

# Northamptonshire Rapid Health Impact Assessment (HIA) Tool for Planning Guidance Notes – v1 August 2019

## **1. What is the Rapid Health Impact Assessment for Planning Tool?**

Health Impact Assessment (HIA) is a practical way to identify and assess the effects a proposal may have on the health and wellbeing of different groups of people. The findings of HIAs help decision makers to judge the health impacts of proposals and to consider how any positive health impacts may be increased and any negative impacts reduced.

This HIA for Planning Tool has been designed to assist the undertaking of health impact assessments in relation to planning proposals, such as a proposal / planning application for a new development.

## **2. Why use the Rapid Health Impact Assessment for Planning Tool?**

Quite simply, planning policy and planning decisions can have a major impact on community health and wellbeing by creating the places where people live, work and visit. These places in turn affect people's opportunities, choices and lifestyles.

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) sets out requirements to address health and wellbeing in planning decisions:

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*Extract from the National Planning Policy Framework:*

### **8. Promoting healthy and safe communities**

*91. Planning policies and decisions should aim to achieve healthy, inclusive and safe places which:*

*c) enable and support healthy lifestyles, especially where this would address identified local health and well-being needs – for example through the provision of safe and accessible green infrastructure, sports facilities, local shops, access to healthier food, allotments and layouts that encourage walking and cycling.*

*92. To provide the social, recreational and cultural facilities and services the community needs, planning policies and decisions should:*

*b) take into account and support the delivery of local strategies to improve health, social and cultural well-being for all sections of the community;*

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There may also be local planning policy requirements in relation to health and wellbeing. Health Impact Assessment can help demonstrate how a proposal meets these national or local planning policies. It could also be used to address the health element of a broader assessment / appraisal process such as Sustainability Appraisal or Environmental Impact Assessment.

## **3. Northamptonshire Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy / Health and Care Partnership**

The Northamptonshire Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy also recognises the importance of local places and environments in influencing health and wellbeing in the county, as does the work of the Northamptonshire Health & Care Partnership.

In order to support good health and wellbeing in our communities, planning decisions need to maximise the positive health and wellbeing impacts of new development and minimise any negative impacts. This will contribute to local health and wellbeing objectives of:

- Improving the health and wellbeing of individuals and communities.
- Reducing the pressures on healthcare services in the county.
- Reducing health inequalities

Health Impact Assessment helps to achieve this by:

- Demonstrating that health impacts have been properly considered when preparing, evaluating and determining development proposals.
- Ensuring developments contribute to the creation of a strong, healthy and just society.
- Identifying and highlighting any beneficial impacts on health and wellbeing of a development scheme.
- Identifying and taking action to minimise any negative impacts on health and wellbeing of a development scheme.

#### **4. When to use the tool?**

HIA should be undertaken when the development proposal is still being developed. Ideally it should be well enough developed that you can understand the potential impacts, but not so far developed that you can't make changes to it as a result of the assessment. It should not be left until after the proposal is completed, as this could miss opportunities to revise / improve the proposal to better achieve health and wellbeing benefits.

#### **5. How to use the Health Impact Assessment for planning tool?**

**5.1 Nature of Impact** - For each theme / issue, identify the key aspects of the development that will impact on that issue and whether this impact will be positive/negative/both. Provide any supporting evidence and information for this assessment.

**5.2 Scale of Impact** – Indicate as far as possible the likely scale of impact of the development proposal on the theme / issue. This could be in respect of:

- The numbers of people that will be affected. (e.g. the residents of the new development / the wider community)
- The geographical area that will be impacted.
- The severity of the impact/s

**5.3 Timing of impact** – Indicate as far as possible when the impact will take place and the likely duration; e.g.

- during the construction phase / after construction is complete
- short term / long term / ongoing impacts

**5.4 Actions taken or proposed** – Describe actions that have been / will be taken to respond to the identified impacts – both to reduce negative impacts and to achieve / maximise positive impacts. Provide evidence of these actions and their likely outcomes.

## **6. The themes / topics:**

The following sections make suggestions of what could be considered in respect of each health and wellbeing theme / topic. They are indicative and the relevant issues will need to be considered for each development.

### **6.1 Physical activity**

Being physically active is an important element in achieving health and wellbeing. A lack of physical activity is a major threat to our health, increasing the risk of developing a range of long-term diseases including diabetes, depression, heart disease and cancer.

New developments can support and encourage communities to be more active in a range of ways through:

- Providing a suitable environment to allow people to walk and cycle more easily and safely, such as facilities, signage / waymarkers, infrastructure, connected routes etc.
- Creating attractive environments where people are likely to want to spend time outdoors.
- Providing formal and informal play, sport and leisure opportunities that people can access easily (sports pitches / facilities, outdoor gyms, trim trails, etc.)
- Providing facilities in locations that can be accessed by walking and cycling

Links:

<https://www.sportengland.org/facilities-and-planning/active-design/>

<https://www.sportengland.org/planningforsport/>

### **6.2 Food, Diet and Obesity**

As they are across the country in general, levels of overweight / obesity within the county are of great concern, as identified in the Northamptonshire Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy and the Northamptonshire Director of Public Health Annual report 2018/19. Obesity increases the risk of developing a whole host of diseases. Obese people are:

- at increased risk of certain cancers, including being 3 times more likely to develop colon cancer
- more than 2.5 times more likely to develop high blood pressure - a risk factor for heart disease
- 5 times more likely to develop type 2 diabetes

Public health approaches acknowledge that overweight / obesity is a complex issue that must be tackled in a variety of ways. However, one key factor is the food and drink environment, which can be greatly influenced by the planning process. There is concern that we are creating environments where less than healthier choices are the norm, which encourage excess weight gain and obesity.

Issues to be considered include:

- Community food growing spaces such as allotments and community gardens.
- Access to local food shops
- Proliferation and density of hot food take-aways

Links:

<https://www.tcpa.org.uk/pages/category/health-publications>

### **6.3 Green Infrastructure**

There is increasing recognition of the health and wellbeing benefits of access to green spaces. This includes benefits to both mental and physical health, through enabling people to be more active, relax and enjoy green spaces, as well as socialise and engage with the community in their local green

spaces. Green infrastructure can also contribute to flood prevention and provide shading / cooling in hot weather.

Consideration should be given to various aspects of green infrastructure including;

- different types of green space
- amounts of greenspace provided
- accessibility
- design
- quality
- management
- community involvement.
- physical activity infrastructure

#### **6.4 Transport & Travel**

Transport and travel infrastructure can have a major impact on health and wellbeing. This can be positive:

- supporting people to be physically active when they travel
- providing good, inclusive access to services, facilities and social opportunities

But it can also be negative:

- causing congestion, which can make travel and access difficult and stressful
- creating pollution (noise, air) which can be harmful to health and wellbeing
- injuries and deaths due to accidents
- road infrastructure causing isolation for those without car access

Consideration should be given to a range of aspects of transport proposals:

- Active / sustainable travel – does the proposed development genuinely prioritise / support walking, cycling and public transport?
- Does the proposal provide good and fair access to services and amenities for all?
- Does the proposal limit pollution from transport, including air and noise pollution? (inc. Electric vehicle charging infrastructure)
- Does the proposal create safe transport systems for all users, that will minimise the likelihood of accidents.
- Does the proposal link the proposed development to neighbouring communities and facilities effectively?

Links:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/spatial-planning-for-health-evidence-review>

#### **6.5 Streets / public spaces**

The design and layout of streets and public spaces can influence wellbeing in various ways:

- Enabling safe travel and access to services
- Creating attractive, interesting and stimulating environments
- Providing shade, shelter and places to stop and rest.
- Enable people to feel safe and relaxed.
- Limits air and noise pollution

Links:

<http://content.tfl.gov.uk/healthy-streets-for-london.pdf>

## **6.6 Social interaction & infrastructure**

There is increasing concern about the impacts of social isolation on health and wellbeing. Designing new developments in a way that supports people to engage with their local communities can help address this issue. Relevant issues include:

- Providing attractive and landscaped developments – attractive environments provide sense of pride and increase people’s satisfaction and sense of wellbeing
- Providing communal spaces to enable people to meet e.g. public meeting spaces, communal gardens / allotments
- Ensuring that facilities are accessible for all e.g. disabled, elderly, parents with young children, financially disadvantaged etc.
- Providing community centres and social infrastructure to enable communities to come together
- Providing spaces for the co-location of public / community services

Links:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/spatial-planning-for-health-evidence-review>

## **6.7 Healthcare infrastructure**

Appropriate access to healthcare is an important part of a sustainable community. Significant new development will lead to an increased population, which may require additional capacity within local healthcare services to meet the need of the new / increased population. Consideration should be given to:

- existing local healthcare capacity and accessibility
- the potential need for this to be enhanced to meet the demand from the new development
- dialogue with relevant health sector agencies (Northamptonshire Clinical Commissioning Groups)

Local healthcare models are changing, and consideration may need to be given to these models, beyond simply considering GP practice provision.

## **6.8 Economy & employment**

Consider the degree to which the proposals will:

- Provide quality new employment opportunities for local people (including during construction)
- Support local economic development strategies and priorities
- Ensure that people can access workplaces through a variety of transport modes including walking, cycling and public transport
- Ensure that employment sites maintain a high standard of design and facilities e.g. provision of green spaces / active travel infrastructure / facilities / sustainability standards to benefit the surrounding communities and wellbeing of employees.

## **6.9 Community safety and crime reduction**

Consider how the proposals:

- Seek to design out crime
- Will support community cohesion and interaction
- Reduce the risks of accidents through good design, including that which protects pedestrians and cyclists and effectively manages traffic speeds
- Are accessible and inclusive for all

Links:

<https://www.securedbydesign.com/>

### **6.10 Homes**

The nature and quality of our homes can have a big impact on health and wellbeing. Factors to consider include:

- Is there adequate living space to avoid overcrowding and make the home genuinely usable?
- Does the design of the home adequately address issues such as daylight, ventilation, noise etc?
- Is there a suitable mix of homes – different tenures, designs, sizes etc
- Adequate security
- Energy efficiency and warmth (Can homes deal with hot summer temperatures and cold winter temperatures?)
- Are the housing needs of older people addressed within the proposed development?
- Accessible and adaptable design for people with disabilities / mobility issues – and design to avoid falls and accidents
- Adequate external space / gardens and storage for items like bikes and bins

Links:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/spatial-planning-for-health-evidence-review>

### **6.11 Health inequalities**

- Are the proposals likely to improve or reinforce health inequalities?
- Are current health inequalities amongst different sections of the community identified / considered?
- Will certain groups of people be affected more than others by the impacts of the development

### **6.12 Hazards to health**

While new development can be very positive for health and wellbeing, it can also create hazards to health:

- Will construction activity be managed effectively to minimise the impact on the community?
- Is flood risk effectively assessed and managed through the development proposals?
- Have the risks of pollution (e.g. air pollution / noise pollution) been identified and will they be managed effectively?
- Is the layout of the development designed to minimise accidents where relevant?

## **7. Summary & Recommendations**

In completing the Summary & Recommendation section of the Rapid HIA tool, the key issues identified through the assessment should be described, along with key recommendations for addressing them through the further development and implementation of the proposed development scheme.

## **8. Help & Assistance**

For more information and advice about using this guidance, contact:

Stephen Marks, Health & Planning Programme Manager, [stephenmarks@nnjpu.org.uk](mailto:stephenmarks@nnjpu.org.uk)

Mitch Harper, Public Health Officer, [MHarper@northamptonshire.gov.uk](mailto:MHarper@northamptonshire.gov.uk)

Northamptonshire County Council Public Health Team - 01604 361500

## 9. General Links:

[www.health.org.uk/publications/what-makes-us-healthy](http://www.health.org.uk/publications/what-makes-us-healthy)

<https://www.england.nhs.uk/wp-content/uploads/2018/09/putting-health-into-place-v4.pdf>

<https://www.designcouncil.org.uk/resources/guide/building-life-12-third-edition>

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/729727/spatial\\_planning\\_for\\_health.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/729727/spatial_planning_for_health.pdf)

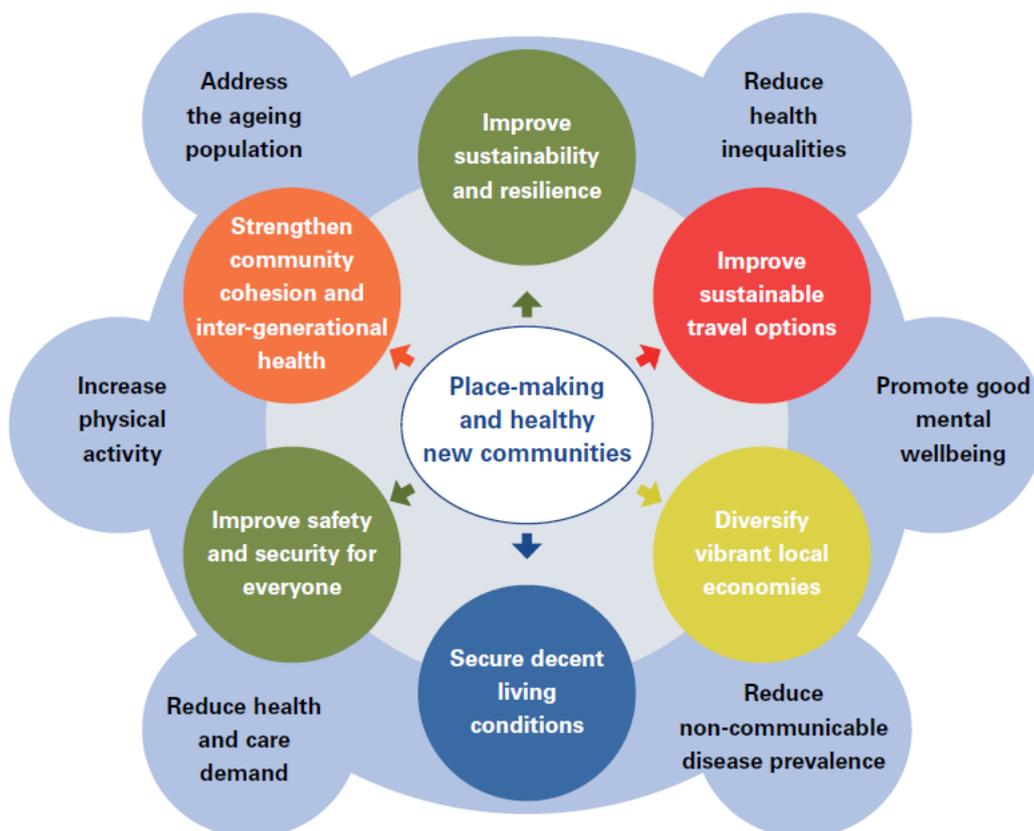
<https://www.tcpa.org.uk/healthyplanning>

<https://www.england.nhs.uk/ourwork/innovation/healthy-new-towns/>

<https://www3.northamptonshire.gov.uk/councilservices/health/health-and-wellbeing-board/Pages/health-and-wellbeing-strategy.aspx>

<https://www.northamptonshirehcp.co.uk/>

<https://www3.northamptonshire.gov.uk/councilservices/health/health-and-wellbeing-board/Pages/jsna-and-reports.aspx>



From: TCPA, December 2017: Practical Guides for Creating Successful New Communities  
**Guide 8: Creating Health-Promoting Environments**