
West Sussex Health and Wellbeing Board

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Creating Healthy and Sustainable Places: A Public Health and Sustainability Framework for West Sussex

Report by Lourdes Madigasekera-Elliott, Programme Manager: Public Health and Sustainability, West Sussex County Council

Summary

West Sussex County Council is committed to reducing [health inequalities](#) which requires us to take a coordinated and cross-sector action at multiple points across a complex system and to apply and embed '[health in all policies](#)'. We recognise the need to shape the system in ways that maximise health equity and opportunities for [sustainability](#). Cross-sector action is key to addressing health inequalities, environmental challenges and the '**causes of the causes**' as outlined by the [wider determinants](#) of health.

The built and natural environment are recognised as major determinants of health and wellbeing across the life course, they are a key aspect and can unlock many opportunities to create **healthy and sustainable places to live, work and play**. However, built and natural environment professionals agree that not everyone is creating healthy and sustainable placesⁱ and where they are it is not being delivered in a consistent manner.

Significant gains in population health and sustainability can be achieved by delivering consistent standards across the county and by working in partnership to improve our built, natural and social environments. This has never been more important than now in the wake of a post Covid-19 world and in the face of a climate change emergency.

The places that are built today will be lived in for decades to come. They must be good-quality places that support communities now and for future generations. Creating healthy and sustainable places in West Sussex and making use of this framework can support the delivery of opportunities to put 'health and sustainability into place'. It is fundamental to delivering healthier lives, delivering a consistent and holistic approach to place making as well as contributing towards '[planetary health](#)'. This approach is innovative, cross cutting and has the potential to reframe how we understand and protect '[Our planet, Our health, Our Future](#)' within the context of delivering public health, sustainability and place making.

This work helps to deliver against the:

- **West Sussex Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2019-2024** and its ambition to address the wider determinants of health, including the focus on the built and natural environment as well as the need to reduce health inequalities;

- The County Council's commitments set out in the **Climate Change Strategy 2020-2030**. For example, *'we will work in partnership to find innovative solutions and collaborative ways of working to tackle climate change'*;
- **West Sussex County Council Reset Plan** and its four priorities which include the need to tackle inequality, work in partnership, deliver a sustainable and prosperous economy, prevent escalating needs and promote independence later in life for example.

Recommendation to the Board

The Health and Wellbeing Board is asked to;

Endorse, support and build upon the work on the 'Creating Healthy and Sustainable Places: A Public Health and Sustainability Framework for West Sussex'

Relevance to [Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy](#)

It delivers against the commitments and Health and wellbeing priorities such as the need to:

- Reduce health inequalities
- Address the wider determinants of health
- Improve and shape the environment for people to live healthy lives
- Provide opportunities to deliver positive health outcomes across the life course approach
- Deliver a 'Health in All Policies Approach' (HiAP - 'Imple Ollila, E. (2011) Health in All Policies: from rhetoric to action. Scandinavian Journal of Public Health 39(S6):11-18. mention Health in All Policies at a local level: practical examples' (LGA 2016))

1 Background and context

1.1 The Local Government Association's (LGA) 'Background Information about Health and Health Equity in All Policies' (2011) sets out two broad approaches suggested by Ollila, as follows¹:

- Proactively identify opportunities for improving health through influencing policies that impact on underlying determinants.
- Identify and analyse policy trends and shifts in sectors other than health that potentially have important health implications and react to take advantage of these opportunities.

WSCC Aims for implementing Health in All Policies (HiAP):

1.2 To create a **health-promoting council** by maximising health improvement and promotion across the majority of services and service areas across the Council by embedding and aligning public health priorities and outcomes within policies, strategies and commissioning. To develop public health skills that help to

deliver HiAP and 'designing in health and sustainability' across the council and district and borough councils.

- 1.3 To promote and support the usage of **health impact assessments**. To promote their usage to inform projects, policies and strategies and as part of creating healthy environments and 'designing in health and sustainability'.
- 1.4 To ensure that all upcoming **policies and strategies**, produced by the council and wider partners (where relevant), are made known to Public Health. Public Health could then review the drafts and ensure that any resulting health impacts have been taken into account.
- 1.5 Embed **prevention principles for prevention into all procurement activity**, by encouraging commissioners to include terms in the service specifications to promote health and social value for example. To ensure service providers do take responsibility for health promotion and early intervention.
- 1.6 **Establish approach with the seven district and borough councils** as part of Health and Well-being Deals. To work with the Health and Wellbeing Partnerships and spatial planning systems in the district and boroughs to support 'designing in health and sustainability', and healthy environments. To roll out the West Sussex Health and Wellbeing Planning Guidance and approaches to/best practice around HiAP.
- 1.7 To **develop a HiAP/'Mainstreaming Health' toolkit** to support the council and its directorates/departments to consider and evaluate any impacts on health; this will ensure and evidence that health implications and the wider determinants of health have been considered as part of decision making and infiltrates all areas across the County Council.

2 Proposal details

The purpose of this framework is to:

- 2.1 Provide a vision and clear statement on our commitment, as a public health authority, to healthy and sustainable place making across the county.
- 2.2 Provide public health guidance in the form of this framework to delivering a consistent and holistic approach to healthy and sustainable placemaking in West Sussex.
- 2.3 To signpost users of the framework to the scale and scope of practical challenges, opportunities and **tools** for placemaking in specific relation to public health, sustainability, planning and the wider built and natural environment.
- 2.4 Provide clarity on how the requirements set out in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and Planning Policy Guidance (PPG) on healthy and safe communities can be met.
- 2.5 To lay the foundations to support health and wellbeing as a holistic thread running through the future development of plans, policies, design guides and codes.

- 2.6 To support decision making to take into consideration at the earliest opportunity health, wellbeing and sustainability impacts.
- 2.7 To guide and champion the proportionate use of Health Impact Assessments (HIAs).

3 Consultation, engagement and advice

- 3.1 The Framework has gone out for two rounds of consultation with internal and external partners. These include all our district and borough colleagues (planning, environmental health and community wellbeing for example). Consultation has also included NHS Estates, Public Health England, Sport England, two major developers (Redrow and Thakeham), the Community Voluntary Sector, Healthwatch, Public Consultation, Cross Portfolio meetings, WSCC Executive Leadership Team, WSCC Direct Leadership Team, WSCC Public Health Board. Their comments, recommendations and feedback have been fed into the development of the framework.

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Appendix

- Creating Healthy and Sustainable Places: A Public Health and Sustainability Framework for West Sussex

Background papers

- [Health Impact Assessment in spatial planning: A guide for local authority public health and planning teams](#) (PHE 2020)
 - [Spatial Planning for Health: An evidence resource for planning and designing healthier places](#) (PHE 2017)
 - [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)
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