

Health and Wellbeing Board

18 January 2022

County Durham Plan Health Impact Assessment



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Electoral division(s) affected:

Countywide

Purpose of the Report

- 1 To provide the Health and Wellbeing Board with a review of the Health Impact Assessment undertaken December 2018, of the County Durham Plan (Local Plan) adopted in October 2020.

Executive summary

- 2 The County Durham Plan (CDP) was adopted in October 2020 and benefitted from a Health Impact Assessment (HIA) to maximise the positive and minimise the negative impacts of new initiatives. The HIA made recommendations for the plan's process which may have a positive impact upon health outcomes in County Durham.
- 3 Furthermore, several recommendations made within the CDP HIA are specific to mitigating existing (or future) health inequalities:
 - (a) Consider health inequalities when assessing housing development schemes (against Building For Life outcomes) during in house reviews.
 - (b) Undertaking HIA's for new housing developments with over 800 residential units.
 - (c) Addressing housing needs for older people and those with specialist needs (i.e. to minimise risk of falls, making homes warm and energy efficient. Suitable housing is a key determinant of health).
 - (d) Regulation of over-concentration of Hot Food Takeaways (HFTs).
- 4 This 'one year on' review provides a progress update on twenty HIA recommendations that cover the following policies found within the CDP:

- (a) Policy 3 - Aykley Heads Strategic Employment Site.
- (b) Policy 4 - Sites allocated to meet housing need.
- (c) Policy 5 - Durham City's Sustainable Urban Extensions.
- (d) Policy 15 - Addressing housing need has the potential to impact on health in County Durham.
- (e) Policy 16 - Durham University refurbishment of existing buildings, allocated sites for development and restrictions on HMOs.
- (f) Policy 24 - Transport measures to relieve the highway network including Northern and Western Relief Roads.
- (g) Policy 51 - Meeting the need for primary aggregates.
- (h) Policy 58 - Preferred area for future carboniferous Limestone Extraction.

Covered in this review but not specific recommendations of HIA

- (i) Policy 30 – Hot Food Takeaways.
 - (j) Restriction of advertising food high in fat, salt and sugar (HFSS) on DCC platforms.
- 5 Only 12 months have elapsed since the adoption of the CDP, and this presents a very limited time frame in which to assess impact of those policies that are subject of this review. Accordingly, the update is predominantly focussed upon progress of HIA recommendations for each policy area.
 - 6 Future reviews will be better positioned to gauge the impact of recommendations in terms of population health and wellbeing. These outcomes are typically longer term. For example, the impact of affordable and suitable housing on older person's health and wellbeing will typically be measured in indicators and qualitative feedback for many years after the inception of this recommendation.
 - 7 Some recommendations have seen more progress than others – typically as a result of policy implementation. For example, progress against Policy 3 (Aykley Heads Strategic Employment Site) will gather pace as this site is developed and more businesses occupy it.
 - 8 Other areas of the HIA (i.e. Policy 5 – sites allocated to meet housing need) have seen progress in terms of DCC's commitment to future developments through the adoption of standards (i.e. Building for Life Supplementary Planning Document) to ensure well-designed and good

quality housing – which is a key determinant of good health and wellbeing.

- 9 Measurable progress has been made in other areas, i.e. Policy 6 (Durham City's Sustainable Urban Extensions) which saw Cabinet approval of the Sniperley Masterplan and its Healthy Active Travel Connectivity Plan – which will maximise the likelihood of healthy, active lifestyles for those who live on this development.
- 10 The Healthy Active Travel Connectivity Plan has already garnered positive attention from professionals aligned to the North East Academic Health Sciences Network and the Royal Town Planning Institute who gave favourable and positive feedback following a presentation of the plan, its purpose and development.
- 11 Public Health now plays an active role in contributing to DCC's design review process for the assessment of proposed residential developments. All such developments with 100 plus houses (or over 10 hectares) must now have a HIA.
- 12 The CDP HIA acknowledged that further assessment of Policy 30 (Hot Food Takeaways) was required (nor on the developing DCC communications policy on restriction of advertising of food high in fat, salt and sugar - HFSS) this review will cover both in order that stakeholders are up to date on the progress made in these cross cutting policy areas.
- 13 When levels of hot food takeaway uses within centres are above 5%, or a proposed use would see the levels rise above 5%, proposals for new such uses will be subject to further scrutiny.
- 14 Furthermore, DCC is progressing plans to implement an innovative policy that will restrict advertising of foods that are HFSS across its advertising sites. As only the second local authority in England (outside London) to implement such a policy, this is pioneering work to reduce the impact of such advertising – a direct contributor to an obesogenic environment.
- 15 These policy developments demonstrate the continued progress that we are making in County Durham towards creating a whole systems approach to obesity and overweight
- 16 As is evident from the findings outlined above, progress is being made against the raft of recommendations made in the County Durham Plan HIA. As work develops, the impact of this progress will be monitored primarily through the Office for Health Improvement and Development (formerly Public Health England) Public Health Outcomes Framework.

Recommendation(s)

17 Members of the Health and Wellbeing Board are asked to:

- (a) Note the contents of this report.
- (b) Note that the CDP HIA will be reviewed annually.

Background

The County Durham Plan (CDP)

- 18 The CDP sets out a range of development proposals as well as planning policies for the county until 2035. It was adopted in October 2020, and presents a vision for potential housing, jobs and the environment, as well as the transport, schools and healthcare to support it.
- 19 The plan aims to continue economic growth and investment in the county, secure more and better jobs in County Durham, address the causes of climate change and adapt to its effects, create and enhance vibrant communities for County Durham towns and villages, provide a wide choice of quality homes to meet need and reduce the need to travel, secure the infrastructure to support new development and relieve congestion and improve air quality, and protect the natural and historic environment.
- 20 Furthermore, the plan (and the subsequent Health Impact Assessment) provide for a timely and vital opportunity to reinforce the role of planning in the wider determinants of health (Appendix 3), and the impact that this has upon people. For example, the quality of the built and natural environment such as air quality, the quality of green spaces and housing quality can all affect health – whether detrimentally or beneficially.

Health Impact Assessment (HIA)

- 21 A HIA is a structured, solution-focused and action orientated approach to maximising the positive and minimising the negative impacts of new initiatives. It takes a broad view of health, in that health means more than health care provision or clinical care.
- 22 Many policies, plans, proposals or decisions have the potential to impact on health and potentially widen health inequalities. By conducting an HIA, the potential impacts can be considered, and action taken to reduce those impacts.
- 23 The CDP HIA made recommendations for the plan's process which may have a positive impact upon health outcomes in County Durham, and it is important that those developing the policies considered by the HIA retain ownership of those recommendations and their progress – working in collaboration with the Public Health team where necessary or applicable.

HIA process

- 24 An HIA steering group was established, comprising membership from spatial policy, sustainability, public health, research, public health intelligence and the AAP's. The group shortlisted 11 policies (Appendix 3) and a scoping process assessed each of the selected policies in detail, specified the health impact to be assessed and the possible evidence required to help inform the recommendations.
- 25 *Please note:* The Hot Food Takeaway (HFT) policy is part of the Local Plan. The policy was developed in conjunction with an evidence review of the impact of HFTs on levels of obesity. This policy is a good example of a health promoting policy developed in partnership between planning and public health. Whilst the screening process acknowledged that further policy assessment was not required, a review of this particular policy will be included in this review.
- 26 During the scoping exercise it became clear that the overlap between policy 24 policy 25 and policy 26 (see appendix two) was so significant that the health impacts and driver diagrams were too similar to warrant individual assessment. Instead the steering group agreed to focus on policy 24 as this was deemed to be the most impactful and amenable policy for HIA purposes.
- 27 The HIA steering group then synthesised available information (including evidence reviews and results from a countywide consultation) to identify the potential health impacts of the policies/proposals in question. This led to the formulation of a set of recommendations most likely to have a positive impact upon health outcome.

HIA review process

- 28 There are 20 recommendations in total – all of which are the subject of this one-year review (see appendix two policies 4, 5, 6, 16, 17, 24, 51, 58). Where limited or no progress has been reported against any recommendation, this will be recorded together with reasons.
- 29 The review has been undertaken following consultation between the Public Health Team (Strategic Manager) and Regeneration, Economy and Growth (Principal Policy Officer).
- 30 It comprises systematic consideration of each of the 20 recommendations with supporting information.

Review of HIA recommendations

Policy 3: Aykley Heads Strategic Employment Site

Summary

- 31 Allocates an employment site known as Aykley Heads within Durham City for B1(a) uses (offices). The policy, supported by the approved masterplan for the Aykley Heads site, aims to provide a high quality employment location to contribute to the delivery of the new and better jobs Durham City and County Durham need. In doing so, it provides an opportunity for the unique landscapes to be used to create an urban park and for bus, pedestrian and cycle routes to be incorporated and to encourage the use of park and ride schemes.

Recommendation 1

- 32 Consider an active environment which promotes physical activity. Consider the guidance within the Building for Life (BfL) SPD so that facilities are linked in a walkable/cyclable environment.
- 33 Consider during the master planning process how green space is enhanced where practical to help facilitate benefits to those employed on site, local residents and visitors.

Recommendation 2

- 34 Consider recommending to all prospective businesses take part in the Better Health at Work Award. The site could consider becoming a healthy business park and each employer recognise the business and social benefits of a healthy environment and workforce.

Recommendation 3

- 35 Linking with current further education establishments to develop a workforce for tomorrow and promote the opportunities that exist within County Durham.

Update

- 36 The Aykley Heads Strategic Employment site is not yet in full development.
- 37 Paragraph 4.57 of the CDP highlights that an integral part of the redevelopment of the site is the opportunity to improve the sites dense woodland, open grassland, streams and ponds, as well as shaded slopes and open spaces. It further highlights that public access into and around Aykley Heads will be retained and improved, creating more

attractive gateways into the site particularly from the railway station and Wharton Park.

- 38 The approved masterplan (application ref: 20/01846/FPA) highlights a commitment to improved walking and cycling routes and public spaces. It also highlights provision of high quality and changing, storage and shower facilities to support the objectives of the Travel Plan.
- 39 Para 4.54 of the CDP states that 'Future businesses at Aykley Heads will be encouraged to participate in the 'Better Health at Work' scheme, as part of promoting healthy lifestyles and considering the health of their employees'. The Better Health at Work Award (County Durham) is a well-established member of the North East Better Health at Work Award programme, and is currently working with 79 County Durham organisations with a reach of over 40,000 employees. Organisations situated on this site will be invited to participate.

Policy 4: Sites allocated to meet housing need

Summary

- 40 Allocates sites to accommodate the new homes needed to ensure that housing need is met over the Plan period. Having had regard to housing need in the county (set out in the Strategic Housing Market Assessment); availability of land for housing in the county (set out in the Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment); viability in different areas; and to the government's figures for housing needed for County Durham, the policy sets out housing sites by monitoring area. We are expected to demonstrate a rolling five 5 year supply of deliverable sites calculated against Objectively Assessed Need (OAN) set out in Policy 2 with a buffer of 5% or 20% added depending on past delivery.

Overarching recommendation

- 41 Consider health outcomes and health inequalities as part of the in house review process that assesses housing development schemes against the Building for Life (BfL) outcomes.

Recommendation 4

- 42 Align to the recommendation in the BfL Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) to ensure that facilities are available and accessible within short walks from people's homes. This could consider the needs of the local population so that the development is easy to navigate from a physical and mental perspective reflective of the local health profile.

- 43 Development management could consider facilities and amenities being built sooner in the development process to allow for the immediate use and adoption of healthy behaviours.

Update

- 44 Durham County Council (DCC) adopted the BfL SPD in 2019, and this is a material consideration in regarding proposals for new residential developments.
- 45 The BfL SPD sets down guidance on the application of the BfL standards to ensure well-designed development proposals. The standards provide a framework for assessing the quality of housing proposals. Reviewing a scheme against BfL provides focus and structure to discussions between local communities, the local planning authority, the developer, and other stakeholders. This ensures a consistent approach to BfL to enhance design quality across the County.
- 46 Given the short period since adoption of the CDP, none of the allocated sites have been developed out and only 152 units were approved on housing allocations across 3 sites (Former Gilesgate School (H1); North of Hawthorn Close (H2); and Former Chamberlain Phipps (H28)). There have been no completions on these sites within 2020/21, however, it is likely that 2 of the sites (Gilesgate School and Hawthorn Close) will see development in the coming years as they are to be developed by Chapter Homes and Believe Housing respectively.

Recommendation 5

- 47 Complete a health impact assessment for sites of over 800 properties and/or significant public interest to explore the health needs and the supporting infrastructure.
- 48 Utilise the education policy when/if need is identified.
- 49 Consider the developments of a healthcare policy to support a practical response to any possible additional health care requirements.
- 50 Ensure that existing or developing community facilities are easy to get to because they are conveniently located near to where people live, are well signposted, and are close to public transport and on walking and cycling networks.

Update

- 51 In the consideration of the planning allocations for new housing within the CDP, significant consultation was carried out with the relevant

bodies to understand education and health requirements as a result of these sites coming forward. Para 4.78 of the CDP identifies that providing housing allocations allows DCC and infrastructure providers to assess the cumulative impact of development and enable us to plan for future needs such as transport schemes, school places and water infrastructure.

- 52 Further to this, when considering planning application, a material consideration is the need to ensure that sufficient choice of school places is available to meet the needs of existing and new communities. DCC's education team provide advice in relation to this.
- 53 Paragraph 92 of the National Planning and Policy Framework (NPPF) recognises the need for planning decisions to ensure an integrated approach when considering the location of new housing and to plan positively for the provision and use of community facilities and local services. This provides policy justification to seek mitigation in respect to essential services including GP provision where a deficit would result, or be exacerbated by the proposal.

Policy 5: Durham City's Sustainable Urban Extensions

Summary

- 54 In order to promote sustainable patterns of development and meet housing need, some land is removed from the Greenbelt and allocated for housing at Sniperley Park and Sherburn Road (1900 houses at Sniperley Park; and 420 houses at Sherburn Road). This will include comprehensive master planning and timely provision of infrastructure.

Recommendation 6

- 55 Ensure there is sufficient access to amenities and facilities as this could improve mental health and increase mobility and participation especially amongst older adults. Make it easy for all people to get around the development in line with the BfL guidance.

Recommendation 7

- 56 Planning applications include a standard condition regarding operational hours for construction.

Recommendation 8

- 57 Recommend promoting and prioritising sustainable modes of transport as a healthier approach. Provide suitable links to existing infrastructure such as Sniperley park and ride and ensure the scheme has good access to public transport to help reduce car dependency as highlighted

in BfL. Consider how the development can maximise the number of homes with a short walk from the nearest public transport route.

- 58 Consider how the development can contribute towards encouraging more sustainable travel choices, i.e. bike racks, electric car charging etc.

Recommendation 9:

- 59 Consider buffer zones such as an earth bund around developments to limit the impact of noise from roads that may run the length of a development.

Update:

- 60 A masterplan for Sniperley has been developed by the Council alongside a Healthy Active Travel Connectivity Plan. These were approved by Cabinet on 17/11/21, and set out the design parameters of the site going forward. The masterplan for the Sniperley site identifies a local neighbourhood centre that will provide access to amenities and facilities. Information relating to the Healthy Active Travel Connectivity Plan can be found at appendix four.
- 61 The site at Sherburn Road is particularly well linked to facilities at Sherburn Road district centre and also to Durham Retail Park at Dragonville.
- 62 Planning permission has yet to be granted on the Sniperley Site. The site at Sherburn Road was recently heard at Planning Committee, the application was recommended for approval with condition 31 restricting development:
- In undertaking the development that is hereby approved: No external construction works, works of demolition, deliveries, external running of plant and equipment shall take place other than between the hours of 0730 to 1800 on Monday to Friday and 0730 to 1400 on Saturday. No internal works audible outside the site boundary shall take place on the site other than between the hours of 0730 to 1800 on Monday to Friday and 0800 to 1700 on Saturday. No construction works or works of demolition whatsoever, including deliveries, external running of plant and equipment, internal works whether audible or not outside the site boundary, shall take place on Sundays, Public or Bank Holidays. For the purposes of this condition, construction works are defined as: The carrying out of any building, civil engineering or engineering construction work involving the use of plant and machinery including hand tools. Reason: To protect the residential amenity of existing and future residents from the

development in accordance with Policy 31 of the County Durham Plan and Part 15 of the National Planning Policy Framework.

- 63 As outlined above, a masterplan for Sniperley has been developed by the Council alongside a Healthy Active Travel Connectivity Plan. These were approved by Cabinet on 17/11/21. As part of the masterplan, it identifies that development must allow for maximum public transport penetration. Further to this it seeks to enhance safe and attractive pedestrian links into the Park and Ride. It states that all homes should include an EV charging point as standard. It also highlights a need to provide positive natural surveillance of active travel routes, good lighting and secure sheltered bike storage to encourage year round use.
- 64 The Sniperley Park masterplan includes a 60m buffer to limit the impact of noise from the road. A similar buffer has been incorporated as part of masterplan for the Sherburn Road site.

Policy 15: Addressing housing need has the potential to impact on health in County Durham

Summary

- 65 The policy sets out the proportions of new housing that should be affordable and suitable for older persons and those with specialist needs. This is dependent on the viability of the area, with the highest value areas having the largest percentage of housing units. The Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) update undertook an assessment of the shortfall in affordable housing in the county.

Recommendation 10

- 66 Recommend considering health outcomes within the SHMA process to assist with identifying current and future need.
- 67 Consider the design of homes which reduces possible hazards and minimises the likelihood of falls. Create warm and energy efficient homes, which can improve general health and may reduce the impact of respiratory conditions.
- 68 Create walkable and physically active neighbourhoods in line with BfL recommendations to help promote and maintain levels of physical activity. Ensure amenities are accessible.

Update

- 69 The policy identifies that to meet the needs of older people and people with disabilities, on sites of more than 5 units, 66% of dwellings must be built to Building Regulation M4(2) (accessible and adaptable dwellings)

standard. It further states that on sites of 10 units or more, we will require a minimum of 10% of the total number of dwellings on the site to be of a design and type that will increase the housing options of older people. These properties should be built to M4(2) standard and would contribute to meeting the 66% requirement set out above. They should be situated in the most appropriate location within the site for older people. Appropriate house types are identified as level access flats, level access bungalows, or housing products that can be shown to meet the specific needs of a multi-generational family.

- 70 Whilst the creation of warm and energy efficient homes falls outside the scope of the CDP, DCC has adopted a Housing Strategy that addresses this.
- 71 DCC adopted the BFL SPD in 2019 and this is a material consideration in considering proposals for new residential development.

Recommendation 11

- 72 Develop mixed use development that are reflective of local need as recommended in BfL, taking into consideration the health profiles of the area.
- 73 Ensure connected streets, accessible amenities and consider community facilities being provided early in a development to help maximise the opportunities for healthy behaviour change.

Update

- 74 The Council adopted the BFL SPD in 2019 and this is a material consideration in for proposals for new residential development. This covers the issues of connected streets and accessible amenities. The delivery of community facilities will be controlled planning conditions once an application is approved.

Recommendation 12

- 75 Endorse the policy to allocate affordable housing due to its positive impact upon mental wellbeing and improved quality of life.
- 76 Endorse efforts for mixed use developments which could create a sense of community, improve a sense of cohesion and create a physically active neighbourhood.
- 77 Explore the pooling of affordable housing so that it can be allocated on a countywide as opposed to a development basis.
- 78 Endorse the scheme to bring empty properties back up to 'better homes standard'.

Update

- 79 Endorsements noted. Regarding the pooling of affordable housing In accordance with the NPPF, the provision of affordable housing should be met on-site. However, it is accepted that this is not appropriate or possible for all schemes. Policy 15 (Addressing Housing Need) sets out that there may also be circumstances where it can be robustly justified and it would contribute to the objective of creating mixed and balanced communities, the Council will accept off-site contributions in lieu of on-site provision. This includes, but is not limited to, circumstances where:
- there would be five or fewer affordable homes on the site;
 - there is clear evidence that a greater number of affordable homes could be delivered off-site, in a more suitable location; or
 - the resulting financial contribution would contribute to specific regeneration activity including bringing viable vacant housing back into use.
- 80 Where affordable housing contributions are secured they will be spent County wide in line with the County Durham Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) which defines County Durham as one housing market area.

Policy 16: Durham University refurbishment of existing buildings, allocated sites for development and restrictions on HMOs.

Summary

- 81 Part one of the policy relates to the Durham University Masterplan. It sets out the criteria by which planning permission for new University facilities and the refurbishment of existing buildings will be permitted. The policy allocates purpose built student accommodation sites too and sets out restrictive criteria towards additional purpose built accommodation. Part 3 of the policy is also restrictive towards houses in multiple occupation (HMOs) in order to maintain mixed and cohesive communities. It uses a threshold of 10% of Class N student exempt council tax properties within 100 metres of the application site.

Recommendation 13

- 82 Endorse approach to Houses of Multiple Occupancy (HMOs) to avoid over concentration. Recommend promoting the landlord accreditation scheme.
- 83 Endorse the references to waste recycling in order to minimise the impact of litter. Endorse the references to the Car Parking and

Accessibility Guidelines. Consider all opportunities to promote and provide opportunities for sustainable travel.

Recommendation 14

- 84 Work closely with Durham University to address the health needs of the student population.
- 85 Endorse the references to the Car Parking and Accessibility Guidelines. Consider all opportunities to promote and provide opportunities for sustainable travel. In relation to purpose built student accommodation (PBSA) consider how build may incorporate cycle racks, cycle storage, and attractive visible signed stairwells, in order to support an active lifestyle and promote good health.

Update

- 86 Endorsements noted. Whilst falling outside the scope of the CDP, the Council have explored a landlord accreditation scheme and a potential scheme has been submitted to government. With regards to cycle parking this will be set out in the Parking and Accessibility SPD (criteria h).

Policy 24: Transport measures to relieve the highway network including Northern and Western Relief Roads

Update

- 87 Note: this policy was not taken forward.

Policy 51: Meeting the need for primary aggregates

Summary

- 88 Supports making sufficient land available for mineral working to enable the maintenance of a steady and adequate supply of primary aggregates. Identifies further need for Carboniferous Limestone and sets out the locational approach to the working of Magnesian Limestone, Carboniferous Limestone, Dolerite and Sand and Gravel. No new or extended working areas for magnesian limestone will be permitted on the East Durham Limestone Plateau for aggregate, high grade purposes, or for agricultural lime production. The policy prioritises basal Permian sand extraction under existing magnesian limestone quarries, followed by the lateral extension of existing magnesian limestone quarries. For dolerite, proposals for new working will only be permitted provided that proposals do not adversely impact upon the North Pennines AONB, Special Areas of Conservation or Special Protection Areas. No minerals allocations are made by this policy.

Government policy requires that we ensure that a large landbank bound up in very few sites should not stifle competition.

Recommendation 17

- 89 Transport and environmental assessments will explore whether as part of a major development an HIA is required as part of the mineral extraction policy.
- 90 Continue to lobby for the Leamside line as an alternative mode of transport and explore the feasibility mechanisms to transport minerals i.e. rail, sea.
- 91 Update the Technical Advice Notes for noise, dust, light.

Recommendation 18

- 92 Continue efforts to minimise or remove exposure to air pollutants.

Recommendation 19

- 93 Every new application considers employment or training opportunities through the Targeted Recruitment and Training policy.

Update

- 94 An HIA is not required through this policy however Environmental Statements will often cover HIA issues such as noise and dust through the planning application process. See para 1 and para 4 of Schedule 4 Information for inclusion in Environmental Statements of the Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2017. The Councils existing Planning validation requirements at Part 14 already addresses Health Impact Assessment.
- 95 A number of railway lines are safeguarded in the CDP (see Appendix D, table 23), this includes the Leamside Line. DCC is progressing a Minerals and Waste Policies and Allocations Development Plan Document which sets out policies for the transportation of minerals (Policy MW7) and mineral rail handling facilities (Policy MW8). Lobbying for the reinstatement of the Leamside Line Falls outside the scope of minerals policy matters and is a transport policy issue.
- 96 It is understood that the update of Technical Advice Notes for noise, dust and light is being undertaken by colleagues in Environment Health and Development Management. This falls outside the scope of the CDP.
- 97 The Minerals and Waste Draft Policies and Allocations Development Plan Document sets out policies on dust (MW5) which will allow for

minimisation or removal of exposure to air pollutants to be considered the planning application process.

- 98 The policy does not set out any Targeted Recruitment and Training requirements; however, Policy MW3 of the emerging Development Plan Document recognises that the applicants/operators set out the economic benefits of extraction which can include job creation and training opportunities. These economic benefits are a material consideration in any planning application for extraction.

Policy 58: Preferred area for future carboniferous Limestone Extraction

Summary

- 99 In order to assist in the steady and adequate supply of carboniferous limestone and the delivery of Policy 51 (Meeting the Need for Primary Aggregates) a Preferred Area for carboniferous limestone working is allocated as an eastern extension to Hulands Quarry in Teesdale. Subject to planning permission being granted, this allocation would enable this quarry to make a significant contribution to the identified need for further carboniferous limestone working from County Durham over the plan period. In addition the carboniferous limestone produced at this quarry will provide a source of aggregate to produce coated roadstone and ready mixed concrete products.

Recommendation 20

- 100 Consider a restoration of mineral sites Supplementary Planning Document. Consider how any impacts Rights of Way can be mitigated by improvements to the current infrastructure which may provide increased connectivity for local communities.

Update

- 101 An SPD is not being produced, however the issue of the restoration of minerals sites is covered in detail within the emerging Minerals and Waste Policies and Allocations Development Plan Document which has recently been out for consultation. A key objective of this is to ensure that County Durham's minerals sites and temporary waste management sites are restored at the earliest opportunity, and in ways that, wherever possible: enhance the environment and amenity of local communities; achieve high quality restoration and aftercare; contribute to climate change adaptation and mitigation; maximise benefits. Detail of this are covered in draft Policy MW22 – Mineral Site Restoration, Landfill and Landraise.
- 102 With regards to Public Rights of Way (PROW), Policy 26 of the CDP covers this issue stating that proposals that would result in the loss of,

or deterioration in the quality of, existing PROWs will not be permitted unless equivalent alternative provision of a suitable standard is made. Para 5.31 of the emerging Minerals and Waste Policies and Allocations DPD advises, “The County's existing public footpaths, Public Rights of Way (PROW), bridleways and cycleways provide important means of getting into and enjoying the countryside. Where proposals will adversely affect existing PROW and the local path network, adequate arrangements will be required for the continued use of PROW both during and after the proposed development, either by means of existing or diverted routes which are safe and convenient and where possible propose opportunities to enhance the existing network”.

Promoting Healthy Communities

- 103 The planning system can play an important role in facilitating interaction and creating healthy, safe and inclusive communities. The Plan seeks to embed health and wellbeing considerations throughout, to achieve healthy places with safe, accessible and inclusive environments for people to come together.

Policy 30: Hot Food Takeaways (HFT)

- 104 This policy sets a framework for assessing proposal for hot food takeaways. The key driver is to reduce levels of obesity. Large concentrations of hot food takeaways within our town centres can have the opposite effect by encouraging unhealthy eating habits. An over-concentration of hot food takeaways can also have a detrimental impact on vitality and viability. The policy recognises that where an application is proposed within a centre where the numbers of hot food takeaways already exceeds 5% (or a new proposal would lead to it exceeding 5%) closer scrutiny is required.
- 105 The information shown in Table 1 follows surveys undertaken in June/July 2021, as well as data from two previous monitoring periods. Percentage of units with Sub Regional, Large Town, Small Town and District centres in use or with planning permission for hot food takeaways.

Table1: Percentage of Hot Food Takeaways

Centre	% of hot food takeaway uses	% of hot food takeaway uses 19/20	% of hot food takeaway uses 18/19
Arnison Centre	0	0	0
Barnard Castle	3.3	3.3	3.3
Bishop Auckland	5	4.8	4.5
Chester-le-Street	4.6	4.3	4.3
Consett	7.2	6.8	6.8
Crook	7.9	7.8	7.1
Dragonville/Sherburn Road	2.3	2.7	2.9
Durham City	2.4	2.6	2.6
Ferryhill	10	10	8.8
Newton Aycliffe	5.8	5.8	5.8
Peterlee	0.8	0.8	0.8
Seaham	5.3	5.9	5.9
Sildon	8.4	8.4	8.4
Spennymoor	7.9	6.9	6.9
Stanley	3.3	3.4	3.4

106 Table 1 shows that seven areas in total have a number of hot food takeaways exceeding 5%. In assessing applications for new hot food takeaways in centres which exceed 5%, consideration is given to the existing level of vacancies. Where vacancy rates are above the national average, weight will be given to the contribution the proposal will make to reducing this. Whilst there are instances where some new proposals will be approved, the target is not to see increased in HFTs – particularly in centres where there is a heavy concentration.

Table 2: Centres where hot food numbers are increasing or decreasing

Centre	% change in number of hot food takeaway uses
Arnison Centre	No change
Barnard Castle	No change
Bishop Auckland	+0.2
Chester-le-Street	+0.3
Consett	+0.4
Crook	+0.1
Dragonville/Sherburn Road	-0.4
Durham City	-0.2
Ferryhill	No change
Newton Aycliffe	No change
Peterlee	No change
Seaham	-0.6
Sildon	No change
Spennymoor	+1
Stanley	-0.1%

107 Table 2 shows that there are just 4 centres where the number of hot food takeaways have increased over the monitoring period (in bold). Whilst the percentage changes are all slightly different in each centre, they all represent just one more unit in a hot food takeaway use. Whilst there is a small percentage increase identified in Crook this reflects a small change in the number of units within the centre, rather than any increase in the number of hot food takeaways. The majority of centres have seen no change in the numbers of hot food takeaways, with Dragonville/Sherburn Road, Durham City and Seaham seeing a small reduction.

108 As there are centres which have seen an increase in the number of hot food takeaways and centres which exceed 5% in terms of hot food takeaways, the target within the CDP is not met. It is however encouraging that the overall levels have either not changed or reduced in the majority of centres.

Restriction of advertising of food that are high in fat, salt and sugar (HFSS)

109 Whilst this is not a recommendation of the CDP HIA, it is worth noting that public health is currently in the end stages of finalising a communications policy that will restrict the advertising of HFSS foods across its advertising sites.

110 A nutrient profiling (NP) model was developed by the Food Standards Agency (FSA) in 2004-2005 as a tool to help Ofcom differentiate foods and improve the balance of television advertising to children. Ofcom introduced controls which restricted the advertising of HFSS foods in order to encourage the promotion of healthier alternatives.

111 The NP model has been subject to rigorous scientific scrutiny, extensive consultation and review. It is supported by the independent Scientific Advisory Committee on Nutrition (SACN) and a wide range of nutrition experts.

112 In its [tackling obesity strategy](#) published in July 2020, the government introduced its intention to ban HFSS products being shown on TV and online before 9pm – limiting exposure of these foods to children.

113 DCC intends to build upon this national policy by restricting the advertising of HFSS products across all of its advertising sites, and will be the second local authority (outside London) to implement this locally.

114 This policy is based upon three principles:

- (a) Advertisements of food and/or non-alcoholic drink products rated HFSS will not be permitted.
- (b) All food and non-alcoholic drink brands, services or companies or ordering services can advertise providing it is their healthier options, consisting of non-HFSS products.
- (c) Advertisements cannot show or feature HFSS products (in line with rule 1) ‘incidentally’ if the HFSS product being promoted is prominent within the advertisement, even if they are not the subject of the advertisement. This includes being referenced through text or graphic. (note: such products can otherwise be shown incidentally).

115 This represents a significant development in County Durham's ongoing whole system's approach to tackling overweight and obesity, particularly in our younger populations.

Main Implications

116 The HIA and this subsequent review are concerned with the people and population aspects of the relevant planning and development policies that comprise the County Durham Plan.

117 The County Durham Plan was adopted in October 2020 (12 months prior to this review), and this represents a limited time frame in which to assess the impact of recommendations made in the associated HIA. This report, therefore, is predominantly focussed on the general progress made against the HIA recommendations.

118 Future reviews will be better positioned to gauge the progress of HIA recommendations in terms of impact upon population health and wellbeing, as such outcomes are typically long-term.

119 There are matters covered in the HIA that have made limited progress due to the fact that the policies to which the recommendations relate have not yet been implemented. For example, recommendations 1 to 3 relating to the Aykley Heads Strategic Employment Site, are dependent upon businesses occupying this site. It is, however, noted that the approved masterplan is committed to developing improved walking and cycling routes, and public spaces – as recommended within the HIA.

120 Likewise, recommendations regarding policy 5 (sites allocated to meet housing need) have been met with progress relating to DCC having adopted the Building For Life Supplementary Planning Document in 2019, which sets down guidance on standards required to ensure well-designed development proposals and good quality housing. The impact of such developments are yet to be measured.

121 Furthermore, DCC's adoption of the BfL SPD in 2019 demonstrates a commitment to engaging in discussions between local communities, the local planning authority, developers, and other stakeholders to ensure a consistent approach to BfL in order to enhance design quality across the County. This directly contributes to making places better for those who live in County Durham.

122 Measurable progress has been made in the context of policy 6 (Durham City's Sustainable Urban Extensions). For example, the Sniperley development masterplan now benefits from a Healthy Active Travel Connectivity Plan which outlines a raft of actions to ensure that this residential development is developed to maximise the likelihood of healthy, active lifestyles and positive wellbeing for those who live there,

i.e. walkable communities, cycling routes, park and pedal sites and multifunctional open spaces.

- 123 This Sniperley Healthy Active Travel Connectivity Plan has garnered attention regionally as an example of good practice regarding collaboration between public health and planning teams. Representatives of DCC recently presented on this plan to the delegates from the Royal Town Planning Institute and the Academic Health Sciences Network North East.
- 124 Any residential development with 100 houses or over (or over 10 hectares) must have a health impact assessment. The number of requests from developers for an such an HIA is increasing, and work is ongoing between public health and spatial policymakers to develop an HIA Developers Guide.
- 125 This will ensure that all developments maximise positive health impacts and minimise negative health impacts and support the communities of County Durham. The finished document will also ensure that developers have a consistent approach to HIA's for this purpose.
- 126 In addition to the above, public health continues to input into DCC's design review process for the assessment of proposed residential developments. This is to ensure that the design of all new developments is a catalyst to supporting good health and wellbeing, including healthy weight. Meetings are every fortnight – chaired by DCC Head of Planning. The Public Health team provides general public health input into this process.
- 127 Matters falling out with the remit of this HIA: hot food takeaways, restrictions in advertising HFSS food and the whole systems approach to overweight and obesity.
- 128 At first sight, the evidence of performance against the Hot Food Takeaway target of 5% appears variable, with 7 out of 15 areas exceeding this target. These data must, however, be considered in the context of what the excess represents – often only one set of premises/unit. Furthermore, it should be noted that only 4 centres have seen an increase since 2018/2019 with the other 11 having either decreased or remained constant.
- 129 An over concentration of hot food takeaways can have a detrimental impact on the vitality and viability of a centre. Whilst potentially impacting on the retail and wider functioning of a centre, many hot food takeaway uses will only open for certain hours of the day, usually in the evening and therefore will often present a blank shuttered frontage during the daytime. In addition, they can also give rise to concerns over noise, disturbance, odours, parking and litter.

- 130 When the levels of hot food takeaway uses within centres are above 5%, or a proposed use would see the levels rise above 5%, proposals for new such uses will be subject to further scrutiny.
- 131 If the application is within a centre that already has more than 5% of units within hot food takeaway use or the application would increase these levels above 5%, regard should be had to the existing levels of vacant units within the centre. This is detailed within criteria a) of the Policy. In particular, where vacancy rates are above the national average, greater weight will need to be given to the contribution that the proposal would make in reducing this
- 132 DCC is progressing plans to implement an innovative policy that will restrict advertising of foods that are high in fat, salt and sugar on across its advertising sites. As only the second local authority in England (outside London) to implement such a policy, this is pioneering work to reduce the impact of such advertising – a direct contributor to an obesogenic environment.
- 133 These policy developments demonstrate the continued progress that we are making in County Durham towards creating a whole systems approach to obesity and overweight; wherein those who live and work in County Durham will be better enabled to make healthier choices.

Conclusion

- 134 Assessing the health impacts of different policies and collaborations between health and planning colleagues has helped to ensure that health considerations are integrated into planning across all departments. This will ensure that health benefits are realised across the broad spectrum of local authority functions, rather than remaining as individual strands of good practice.
- 135 As is evident from the findings outlined above, progress is being made against the raft of recommendations made in the County Durham Plan HIA. As work develops, the impact of this progress will be monitored primarily through the Office for Health Improvement and Development (formerly Public Health England) Public Health Outcomes Framework.
- 136 The recommendations will continue to be monitored, and reviewed on an annual basis by public health and planning.

Other useful documents

- [The County Durham Plan \(Adopted 2020\)](#)

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Appendix 1: Implications

Legal Implications

None

Finance

None

Consultation

No external consultation. Internal consultation between Public Health and Regeneration Economy and Growth.

Equality and Diversity / Public Sector Equality Duty

An HIA seeks to improve inequality where possible.

Climate Change

None

Human Rights

None

Crime and Disorder

None

Staffing

None

Accommodation

None

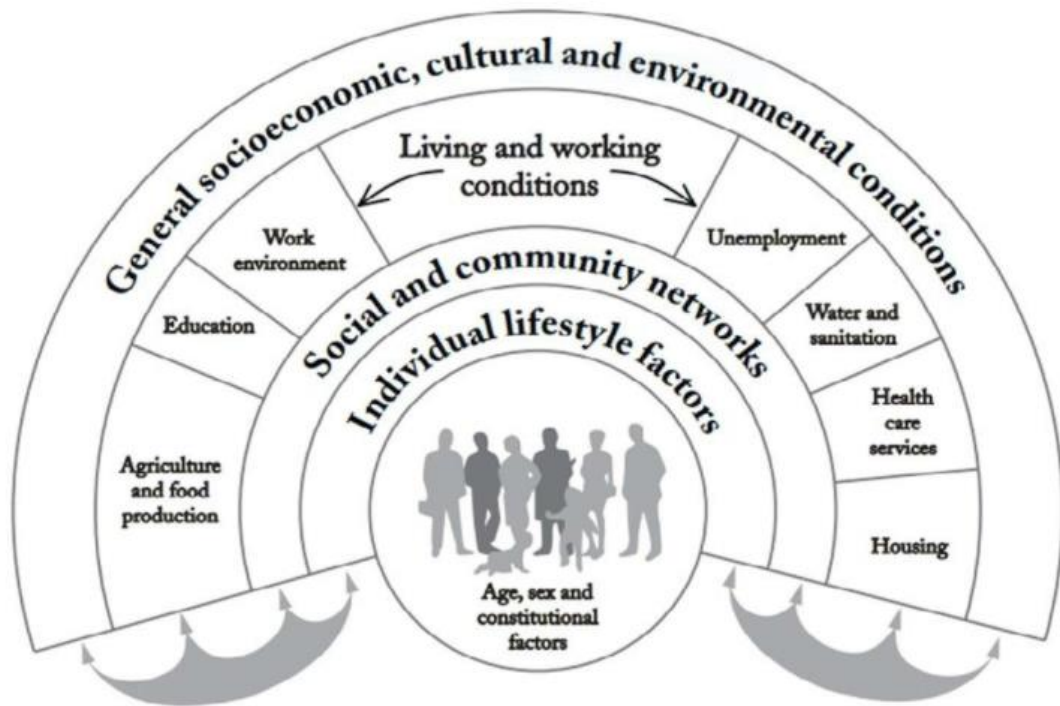
Risk

This review has been produced one year after adoption of the County Durham Plan. This is a relatively limited time period for what is a cross cutting set of recommendations

Procurement

None

Appendix 2: the wider determinants of health



Source: Dahlgren and Whitehead

Appendix 3: Policies reviewed in CDP HIA

POLICY NO.	POLICY NAME
Policy 4	Aykley Heads
Policy 5	Housing Allocations
Policy 6	Durham City's Sustainable Urban Extensions
Policy 16	Addressing Housing Need
Policy 17	Durham University Development Purpose Built Student
Policy 23	Delivering Sustainable Transport
Policy 24	Durham City Sustainable Transport
Policy 26	Provision of Transport Infrastructure
Policy 51	Meeting and Need for Primary Aggregates
Policy 53	Surface Mined Coal and Fireclay
Policy 58	Preferred Area for Future Carboniferous Limestone Working

Please note:

These policy numbers have changed in some instances. They read correct in the main report.

Appendix 4: Briefing note 'Healthy Active Travel Connectivity Plan for the Sniperley Development Site'

The purpose of this briefing is to provide an update on work which is currently underway to produce an accessible connectivity plan and opportunities to promote positive health and wellbeing within and around the development of the proposed Sniperley site.

Background:

Sniperley is a large site north west of Durham City which has planning permission for residential development (1700-2000 houses). The site is well located with good access to nearby schools and services in Framwellgate Moor and Pity Me as well as the nearby Arnison Centre and Durham City. The land currently hosts arable farmland and a nature reserve and is well used for dog walking and physical activity. Much of the woodland will remain in a linear park and will offer some space for recreational use and active travel.

Beyond the site, Sniperley is adjacent to the A167 with good transport links to Durham City, Chester le Street and Darlington including the Park and Ride, Great North Cycleway and walking and cycling routes. Many key destinations from the site are less than a mile and most under 5 miles presenting a good case for active travel.

It is now well known that the design and quality of the environment is a determining factor in the choices made by individuals and communities in how they use their local environment. Active Design can help to create conditions that will naturally support participation in physical activity as an integral part of everyday life. Sport England's [Active Design](#) includes ten Active Design Principles which are grounded in the promotion of a healthy community as expressed within the National Planning Policy Framework¹⁴, and the advice contained within its supporting the Planning Practice Guidance. For example, Core Planning Principles (NPPF paragraph 17) include supporting local strategies to improve health, delivering community and cultural facilities, making the fullest possible use of public transport, walking and cycling and seeking high quality design. Use of these principles in the design of Sniperley would be a good template during development.

For adults, the protective effect of physical activity on a range of many chronic conditions including cardiovascular disease, obesity and type 2 diabetes, mental health problems and social isolation gives a good case for ensuring that opportunities are taken at the design stage to provide the space required

to enable activity. There are also wider benefits of regular physical activity to society for both individuals and communities including improved air quality from reduced road congestion and increased productivity and reduced absenteeism in the workplace. As a result, these health and social benefits have been attributed to cost savings for the health and care system. Furthermore, they directly and indirectly support key objectives identified in the climate change emergency declared by Durham County Council in 2019.

Overall, the Sniperley site offers significant opportunities to create a comprehensive network of access infrastructure and green space to enable healthy active lives by creating a healthy community. For these reasons, working jointly with the sustainable travel officer, this work will focus on creating a connectivity plan which will have health benefits for individuals and communities within and around the Sniperley development. The rationale is that this could be used as a gold standard template not only for this site but for all future developments across County Durham.

WSP (<https://www.wsp.com/>) is an external provider that has been commissioned to conduct this piece of work. It is being part funded by underspend from the public health reserve funding which was allocated for cycle and design training back in December 2019. Due to Covid 19, the training took place at a reduced cost online and therefore it was agreed that the underspend could be used for an alternative piece of work linked to Active Travel. The total cost of the project is £4,500 with half of that being funded from Public Health reserves.

The Output

The purpose of this piece of work will be to Produce a Healthy Active Travel Plan showing:

- Walking and cycling routes within and around the site – to include outline of requirements for creation or improvement
- Crossing points and connections to wider network
- Opportunities for mobility hub and zero emission delivery hub
- Opportunities for a Park and Pedal site
- Appropriate infrastructure such as secure cycle storage
- Opportunities for healthy lifestyle such as:
 - Opportunities for walkable communities which link to other local facilities such as schools, shops, community facilities, workplaces, open spaces
 - Activity for all- open spaces should be accessible to all users and should support sport and physical activity across all ages

- Access to Multifunctional space- multifunctional open space should be created to support a range of activities to support health including physical activity, woodland, wildlife habitat and productive landscapes (allotments, orchards, community gardens).
- Provide high level but evidenced costs for schemes included on the plan.

Some work has been carried out previously on the Sniperley site (see appendix 1).

The plan will reflect the Site Masterplan and make reference to the Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan for Durham City. It will also take other relevant plans and strategies into consideration.

The plan should provide a case study to be used as an example for future work on the DCC Connectivity Strategy.

An internal strategic group for the Sniperley development is being led by Stephen Reed (Planning development Manager). The plan will be presented to the group in due course to ensure that it is incorporated into site development to maximise the opportunities for positive health and wellbeing impacts.

Action Taken and Next Steps

- WSP are currently working on developing the plan for an end of May/ early June deadline.
- Once a plan is developed, it will be shared across the Public Health team.

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