

**HEALTH AND WELLBEING BOARD: 26<sup>th</sup> SEPTEMBER 2019****REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC HEALTH****ACTIVE DESIGN IN NEW COUNTY HOUSING DEVELOPMENTS****Purpose of report**

1. The purpose of this report is to update the Board on progress made to incorporate active design principles into new housing developments in Leicestershire.

**Link to the local Health and Care System**

2. This report outlines progress made by Leicestershire County Council to use Health Impact Assessment (HIA) and a Health in All Policies (HiAP) approach to influence the design of major developments, policies and programmes. The report specifically focusses on how the Authority is progressing in ensuring that new housing developments facilitate increases in physical activity by good design, and how it can ensure active travel is the default option for moving both within and to and from new developments. Creating environments that enable and support healthy behaviours contributes to the all the following strategies and plans.

- a. The six pillars of intervention*
- b. The Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy;*
- c. Progress against the Integration Agenda*
- d. The Better Care Fund;*
- e. Better Care Together workstream(s);*
- f. The Sustainability and Transformation Plan;*

**Recommendation**

3. It is recommended that the Board notes the report and supports the Council's approach to help create healthy communities.

**Policy Framework and Previous Decisions**

4. Working to improve the wider determinants of health is one of the key objectives of the Health and Wellbeing Board's strategy.

**Background**

5. Almost everything shapes the populations health – where they work, live and play and the social and economic conditions around them make a major contribution to their health and wellbeing. Most studies agree that the contribution of health care, although important, is responsible for less than half of a person's health. The biggest contributor is the wide bundle of factors often referred to as 'the wider determinants of health', those factors that are not health care, behaviours or genetics.

6. Creating healthy places is an essential component of the County Council's focus on prevention. Healthy places can enable people to make healthy choices; promote physical activity and active travel; provide access to green spaces, healthy food and warm homes.
7. More specifically walking and cycling are good for physical and mental health. Switching more journeys to active travel will improve health, quality of life and the environment, and local productivity, while at the same time reducing costs to the public purse. These are substantial 'win-wins' that benefit individual people and the community as a whole.
8. PHE guidance (Public Health England. Working Together to Promote Active Travel: A briefing for local authorities. 2016) shows that:
  - physical inactivity directly contributes to 1 in 6 deaths in the UK and costs £7.4 billion a year to business and wider society
  - the growth in road transport has been a major factor in reducing levels of physical activity and increasing obesity
  - building walking or cycling into daily routines are the most effective ways to increase physical activity
  - short car trips (under 5 miles) are a prime area for switching to active travel and to public transport
  - health-promoting transport systems are pro-business and support economic prosperity. They enable optimal travel to work with less congestion, collisions, pollution, and they support a healthier workforce
9. In 2017 Leicestershire County Council along with Leicestershire and Rutland Sport and Hinckley and Bosworth Borough Council were selected to take part in a series of workshops with the Design Council and the Local Government Association, to embed active design principles into the design of a new housing development to the east of Hinckley. The lessons learnt from this have been incorporated into a more systematic use of HIAs across the County (see the Appendix for the developed checklist).
10. A HIA is a systematic, objective and practical way of assessing both the potential positive and negative impacts of a proposal on health and well-being and suggests ways in which opportunities for health gain can be maximized and risks to health minimised. HIA looks at health in its broadest sense, using the wider determinants of health as a framework. Importantly, HIA highlights the uneven way in which health impacts may be distributed across a population and seeks to address existing health inequalities and inequities as well as avoid the creation of new ones. HIA is a tool to implement a HIAP approach. It is not an end in itself but is a tool to support decision making – and the process of gathering evidence, consulting with stakeholders and developing and implementing recommendations is as important as the final document.
11. Over the last 5 years the Public Health Department has undertaken a number of HIAs in order to pilot an approach to HIA / HIAP across Leicestershire. These included:

**i) Lubbethorpe**

A desk based HIA for the proposed major development in Blaby District for over 10,000 people with a variety of homes, schools, shops, places to work, community facilities and parks and natural green spaces was undertaken with support from the New Lubbethorpe Delivery Group and Blaby District Council. Key evidence based recommendations were made covering:

- road safety and active travel;
- street scene development;
- sustainability of residential units including community energy; and
- use of buildings and land for community develop projects.

The recommendations are being considered by the Lubbethorpe Executive Board for inclusion into the final plans.

## ii) Melton Borough Council Local Plan

The emerging Options (draft plan) provided an opportunity to undertake a HIA. The Local Plan includes the development of at least 6,125 homes and 51 hectares of employment land between 2011-2036. The focus for the HIA was on two new large scale sustainable neighbourhoods – ‘Melton North’ and ‘Melton South’ urban extensions.

The HIA included policy analysis, literature/evidence review, analysis of health needs and inequalities, and a stakeholder engagement event with members of the Local Plan reference group. Recommendations cover a number of policy areas including:

- minimising the disruption, anxiety and uncertainty – especially during construction phases;
- fostering and enabling community cohesion and social networks
- provision of sufficient and appropriate housing types,
- provision of allotments, community gardens and school gardens,
- accessibility and affordability of sports facilities;
- prioritising active transport and including 20mph zones.

The recommendations will now be considered alongside all other formal consultation responses in the development of the final plan.

## iii) North West Leicestershire Housing Strategy 2016 - 2021

This desk based/ rapid HIA also included community engagement as well as evidence appraisal, community profiles gaps analysis and recommendations. The latter covered:

- Supply – holistic delivery of housing; lifetime homes; Training skills and employment.
- Standards – affordable warmth; focus on private rented sector; build for life
- Support – energy advice; homelessness; community development and social networks.

As well as the opportunity to use HIA/HIAP for major strategies, plans and developments, this approach can also be used to enhance major procurements through applying these principles to social value policies.

12. The latest development to use this approach will be the land east of Lutterworth owned by the County Council. There is an opportunity to create an exemplar in active design, using the latest evidence, technologies and methodologies to create a healthy, prosperous and sustainable community.
13. By building the Council’s expertise and partnership working in this field it has been requested by the City and County Strategic Growth Plan Board to develop a Healthy Communities Design Guide. This has the potential to form a framework that would be

adopted by Leicester City, Leicestershire County Council and seven Districts Councils, and inform and influence the all major housing and infrastructure developments and programmes over the next few decades.

### **Proposals/Options**

14. Leicestershire County Council working with Leicester-Shire and Rutland Sport and all key stakeholders will continue to develop this approach to creating active and healthy communities. The Health and Wellbeing Boar is asked to endorse and support this approach.

### **Officer to Contact**

Mike Sandys  
Director of Public Health  
0116 305 4239  
[Mike.sandys@leics.gov.uk](mailto:Mike.sandys@leics.gov.uk)

Rob Howard  
Consultant in Public Health  
Rob.Howard@leics.gov.uk

### **Relevant Impact Assessments**

#### **Equality and Human Rights Implications**

The process of Health Impact Assessment considers the likely impact on people of infrastructure developments, including consideration of the impact on equality and diversity.

### **Appendix**

HIA checklist