

North East Lincolnshire

Health and Welbeing Topic Paper

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Section 1 Introduction

- 1.0.1** This Topic Paper provides the background, evidence and justification for the proposed revisions of the health and wellbeing policy as part of the preparation of the emerging Local Plan. It identifies the key health challenges facing the Borough and considers how spatial planning can contribute to improving health outcomes, reducing health inequalities and supporting the delivery of sustainable, safe and attractive places.
- 1.0.2** Health is influenced by a complex range of social, economic and environmental factors and cannot be addressed through planning interventions alone. However, the planning system plays an important role in shaping the built and natural environment, influencing how people live, work, travel and interact. The quality and location of development, access to services, green spaces and active travel opportunities can have significant impacts on both physical and mental wellbeing and can help address wider health issues.
- 1.0.3** The Council is committed to improving health outcomes, increasing healthy life expectancy and reducing inequalities across the Borough. The English Indices of Deprivation identify significant differences between communities across the Borough, with some areas of Grimsby and Cleethorpes experiencing high levels of deprivation and associated health challenges. Health indicators show that North East Lincolnshire performs below the national average across a number of measures, including healthy life expectancy, obesity, smoking prevalence and mortality rates. These issues demonstrate a clear need for planning policies that help create healthier environments and support healthier lifestyles.
- 1.0.4** The Topic Paper reviews relevant national policy, local strategies and evidence relating to health and planning, including recent and emerging changes in national policy. It focuses on those aspects of health and wellbeing that can be most effectively influenced through planning policy and decision-making. The paper therefore considers the following key themes:
- Healthy weight environments
 - Active and sustainable transport
 - Green and blue infrastructure
 - Built environment and place-making
 - Community facilities and social health
 - Housing and accommodation
 - Air quality
- 1.0.5** Together, these themes provide the framework for considering how the Local Plan can support healthier, more inclusive and sustainable communities across North East Lincolnshire.

Section 2 Legislation and policy content

2.1 National context

- 2.1.1** The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) establishes a clear national policy basis for promoting healthy communities, embedding health and wellbeing as a core component of sustainable development and spatial planning.

Achieving Sustainable Development

- 2.1.2** At the heart of the NPPF, paragraph 8 identifies the social objective of sustainable development, which includes supporting “strong, vibrant and healthy communities” through the provision of sufficient housing, well-designed places, and accessible services and open space. This establishes a clear expectation that planning should positively influence health outcomes through the location, design, and function of development.

Promoting healthy and safe communities

- 2.1.3** Section 8 of the NPPF provides detailed policy direction on delivering healthy places. Paragraph 96 requires planning policies and decisions to support healthy, inclusive and safe environments, emphasising:
- Opportunities for social interaction through mixed-use development and walkable neighbourhoods
 - Safe and accessible environments, supported by high-quality design
 - Environments that enable healthy lifestyles, including access to green infrastructure, local services and active travel networks
- 2.1.4** Importantly, the NPPF explicitly links planning to health inequality, requiring policies to address disparities between the most and least deprived communities.
- 2.1.5** Paragraph 97 provides a clear policy basis for managing the location of hot food takeaways, supporting refusal where developments would negatively impact health - particularly in proximity to schools or where there is over-concentration. This is highly relevant to areas experiencing poor health outcomes.
- 2.1.6** Paragraph 98 reinforces the importance of community infrastructure, requiring planning policies to:
- Safeguard valued services and facilities
 - Support local health and wellbeing strategies
 - Promote integrated land-use planning
- 2.1.7** The NPPF places significant weight on the role of open space and recreation in supporting health. Paragraph 103 requires local planning authorities to undertake robust assessments of need and ensure sufficient provision of open space, sport, and recreation facilities.

- 2.1.8** Paragraph 104 further strengthens protection by resisting the loss of existing open space unless it is clearly surplus or replaced with equivalent or improved provision. This provides a strong policy basis for protecting and enhancing green infrastructure networks.
- 2.1.9** Government guidance in the form of the Health Impact Assessment in Spatial Planning guide (2020) discusses how Health Impact Assessments (HIA) can be used to maximise the positive impacts and minimise negative impacts as a result of development and direct focus to addressing health inequalities. They can help planning achieve enhanced benefits such as improved housing, more and better active travel infrastructure and safer more inclusive spaces which overall contribute positively to reducing health inequalities. The guidance promotes integration between the HIA and Environmental Impact Assessments (EIA) processes. Given there is some cross over between the two documents such as air quality, noise, transport, open space and access to services, the guidance considers it's efficient to combine the two and avoids duplication. The guidance adds that triggers as to when a HIA is required is dictated by local policy.
- 2.1.10** The guide identifies 3 types of HIA:
- Comprehensive - In-depth including extensive literature searches and, data collection and stakeholder and public engagement. Suitable for more complex proposals.
 - Rapid - Brief assessment of health impacts, including a literature review of quantitative and qualitative evidence and the gathering of knowledge and further evidence from local stakeholders. Usually includes a small steering group and carrying out a stakeholder workshop. The NHS provides a Rapid Health Assessment Tool to assist with submissions.
 - Desktop - can encompass engaging a small number of participants using existing knowledge and evidence to undertake the assessment of health impacts.

Promoting Sustainable Transport

- 2.1.11** Paragraph 109 highlights the importance of transport in shaping healthy places, requiring a vision-led approach which prioritises walking, cycling, and public transport. This reinforces the role of spatial planning in promoting active lifestyles and reducing reliance on private vehicles.
- 2.1.12** Collectively, these provisions establish a strong national policy basis for embedding health considerations within plan-making and development management. At the time of writing, proposed changes to the NPPF were consulted on in December 2025. These are not yet adopted but may have implications for plan-making and are therefore material to the wider policy context.

2.2 Public Health England

- 2.2.1** Public Health England (PHE) (2020) highlights the important role of the planning system in shaping healthier weight environments and reducing obesity-related health inequalities. The guidance demonstrates how spatial planning can influence the availability of, and access to, healthy food, as well as the wider built environment factors that support active lifestyles ¹.
- 2.2.2** The guidance emphasises that obesity and diet-related ill health are closely linked to the local environment, including the concentration and accessibility of hot food takeaways and other less healthy food outlets. In this context, planning policies can play a key role in managing the location and clustering of such uses, particularly in areas with higher levels of deprivation and around sensitive locations such as schools. This approach supports the creation of environments where healthier choices are more accessible and where exposure to less healthy options is limited.
- 2.2.3** In addition, PHE (2020) identifies the importance of improving access to healthy and affordable food. The planning system can support this through the protection and provision of local retail services, encouraging a diverse range of food outlets, and supporting opportunities for community food growing, such as allotments and community gardens. These interventions not only improve physical access to healthy food but can also contribute to social cohesion and community wellbeing.
- 2.2.4** The guidance also reinforces the relationship between the built environment and physical activity, highlighting that environments which prioritise walking, cycling and access to local services can support healthier lifestyles. This aligns with wider national policy objectives to promote active travel and reduce reliance on car use, contributing to both improved health outcomes and environmental sustainability.
- 2.2.5** Importantly, PHE (2020) recognises that the impacts of unhealthy weight are not distributed evenly across the population, with higher prevalence in more deprived communities. As such, the planning system has a role in addressing these inequalities through place-based interventions that respond to local need. This supports a targeted and proportionate policy approach within areas experiencing the greatest health challenges.
- 2.2.6** Overall, the PHE guidance provides a clear evidence base demonstrating how the planning system can contribute to healthier weight outcomes. It complements the broader framework established by the Marmot Review by identifying specific spatial and policy interventions that can shape healthier environments. These principles support the development of planning policies which promote healthier food environments, encourage active lifestyles, and contribute to the reduction of health inequalities across North East Lincolnshire.

2.3 The Marmot Review

1 Public Health England (2020) *Using the Planning System to Promote Healthy Weight Environments*

2.3.1 The Marmot Review (2010), and subsequent updates (2020), identify that health inequalities are primarily driven by the social determinants of health, including the conditions in which people are born, grow, live, work and age.

2.3.2 The Review highlights several key themes of direct relevance to the planning system:

- **Design and place-making** - The creation of high-quality, inclusive environments that promote social interaction and community cohesion is essential. This includes walkable neighbourhoods, accessible public spaces, and mixed-use development patterns which support daily needs within close proximity.
- **Housing** - Good quality housing is a critical determinant of health. Priorities include improving the condition and energy efficiency of existing housing stock, addressing fuel poverty, and ensuring the delivery of a range of affordable and adaptable homes to meet diverse needs.
- **Access to healthy food** - The Review identifies the importance of improving access to healthy and affordable food. Planning can support this through the provision of local food growing opportunities (e.g. allotments and community gardens) and ensuring access to local retail provision.
- **Natural environment** - Access to high-quality green and blue infrastructure supports both physical and mental wellbeing. The Review emphasises the importance of enhancing green space provision, improving air quality, and mitigating environmental risks such as climate change and flooding.
- **Transport and connectivity** - Promoting active travel is a key mechanism for improving health outcomes. The provision of safe, attractive walking and cycling infrastructure, alongside measures to reduce traffic dominance and air pollution, is a central component of healthy place-making.

2.3.3 Reducing health inequalities requires coordinated action across six policy objectives identified in the Marmot Review:

- Give every child the best start in life
- Enable all children, young people and adults to maximise their capabilities and have control over their lives
- Create fair employment and good work for all
- Ensure a healthy standard of living for all
- Create and develop healthy and sustainable places and communities
- Strengthen the role and impact of illness prevention

2.3.4 The Council is committed to embedding these principles within all its planning and regeneration activities to support the delivery of healthier, more sustainable communities and to reduce health inequalities across the Borough.

2.4 Local context

- 2.4.1** The North East Lincolnshire Council Plan (2025–2028) provides a clear strategic framework for improving health and wellbeing across the Borough, with a strong emphasis on addressing health inequalities through economic growth, community resilience, and environmental improvement.
- 2.4.2** Across its priority themes, the Plan recognises the fundamental relationship between place, health, and inequality, aligning closely with the Marmot principles and reinforcing the role of planning in delivering healthier communities.

Priority One: Supporting a Stronger Economy

- 2.4.3** The Council Plan identifies the importance of good quality housing, employment, and skills development as key determinants of health. It recognises that access to appropriate housing in sustainable locations can support both economic growth and wellbeing, helping to create inclusive communities where people can both live and work.
- 2.4.4** In addition, the Plan highlights the role of employment in improving health outcomes, noting that secure and meaningful work contributes to both physical and mental wellbeing. This aligns with the Marmot objective of creating fair employment and good work for all, which has clear spatial implications in terms of employment land provision and accessibility.
- 2.4.5** The Plan also promotes active lifestyles, emphasising the need to design places that encourage walking, cycling, and use of open spaces. This reinforces the importance of the built environment in shaping healthier behaviours.

Priority Two: Supporting Stronger Communities

- 2.4.6** Addressing health inequalities is a central focus of the Plan, with particular emphasis on deprived inner-town wards where life expectancy and healthy life expectancy are significantly lower than the Borough average. The Plan identifies a range of health challenges, including obesity, cardiovascular disease, and poor mental health, highlighting the need for targeted, place-based interventions.

Priority Three: Supporting a Greener Future

- 2.4.7** The Council Plan emphasises the role of the natural and built environment in supporting health and wellbeing. This includes improving air quality, enhancing access to green spaces, and promoting active travel.
- 2.4.8** Recognising that environmental improvements can play a key role in reducing health inequalities, particularly in areas most affected by pollution and poor living conditions. As such, it promotes the integration of green infrastructure and sustainable design as fundamental components of place-making.

The Council's commitment to becoming a Marmot Place

2.4.9 In July 2025 the Council committed to becoming a Marmot Place² This commitment reinforces both the principles set in both the Marmot Review and the Council Plan, focusing on giving children the best start in life, enabling people to reach their potential, creating fair employment opportunities, developing healthy and sustainable communities, and reducing health inequalities across the Borough. Together, the documents provide a strong evidence base for embedding health and wellbeing considerations into planning policies and future development across North East Lincolnshire.

2 <https://www.instituteoftheequity.org/taking-action/marmot-places>.

Section 3 North East Lincolnshire health statistics

- 3.0.1** The data presented in Table 3.1 Obesity prevalence per ward has been sourced from the Department of Health and Social Care's Fingertips Public Health Profile and shows the percentage of Year 6 children classified as overweight (including obesity) across wards within North East Lincolnshire. The data indicates that a significant number of wards record levels above the national average, highlighting the prevalence of childhood overweight and obesity across much of the Borough ³.
- 3.0.2** To aid interpretation, ward-level childhood obesity data has been benchmarked against the England average. The following categories have been applied:
- Significantly better than England (5% or more below the England average)
 - Better than England (1–4% below the England average)
 - Worse than England (1–4% above the England average)
 - Significantly worse than England (5% or more above the England average)
- 3.0.3** These categories have been developed for the purposes of this analysis and provide an indication of how wards in North East Lincolnshire compare with the England average.

Ward Area	Ward area percentage (Year 6 prevalence of overweight (including obesity))	National Average (36.2%)
Sidney Sussex	48.8	Significantly worse than England
West Marsh	44.3	Significantly worse than England
South	40.2	Worse than England
East Marsh	38.9	Worse than England
Yarborough	39	Worse than England
Heneage	46.3	Significantly worse than England
Park	48.8	Significantly worse than England
Immingham	39.8	Worse than England
Croft Baker	45.2	Significantly worse than England
Waltham	29.2	Significantly better than England
Humberston and New Waltham	30.5	Significantly better than England
Wolds	33.3	Better than England
Scartho	35.4	Similar to England

³ Fingertips Public Health Profiles (2025)

Ward Area	Ward area percentage (Year 6 prevalence of overweight (including obesity))	National Average (36.2%)
Haverstoe	35.6	Similar to England
Freshney	33.8	Better than England

Table 3.1 Obesity prevalence per ward

3.0.4 The data presented in below has been sourced from the North East Lincolnshire Data Observatory, which forms part of the Council's Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA) evidence base⁴. This platform draws together the most up-to-date local health and wellbeing data. The use of this data ensures consistency with nationally recognised indicators while providing a robust, locally specific evidence base for understanding health outcomes and inequalities across North East Lincolnshire.

3.0.5 The data for North East Lincolnshire has been categorised according to its performance relative to the England average. The following categories have been used:

- Significantly better than England
- Better than England
- Worse than England
- Significantly worse than England

Indicator	North East Lincolnshire Average	England Average	Status
Life expectancy at birth (females)	81.1	82.3	Worse than England
Life expectancy at birth (males)	76.8	78.3	Worse than England
Healthy life expectancy at birth (females)	54.3	61.9	Significantly worse than England
Healthy life expectancy at birth (males)	54.7	61.5	Significantly worse than England
Mortality rate from cardiovascular disease (Rate per 100,000)	44.9	30.2	Significantly worse than England
Mortality rate from cancer (Rate per 100,000)	61.3	48.3	Significantly worse than England

4 North East Lincolnshire Data Observatory (2025) *Joint Strategic Needs Assessment and Health Intelligence Data*

Indicator	North East Lincolnshire Average	England Average	Status
Mortality rate from liver disease (Rate per 100,000)	21.8	18.9	Worse than England
Mortality rate from respiratory disease (Rate per 100,000)	29.8	19.3	Significantly worse than England
Suicide rate (females) (Rate per 100,000)	8.3	5.5	Worse than England
Suicide rate (males) (Rate per 100,000)	28.8	16.8	Significantly worse than England

Table 3.2 Life expectancy and mortality rates

Indicator	North East Lincolnshire Average	England Average	Status
Child smoking status percentage	11	6.1	Significantly worse than England
Physically active children percentage	47	49.1	Worse than England
Adults classified as overweight or obese percentage	71.6	64.5	Significantly worse than England
Adult smoking prevalence percentage (female)	14.1	8.7	Significantly worse than England
Adult smoking prevalence percentage (male)	10.4	12.2	Significantly worse than England

Table 3.3 Risk behaviours

Indicator	North East Lincolnshire Average	England Average	Status
High anxiety score percentage	20.1	23.3	Better than England
Low happiness score percentage	6.2	8.9	Better than England
Low satisfaction score percentage	5.9	5.6	Worse than England

Indicator	North East Lincolnshire Average	England Average	Status
Low worthwhile score percentage	3.1	4.4	Better than England

Table 3.4 Self-reported well-being

Indicator	North East Lincolnshire Average	England Average	Status
Life expectancy at birth in least deprived decile (females)	84.6	86.2	Worse than England
Life expectancy at birth in least deprived decile (males)	81.8	83.2	Worse than England
Life expectancy at birth in most deprived decile (females)	73.7	78	Significantly worse than England
Life expectancy at birth in most deprived decile (males)	70	72.8	Worse than England

Table 3.5 Marmot Indicators

Figures represent the latest available data from OHID Public Health Profiles accessed via the North East Lincolnshire Data Observatory (typically 3-year pooled averages unless otherwise stated).

- 3.0.6** The data highlights that North East Lincolnshire consistently performs worse than the England average across a range of key health indicators, including life expectancy, healthy life expectancy, mortality rates, obesity, and smoking prevalence. Notably, the gap in healthy life expectancy is particularly pronounced, indicating that residents spend a significant proportion of their lives in poor health. These patterns are closely linked to deprivation and lifestyle factors, reinforcing the need for a spatial planning approach which prioritises healthier environments, access to services, and active lifestyles.
- 3.0.7** The health data demonstrates that North East Lincolnshire performs worse than the England average across many of the indicators most closely associated with long-term health outcomes and health inequalities. Whilst some measures of self-reported wellbeing perform comparatively well, the overall picture indicates that residents experience poorer physical health outcomes and shorter periods of healthy life than the national population.
- 3.0.8** Of particular concern is the gap in healthy life expectancy shown in Table 3.2 Life expectancy and mortality rates. Females in North East Lincolnshire can expect to spend approximately 7.6 fewer years in good health than the England average,

whilst males experience a gap of around 6.8 years. This suggests that although residents are living longer, a greater proportion of their lives is spent in poor health, placing additional demands on health and social care services and reducing overall quality of life.

- 3.0.9** The data also highlights significant inequalities between communities. Life expectancy within the most deprived areas is substantially lower than in the least deprived areas, reflecting the strong relationship between deprivation and health outcomes. These disparities are consistent with wider evidence presented through the Marmot Review and support the need for targeted place-based interventions which seek to reduce health inequalities through improvements to housing, access to services, the quality of the local environment and opportunities for healthy lifestyles.
- 3.0.10** Lifestyle-related health indicators are similarly concerning. Table 3.3 Risk behaviours shows that more than 70% of adults in North East Lincolnshire are classified as overweight or obese, significantly exceeding the England average. Table 3.1 Obesity prevalence per ward indicates childhood obesity is also prevalent across the Borough, with nine of the fifteen wards recording levels above the national average and five wards performing significantly worse. The distribution of obesity rates broadly mirrors patterns of deprivation, suggesting that environmental and socio-economic factors continue to influence health outcomes. These findings provide a strong justification for planning policies that support active travel, access to green infrastructure, opportunities for recreation, and healthier food environments.
- 3.0.11** Table 3.3 Risk behaviours shows that smoking prevalence remains significantly above the national average for both males and females and is likely to contribute to the elevated mortality rates seen across several major diseases. North East Lincolnshire records significantly worse mortality rates from cardiovascular disease, cancer and respiratory disease, all of which are influenced by lifestyle, environmental and socio-economic factors. Whilst these health outcomes cannot be addressed through planning alone, the built environment can play an important supporting role by encouraging healthier behaviours and reducing exposure to factors which contribute to poor health.
- 3.0.12** There are, however, some positive findings within the data. Table 3.4 Self-reported well-being shows measures relating to self-reported wellbeing, including anxiety, happiness and feelings of worthwhileness, perform similarly to or better than the England average. This suggests that despite poorer physical health outcomes, levels of social connection, community identity and personal wellbeing may be relatively strong in parts of the Borough. Protecting and enhancing the social infrastructure that contributes to these outcomes, including community facilities, cultural assets, public spaces and green infrastructure, should therefore remain an important consideration within the Local Plan.
- 3.0.13** Overall, the evidence indicates that North East Lincolnshire faces significant and persistent health challenges, many of which are closely linked to deprivation and the wider determinants of health. The data provides a strong rationale for embedding health considerations throughout the Local Plan, ensuring that future

growth supports healthier lifestyles, improves access to services and opportunities, enhances environmental quality, and contributes towards reducing health inequalities across the Borough.

Section 4 Policy approaches to health and wellbeing areas

- 4.0.1** The evidence presented above demonstrates that North East Lincolnshire experiences significant health inequalities, lower healthy life expectancy, higher obesity levels and poorer health outcomes than the England average. Whilst many of these issues cannot be addressed through planning intervention alone, the planning system can influence a number of the wider determinants of health including access to healthy food, opportunities for physical activity, active travel, open space provision, healthcare infrastructure and the quality of the built environment. Accordingly, the revised Local Plan introduces a strengthened approach to health and wellbeing to ensure that health considerations are embedded throughout the planning process.
- 4.0.2** The themes selected for detailed assessment reflect both the evidence of health challenges within North East Lincolnshire and those aspects of health most capable of being influenced through the planning system. Whilst health outcomes are affected by a wide range of social, economic and behavioural factors, planning policy has the greatest opportunity to influence matters such as access to healthy food, opportunities for physical activity, transport choices, green and blue infrastructure, environmental quality, community infrastructure and the design of the built environment. The topics assessed within this paper have therefore been selected to focus on the areas where planning intervention can make the most meaningful contribution towards improving health outcomes and reducing health inequalities.

4.1 Health Impact Assessments

- 4.1.1** The revised Local Plan introduces a Health Impact Assessment (HIA) requirement for major residential development proposals. HIA provide a structured mechanism for identifying and assessing the potential health and wellbeing effects of development and ensuring that opportunities to improve health outcomes are considered as part of the planning process.
- 4.1.2** Residential development has been selected as the trigger as housing growth directly generates population increase and associated demand for healthcare, community facilities and other infrastructure.
- 4.1.3** A proportionate, tiered approach has been adopted. Residential development of 150 dwellings or more will be required to submit a comprehensive HIA with major housing below 150 requiring a rapid HIA. This reflects the increased likelihood that larger-scale residential development will generate significant population growth, resulting in additional demands on healthcare provision, community facilities, active travel infrastructure, green and blue infrastructure and other services which contribute to health and wellbeing. Larger developments are also more likely to give rise to wide-ranging and cumulative effects across a number of health determinants, justifying a more detailed assessment.
- 4.1.4** The threshold of 150 dwellings is considered an appropriate trigger for a comprehensive assessment and aligns with an established national planning benchmark used within the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) screening regime for larger-scale residential development. Whilst EIA and HIA serve different

purposes, the use of this recognised threshold provides a clear, proportionate and consistent basis for identifying development proposals where a more detailed consideration of health and wellbeing impacts is justified.

4.2 Healthy weight environments

- 4.2.1** Obesity represents a significant public health issue. Table 3.1 Obesity prevalence per ward demonstrates that childhood overweight and obesity is a significant issue across much of North East Lincolnshire. Nine of the fifteen wards perform worse than the England average, including five wards that are categorised as significantly worse. Only two wards perform significantly better than the national average. This suggests that excess weight amongst Year 6 children is a widespread issue across the Borough and supports the need for planning policies that promote healthier environments and encourage healthier lifestyle choices. Whilst obesity is influenced by a range of behavioural, environmental and socio-economic factors, the built environment plays an important role in shaping health outcomes. Changes to the local environment are therefore required to support healthier lifestyles and enable residents to maintain a healthy weight.
- 4.2.2** A healthy weight environment is one which supports physical activity, encourages active travel, and enables access to healthier food options and services. Such environments can help influence healthier dietary and lifestyle choices and contribute towards improved long-term health outcomes.
- 4.2.3** Hot food takeaway uses can contribute towards unhealthy food environments. Swinburn et al. (1999) introduced the concept of the “obesogenic environment”, recognising that rising obesity levels can be influenced by environments characterised by a high concentration of affordable, energy-dense and less healthy food options⁵. The concept highlights the important role planning policy can play in shaping local food environments, including the distribution and concentration of hot food takeaway uses.
- 4.2.4** In the updated Local Plan, the policy relating to hot food takeaways has been moved from the Local Centres Policy to the Health and Wellbeing Policy. This reflects the need for a borough-wide approach to managing hot food takeaway uses, recognising their implications for public health and wellbeing irrespective of their location within the town centres hierarchy.

What the North East Lincolnshire Local Plan will do

- 4.2.5** The Local Plan seeks to support healthier weight environments through the following policy approaches:

⁵ *Dissecting obesogenic environments: the development and application of a framework for identifying and prioritising environmental interventions for obesity* (1999)

- Safeguarding public and private green space, sports and recreation facilities, equipped play facilities and designated Local Green Spaces in recognition of their contribution to health and wellbeing (Green Space and Recreation).
- Requiring a Rapid Health Impact Assessment (HIA) for all major development proposals and a more comprehensive HIA for schemes of 150 dwellings or more (Health and Wellbeing).
- Supporting the creation and enhancement of allotments to improve access to healthy, fresh and locally produced food (Health and Wellbeing).
- Requiring development proposals to promote, support and enhance physical and mental wellbeing, including ensuring walking and cycling routes are accessible to all sectors of the community (Health and Wellbeing)
- Hot food takeaways will be restricted within wards where obesity levels exceed national averages (Health and Wellbeing).
- Restricting new hot food takeaway uses where they would contribute to an overconcentration of such uses, particularly in proximity to schools (Health and Wellbeing)
- Requiring strategic housing sites to incorporate open space, equipped play areas, allotments, sports provision and wider recreational infrastructure as part of comprehensive place-making (Development of Strategic Housing Sites).

4.3 Active travel

- 4.3.1** The updated North East Lincolnshire Local Plan emphasises the importance of active travel in promoting health and wellbeing. The Plan seeks to support the creation of accessible and connected environments, recognising the need for walking and cycling routes to be safe, attractive and accessible to all sectors of the community. Active travel is recognised as an important contributor to physical and mental wellbeing and can help reduce obesity, improve cardiovascular health and support healthier lifestyles.
- 4.3.2** The design and connectivity of the built environment can significantly influence travel behaviour. Development which prioritises walking, wheeling and cycling can help reduce reliance on private vehicles and support more sustainable patterns of movement. In addition to health benefits, active travel can also contribute towards improved air quality, reduced traffic congestion and climate change mitigation.
- 4.3.3** Improving access to active travel infrastructure is also important in addressing health inequalities, particularly for groups who may have limited access to private vehicles, including younger people, older residents and lower-income households.
- 4.3.4** North East Lincolnshire is relatively compact, with the main urban area and arc settlements located within a few kilometres of one another. This provides opportunities to promote walking and cycling as realistic alternatives to private car use, particularly where development is supported by connected and accessible active travel infrastructure.

What the North East Lincolnshire Local Plan will do

4.3.5 The Local Plan seeks to support active travel through the following policy approaches:

- Supporting the maintenance and enhancement of networks of footpaths, cycleways and bridleways, including links to the countryside, in order to retain and improve public access within Strategic Wedges (Strategic Wedges).
- Promoting accessible green corridors which provide connections between urban areas and the wider countryside, helping to support active travel opportunities for pedestrians, cyclists and horse riders (Green and Blue Infrastructure).
- Supporting improvements to the connectivity and permeability of green and blue infrastructure networks, including enhancing access to the countryside and improving sustainable movement throughout the urban area (Green and Blue Infrastructure).
- Development proposals that generate additional parking demand should ensure that appropriate cycle parking provision is made (Parking).

4.4 Transport

4.4.1 New transport infrastructure can also deliver wider health and wellbeing benefits. The A18/A180 link road has now been completed, providing improved access to employment site ELR001 (Pelham Estate, Kings Road). In addition, a link road has been delivered for ELR015A (Great Coates Business Park), and an access road has been completed for the Hall Park Road employment site. Further infrastructure improvements are underway to ensure strategic employment sites are adequately connected, helping to improve journey times, reliability and access to employment opportunities.

4.4.2 Transport infrastructure can influence health outcomes both directly and indirectly. Improved connectivity can increase access to employment, education, healthcare and other services, whilst reduced congestion can help support improved air quality and more efficient movement across the Borough.

4.4.3 However, North East Lincolnshire has identified that many of the main strategic employment sites are focused around the ports and the land between them, which is physically detached from the main urban area and currently less well served by public transport. This presents a key challenge in relation to sustainable accessibility and may increase reliance on private car use. Limited access to sustainable transport options can also contribute towards social exclusion and health inequalities, particularly for residents without access to a private vehicle.

4.4.4 Improving public transport connectivity and active travel infrastructure to strategic employment areas will therefore be important in supporting healthier travel behaviours, widening access to employment opportunities and encouraging more sustainable patterns of movement. For more remote communities, accessibility to services can also be restricted by limited transport choices, which may contribute towards social isolation.

What the North East Lincolnshire Local Plan will do

4.4.5 The Local Plan seeks to support healthy and sustainable transport through the following policy approaches:

- Supporting the delivery of new healthcare facilities in locations that are well related to public transport services (Health and Wellbeing).
- Improving bus and community transport accessibility, working towards a maximum 400m walking distance to a bus stop, alongside continued investment in improved bus facilities across the Borough (Sustainable Transport).
- Supporting measures which reduce congestion, improve environmental quality and encourage healthier and more sustainable travel choices, including walking, cycling and public transport use (Sustainable Transport).
- Focusing development which generates significant movement in locations where the need to travel can be minimised and sustainable transport accessibility maximised (Sustainable Transport).
- Requiring strategic development sites to maximise accessibility to sustainable travel choices, promote walking, cycling and public transport, and address necessary on-site and off-site highway improvements (Development of Strategic Housing Sites).
- Supporting housing development which maximises independence and choice for older people and people with specific needs, including having regard to access to essential services, shops and public transport (Housing Mix).

4.5 Green and blue infrastructure

4.5.1 Public Health England's *Using the Planning System to Promote Healthy Weight Environments* (2020) highlights the important role green and blue infrastructure can play in supporting healthier lifestyles⁶. Accessible parks, green corridors, open spaces and recreational routes can encourage physical activity, active travel and informal recreation as part of everyday life. These spaces are essential to delivering sustainable growth, high quality placemaking, climate resilience, nature recovery and improved health and wellbeing in North East Lincolnshire. The guidance recognises that well-designed natural environments can positively influence health behaviours, improve mental wellbeing and help support healthier weight outcomes.

4.5.2 Developing a connected green and blue infrastructure network recognises the importance of accessible green spaces and water-related 'blue' features in supporting healthy communities. Green corridors can provide healthy traffic-free routes for walking, wheeling and cycling, whilst also connecting formal and informal open spaces, softening development edges and maintaining the separate identity of settlements. These corridors can provide access from the heart of the urban area to the wider rural environment, promote active travel and deliver wider environmental, recreational and wellbeing benefits.

6 *Using the Planning System to Promote Healthy Weight Environments* (2020)

What the North East Lincolnshire Local Plan will do

- 4.5.3** The Local Plan seeks to support green and blue infrastructure through the following policy approaches:
- Requiring development to contribute towards necessary infrastructure, including green and blue infrastructure, green space, sport, recreation and play provision where demands arise from development (Infrastructure).
 - Supporting the provision of quality green infrastructure and access to nature in recognition of the benefits to physical and mental health and wellbeing (Health and Wellbeing).
 - Requiring development proposals within Strategic Wedges to have regard to improving the quality, function and connectivity of green and blue infrastructure networks (Strategic Wedges).
 - Supporting development proposals which contribute positively towards the wider green and blue infrastructure network, particularly where located within or adjacent to development boundaries (Development Boundaries).
 - Protecting and enhancing Strategic Wedges, including their role in providing accessible formal and informal recreational opportunities close to where people live and providing public access to the open countryside (Strategic Wedges).
 - Supporting community wellbeing through appropriate physical and social infrastructure, including calming environments with access to natural green space (Health and Wellbeing).
 - Applying local accessibility standards and contribution requirements for open spaces, including natural green space, parks and gardens, outdoor sports facilities, and allotments, helping to support healthy and sustainable communities (Open Space and Recreation).
 - Requiring strategic development sites to be planned within a comprehensive green infrastructure framework which maximises connectivity to the wider network and promotes healthy lifestyles (Development of Strategic Housing Sites).

4.6 Built environment

- 4.6.1** The built environment has a significant influence on the health and wellbeing of communities. The way places are planned, designed and managed can affect physical activity levels, access to services and facilities, social interaction, environmental quality and overall quality of life. Well-designed neighbourhoods can encourage walking and cycling, provide access to green infrastructure and open space, support healthy food choices and create safe, inclusive environments for people of all ages.
- 4.6.2** Conversely, poor quality environments can contribute to health inequalities, social isolation, physical inactivity and poorer health outcomes. The planning system therefore has an important role in shaping healthy places and ensuring that future growth contributes positively to the health and wellbeing of residents.

What the North East Lincolnshire Local Plan will do

- 4.6.3** The Local Plan seeks to support healthy built environments through the following policy approaches:
- Ensuring development incorporates high-quality green and blue infrastructure and provides opportunities for people to access and connect with nature (Health and Wellbeing).
 - Supporting the delivery of healthcare facilities in accessible locations with good links to public transport, walking and cycling networks (Health and Wellbeing).
 - Promoting the creation of attractive, safe, inclusive and accessible places through high-quality design (Good Design in New Developments).
 - Supporting sustainable and accessible transport options, including community transport schemes, to improve access to employment, education, healthcare, leisure and social opportunities (Promoting Sustainable Transport).
 - Enhancing the public realm and supporting the provision of safe, accessible spaces for cultural, recreational and community activities (Social and Cultural Places).

4.7 Air quality

- 4.7.1** Air quality is an important determinant of health and wellbeing. Exposure to air pollution can have significant impacts on human health, particularly for vulnerable groups such as children, older people and those with existing respiratory or cardiovascular conditions. Poor air quality has been associated with a range of adverse health outcomes, including asthma, respiratory disease, cardiovascular disease and premature mortality. There are currently no Air Quality Management Areas (AQMAs) in the Borough, however, it is important that the council continues to support initiatives to improve air quality to maintain this position.
- 4.7.2** The built environment plays an important role in influencing air quality. Development patterns, transport choices, traffic levels and the location of sensitive uses can all affect the extent to which people are exposed to air pollution. Planning therefore has a key role in improving air quality by promoting sustainable patterns of development, encouraging active and sustainable travel, reducing reliance on private vehicles and ensuring that new development does not give rise to unacceptable impacts on air quality.
- 4.7.3** Maintaining and improving air quality is an important component of creating healthy places. According to the Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs (DEFRA), air pollution is the largest environmental risk to public health, with long-term exposure linked to chronic conditions such as cardiovascular and respiratory diseases, as well as lung cancer ⁷.

7 *Air Quality and Public Health (2023)*

What the North East Lincolnshire Local Plan will do

4.7.4 The Local Plan seeks to support air quality through the following policy approaches:

- Development boundaries will be considered regarding suitability and sustainability which includes taking into account air quality (Development Boundaries)
- Proposals for renewable and low carbon energy generating systems will be assessed subject to impact considerations including air quality (Renewable and Low Carbon Infrastructure)
- Green and Blue Infrastructure is promoted, which can improve overall air and water quality (Policy SP9: Developing a green and blue infrastructure network)
- The council expects that the design and approach of each development is informed by the need to achieve air quality improvements (Good design in new developments)
- The priority areas where combinations of sustainable transport measures and highways improvements will be made include defined AQMAs (Promoting Sustainable Transport)
- Street and parking areas should include green infrastructure to improve, among other factors, air quality (Parking)

4.8 Social health

4.8.1 Social health refers to the ability of individuals and communities to develop positive social connections, participate in community life and access the services, facilities and support networks needed to maintain wellbeing. Strong social relationships and community cohesion are associated with improved physical and mental health outcomes, whilst social isolation and loneliness can negatively affect health, wellbeing and quality of life.

4.8.2 The built environment plays an important role in shaping social health. The availability of community facilities, public open spaces, cultural venues, sports and recreation facilities, and opportunities for social interaction can help foster a sense of belonging and strengthen community resilience. Equally, well-connected and accessible neighbourhoods can improve access to employment, education, healthcare and social opportunities, helping to reduce inequalities and support healthier communities.

4.8.3 The planning system therefore has an important role in creating places that encourage social interaction, support community networks and provide access to the services and infrastructure needed for people to lead healthy and fulfilling lives.

What the North East Lincolnshire Local Plan will do

4.8.4 The Local Plan seeks to support Social Health through the following policy approaches:

- The Council will expect development proposals to promote, support and enhance physical and mental health and wellbeing, and thus contribute to reducing health inequalities (Health and Wellbeing)
- Supporting community needs through appropriate physical and social infrastructure, establishing calming environments with access to natural green space and improving physical and mental health and wellbeing, and the overall quality of life experienced by residents (Health and Wellbeing)
- Ensuring that local infrastructure requirements for the new community are met through provision of facilities and services (schools, community facilities, local centres, play and playing pitch provision, and healthcare) so that residents don't become isolated (Development of Strategic Housing Sites)
- Promoting the role of the town centre in supporting social activities (Town Centre Uses)
- Supporting developments to extend or broaden the appeal of social and cultural facilities (Social and Cultural Spaces)

Section 5 Conclusions

- 5.0.1** The evidence presented within this Topic Paper demonstrates that North East Lincolnshire experiences significant health challenges relative to the England average, particularly in relation to healthy life expectancy, obesity, smoking prevalence and mortality rates. These issues are closely associated with deprivation and are unevenly distributed across the Borough.
- 5.0.2** Whilst planning alone cannot address all determinants of health, the planning system has a significant role in shaping healthier environments through the delivery of high-quality housing, sustainable transport networks, green and blue infrastructure, accessible community facilities and healthy food environments.
- 5.0.3** The emerging Local Plan will therefore seek to embed health and wellbeing throughout the plan-making process, ensuring that future growth contributes positively to reducing health inequalities and improving the quality of life for existing and future residents.

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