

10 July 2019



## Healthy town approach

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### Purpose of the Report

- 1 This report is an update on the healthy town approach as part of the consideration of the Chester Le Street Masterplan.

### Executive summary

- 2 Colleagues across Durham County Council have utilised the Place Standard to allow for consideration of health outcomes as part of the Chester Le Street Masterplan process.
- 3 The Place Standard provided a structured way to assess the local area. Following the assessment a number of recommendations have been suggested to consider as part of the masterplan process, which could have a beneficial impact upon the health of residents and the perception of their place.
- 4 Further consideration could be given to the use of this tool as part of the masterplan process as a mechanism to connect the community/people with the aspects of their place which will promote good health.

### Background

- 5 The Chester Le Street Masterplan sets out for consultation a vision, series of objectives and an actions framework to shape the future development of Chester-le-Street Town Centre.
- 6 A range of interests are reflected in the objectives of the Masterplan and a similarly diverse range of parties will be required to help deliver the vision and objectives. It is anticipated that the council along with partners, agencies and other stakeholders will continue to provide the links with local communities throughout the delivery of actions.
- 7 Colleagues across Durham County Council have considered the Healthy Place Standard tool as a mechanism to help fulfil the

Masterplan's vision and incorporate health outcomes for the community as a key aspect of the process.

- 8 The public health strategic plan is ambitious and places much emphasis on working throughout Durham County Council (DCC) and embedding public health into all aspects of local authority delivery. It highlights what can be achieved through the collective efforts of all working to prevent the escalation of need within the context of the places in which families live, work and socialise.



## Place, people and health

- 9 The linkages between health and the built and natural environment have long been established and the role of the environment in shaping the social, economic and environmental circumstances that determine health is increasingly recognised and understood. An ever-increasing body of research indicates that the environment in which we live is inextricably linked to our health across the life course.
- 10 Neighbourhoods are places where people live, work, and play and have a sense of belonging. The design of a neighbourhood can contribute to the health and well-being of the people living there. Several aspects of neighbourhood design (walkability and mixed land use) can also maximise opportunities for social engagement and active travel. Neighbourhood design can impact on our day-to-day decisions and therefore have a significant role in shaping our behaviours. Other positive aspects of a neighbourhood are: feelings of safety, having places to meet people, a sense of belonging and a

sense of control and thriving communities. These community/people aspects of a place are important health promoting components.

- 11 The benefits of reducing health inequalities are economic as well as social. The cost of health inequalities can be measured in both human terms – lost years of life and active life, and in economic terms – the cost to the economy of additional illness. By integrating the planning, transport, housing, environmental and health systems, collective efforts can be work to address the social determinants of health in each locality.
- 12 Efforts are underway in County Durham to embed an approach to wellbeing. There are many definitions of wellbeing but in short it can be described as '*how we are doing*', and '*how satisfied we are with our lives*'. This approach has 'people and place' at its heart. Working with communities, building on the assets of those communities, and fostering the resilience and empowerment of those communities through the support offered to everyone, and importantly to those who are most vulnerable.

### **The Place Standard**

- 13 The purpose of the Place Standard is to maximize the potential of the physical and social environment to support health, wellbeing and a high quality of life. In order to achieve this, it provides a framework for:
  - evaluation and improvement of new and existing places;
  - structured conversations through partners which can work together to deliver high quality places;
  - maximization of the contribution of place to reducing health inequalities; and
  - Consideration of social aspects of place alongside physical infrastructure.
- 14 One of the Place Standard's strengths is that it enables different groups to come together and to cooperate in order to make a balanced assessment of a place.
- 15 Within Durham County Council colleagues from spatial policy, regeneration, traffic, culture and sport, Area Action Partnerships, Assets and public health worked together to consider the health promoting aspects of Chester Le Street. The group considered the strengths of the place and areas of possible improvement.

- 16 The Place Standard can help integrate local community knowledge with the knowledge and skills of a wide range of professionals. Community members, businesses and organisations can become active partners with the local authority and developers in the improvement of places with wider benefits for all. In the context of this assessment, comments made as part of the consultation on the Masterplan were apportioned to the Place Standard themes.

## The Place Standard Questions

- 17 The tool asks a number of questions, each with additional criteria, prompts and sub questions in order to generate a considered response with regards the question.

Theme	Question
Moving around	Can I easily walk and cycle around using good quality routes?
Public transport	Does public transport meet my needs?
Traffic and parking	Do traffic and parking arrangements allow people to move around safely and meet the community's needs?
Streets and spaces	Do buildings, streets and public spaces create an attractive place that is easy to get around?
Natural and space	Can I regularly experience good quality natural space?
Play and recreation	Do I have access to a range of spaces and opportunities for play and recreation?
Work and local economy	Is there an active local economy and the opportunity to access good quality work?
Housing and community	Does housing support the needs of the community and contribute to a positive environment?
Social interaction	Is there a range of spaces and opportunities to meet people?
Identity and belonging	Does this place have a positive identity and do I feel I belong?
Feeling safe	Do I feel safe?
Care and maintenance	Are buildings and spaces well cared for?
Influence and sense of control	Do I feel able to participate in decisions and help change things for the better?

## The process

- 18 The group held two workshops to review the Place Standard against Chester Le Street. All group members had a detailed working knowledge of Chester Le Street and the areas of focus with the Masterplan. The first workshop shared the principles and evidence relating to health and place, and the overall picture of health (taken from Durham Insight) in County Durham to ensure that everyone had a similar level of understanding.
- 19 The group split in two, and each assessed Chester Le Street against each of the 14 questions. Each question was accompanied with the evidence relating to that aspect of 'place' and how it impacts upon health.
- 20 The second workshop brought the group together to review their assessment feedback. This allowed for further reflection on the agenda. The group then sought to agree the 'score' of the place. The collective agreement ensured that all professional views were considered.
- 21 Following this, the public representations were included and assessed against the initial group feedback to identify whether it was an appropriate reflection of the place.
- 22 The health profile of the local area was considered as part of this approach.
- 23 The feedback and scores were entered into the Place Standard, and the attached report was created (appendix 2).

## Place Standard Recommendations

- 24 A number of high level recommendations were made. These could be considered as part of the masterplan or provide an indication as to a possible prioritisation exercise.

Recommendation	Comment
Cycling – efforts could be made to improve connectivity through the town and consider the entry and exit points. Improve bike storage throughout.	<p>The defined Sustainable Transport Zones 1 and 2 recognise opportunities to improve pedestrian and cycling accessibility.</p> <p>The Masterplan notes project activity will be undertaken in respect of:</p>

	<p>Small schemes to improve the facilities for the walking and cycling network which will be undertaken in the next three years (including signage, crossing, minor improvements and surfacing works)</p> <p>Free cycle parking offered to all businesses, organisations and community groups who have staff or visitors who cycle to their property through social enterprise ParkThatBike.</p>
<p>The park and town centre – enhance the connectivity and increase usage between them both. Ensure it is accessible to all.</p>	<p>The defined Sustainable Transport Zones 1 and 2 note that</p> <p>The Masterplan recognises that the Riverside Park area of the town, including the Emirates Cricket Stadium are important visitor areas, attracting significant numbers of visitors to the town. The Riverside Park area provides amenity open space which can support play and recreation opportunities. The Masterplan seeks to develop these linkages further and to improve the accessibility between the town and Riverside Park for pedestrian and cyclists. There are currently two locations, one being a bridge crossing and the other being an underpass. It is hoped that through improving these access routes and quality of environment to entrance points to the town that footfall can be improved through linked visits.</p> <p>The Masterplan identifies opportunities in respect of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improve pedestrian and cycling accessibility.</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improve the appearance and quality of arrival into the town centre.</li> <li>• Increase footfall from leisure and recreation related activities to town centre.</li> <li>• Improve environmental quality.</li> </ul> <p>These opportunities are supported by a series of project activities.</p>
<p>Improve the appearance of the town centre as this is impacting upon multiple of health related areas. Consideration should be given to the quality of the wider retail offer.</p>	<p>The Masterplan notes the Chester-le-Street Conservation Area which covers the northern portion of the town centre. It is noted that the special characteristics of the conservation area are identified in the Conservation Area Appraisal. New development should respond positively to those characteristics, conserving and enhancing the character and appearance of the conservation area.</p> <p>The Masterplan recognises that many of its proposals rely on partnership working and specifically upon private sector investment. Whilst, economic circumstances can sometimes be challenging due to the changing nature of the retail environment, the Masterplan seeks to facilitate and secure private sector investment wherever possible.</p>
<p>Improve the rear of the front street. Currently it is poorly lit, unwelcoming and for many, the first impression of the town centre.</p>	<p>The Masterplan notes the Chester-le-Street Conservation Area which covers the northern portion of the town centre. It is noted that the special characteristics of the conservation area are identified in the Conservation Area Appraisal. New development should respond positively to those characteristics,</p>

	conserving and enhancing the character and appearance of the conservation area.
Consider engaging local community groups as part of the process of improving the appearance of the town.	<p>Over the years Chester-le-Street has benefited from the work of a variety of stakeholders in partnership with both the council and the local resident and business communities. The council will continue to make use of the Chester-Le-Street Area and District Area Action Partnership (AAP) as a key interface with the local community.</p> <p>The AAP has a Task Group which considers a range of town centre issues. The group called 'Thriving Chester-le-Street' meets on a monthly basis and will be able to look at developing some appropriate local project responses for some of the themes contained in the Masterplan.</p>
Consider the Healthy Place Standard as part of the masterplan process in order to encourage a wider range of views and broader consideration for the impact of place upon health.	The Healthy Place standard has been considered as part of the development of the Masterplan and the representations made as part of the consultation have been fed into the process.

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## **Appendix 1: Implications**

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### **Finance**

Any improvement to the public realm will require budget as highlighted within the Masterplan.

### **Staffing**

Assessment delivered within existing resource.

### **Risk**

The process may highlight areas for improvement. Improvements may not always be possible within budget or practical within national trends.

### **Equality and Diversity / Public Sector Equality Duty**

Public health actively seeks to address health inequalities

### **Accommodation**

None

### **Crime and Disorder**

Safety is a key question within the Place Standard as is considered as part of the assessment.

### **Human Rights**

Not impacted by current activity.

### **Procurement**

None

### **Disability Issues**

Access was considered as part of the assessment.

### **Consultation**

As part of the Masterplan process the local community is consulted. This has been utilised within the assessment.

### **Legal Implications**

None

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## **Appendix 2: Place standard evaluation**

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