

Embedding HIAs – the Darlington Experience

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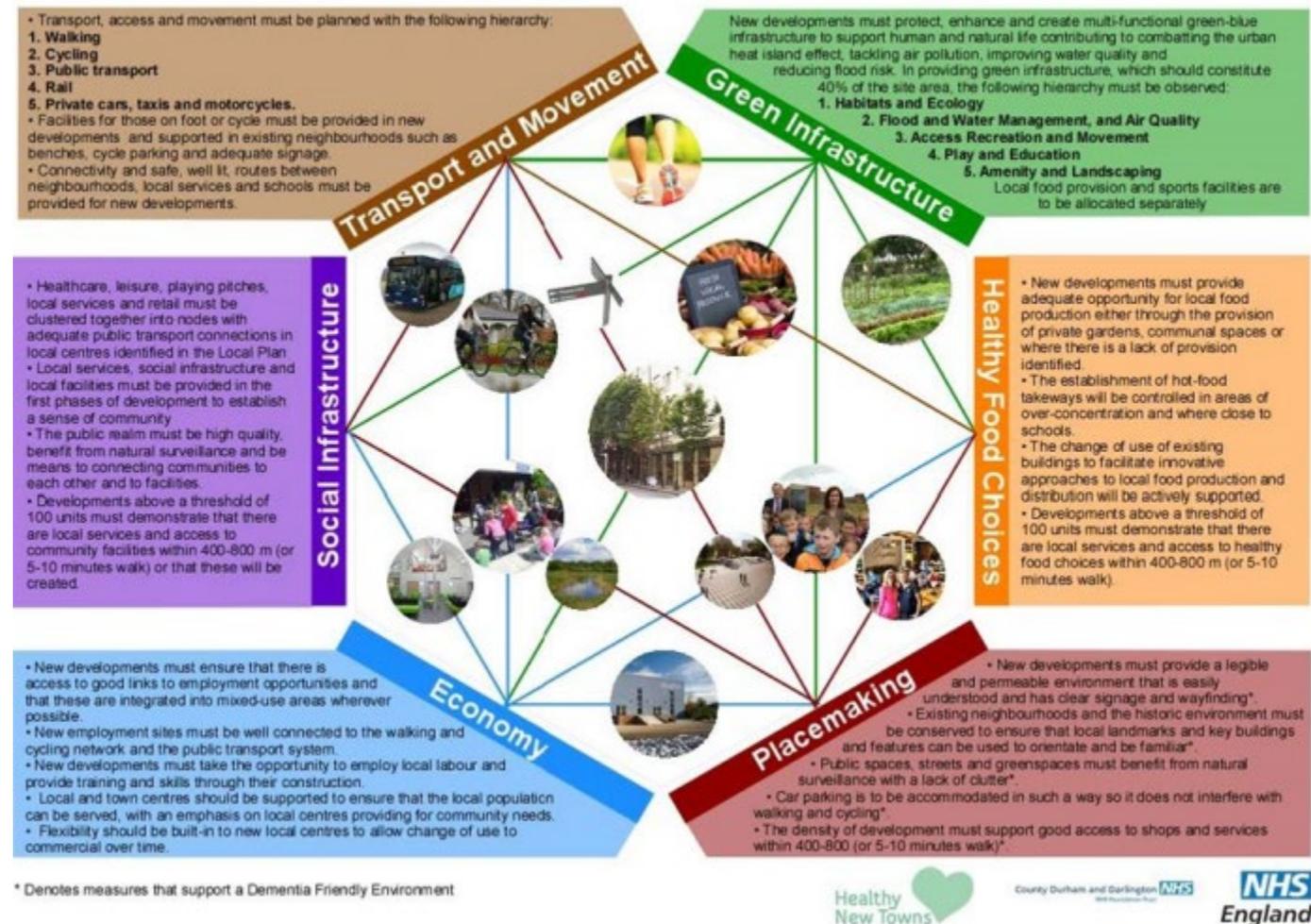


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Background

- Healthy New Towns Pilot site (from 2016)
 - strong local partnerships across the local NHS, LA planning & public health
 - Increased awareness of opportunities to improve health and wellbeing and tackle inequalities through place-based planning
 - Resulted in the Healthy New Towns design Principles.

HEALTHY NEW TOWNS - DESIGN PRINCIPLES



Darlington Borough Local Plan 2016-2036

- Adopted in February 2022
 - Included specific aims relating to improving population health and wellbeing and tackling health inequalities
 - Embedded the Healthy New Towns Design Principles through multiple policies
 - Policy DC3 required submission of HIA for 'development of 150 or more homes and all other non-residential major development'
- **Policy DC1:** Sustainable Design Principles and Climate Change
 - **Policy DC3:** Health and Wellbeing
 - **Policy DC4:** Safeguarding Amenity
 - **Policy DC5:** Skills and Training
 - **Policy H4:** Housing Mix
 - **Policy H8:** Housing Intensification
 - **Policy H9:** Gypsy and Travellers Accommodation
 - **Policy ENV1:** Protecting, Enhancing and Promoting Darlington's Historic Environment
 - **Policy ENV4:** Green and Blue Infrastructure
 - **Policy ENV6:** Local Greenspace
 - **Policy ENV9:** Outdoor Sports Facilities
 - **Policy IN1:** Delivering a Sustainable Transport Network
 - **Policy IN2:** Improving Access and Accessibility
 - **Policy IN4:** Parking Provision including Electric Vehicles
 - **Policy IN10:** Supporting the Delivery of Community and Social Infrastructure



The challenge

- Had started receiving HIAs from developers as part of planning applications
 - Varying methodology, quality and impact
 - None fully considered impacts of development on different groups/health inequalities
 - Opportunities to enhance positive impacts of proposed developments often missed
- No agreed processes for supporting developers with HIAs, reviewing/responding to HIAs, enforcing any recommendations or evaluating the impact of HIAs.

Some of the questions we were grappling with...

- How would HIAs add real value – not just be a ‘tick box’ exercise!
- How could different teams across DBC support the HIA process and what would our roles and responsibilities be?
- Did we have the capacity and skills to support the process?
- How would we engage with developers earlier to embed healthy designs, mitigate negative health impacts, enhance positive health impacts and address health inequalities?
- How would we assess the quality of HIAs and address any concerns?
- How would we enforce any recommendations/actions/conditions and link them to planning policy?
- How would we monitor and evaluate the impact of HIAs?



Our approach



Some of the detail...



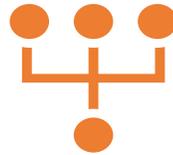
Agreeing HIA threshold

A compromise!

Supported by Gov't appointed Independent Inspector reviewing our Local Plan

Keeping this under review – looking at what was missed!

Schemes of 50+ homes encouraged to speak to PH at pre-app and undertake a HIA



Managing the HIA process for larger/complex schemes

Each LA team reviews HIA separately as consultees (PH, transport, environmental health, etc)

Cross-departmental review group to review HIA's where developments are particularly complex/have significant health and wellbeing impacts. Discuss any opportunities to improve health and wellbeing and address inequalities. Input from planning crucial to help ensure any recommendations are linked to planning frameworks/policies



Addressing concerns around capacity

Estimating likely numbers based on thresholds and previous applications

Testing out process and discussing capacity issues early

Joint approach to responding to larger schemes / more complex HIAs

Early engagement with developers to improve impact and reduce the need for lengthy feedback and recommendations when HIA is submitted

PH notified at pre-app of all proposals requiring an HIA

Developers encouraged to speak to PH during design phase and provided with guidance on undertaking effective HIA process



HIA Developer Guidance

Sets out:

- What a HIA is and what we want to achieve through the HIA process
- The vision for population health and wellbeing in Darlington and health needs across the Borough
- The Healthy New Towns Design Principles and our learning from the HNT pilot
- HIAs and the planning policy context (national and local)
- The HIA process and how to engage with the Council throughout
- Signposting to key guidance – does not try to repeat it!
- Comprehensive HIA Tool and how to use it to support the HIA process
- Points of contact for advice and information sources
- Introduces HIA Assessment Themes.



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HEALTH IMPACT ASSESSMENT

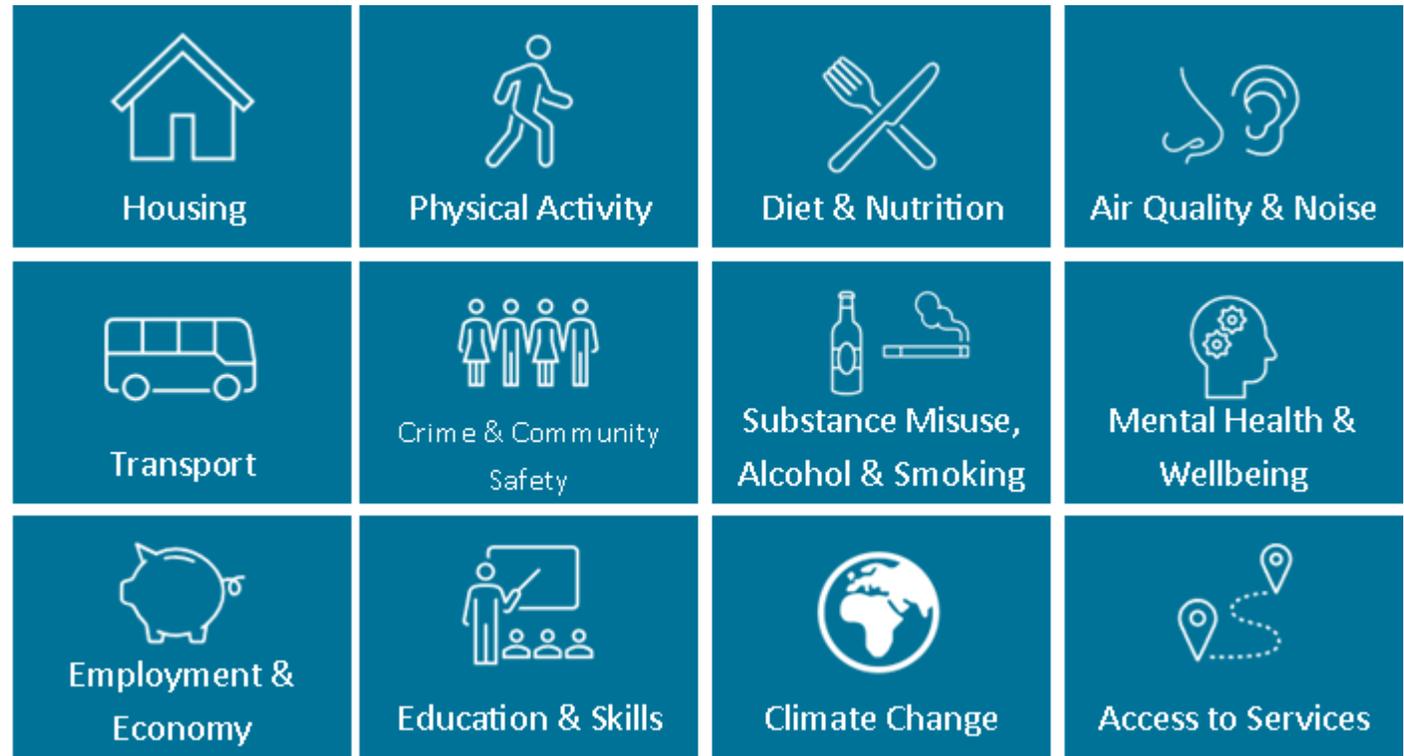
DEVELOPMENT GUIDANCE NOTE

May 2023



Comprehensive HIA Tool

- Helps developers work through a thorough and systematic HIA process
- Provides a framework for the final HIA document
- Helps developers show:
 - How health, wellbeing and tackling health inequalities have been considered during the design of new developments
 - How any negative health impacts will be mitigated, and any positive health impacts will be enhanced
- Is set out around 12 themes identified from local intelligence on population health needs



HOW TO USE THE COMPREHENSIVE HEALTH IMPACT ASSESSMENT TOOL

SECTION 1: POPULATION GROUPS

Select which population groups will be most impacted by the proposed development.



SECTION 2: COUNCIL WARDS

Select which council wards will be most impacted by the proposed development.

This should include not just the ward the development is located in - but also any neighbouring wards in which the development might influence health and wellbeing.



SECTION 3: PROPOSAL

Provide a description of the proposed development.

SECTION 4: EVIDENCE

Provide a summary of the evidence that has been used to inform the HIA. This includes; literature & policy considered, health data, best practice examples.

It is not necessary to provide a detailed write-up of health and wellbeing across Darlington.



SECTION 5: COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Provide a summary of the community engagement undertaken to establish local health priorities, and detail the conclusions and priorities drawn from these events.

SECTION 6:

This section is divide into 12 assessment criteria.

Each criterion has a series of categories to provide a response to.

Also provided are a series of prompt questions to provide details on what could be considered in each category. These prompts are not intended to be exhaustive. There may be other considerations applicants wish to include that are more relevant or have not be thought of when preparing this assessment tool.



Each theme has a short explanation

SECTION 6: IMPACT ASSESSMENT: PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

USER NOTES Think about how the proposal may create an environment that promotes or hinders physical activities such as sport, active play and active travel.

Theme	Impact	Certainty	Description of Impact	Actions
<p>Supporting Active Travel</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are cycle lanes, footpaths, and road crossings integrated into the scheme? • Is the development integrated into the existing walking and cycling network, and into neighbouring areas? • Are facilities for daily essentials and recreation within easy reach of each other by active travel? 				

Category

Prompt Question

IMPACT

Think about what impact the proposal may have with regard to each of the themes listed and if this impact will be positive or negative.

Assess the impact using the following coding:

Symbol	Coding
++	Definitely Positive
+	Probably Positive
0	No Change
-	Probably Negative
--	Definitely Negative
?	Unclear

If the proposal will impact on different groups or populations differently please list these separately.

CERTAINTY

Think about how certain you are about your assessment for each impact. As far as possible your decisions should be supported using available evidence.

Assess the certainty using the following coding:

Symbol	Coding
!!!	High Certainty
!!	Medium Certainty
!	Low Certainty
?	Uncertain

NOTE:

Each section must clearly set out what evidence (E.g. Literature & Policy Review, Health Data, Best Practice Examples) has been used to arrive at the impacts and actions detailed.

Health Priorities Table

Uses the 12 themes to present health priorities in each council ward in a simple visual way.

It is hoped this will focus applicants submissions to make sure they spend additional time addressing key areas of concern.

Ward	 Housing	 Physical Activity	 Diet & Nutrition	 Air Quality & Noise	 Transport	 Crime & Community Safety	 Substance Misuse, Alcohol & Smoking	 Mental Health & Wellbeing	 Employment & Economy	 Education & Skills	 Health Inequalities	 Access to Services
Bank Top & Lascelles	●	●	●		●	●	●	●	●	●	●	
Brinkburn & Faverdale								●			●	●
Cockerton	●	●	●		●			●	●	●	●	
College								●				
Eastbourne	●	●		●		●	●	●	●	●	●	
Harrowgate Hill		●		●				●			●	
Haughton & Springfield		●		●						●	●	
Heighington & Coniscliffe								●				●
Hummersknott								●				
Hurworth											●	
Mowden								●				
Northgate	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	
North Road	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	
Park East	●	●	●		●	●	●	●	●	●	●	
Park West				●			●	●				
Pierremont	●							●			●	
Red Hall & Lingfield	●	●	●	●			●	●	●	●	●	
Sadberge & Middleton St. George											●	●
Stephenson	●	●	●	●	●	●		●	●	●	●	
Whinfield		●		●				●			●	

Our learning: Success factors

- Making HIAs a requirement in the Local Plan
- Early engagement – bringing together a cross-departmental steering group
- Taking time to build trust and properly understand the priorities, interests and needs of other teams/groups of professionals
- Finding common ground and identifying where priorities of different Council departments overlapped
- Learning to speak each others language!
- Involving regional and national experts – Knowledge, Credibility and Kudos!
- Timing – HIAs mandated in Local Plan, regional/national interest, local elections!
- Being flexible and working through challenges together.



Our learning: Challenges

- Limited capacity/resources and competing priorities
- Differing levels of public health and planning knowledge and skills
 - People often don't intuitively consider health inequalities
- Different professional 'languages'
- Complex planning policies/legislation and a lack of 'hooks'
- Evaluating / measuring impact.



Darlington Borough Council HIA Developer Guidance and Comprehensive HIA Tool:

<https://www.darlington.gov.uk/environment-and-planning/planning/planning-and-environmental-policy/supplementary-planning-documents/>



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