

Report to: East Sussex Health and Wellbeing Board

Date: 27 June 2023

By: Director of Public Health

Title: East Sussex Public Health and Planning Memorandum of Understanding (MOU)

Purpose of Report: To inform the Board of the development of a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) covering the Public Health aspects of planning.

Recommendations:

East Sussex Health and Wellbeing Board is recommended to:

1) Note the Memorandum of Understanding between the County Council and Borough and District Councils in respect of planning from a Public Health perspective.

1 Background

1.1 Public Health has a role and responsibility to work for all and speak to all parts of the wider systems (enable and facilitate as well as the need to enable, lead and support):

- [Health in all policies: a manual for local government | Local Government Association](#)
- [District councils' contribution to public health |](#)
- [The King's Fund \(kingsfund.org.uk\)](#)
- [The district council contribution to public health \(kingsfund.org.uk\)](#)
- [District councils' role in health and social care \(kingsfund.org.uk\)](#)

It has the responsibility to 'make health everybody's business' and for health to feature strongly in 'all policies' if we are to create healthy, prosperous and equitable people and places.

1.2 Population health and wellbeing is impacted not only by individual behaviour, but by the wider determinants such as those within the built and natural environment as depicted below.

1.3 Some of the most pressing health challenges such as obesity, mental health issues, physical inactivity, and the needs of an ageing population, can all be influenced by the quality of our built and natural environment. These wider determinants of health are influenced by the planning system and therefore improving both physical and mental health and wellbeing is integral to land use planning. This is through areas such as place-making, design, regeneration, sustainable development, green infrastructure, active and sustainable travel, and development management. The links between health and planning are recognised in the National Planning Policy Framework 2021 (NPPF) and its accompanying Practice Guidance (NPPG).

1.4 It is acknowledged that whilst most of the public health agenda is nothing new for land use planning there is growing policy, guidance, and evidence of the specific links between the two areas and therefore there is now a real opportunity to strengthen how health and wellbeing is addressed within the planning system. This will add value not only to existing work which already considers health impacts and inequalities but will also support work addressing shared objectives with health on tackling the climate change emergency and delivering an economic recovery post Covid 19.

1.5 It is also acknowledged that other health teams and organisations input into the planning system to improve health and wellbeing such as environmental health teams, health and wellbeing teams in district authorities and the National Health Service (NHS). This MOU will support and link in with the work being done by these other partners.

1.6 Purpose of the MOU

The MOU supports delivery of the [East Sussex County Council Plan](#). More specifically:

- Driving sustainable economic growth - Individuals, communities and businesses thrive in East Sussex with the environmental, and social infrastructure to meet their needs.
- Keeping vulnerable people safe - People feel safe at home.
- Helping people help themselves - The most vulnerable get the support they need to maintain their independence, and this is provided at or as close to home as possible.

It also supports delivery of the [Sussex Integrated Care Strategy](#):

- People to live for longer in good health.
- To reduce the gap in healthy life expectancy between people living in the most and least disadvantaged communities.

More specifically its ambitions to:

- Creating healthy environments for children, young people and families to grow up in.
- Supporting people to live, work and play in places that promote health and wellbeing.

1.7 The MOU has been developed between the Council's public health department and Borough and District Council planning officers to build consensus and mutual understanding. It will build consistency across the County in the approach to creating healthy and sustainable places, strengthening compliance to the Duty to Cooperate. It will also be a mechanism which will help to deliver against the East Sussex Health and Wellbeing Strategy, the Creating Healthy and Sustainable Places – A Framework for East Sussex, and Local Plan policy objectives concerning health, wellbeing, and sustainability.

1.8 The Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) sets out how the Public Health Team within East Sussex County Council (ESCC) and Local Planning Authorities (LPAs) will work together to deliver the County Council's statutory public health responsibilities and LPAs duties to deliver relevant elements of the National Planning Policy Framework through the planning system. The MOU includes all LPAs within East Sussex which are Eastbourne Borough Council, East Sussex County Council, Hastings Borough Council, Lewes District Council, Rother District Council, South Downs National Park Authority and Wealden District Council (see Appendix 1).

1.9 The MOU provides the policy context and links between planning and health. It provides an overarching agreement and intention to work together countywide to improve the health and wellbeing of our residents. It sets out the high-level actions that parties will take, including working together to agree specific actions around processes, engagement, and parameters to establish robust working outcomes and objectives. These will be developed into detailed agreements between Public Health and individual LPAs.

2 Links to National Policies and requirements

National Planning Policy Framework, 2021 (NPPF)

2.1 The NPPF requires public health to be considered in both plan-making and decision-taking and states the purpose of planning is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development, with delivery of the social objective of sustainable development being paramount to supporting health.

2.2 The social objective in paragraph 8b supports strong, vibrant, and healthy communities, by ensuring that a sufficient number and range of homes can be provided to meet the needs of present and future generations; and by fostering well-designed, beautiful, and safe places, with accessible services and open spaces that reflect current and future needs and support communities' health, social and cultural wellbeing.

2.3 Section 8 'Promoting healthy and Safe Communities' paragraph 92, requires planning policies and decisions to aim to achieve healthy, inclusive, and safe places which promote social interaction, that are safe and accessible, and enable and support healthy lifestyles, especially where this would address identified local health and wellbeing needs.

2.4 Paragraph 93 requires planning policies and decisions to provide the social, recreational, and cultural facilities and services the community needs, through planning positively for the provision and use of shared space, community facilities and other local services to enhance the sustainability of communities and residential environments.

2.5 Paragraph 98 recognises the importance of access to a network of high-quality open spaces and opportunities for sport and physical activity for health and wellbeing of communities which can also deliver wider benefits for nature and support efforts to address climate change.

2.6 Further links to health and wellbeing can be found throughout the framework including in sections on housing, transport, design, and the natural environment.

National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG), November 2019

2.7 The NPPF is supported by additional guidance set out in NPPG specifically in the 'Healthy and Safe Communities' category. This acknowledges that the design and use of built and natural environments are major determinants of health and wellbeing. It states that planning and health need to be considered together in terms of creating environments that support and encourage healthy lifestyles.

2.8 Paragraph 3 describes a healthy place as one which:

- Supports and promotes healthy behaviours and environments and a reduction in health inequalities for people of all ages.
- Provides opportunities to improve physical and mental health and supports engagement and wellbeing.
- Is inclusive and promotes social interaction.
- Meets the needs of children and young people to grow and develop as well as being adaptable to the needs of an increasingly elderly population and those with sensory or mobility impairments.

2.9 Paragraph 5 states that it is helpful to consult Public Health on planning applications that are likely to have a significant impact on the health and wellbeing of the local population or particular groups, this would allow partnership working on any necessary mitigation measures. It also mentions that a health impacts assessment is a useful tool to use where there are expected to be significant impacts.

2.10 County Policy Context:

- [Healthy lives, healthy people: East Sussex Health and Wellbeing Board Strategy | East Sussex County Council](#)
- Annual Report of Director of Public Health 'Health and Housing', 2019/20
- East Sussex Whole-System Healthy Weight Plan 2021-2026
- [Sussex Integrated Care Strategy](#)

- East Sussex Environment Strategy 2020
- East Sussex Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA)
- ESCC Local Plans
- ESCC Local Transport Plan

2.11 Local Policy Context:

- Eastbourne Corporate Plan 2022-2026
- Eastbourne Borough Council Biodiversity Strategy, 2021
- A Whole Systems Approach to Creating Health Equity, and Prosperity in Hastings
- Healthy Hastings and Rother – Working Together to Reduce Health Inequalities, Summer 2019
- Lewes District Council Corporate Plan, 2020-2024
- Lewes District Council Biodiversity Strategy, 2021
- Rother's Corporate Plan, 2020-2027
- People and Nature Network: Green Infrastructure in the South Downs and wider South East
- South Downs National Park, Partnership Management Plan, Outcome Health and Wellbeing
- South Downs National Park Authority Health and Wellbeing Strategy
- Wealden Health and Wellbeing Strategy

3 Conclusion and reasons for recommendations

3.1 The development of an East Sussex Public Health and Planning Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) in conjunction with the Borough and District Councils has the potential to improve outcomes for the population of East Sussex and can be referenced across to support the development of wider policies and programmes of work that support the delivery of the affiliated priorities and policies.

3.2 The Health and Wellbeing Board is recommended to note the Memorandum of Understanding between the County Council and the District and Borough Councils in respect of planning from a Public Health perspective.

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BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

- [Health in all policies- a manual for local government](#) (2016)
- [Health Impact Assessment in spatial planning: A guide for local authority public health and planning teams](#) (PHE 2020)
- [Our Planet, Our Health](#) (House of Commons Environmental Audit Committee 2019)

- [Healthy Placemaking: The evidence on the positive impact of healthy placemaking on people is clear – so how can we create places that deliver healthier lives and help prevent avoidable disease?](#) (Social Change UK 2018)
- [National Planning Policy Framework](#) (2021)
- www.tcpa.org.uk/healthyplanning
- [Building for Life: The sign of a good place to live](#) (January 2015)
- [Healthy Placemaking \(TCPA\)](#)
- [Spatial Planning for Health: An evidence resource for planning and designing healthier places](#) (PHE 2017)
- [Health and Wellbeing in Homes](#) (UK Green Building Council 2016)
- PHE and partners: [Healthy weight environments: using the planning system](#) (2020)
- [Building the Foundations: Tackling Obesity through Planning and Development](#) TCPA & LGA (2016)
- [Rising to the Climate Crisis: A Guide for Local Authorities on Planning for Climate Change](#)
- Town and Country Planning Association's report on '[Securing constructive collaboration and consensus for planning healthy development](#)' (2018)
- [Health in Environmental Impact Assessment. A briefing for public health teams in England](#) by PHE
- [Spatial Planning and Health Getting Research into Practice \(GRIP\): study report](#) (PHE 2019)

Appendix 1 – East Sussex Planning and Public Health Memo of Understanding