> <p>Glue sticks</p> <p>Large blank paper</p>
20 mins	<p>Activity 2:</p> <p>Healthy High Street Board Game</p>	<p>Board Game</p> <p>Counters, Dice,</p> <p>Cards for Calories and Litter</p> <p>Promise Cards</p>
30 mins	<p>Activity 3:</p> <p>Preparation for Planning Committee. Considering issues and roles</p>	<p>Cue cards with prompts</p> <p>Room arranged with 'top table'</p>
40 mins	<p>Activity 3:</p> <p>The Planning Committee. Led by the Chair of the Committee</p>	<p>Chair Person's 'order of events'</p> <p>Photo of the proposed takeaway.</p>

Developing these Resources

These cards offer a starting point in supporting you to run the 'Canny Planners' workshop. There are many ways to extend the learning from each of the workshop activities and several resources that can be accessed to support this. Here are some ideas to explore with your young people:

- Develop the diamond ranking exercise to discuss what makes a 'healthy', or 'successful' or 'young people-friendly' neighbourhood. Ask them to list the criteria that they have used. Ask them to write a vision for their area for 15 years time (as planners would do when writing planning policies).
- Visit your local high street to survey how many HFTs there are. What are the potential environmental and social effects of these HFTs?
- Look on your local authority's website to find planning policy documents relating to HFTs, such as a Supplementary Planning Document. What do these say about controlling HFTs in your area?
- Search on your local authority's website planning application register for recent HFTs planning applications. Were they approved or refused? If they were refused, what reasons were given? In the Planning Committee agendas, read the Planning Officer's report relating to the application.
- Write to the local Planning Committee to make comments on a real or fictitious HFT planning application. Is the new outlet a good or bad idea? Justify your points of view.
- Run a competition to design a healthy high street for your local area.

Your help with our continuing research

One of the outputs from the pilot phase of the 'Canny Planners' project has been a insight into the lifestyles that govern young people's takeaway eating habits. This is helping us to understand the socio-economic context within which young people make their lifestyles choices and is a consideration when thinking about future health and planning policy. If you could scan or photograph a copy of the 'good' and 'bad' comments then we can add this to our database of evidence. We confirm that the data collected will be anonymous and no school or participant will be identified in any future publication. Thank you for participating in this workshop! **Please email any outputs to: teresa.strachan@newcastle.ac.uk**

References

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9. <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/health-and-wellbeing>
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