

Reuniting Planning and Health

Planning for Healthy Communities resources pack



RESOURCE 2:

PUTTING PLANNING AT THE CENTRE TO ACHIEVE WIDER CORPORATE ASPIRATIONS,

A resource for elected members and senior officers. It focuses on the role of planning corporately, and how a focus on health can help to achieve wider corporate objectives. This is particularly timely as councils consider how they will coordinate and organise their new responsibilities.



Planning for Healthy Communities resources pack

'The integration of planning, community planning, regeneration, local economic development and local tourism, combined with councils' existing functions, should provide a productive joined up approach that will enhance the role of local government as a natural partner in helping to deliver health improvements and addressing health inequalities at the community level.'

Dr Michael McBride, Chief Medical Officer, Northern Ireland ([Your Health Matters](#), 2013)

Welcome

This set of resources explains how better integration between health and spatial planning can help to create healthier places to live. It explains the opportunities for achieving this in Northern Ireland, and includes suggestions from elsewhere to illustrate potential ways forward.

These resources have been developed primarily for elected members, senior officers in local government, planners and public health practitioners. They will also be useful for community development practitioners and others who want to understand how the planning system can play a part in improving health and wellbeing locally.

Not everyone will want to know the same thing, and users will come with their own existing knowledge. To make the resources as useful as possible they have been written as standalone resources. This means that users can choose the ones they are most interested in, without having to start from the beginning of Resource 1 and work their way through to the end (you are of course welcome to do this too!).

Resource 1 is for people who want to learn more about the links between planning and health. It is a brief overview with lots of links to other more detailed reports and websites to get more information.	Resource 2 is for elected members and senior officers. It focuses on the role of planning corporately, and how a focus on health can help to achieve wider corporate objectives. This is particularly timely as councils consider how they will coordinate and organise their new responsibilities.	Resource 3 is for elected members, planners and public health practitioners. It explains the opportunities and constraints for considering health concerns within the planning process, and includes examples of evidence-based policies. There are lots of links to more information.	Resource 4 is for people who want to know more about how health can be considered within the existing and emerging Northern Ireland planning system.	Resource 5 is for people who want to know more about what integrated health and planning might look like in practice. It showcases examples of places where health has been considered throughout the planning process.
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Resource 2: Putting planning at the centre to achieve wider corporate aspirations

Demonstrates how planning is an important council function that can help to achieve wider council objectives, including better health

This resource has two sections:

- Putting planning centre-stage: presents examples of council corporate structures to highlight the different ways that planning can be connected to the wider decision-making of the council
- Meeting corporate objectives: examples of how planning (and a commitment to improving health via planning) can help to deliver wider corporate objectives.

Putting planning centre-stage

This section presents examples of council corporate structures within which public health and planning sit. A brief description is presented for each example.

These examples provide an initial snapshot of approaches different councils have adopted to fit local corporate priorities, statutory responsibilities and appointments (such as a Director of Public Health in England) and budgetary constraints. They include:

- London Borough of Lewisham
- Bristol City Council
- Plymouth City Council
- Sandwell Council
- Gateshead Council
- Glasgow City Council.

Note that by including these examples we are not necessarily endorsing them as the most effective for achieving corporate objectives, including better health (they have not been evaluated). Nor can the diagrams below present the 'glue' of working relationships (formal or informal) on the ground, which can only be understood through further work. These relationships are often the bridge across departments to ensure that integration happens between council sections, not just within them (see the collaborative working section in Resource 3).

London Borough of Lewisham (www.lewisham.gov.uk)

Lewisham has four directorates to carry out the council functions and deliver services. Planning comes under the Resources and Regeneration directorate while public health comes under Community Services. There is already some existing collaboration between planning and public health on hot food takeaways policies in the local development planning documents.

Bristol City Council, South West of England (www.bristol.gov.uk)

Bristol currently has four directorates with planning and public health sitting in different directorates of Place and Neighbourhoods, respectively. There is already some existing collaboration between public health and planning, indeed with a specialist in public health post embedded in the planning team. The council is currently undertaking a restructure.

Plymouth City Council, South West of England (www.plymouth.gov.uk)

Plymouth has three directorates with each directorate having four departments. Planning sits within the Place Directorate while public health sits within the People Directorate.

Sandwell Council, West Midlands (www.sandwell.gov.uk)

Sandwell Council has a number of directorates and services with planning and public health sitting in different areas of the structure. There is already some existing collaboration between planning and public health on hot food takeaways policies in the local development planning documents.

Sandwell has produced a joint local plan with neighbourhood councils within the Black Country sub-region and therefore on the ground working structures between health and planning would be more complex.

Gateshead Council, North East of England (www.gateshead.gov.uk)

The Council's services are delivered through five groups each run by a Strategic Director. Within each of the five groups are a number of services, each run by a Service Director. Planning and public health sits under Development and Enterprise, and the Director of Public Health sits under the Head of Planning which is a Service Director level. A Place Shaping Group was established which met quarterly, chaired by the Strategic Director Development and Enterprise with representatives from across the council who 'place shape'. The outputs feed into the Health and Wellbeing Board.

Glasgow City Council, Scotland (www.glasgow.gov.uk)

Glasgow has a number of directorates. Planning sits under the Development and Regeneration Services directorate while public health sits under Land and Environmental Services. Community planning responsibilities is a corporate function and therefore sits within the Corporate Services. There had been innovative work on planning and health in Glasgow as part of the Scottish Government's 'Equally Well' initiative for which Glasgow was a test site. Public health responsibilities in local councils in Scotland differ in relation to England.

How a focus on health and planning can meet wider corporate objectives

The examples below highlight how putting planning at the corporate centre can help an authority to focus on integration and meet a range of aspirations that most councils share. They are valuable food for thought for chief executives and senior officers in the newly forming local authorities in Northern Ireland:

- **Driving local authority performance**
- **Engaging communities**
- **Demonstrating councillor leadership**
- **Working across different levels of government**

Driving local authority performance – Coventry City Council (www.coventry.gov.uk)

Coventry City Council, in the West Midlands of England, has appointed a public health practitioner to advise urban and transport planners within the council. But its commitment to integrate across health and the built environment goes much wider than a single post, and is driven by the chief executive, Martin Reeves. Martin believes that local authorities must recognise that achieving health and wellbeing needs to be 'driven through all of a council's functions – we have missed a major trick if we do this in a piecemeal way'.

One practical example of this approach is the council's attempts to build in health and wellbeing from the start to a £350 million development scheme around the city's airport. Part of the council's approach is to work with a range of stakeholders to convince them that improving health and wellbeing makes business sense, and should not be viewed simply as something that would be 'nice to have'.

Martin says:

'This is a leadership challenge: we must find a way of making the right decision for the place. And the best way to do that is to get staff bonded by the one thing we all care about, which is trying to improve the wellbeing of our people and our places.'

Contact: Angela Hands, Public Health Practitioner (Planning and Transport), Coventry City Council, angela.hands@coventry.gov.uk

Engaging communities to influence public sector spending – Bristol City Council (www.bristol.gov.uk)

Community planning is a central plank of Northern Ireland's reformed planning system. Increasing people's sense of participation and control over their local environment is an important element of improving wellbeing (Marmot). Bristol City Council, in collaboration with the University of West of England, the University of Bristol and the NHS, has recently established a team called SHINE (Supporting Healthy Inclusive Neighbourhood Environments).

SHINE aims to combine community engagement, research and innovation to make sure that future development of the city improves health and wellbeing, and social inclusion. The scale ranges from influencing the development of large urban extensions through to making sure that benches and public toilets are available in the right places so that older people can walk comfortably to the shops or park. This work will build on existing innovation with involving communities in decision-making in Bristol, such as the online [Traffic Choices](#) tool, which allows residents to have a say in how they would like money spent on traffic schemes locally.

Contact: Marcus Grant, Associate Professor of Healthy Urban Environments, University of the West of England, marcus.grant@uwe.ac.uk

Demonstrating councillor leadership – Medway Council (www.medway.gov.uk)

A recurring finding when examining the factors that contribute to successful integration is leadership by councillors. Elected members at Medway Council, a unitary authority to the south east of London on the North Kent coast, were concerned by the increase in the number of children and young people who were becoming overweight or obese. To investigate this further they set up a task group to review healthy eating among children and young people in the Medway area.

This leadership has led to a collaboration developing between the public health directorate (now within the council) and planning and licensing teams within Medway Council to tackle

obesity and to learn from the experiences of others. There is agreement to write some interim planning policy based on local evidence gathered by the public health directorate.

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Working across different levels of government – Hertfordshire County Council
(www.hertfordshire.gov.uk)

In England two tier areas, the county council is responsible for public health while the district councils are responsible for most planning functions. This replicates to some extent the forthcoming arrangements for Northern Ireland between central government (public health) and the reformed local councils (planning).

Hertfordshire County Council has ten district councils within its area. To facilitate communication between these two levels it has set up a public health board as a sub-committee of the county's health and wellbeing board. The board acts as a multi-agency forum to enable all parts of the public health system in the county – such as Public Health England, district and county councils, the Police and Crime Commissioner, NHS bodies, and other agencies – to work effectively together.

To assist this joint working the county is also reviewing how it makes public health data available to built environment professionals across the ten districts so that it is as useful and accessible as possible. This has included working with environmental health officers to develop data on air quality, and collaborating with planners to gather relevant evidence on healthy place priorities, such as creating more green space and reducing congestion and pollution.

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This resource is part of a series
Reuniting Planning and Health- Planning for Healthy Communities .

All five publications are available to download
at
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