

## Health and Wellbeing Board

4 September 2018



### Public Health and Spatial Policy teams working together to address health and health inequalities

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### Joint Report of Amanda Healy, Director of Public Health, Adult and Health Services, Durham County Council, and Stuart Timmiss Head of Planning and Assets, Regeneration and Local Services, Durham County Council

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#### Purpose of the Report

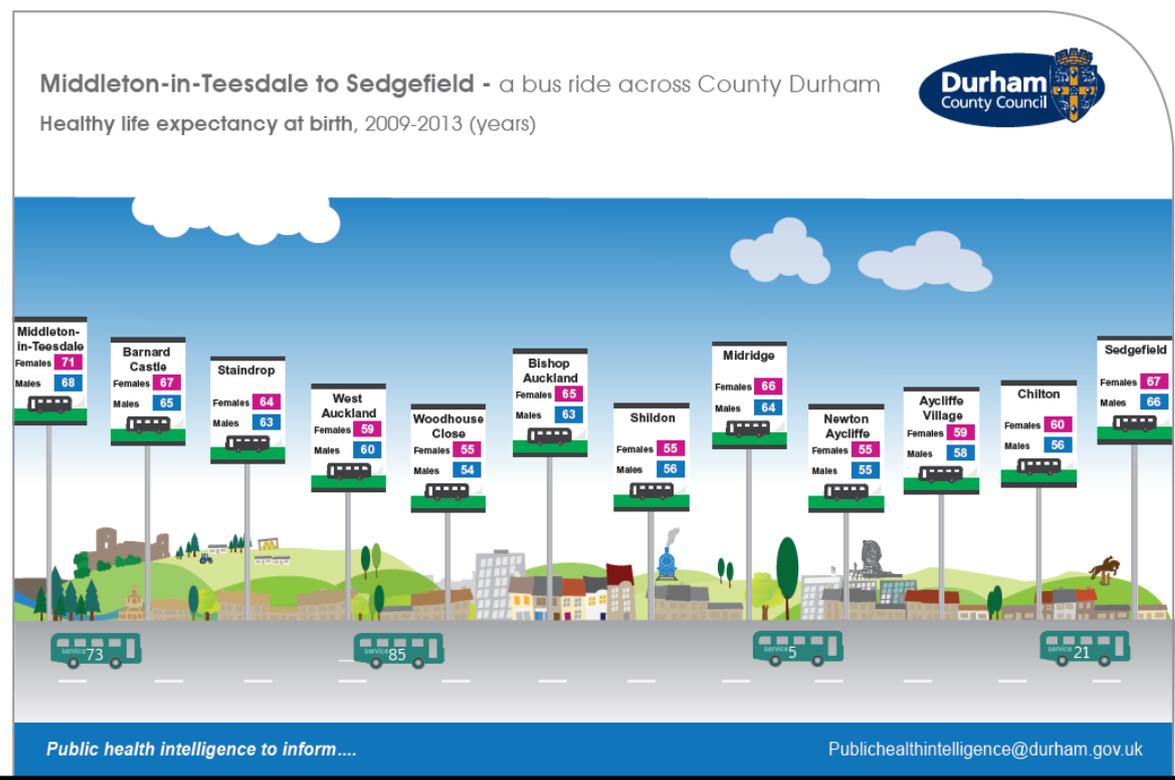
- 1 To provide the Health and Wellbeing Board with an update on the partnership working between Durham County Council public health and spatial policy teams to address health and health inequalities across the county.
- 2 To present two strands of work jointly developed relating to the County Durham Plan around Health Impact Assessment and the Hot Food Takeaways (A5 uses) Policy.

#### Background

- 3 Health is influenced by a wide range of interconnected factors. These wider social determinants of health include lifestyle choices, economic factors and social and environmental factors relating to the natural and built environment with which we interact.
- 4 The wider, social determinants of health have a key role in underpinning individual and societal wellbeing. Variations in experience of the wider determinants of health is a fundamental cause of health outcomes (*the causes of the causes*) and underpins inequalities in health. Addressing the wider determinants of health is key to reducing health inequalities.
- 5 The built environment is one of the many interrelated factors that influence people's behaviour and the choices that they are able to make. The health and wellbeing of communities cannot be an afterthought; it must begin with the planning process.

#### Addressing inequalities in County Durham.

- 6 Inequalities in County Durham are greatly impacted by the environment in which residents live work and socialise. This is depicted in the '*bus ride across County Durham*' infographic developed by DCC Public Health Intelligence team (see overleaf) which highlights the influence of 'place', outlining the different experiences in healthy life expectancy for both men and women among differing communities within the county.



- 7 Strong political leadership for health and wellbeing is evident in County Durham. The County Durham Partnership Sustainable Community Strategy (SCS) sets out the long term vision for an *altogether better* County Durham by 2030. The SCS and work across all thematic partnerships has a strong focus upon the wider determinants of health including the environment.
- 8 The vision for County Durham Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2016 – 2019 is to *'improve the health of the people of County Durham and reduce health inequalities'*. The JHWS has informed Local Authority plans, Clinical Commissioning Group intentions and plans, SCS and NHS provider plans.
- 9 Durham County Council Public Health vision is to *'improve and protect the wellbeing of the people of County Durham and reduce health inequalities'* by taking forward a strategic approach based upon best evidence and evaluation and that is underpinned by a community led asset based approach that sets out a clear and positive narrative to address prevention and inequalities across the life course.

### Spatial Policy and Public Health working together.

- 10 The Health & Social Care Act (2012) gave statutory duties for local authorities to take appropriate steps to improve population health. The vision being that local authorities would put health and wellbeing at the heart of everything they do.
- 11 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (2018) acknowledges the role of planning in improving health, and requires local authorities to promote healthy and safe communities through planning policies and decisions which: promote social

inclusion; achieve safe and accessible communities; and enable and support healthy lifestyles.

- 12 Whilst not an intervention itself, planning is an enabler. Good spatial planning helps improve the 'liveability' of areas because the way places are planned positively or negatively affects that area's health.
- 13 Creating environments that support people to develop and sustain healthy behaviours is a key challenge for policy makers. Locally the challenge is how to build on national guidance and best practice to bring about real change within local communities.

### **The County Durham Plan - Spatial Policy and Public Health working together to deliver a Health Impact Assessment on the County Durham Plan (the Local Plan)**

- 14 Local authorities need to ensure that the health impacts of different policies are assessed and health considerations 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 isolated strands of good practice.
- 15 The NPPF (2018) makes it clear that local planning authorities have a responsibility to promote healthy communities. Achieving sustainable development includes *"fostering a well-designed and safe built environment, with accessible services and open spaces that reflect current and future needs and support communities' health, social and cultural wellbeing"*.
- 16 In order to ensure that County Durham is a successful place to live, work, invest and visit, the Local Plan focusses on supporting and creating vibrant communities by delivering:
  - More and better jobs and sustained economic growth;
  - A wide choice of high quality homes that supports economic growth and meets the needs of all people;
  - A high quality built and enhanced natural environment; and
  - The necessary supporting infrastructure including transport, health and educational needs
- 17 To ensure that health considerations have been embedded into the Plan, health considerations have been included as a key part of the Sustainability Appraisal process.
- 18 A public consultation was undertaken on the County Durham Plan Preferred Options which concluded on the 3<sup>rd</sup> August 2018. In total, 4000 comments have been received from 1100 consultees. All comments received are now available to view on our website and will be considered in the preparation of the Pre-Submission draft of the County Durham Plan.

## **Ensuring healthy policies**

- 19 Health Impact Assessment (HIA) training has recently taken place with a number of colleagues across Durham County Council. This was aimed at ensuring that there was a shared skill set and narrative in our approach to a HIA. Feedback from this was universally positive with many participants highlighting that the approach had enabled further constructive discussion between planners and public health professionals.
- 20 A HIA considers the impact directly upon disease and also considers the social determinants of health which impact our residents, unequally, across County Durham. By using these social determinants a HIA can support the development of healthy public policy.
- 21 A task and finish group has been established to ensure the delivery of the HIA. This group has membership from spatial policy, sustainability, public health, research and public health intelligence and the AAPs.
- 22 As part of the HIA process, a range of policies within the County Durham Plan have been identified by the task and finish group to move forward to the next stages of the HIA process.
- 23 This collective approach has provided the task and finish group with opportunities to engage colleagues across the authority, share expertise and explore pragmatic approaches to improving health promoting policies within Durham County Council.
- 24 The task and finish group are currently progressing the HIA process on these policies. The HIA process will be completed and the work plan developed to enable timely reporting to inform further progression of the County Durham Plan.

## **Spatial Policy and Public Health working together to address obesity in County Durham**

- 25 Obesity is a population health and inequalities problem which has profound long term consequences for the health and wellbeing of communities in County Durham.
- 26 Within County Durham levels of obesity among our child and adult populations continue to increase and remain significantly worse than the England average.
  - For children in our reception years and Year 6 National Child Measurement Programme (NCMP) data 2016/17 shows that in these year groups alone, there are around 3400 children; 103 classrooms; across the County, who are overweight or obese.
  - For our adult population, being overweight is the norm with almost 7 in 10 adults in County Durham overweight or obese.

On average, obesity reduces life expectancy by 6 – 7 years, however children from lower income households are more than twice as likely to be obese than those in high income households.

## **The out of home food environment and obesity**

- 27 While people may aspire to eat a healthy diet, many still find it difficult to do so. Many people live in environments which encourage excess weight gain and obesity, where less than healthier choices are the default; the easy option - for some they are the only option.
- 28 The public sector and local food businesses have great influence over the lives of local communities and the food choices available. During the past decade in the UK consumption of food away from the home has increased by 29%, whilst the number of takeaway or fast food outlets has increased dramatically.
- 29 New data from Public Health England (PHE) reveal England's poorest areas have around five times more outlets than in the most affluent communities. This data also suggests fast food outlets – including chip shops, burger bars and pizza places – account for more than a quarter (26%) of all eateries in England.
- 30 The recent PHE data shows that in County Durham we have 624 fast food outlets. This number appears high when compared to neighbouring local authorities, however there is a need to be mindful of the geographical scale of County Durham. When numbers of fast food outlets for every 100,000 population are considered, our rate of 119.6, whilst still significantly higher than England as a whole (96.5), is comparable with or lower than other North East areas.

## **Draft Hot food takeaways (A5 Uses) Policy County Durham**

- 31 In '*Working towards a healthy weight in County Durham*' (2018) working with planning and licensing colleagues to develop public health driven policies specifically around hot food takeaways and street trading was identified by County Durham Healthy Weight Alliance as a gap and a key goal in taking forward the whole system approach to addressing obesity in County Durham.
- 32 Durham County Council public health and spatial policy teams are working in partnership and have carried out work together to address the issue of hot food takeaway proliferation. In the County Durham Preferred Options – a specific policy has been developed and consulted upon to address future development of hot food takeaways (see Appendix 2).
- 33 This draft policy seeks to minimise the potential detrimental impacts of hot food takeaways specifically in areas of existing high proliferation and to promote healthy lifestyles among children and young people, proposing restrictions for future applications within:
- Sub-regional, large town, small town and district centres where the proposal would result in more than 5% of the premises within the centre being A5 use.
  - 400m of existing or proposed school or college buildings.

This policy is underpinned by the public health evidence base around fast food and its impact upon health (<https://durhamcc.objective.co.uk/portal/planning/cdpev/> number 23 in list). All comments received to this policy are publically available and

their content is being considered in preparation for the Pre-Submission County Durham Plan.

- 34 The Hot Food Takeaway Policy will support our young people, families and communities to be able to live and interact within environments where healthier choices are the easy choice.
- 35 Whilst this policy supports restrictions proposed for new premises, work is being developed by public health concurrently to support Licensing staff and Environmental Health and Consumer Protection staff to begin a dialogue with existing out of home food providers to more widely promote a healthier food and drink offer.
- 36 The work outlined here to address the existing and future out of home food offer in County Durham is a fundamental element within the multi-agency work ongoing across the whole system to address obesity in County Durham that is being driven forward by the Healthy Weight Alliance (HWA), a sub group of the County Durham Health and Wellbeing Board.
- 37 This work addresses identified gaps and goals within the system and, as part of the wider systems working to address obesity in County Durham, will support the Healthy Weight Alliance to achieve the long term vision to: *halt the rise in obesity in County Durham by 2022 and, by focussing resources upon addressing inequalities, see a sustained decline in obesity rates locally to below England national average by 2025.*

## Recommendations

- 38 Members of the Health and Wellbeing Board are requested to:
  - a) Note the content of this report
  - b) Note the continued joint working between Durham County Council public health, spatial policy, sustainability, research and public health intelligence and research, and AAPs.
  - c) Support and engage with the HIA process on the County Durham Plan and, as part of the HIA process, participate in the planned Health and Wellbeing Board development session (26<sup>th</sup> September).
  - d) Note the content of the draft Hot Food Takeaway (A5 Uses) Policy and the public health evidence base which have been subject to consultation as part of the County Durham Plan Preferred Options consultation.

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## **Appendix 1: Implications**

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**Finance** – N/A - partnership working to date has been developed within existing resource capacity

**Staffing** – N/A - partnership working to date has been developed within existing resource capacity

**Risk** – The long term impact of the policies may mean that the improvement to health outcomes are not immediately evident.

**Equality and Diversity / Public Sector Equality Duty** – the process will be aware of equality and diversity. An HIA is built upon the principles of delivering equity.

**Accommodation** – N/A.

**Crime and Disorder** – N/A.

**Human Rights** – N/A.

**Consultation** –the Hot Food Takeaway Policy (A5 Uses) will be subject to a further round of consultation as part of the Regulation 19 stage the County Durham Plan. Part of the HIA process may involve engagement with the community. It is anticipated AAPs are pivotal in exploring the possible health impacts to a local area.

**Procurement** – N/A.

**Disability Issues** – The HIA will seek to ensure equity across the identified policies.

**Legal Implications** – Local plans must be positively prepared, justified, effective and consistent with national policy in accordance with section 20 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 (as amended) and the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). The NPPF gives guidance to local authorities in drawing up their local plans.

**Policy 32  
Hot Food Takeaways (A5 Uses)**

Within sub-regional, large town, small town and district centres (as defined in Policy 10 (Retail Hierarchy and Town Centre Development) and as shown on the policies map), in order to minimise the potential detrimental impacts of hot food takeaways, planning applications for A5 uses will only be approved where the proposal would not result in more than 5% of the premises within the centre being in A5 use.

Within defined local centres consideration should be given to the impact that the proposed A5 use would have in terms of the overall vitality and viability considering the numbers of existing A5 uses and will be refused if the impact is unacceptable.

In order to promote healthy lifestyles in young people, proposals for A5 uses outside of defined centres but within 400m of an existing or proposed school or college building will not be permitted.

Where a proposed A5 use is considered locationally acceptable, consideration will need to be given to the impact that the development would have in terms of amenity, particularly in relation to noise and odours. Where it is considered that the proposal would give rise to unacceptable impact, the application should be refused.

Reducing levels of obesity is a key objective of the council. One way this can be achieved is to encourage healthy eating. 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. They can also give rise to concerns about noise, disturbance, odours, parking and litter and are likely to be considerations in the determination of any planning application. In assessing proposals within commercial centres, consideration will therefore be given to the detrimental impact that an over-provision of A5 uses may have.

An assessment has been carried out of the numbers of A5 units within our commercial centres. This has identified that some have relatively high existing numbers of A5 uses within them ranging from 1.6% in Peterlee to 9.1% in Ferryhill.

It is considered that a threshold of 5% is appropriate to ensure a diverse mix of uses with our centres. If a proposal would exceed this threshold, in terms of number of units, it will not be permitted, this will include units that are vacant but have planning permission for A5. Six centres (Consett, Ferryhill, Crook, Newton Aycliffe, Spennymoor and Shildon) already have more than 5% of units as hot food takeaways, therefore no further A5 uses would be permitted in these centres.

The nature of our Local centres in terms of their size and function means that the application of a 5% threshold is not appropriate in assessing such applications. In assessing proposals for A5 uses within Local centres, consideration should be given to the impact that such a proposal would have on the overall vitality and viability of the centre, considering the mix of uses and also the levels of existing vacancies.

The council have carried out an assessment of Fast Food and its Impact on Health which looks at the density of fast food outlets in County Durham. This provides evidence of a correlation between the density of fast foods outlets and obesity levels amongst children within locations in the County. As the promotion of healthy eating amongst young people is a key national and local priority it is reasonable to limit the number of hot food takeaways close to schools and colleges. Therefore proposals for A5 uses outside of retail centres but within a five to ten minute walking distance of the school, equating to 400m radius, will not be permitted.

**How will the Policy be monitored?**

**Indicator:**

1. Percentage of units within Sub Regional, Large Town, Small Town and District centres in use or with planning permission for A5 (hot food takeaways)

**Target:**

1. A5 not increasing to or exceeding 5%