

DERBYSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

Cabinet

10th September 2013

Report of the Director of Public Health

Health & Communities

Proposal to Pilot Health Impact Assessment in Derbyshire

1. Purpose of Report

To seek approval to implement a programme of health impact assessments (HIA) to contribute to improving the health of local people and to reduce health inequalities.

2. Information and Analysis

2.1 Background

The aim of health impact assessment (HIA) is to identify factors that will have a significant impact on health and to use evidence to maximise health gains and mitigate any negative impacts.

HIA defines health in a holistic way which acknowledges the wider influences on health, such as income, education and employment status as well as lifestyles and genetics. Figure 1 below is a diagrammatic representation of the different layers of influence on health, many of which will be taken into account during an HIA.

The purpose of conducting a health impact assessment is to inform and influence decision-making to enhance the positive impacts of any decision and reduce (or eliminate) any negative impacts. HIAs are conducted during the planning phase of whatever is under consideration, for example, whilst a policy is being developed. Timing is important. The policy needs to be sufficiently developed to allow an examination of the likely impacts and early enough for amendments to be made in response to the HIA's recommendations.

2.2 The benefits of HIA include:

- Improves health and reduces health inequalities: a positive approach
- Uses best available evidence to support decision making and prioritisation of major programmes of work
- A mechanism for community engagement and participation in key Council developments through stakeholder meetings and consultations
- Links well with other impact assessments, e.g. environmental sustainability and equity
- Promotes partnership working
- Builds skills for health with partners and communities
- Makes best use of resources
- Can be cascaded to partner agencies, e.g. district/boroughs; voluntary & community sector

2.3 Principles and values of HIA

HIA is a principled activity and its application will foster a culture of fairness and equity if properly conducted. HIA's values include:

- a democratic approach through the involvement of all those affected in the evidence gathering and decision making process
- openness and transparency through stakeholder meetings and consultations
- equity: an emphasis on reducing social and health inequalities
- sustainable development
- ethical use of evidence, for example, evidence is assessed for potential bias due to vested interests

Embedding HIA across the County Council will contribute to a reduction of health inequalities within the County's population. For example, an

HIA of the proposed route of phase 2 of the high speed rail link HS2 will highlight the potential benefits and harms to the residents of Derbyshire and especially those living close to the proposed route. These communities already experience relative deprivation and inequalities in health and an HIA will seek to make best use of the rail development to ensure local people benefit from the economic developments of HS2. It will also highlight potential harms such as noise, air pollution and congestion during the construction phase and provide recommendations for how these can be mitigated.

2.4. Monitoring and evaluating

This stage assesses the degree to which the HIA influenced the programme or policy under consideration and, if possible, the health outcomes of those changes. In other words, this stage aims to assess the impact of the HIA itself.

2.5 Developing HIA at Derbyshire County Council

Public health professionals have the knowledge and skills to develop a programme of HIA within the County Council and its partners and communities. Developing capacity within other departments of the County Council can be achieved through an in-house training programme for staff, designed and delivered by a public health officer who has been trained in the theory and practice of HIA. For example, staff from Environmental Services, CAYA, Adult care and Policy could become the HIA champions within their department and in this way build health into all the council's work. An initial cohort of staff could be trained within three months. Trained staff can be allocated to HIAs appropriate to their seniority, expertise and time availability. For example, senior public health staff can lead HIAs on key policies and programmes, such as economic development and transport/HS2 policies and projects, while health improvement staff can conduct community-based HIAs within their communities of interest.

Capacity can also be developed in partner organisations, for example, in district and borough councils and in the voluntary and community sector. This maximises the potential to improve health and reduce health inequalities across a wide range of agencies in Derbyshire which, in turn, will contribute to achieving public health outcomes for Derbyshire County Council.

A quality assurance process will be included through a system of internal peer reviews of HIAs undertaken by trained staff.

2.6 Conclusion

Health impact assessment is an evidence-based, effective, systematic and inexpensive approach to improving the health of and reducing health inequalities in the population. Prospective and concurrent assessment of policies, programmes and projects being developed and implemented within Derbyshire County Council will maximise health gain. In-house training can be provided to build capability and capacity. The initial phase will focus on two demonstration HIAs to pilot this approach in Derbyshire. Suggested topics are the high speed rail link HS2 and the Council's economic development policy. Following a review of these initial HIAs, a medium to long-term programme can be developed to embed a systematic approach to HIA across Derbyshire.

3. Financial Considerations

A modest sum of money will be required to deliver training and to pay for venues, refreshments and expenses for stakeholder workshops. This will be found from the public health budget.

4. Human Resources Considerations

Staff from within the Public Health Department and other Departments may be asked to dedicate some of their time to be trained in and to contribute to HIAs.

5. Other Considerations

In preparing this report the relevance of the following factors has been considered:- Legal and Human Rights, equality of opportunity, health, environmental, transport, property and crime and disorder considerations.

6. Background Papers

The mental wellbeing screening checklist and the Merseyside Guidelines appraisal tool.

7. Key Decision? Yes

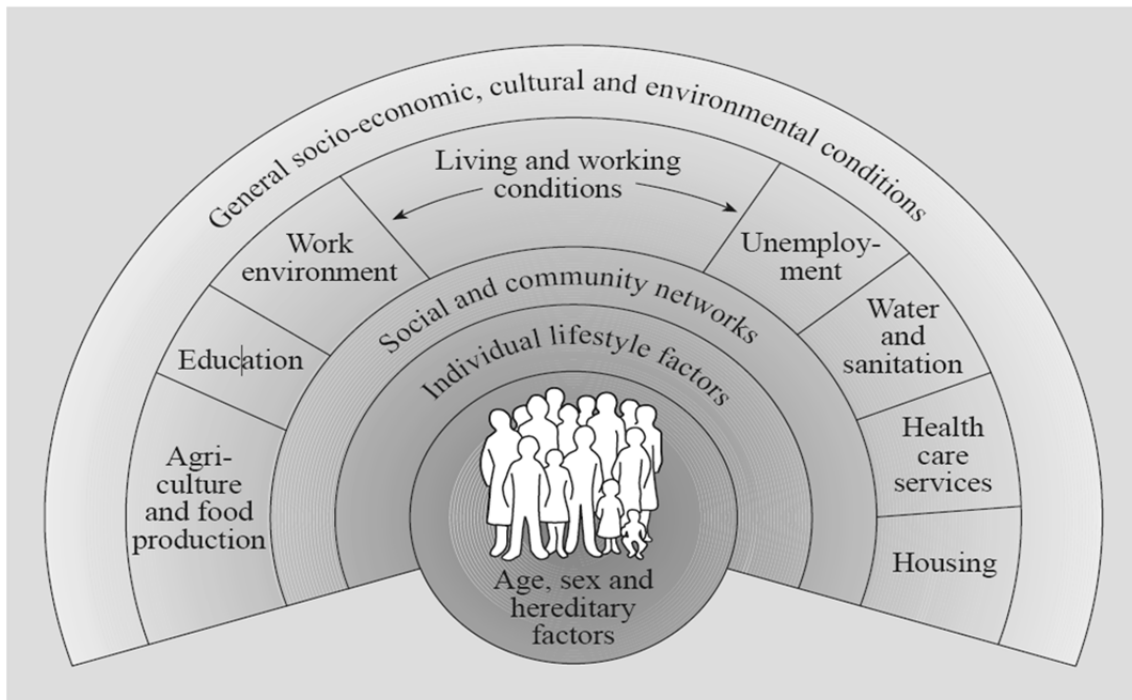
8. **Is it necessary to waive the call-in period?** No

9. **Officer's Recommendations**

1. That Cabinet approves a pilot of health impact assessment across relevant departments and programmes within DCC with the aim of enhancing health benefits and reducing health inequalities
2. That a further report will be submitted to Cabinet notifying it of the outcome of the pilot.

Elaine Michel
Director of Public Health

Appendix 1: Diagram of the social model of health (Dahlgren & Whitehead 1991)



Appendix 2: The process of health impact assessment

The process of HIA – add as appendix

There are five stages in the HIA process, as summarised below.

Screening

The first stage of HIA is known as 'screening'. Screening is a systematic process using a tool, or questionnaire. The screening stage is a quick assessment of the potential health effects of a policy and is used to identify policies that need a full HIA. The screening stage can also be used as a rapid HIA for some policies and programmes. For example Kent County Council uses the Mental Wellbeing Impact Assessment screening tool (appendix 3) to assess the potential impact on health inequalities all its policies.

Scoping

This stage sets out the scope of the HIA, including the depth of the assessment, i.e. desk-top; rapid; or comprehensive. Other issues considered at this stage are the membership of the steering group overseeing the HIA, the geographical boundary, the types and methods

of data collection, and the type of report required. Data may include demographic and health profiles of the community affected, literature reviews of the evidence, expert informants and the views of the stakeholders and communities affected by the policy.

Appraisal

Appraisal of the evidence collected is the third step. This is done using an appraisal tool which identifies the health impacts, (both determinants and outcomes), whether the impacts are positive or negative, the scale of the impacts (e.g. size of population and severity of effect), the likelihood of the impact (e.g. definite, possible or speculative) and the latency of the impacts (e.g. short, medium or long term) (see appendix 2).

Recommendations

At the fourth stage the steering group develops and records the recommendations of the HIA. These aim to maximise the positive health impacts of the policy or programme and minimise or mitigate the negative impacts.

Appendix 3: Mental wellbeing impact assessment checklist

Appendix 4: Matrix for assessing potential health impacts