

Briefing Note for Overview and Scrutiny Committee – Planning and Health Issues

Background

1. Health concerns are closely related to environmental and social issues and planning now plays its part in improving health outcomes.
2. This is achieved through development management (the securing of community objectives through planning applications);
3. It is also achieved through spatial planning policy contained in a Local Development Framework. This seeks to achieve community objectives by co-ordinating plans and strategies which have an impact on places and how they function).
4. Lancaster City Council's Core Strategy, the first to be adopted in the North West, is the cornerstone of the City Council's Local Development Framework. In time, it will be joined by Development Management and Land Allocation documents, Action Area plans and detailed guidance.
5. In preparing the Core Strategy, the North West Strategic Health Authority, North Lancashire NHS Trust (the Primary Care Trust) University Hospitals of Morecambe Bay NHS Trust, the North West Ambulance Trust, the Lancashire Care NHS Trust and the Cumbria Primary Care trust were all consulted and their strategies taken on board.
6. Health Strategies include the Cumbria and Lancashire Strategic Health Authority - Strategic Delivery Framework, the North Lancashire NHS Trust Local Delivery Plan and North West Ambulance Service NHS Trust - Strategy and Vision. These have been reviewed and found to be non-spatial in nature focussing primarily on operational and clinical priorities.

Direct Impacts

7. Planning policy assists the delivery of health outcomes directly by;
 - Allocating land for new GP surgeries, primary resource centres, hospital facilities, ambulance stations as required (this will be achieved through the Land Allocations document);
 - Ensuring that where very large scale development can be shown to generate a direct need for healthcare provision, such provision is made;
 - Ensuring that new nursing and care homes meet satisfactory amenity standards (this will be achieved through the Development Management document.

Indirect Impacts

8. There are a number of ways in which spatial planning has indirect impacts on health.
9. The Lancaster District Health profile identifies high levels of binge drinking and alcohol related hospital admissions as the main distinctive health issue in the District. For this reason Policy SC6 of the Core Strategy specifically targets alcohol related disorder in Lancaster City Centre.
10. A related issue to health is Air Quality. Lancaster City Centre is an Air Quality Management area and an action plan is in preparation. The Transport measures set out in Policy E2 complement this by reducing the impact of transport on air quality.

11. A key element of the Core Strategy is achieving the physical, economic and environmental regeneration of Central Morecambe and other areas of deprivation. The increased prosperity which regeneration will deliver, through new jobs, better housing and improved environmental quality will have a beneficial impact on deprivation related health issues.
12. Spatial planning is also fundamental in promoting a healthy lifestyle. Within the urban area, the Core Strategy defines a Greenspace network which provides both informal recreation and a strategic walking and cycling network throughout the urban area.
13. The Core Strategy also protects formal sports provision including football and cricket pitches and other outdoor sports facilities;
14. A recreational needs study has been undertaken and this will inform both the protection, management and enhancement of the existing recreation open space network and the provision and enhancement of new open space through development;
15. The Development Management document will ensure that new developments provide space and facilities for children to play outdoors;
16. The Core Strategy policies on sustainability will ensure that new housing, shopping and employment development encourage people to make as many daily journeys as possible on foot or by bicycle.
17. The Core Strategy seeks to protect strategic outdoor recreational resources such as the Arnside Silverdale and Forest of Bowland Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty and the rights of way and open access land network. Further initiatives such as the Morecambe Bay Regional Park will develop this potential, both in terms of the recreation offer and its accessibility.

Planning Obligations

18. During the recent house building boom, some south eastern planning authorities in areas where major urban expansion was taking place sought to achieve contributions from developers to healthcare provision. It is not Lancaster City Council's practise to do this at the present time.

Summary

19. Spatial planning makes a major and growing contribution to improving health outcomes in Lancaster District. It helps the NHS to grow and modernise by encouraging new health care provision. It tackles some of the causes of ill health such as pollution, alcohol related disorder, poor housing, unemployment and deprivation. Most importantly however it creates sustainable communities which promote healthy lifestyles with sports and recreation facilities, countryside recreation opportunities and pedestrian and cycle friendly places to live, work, shop and enjoy life.

Note prepared by Dan Hudson (Forward Planning) for Head of Planning Services

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