

**HERTFORDSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL**

**PUBLIC HEALTH, PREVENTION AND PERFORMANCE  
CABINET PANEL  
10 MAY 2018 AT 10.00 AM**



**HEALTHY PLACES UPDATE**

*Report of the Director of Public Health*

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Executive Member/s: Richard Roberts,  
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**1. Purpose of report**

1.1 To provide an update on progress within the Healthy Places  
workstream over the last 12 months.

**2. Summary**

2.1 The Healthy Places role was created in 2015 with a view to enabling  
Public Health to engage with, and influence, the systems and  
processes that shape the wider determinants of health (i.e. our physical  
and social environments). The agenda is incredibly broad, and Panel  
have previously received reports regarding how work has focussed on  
four key areas – planning, housing, transport and environment.

2.2 Eighteen months since the last update report<sup>1</sup> on the Healthy Places  
work stream, this report outlines the progress made. Particular focus  
will be placed on the progress made in relation to housing and health,  
as well as the emerging air quality agenda. Summary commentary on  
planning and transport is also included.

**3. Recommendation/s**

3.1 Members are asked to note and comment on the content of this report.

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<sup>1</sup>

<http://cmis.hertfordshire.gov.uk/hertfordshire/Calendarofcouncilmeetings/tabid/70/ctl/ViewMeetingPublic/mid/397/Meeting/583/Committee/50/Default.aspx>

## 4. Background

### Housing

- 4.1 Public Health undertook a piece of work two years ago to understand the housing and health agenda in Hertfordshire – what the issues were and where Public Health might look to add value. The subsequent report<sup>2</sup> has previously been shared with Panel (November 2016) and identified a number of key themes where Public Health might seek to influence the housing and health relationships, including housing quality.
- 4.2 The Health and Wellbeing Board agreed in 2016 that Public Health should lead the housing quality agenda, and there are housing quality objectives in the Herts Health and Wellbeing Strategy<sup>3</sup> that we report back on.
- 4.3 The Public Health Board<sup>4</sup> wanted to see a Housing Quality Working group set up which could deliver projects and aim to tackle poor health outcomes as a result of poor housing quality. This group was established and has been running for around a year, with terms of reference (Appendix 1) and an agreed action plan (Appendix 2). We are working collaboratively with Districts and Borough colleagues – both Environmental Health and Housing – as well as Adult Care Services (Community Wellbeing Team) and the Fire Service.
- 4.4 Through this group Public Health (PH) have published the Hertfordshire Housing Quality JSNA<sup>5</sup>, and developed the Herts Warmer Homes project in response to the priority to tackle excess winter deaths and poor health outcomes from cold homes. In Hertfordshire, over 32,000 households are estimated to live in fuel poverty. Cold homes lead to poor health outcomes.
- 4.5 The Herts Warmer Homes project aims to make homes easier and cheaper to heat by offering free or discounted energy efficiency measures, such as insulation and heating repair, as well as fuel switching advice to low-income and vulnerable households.
- 4.6 Working in partnership with all 10 Hertfordshire District and Borough Council's, we have committed £150,000 as an addition to leveraging Energy Company Obligations to target the most vulnerable households

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<sup>2</sup>

<http://cmis.hertfordshire.gov.uk/hertfordshire/Calendarofcouncilmeetings/tabid/70/ctl/ViewMeetingPublic/mid/397/Meeting/583/Committee/50/Default.aspx>

<sup>3</sup><https://www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/media-library/documents/about-the-council/partnerships/hertfordshire-health-and-wellbeing-strategy-2016---2020.pdf>

<sup>4</sup> The Public Health Board is the lead group for the prioritisation and co-ordination of public health strategies and approaches across the county. It is made up of senior officers from Hertfordshire local authorities, and relevant partner agencies with public health functions. It acts as a sub-committee of the Health and Wellbeing Board for Hertfordshire and also reports to the Hertfordshire Chief Executives' Co-ordinating Group.

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/microsites/jsna/jsna-documents/housing-quality-health.pdf>

across the county. All ten Districts have contributed funding, as has Public Health and Adult Care Services (Community Wellbeing Team).

- 4.7 The project went 'live' in November 2017 and is being delivered by the National Energy Foundation. Two webpages are now available, a public one<sup>6</sup> and one with more detail for professionals<sup>7</sup>.
- 4.8 Recent performance monitoring of the project shows that despite a slow start, a total of 485 referrals have been made through HertsHelp. Of these, 350 properties meet eligibility criteria, 155 have (to date) been taken forward for installation of measures. The project has accessed around £41,500 of energy company eco-funding for installations that should save the households who have received support, £88,500, and see a 212 tonne reduction in carbon that otherwise would have been produced. Monitoring and evaluation of health-related outcomes will take place later in the project.

#### **Other housing work**

- 4.9 Public Health has been working with senior officers at Stevenage Borough Council to understand the broader housing and health landscape, making recommendations to the Public Sector Chief Executives group in early 2018 (see report in Appendix 3). A number of big issues have been identified including the impact of homelessness on health, the growing impact of individuals' mental health on housing services and the possible impact of national policy on poor health outcomes (Homelessness Reduction Act, Universal Credit).
- 4.10 This is a fast moving agenda, with other areas of the County Council undertaking similar work and PH have therefore been working collaboratively with Districts and Adult Care Services to ensure a consistent response and to avoid duplication.
- 4.11 Public Health is now represented on, or able to attend, a wide range of housing groups and forums including (but not an exhaustive list): East Herts Housing and Health Forum; Heads of Housing; Strategic Supported Accommodation Board; Herts and Beds Environmental Health network – Housing; Herts Energy Group; HertsHelp steering group; Homelessness Forum; Mental Health Concordat; Registered Providers forum.

#### **Air Quality**

- 4.12 Poor air quality is considered the largest environmental risk to our health. It affects everyone, but has a disproportionate impact on the young, old, sick and poor. There is no 'safe level' for air pollutants.

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<sup>6</sup> <https://www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/services/health-in-herts/news-events-and-campaigns/hertfordshire-warmer-homes-scheme.aspx>

<sup>7</sup> <https://www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/services/health-in-herts/professionals/health-in-herts-professional.aspx>

- 4.13 There are obligations on both district and county councils within Part IV of the Environment Act 1995 to take action in relation to local air quality issues. Although the statutory duty to tackle air quality sits at district level, the Secretary of State expects county councils to actively engage with district partners to jointly tackle local air quality challenges.
- 4.14 With over one million residents and a heavy reliance on transport by road vehicles, the challenges Hertfordshire faces in relation to air quality are many, complex, and likely to grow.
- 4.15 There is significant breadth to the work that various parts of the County Council deliver that influences local air quality, but this is not delivered in the most efficient and effective way.
- 4.16 Public Health has been working collaboratively with its County Council and District colleagues for a number of years, having previously funded countywide particulate matter (PM<sup>2.5</sup>) monitoring equipment (the data from which is now being collated by the Herts and Beds Air Quality Network).
- 4.17 Having published the Hertfordshire Air Quality JSNA<sup>8</sup> late last year, officers within Public Health are now leading on work to develop the County Council's strategic response to the growing challenges presented by poor air quality, and this is in close partnership with colleagues in Environment, including:
- Hertfordshire Air Quality Joint Strategic Needs Assessment
  - Internal Officer workshop – issues and challenges
  - 3-way Executive Member Briefing – issues and challenges
  - Member Seminar (January 2018) – developing our strategic response
  - County Council Strategy development (summer 2018)
  - Countywide strategy development over the next 12 months
- 4.18 Air quality is a standard issue raised in all Public Health responses to Local Plan consultations and planning applications.

### **Planning**

- 4.19 During 2017 Public Health has operated its adopted 'business as usual' approach to engagement in planning – responding to all Local Plan consultations and strategic development planning applications of over 100 homes, or where there is significant public concern with regards health impact.
- 4.20 The Hertfordshire Health, Wellbeing and Planning Guidance was published in 2017 and is available at [www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/healthyplaces](http://www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/healthyplaces). Public Health colleagues in Essex County Council are now also referencing this document and it has been cited as part of a healthy community policy by one District

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<sup>8</sup> <https://www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/microsites/jsna/jsna-documents/air-quality.pdf>

Local Plan. However, more work is needed to influence the local plan process in other areas.

- 4.21 Both Hertfordshire and Essex Public Health teams are working collaboratively in relation to cross-border planning issues, and are jointly engaged with the development proposals for 10,000 homes near Gilston (East Herts).
- 4.22 Public Health has responded to a number of other high profile planning applications, including minerals and waste. We are working with Minerals and Waste Planning colleagues to ensure future planning policy considers health. As a result, the County Council's Draft Minerals Local Plan now articulates specific reference to health considerations, including the policy requirement for Health Impact Assessment to be undertaken for any mineral working planning applications<sup>9</sup>. A similar approach is being proposed for the development of the new Waste Local Plan.

### **Transport**

- 4.23 A lot of the early progress made in the planning and place workstream was in relation to transport, as previously reported to Panel.
- 4.24 Public Health now has an established, collaborative and productive working relationship with Transport, Planning and Highways Colleagues. Over the past 12 months we have provided advice and input into the development of Local Transport Plan 4, with an emphasis on promoting sustainable and active travel, and tackling poor air quality.
- 4.25 We are currently working with colleagues on the development of a new Active Travel Strategy, which will sit as a daughter document to LTP4.
- 4.26 We continue to work with Highways colleagues to look for opportunities to include health criteria in highways schemes.

## **5. Equality Impact Assessment**

- 5.1 When considering proposals placed before Members it is important that they are fully aware of, and have themselves rigorously considered the equalities implications of the decision that they are taking.
- 5.2 Rigorous consideration will ensure that proper appreciation of any potential impact of that decision on the County Council's statutory obligations under the Public Sector Equality Duty. As a minimum this requires decision makers to read and carefully consider the content of any Equalities Impact Assessment (EqIA) produced by officers.
- 5.3 The Equality Act 2010 requires the Council when exercising its functions to have due regard to the need to (a) eliminate discrimination,

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<sup>9</sup> <https://www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/services/recycling-waste-and-environment/planning-in-hertfordshire/minerals-and-waste-planning/minerals-planning/minerals-local-plan-review/minerals-local-plan-review.aspx>

harassment, victimisation and other conduct prohibited under the Act; (b) advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it and (c) foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it. The protected characteristics under the Equality Act 2010 are age; disability; gender reassignment; marriage and civil partnership; pregnancy and maternity; race; religion and belief, sex and sexual orientation.

- 5.4 An EQIA has been carried out, and is attached to this report (Appendix 4). The Healthy Places Workstream is not considered to have a negative impact on County Council staff or the wider public in relation to the statutory protected characteristics. It is hoped that, over time, the influence of the planning and place agenda on the Hertfordshire community will be a positive one in terms of reducing health inequalities.

## **6. Financial Implications**

- 10.1 The Healthy Places workstream currently has a nominal budget. However over the last 12 months there have been a number of resource requirements to take this forward and it is anticipated that these will continue:-
- This year saw the successful recruitment of a full-time Healthy Places Officer to support the Health Improvement Lead with a number of future projects identified within the housing workstream, working collaboratively with District colleagues.
  - Other ad hoc pieces of work may also require small amounts of funding to deliver.
  - Staff capacity is an identified need given the broad scope of the workstream, the continued need for engagement across a number of agendas to develop and maintain working relationships and the anticipated growth in the healthy places agenda.