

JANUARY 2013



# Borough of Redditch Local Plan No.4 Health Impact Assessment



## Introduction and Purpose

Health Impact Assessment (HIA) is a means of developing better, evidence-based policy by careful consideration of the impact on the health of the population (ref: Department of Health, 2010). This HIA considers the positive and negative impacts of the Borough of Redditch Local Plan No.4. It has been prepared by Redditch Borough Council and the Redditch Partnership through a working group of Planning Officers, the Chair of the Health and Wellbeing theme group of Redditch Partnership Board who is a Consultant in Public Health and the Redditch Partnership Manager.

The Borough of Redditch Local Plan No.4, once adopted, will be the most important planning document at the local level, as it provides a framework approach for growth of the Borough through a series of policies. The Local Plan is currently being prepared and is due to be adopted in September 2014. More details of the Local Plan and the current timetable can be viewed at [www.redditchbc.gov/localplan](http://www.redditchbc.gov/localplan).

The purpose of this HIA is to ensure that the policies in Local Plan No.4, where possible, actively promote health gain for the local population, reduce health inequalities and do not actively damage health. Improving health is not only a concern for Redditch Borough but is a critical issue at a local, national and international level. Every opportunity must be taken to improve the health of the Borough's residents and planning is considered to have a key role in achieving a healthier Borough.

There is an important link between the planning process (both plan making and the implementation of plans) and health. The way that places are planned, develop and change impacts on the health and wellbeing of the communities that live in them. Consequently, it is important to assess the Local Plan to identify how health and wellbeing benefits can be maximised and potential negative impacts can be minimised.

### Redditch Health Profile (2012)

The health profile for Redditch compiled by the Department of Health gives a picture of health in the Borough compared to the averages for England. The headlines for Redditch are:

- The health of people in Redditch is mixed compared with the England average. Deprivation is higher than average and about 3,300 children live in poverty. Life expectancy for both men and women is similar to the England average.
- Life expectancy is 8.7 years lower for men and 9.4 years lower for women in the most deprived areas of Redditch than in the least deprived areas.
- Over the last 10 years, all cause mortality rates show no clear trend. The early death rate from heart disease and stroke has fallen and is similar to the England average.
- About 20.9% of Year 6 children are classified as obese. Levels of GCSE attainment, alcohol-specific hospital stays among those under 18 and smoking in pregnancy are worse than the England average.
- Estimated levels of adult 'healthy eating' and obesity are worse than the England average. The rate of road injuries and deaths is better than the England average. The rates of violent crime and hospital stays for self-harm are higher than average. The rates of statutory homelessness, long term unemployment and drug misuse are lower than average.
- Priorities in Redditch include smoking, obesity and heart disease & stroke.

The impacts that Local Plan No.4 can have on these particular health issues are identified in the 'Identifying Health Impacts' section below.

## Methodology

The Department of Health publication 'Health Impact Assessment of Government Policy' (July 2010) is a guide to carrying out a Health Impact Assessment of new policy as part of the Impact Assessment process. This document has informed the assessment of Local Plan No.4 to provide a HIA that is commensurate with the scale of the plan. The stages of this HIA are:

- **Screening** – the Local Plan themes and policies are assessed against five questions to determine whether or not there will be a health impact.
- **Identify health impacts** – following the screening the positive and potential negative health and wellbeing impacts of the Local Plan policies are identified along with possible mitigation measures
- **Conclusions and recommendations** – the main findings and this HIA and recommendations for monitoring and updates to the HIA

### Screening

Each of the Local Plan No.4 theme areas and policies has been assessed against the screening questions contained in the Department of Health publication 'Health Impact of Government Policy'. The screening question regarding impact on global health has not been included in the assessment below because, overall, the plan is not expected to have any impact on global health. Although it is recognised that improvements to the quality and biodiversity of the local environment and efforts taken to reduce carbon emissions will support global efforts on climate change.

Local Plan Theme and Policies	Will the policies have a direct impact on health, mental health and wellbeing?	Will the policies have an impact on social, economic and environmental living conditions that would indirectly affect health?	Will the policies affect an individual's ability to improve their own health and wellbeing?	Will there be a change in demand for or access to health and social care services?
<p><b>Sustainable places to live which meet our needs</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Settlement Hierarchy</li> <li>• Development Strategy</li> <li>• Green Belt</li> <li>• Open Countryside</li> <li>• Housing Provision</li> <li>• Effective and efficient use of land</li> <li>• Affordable Housing</li> <li>• Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople</li> <li>• Agricultural Worker's Dwellings</li> </ul>	<p>Provision of the appropriate amount and type of housing to meet needs will support a reduction in the negative health consequences of homelessness or inappropriate housing.</p>	<p>The policies will help maintain and improve access to local services in all of the Borough's settlements. Access to local services in the district centres is particularly important for those with limited mobility or non-car owners, supporting a reduction in inequalities in these groups.</p> <p>New housing provided to meet local needs including affordable housing will support improved living conditions and associated improvements in health and wellbeing.</p> <p>Deciding on the appropriate density for development requires balancing the potential loss of green space with the need to provide adequate living and outdoor space as well as the need to meet development needs.</p> <p>Improving the local environment will support improvements in community cohesion and sense of pride in the local area: this is associated with improvements in health and wellbeing.</p> <p>There are a number of potential negative impacts of construction work which can affect health and wellbeing, including noise, air quality, access to local services and anxiety.</p>	<p>Planning for the needs of Gypsies and Travellers will allow them to access clean water, sewerage etc. This will support improvements in health e.g. a reduction in gastrointestinal disease and will also support improvements in wellbeing through supporting a reduction in discrimination experienced by these communities.</p>	<p>An increased population will require increased health and social care services. This will be required in appropriate locations with appropriate infrastructure planning.</p>

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<p><b>Creating and sustaining a green environment</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Green Infrastructure</li> <li>• Open Space Provision</li> <li>• Primarily Open Space</li> <li>• Protection of incidental open space</li> <li>• Climate Change</li> <li>• Natural Environment</li> <li>• Flood risk</li> <li>• Sustainable Water Management</li> <li>• Sustainable Travel and Accessibility</li> <li>• Transport Requirements for New Development</li> <li>• Alexandra Hospital Public Transport Interchange</li> </ul>	<p>Maintaining and improving the natural environment, green infrastructure and open space levels provides opportunities to increase physical activity, improve mental wellbeing and improve respiratory health.</p> <p>There is good evidence that access to, and contact with, natural environments including urban green spaces can contribute to improved mental health and wellbeing.</p> <p>Reviews of the evidence suggest that that green spaces encourage physical activity in all age groups</p> <p>Improved water quality will also support a reduction in water borne diseases.</p>	<p>Several sources have suggested that green spaces can have potential economic benefits for an area, especially in urban areas.</p> <p>This includes public health, as well as urban regeneration and encouraging inward investment.</p> <p>There is growing evidence that inequalities in health between the most deprived and most affluent groups are reduced where there is improved access to greenspace.</p> <p>Protecting open space may put increased pressure on other land for development and result in overcrowded living conditions.</p> <p>Increased access to the train station and reduced commuting times will also support economic development of area as well as having broader social benefits.</p> <p>Reducing carbon emissions and improving the energy efficiency of new builds will help support efforts to limit and reduce the impact of climate change globally, as well as reducing the incidence of fuel poverty as a result of poorly insulated housing.</p> <p>Decreased risk of flooding will help mitigate against the negative impact of flooding on an individual's mental health and economic situation.</p>	<p>Increased sustainable transport opportunities e.g. walking and cycling and increased access to green space will enable individuals to increase physical activity levels</p> <p>Providing open space, natural resources etc and access to it can encourage healthier lifestyles and improve wellbeing.</p>	<p>Potential long term reduction in demand through improvements in health as a consequence of increased physical activity levels.</p>

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<p><b>Creating a borough where businesses can thrive</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Employment Land Provision</li> <li>• Development within Primarily Employment Areas</li> <li>• Development Outside of Primarily Employment Areas</li> <li>• Office Development</li> <li>• Rural Economic Development</li> <li>• Supporting Education, Training and Skills</li> <li>• Broadband and Telecommunications</li> </ul>	<p>Increasing employment opportunities will support a reduction in the negative health consequences of unemployment.</p>	<p>Improved economic conditions can lead to a reduction in deprivation and the associated health inequalities.</p> <p>New employment development in accessible locations can improve opportunities for physical activity through active travel.</p> <p>Improved skill development and increased job opportunities for young people will support a reduction in NEETS and associated antisocial behaviour.</p> <p>Improved communications infrastructure can help reduce negative impact of car travel on the environment by supporting flexible working practices.</p>	<p>Improved opportunities for active travel and flexible working arrangements.</p>	<p>Potential need for healthcare services for workforce not resident in the Borough (e.g. walk-in health care facilities).</p>
<p><b>Improving the vitality and viability of Redditch Town Centre and District Centres</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Town Centre and Retail Hierarchy</li> <li>• Regeneration for the Town Centre</li> <li>• Protection of the Retail Core</li> <li>• Use of Upper Floors</li> <li>• New Town District Centre</li> <li>• Redevelopment</li> <li>• Health of District Centres</li> </ul>	<p>Shifting the emphasis of the night time economy to encourage family dining and changing the culture around alcohol consumption should have a positive impact by reducing alcohol related harm, including accidents and injuries.</p>	<p>Improvements in the environment and safety (or perception of) can have a positive impact including reducing antisocial behaviour in the town &amp; district centres.</p> <p>Increased access to leisure, arts and green space and improved perceptions of safety will support improvements in mental wellbeing through encouraging social connectedness.</p> <p>There will be positive improvements to the environment and increased opportunities for sustainable transport.</p> <p>Potential increased employment opportunities and improvements to the local economy through town centre regeneration.</p>	<p>Limiting the number of hot food takeaways will support individuals to make healthy food choices.</p>	<p>Not likely directly as a result of these policies but any new health facilities will be directed to the town and district centres as the most accessible locations in the Borough.</p>
<p><b>Protecting and Enhancing Redditch's Historic Environment</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Historic Environment</li> <li>• Listed Buildings and Structures</li> <li>• Conservation Areas</li> <li>• Local List</li> </ul>	<p>Not directly as a result of these policies.</p>	<p>Improvements in the historic environment and buildings can benefit the wider environment and feel of an area, supporting improvements in wellbeing amongst local residents.</p>	<p>Not directly as a result of these policies.</p>	<p>Not directly as a result of these policies.</p>

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<b>Creating Safe and Attractive Places to Live and Work</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Built Environment</li> <li>High Quality and Safe Design</li> <li>Shop Fronts and Shop Front Security</li> <li>Advertisements</li> </ul>	<p>The policies aim to achieve a high quality and safe built environment, reducing the risk of accidents and injuries.</p>	<p>Improvements to the built environment can improve the feel of an area, supporting improvements in wellbeing amongst local residents and employees.</p>	<p>Improving access to green space can increase opportunities for walking/cycling.</p>	<p>Not directly as a result of these policies.</p>
<b>Promoting Redditch's Community Well-being</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Leisure, Tourism and Abbey Stadium</li> <li>Health Facilities</li> <li>Cemeteries</li> </ul>	<p>Increased opportunities for leisure and recreation activities can have a positive impact on health and wellbeing.</p> <p>Affordable leisure and recreation activities will help support a reduction in health and wider inequalities.</p> <p>The policies aim to improve access to health facilities.</p>	<p>New facilities are directed to the most accessible locations in the Borough, with the aim of reducing the need to travel which can reduce carbon emissions and subsequently help limit the impacts of climate change.</p>	<p>Increased opportunities for leisure and recreation activities can have a positive impact on health and wellbeing. Ensuring these facilities are accessible by active transport means, will enable individuals to increase physical activity levels.</p>	<p>These policies seek to improve access and may result in a reduced demand if healthier lifestyles can be adopted.</p>
<b>Strategic Sites</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Brockhill East</li> <li>Brockhill West</li> <li>Land to the rear of the Alexandra Hospital</li> <li>Woodrow Strategic Site</li> <li>Webbheath Strategic Site</li> </ul>	<p>These developments will be subject to all relevant policies in the plan, which are assessed above.</p>			<p>These developments will lead to higher populations in these locations, possibly triggering the need for additional healthcare facilities.</p>

References:

- Great Outdoors: How our Natural Health Service Uses Greenspace to Improve Wellbeing. Faculty of Public Health and Natural England joint briefing statement, 2010.
- Five Ways to Wellbeing: New Economics Foundation, 2008
- Fair Society Healthy Lives (The Marmot Review): Strategic Review of Health Inequalities in England post 2010, 2010

## Identifying Health Impacts

The assessment of the Draft Local Plan No.4 policies against the HIA screening questions has shown that the policies will largely have a positive impact on health and well-being. In particular, the Local Plan can make a positive contribution to improvements in some of the health issues identified in the Health Profile for Redditch:

Health & Wellbeing issue	Local Plan contribution
High levels of deprivation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Identifying land for employment development will lead to increased employment opportunities</li> <li>Support for education, training and skills will allow more people to access employment</li> <li>Helping to create stronger communities through improvements to district centres</li> </ul>
Obesity (in children & adults)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Increased sustainable transport opportunities e.g. walking and cycling can increase physical activity (as well reducing carbon emissions)</li> <li>Increased access to open spaces can encourage healthier lifestyles and improve wellbeing</li> <li>Increased opportunities for leisure and recreation activities can have a positive impact on health</li> <li>Limiting the number of hot food take-aways in district centres can encourage healthier eating</li> </ul>
Violent crime	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Improvements in the environment of the town and district centres can help reduce anti-social behaviour</li> <li>Incorporating high quality and safe design in all developments can reduce crime risk</li> </ul>

This HIA has also highlighted the potential for the Local Plan to have some negative effects on health and wellbeing. These effects should, as far as is practicable, be mitigated; although it should be noted that the appropriate mitigation measures may not be within the remit of the Local Plan.

The construction of new development could have negative impacts on health and well-being, including noise, air quality, access to local services and anxiety. It is normal practice to try to limit the impacts of construction through planning conditions, such as limiting working hours. It is not appropriate to include this in the Local Plan because conditions will be tailored to individual planning applications through the Development Management process.

By safeguarding open spaces and Green Belt land from development there is a concern that other areas of the Borough will become overcrowded. The Local Plan also includes a policy which sets appropriate densities for residential development; this ensures efficient use of land and that development does not result in overcrowding. In addition, the Council's adopted Supplementary Planning Guidance 'Encouraging Good Design' sets spacing standards for new developments. These guidelines give an indication of acceptable relationships between buildings with a view to achieving acceptable standards of amenity including privacy and an appropriate residential environment.

Local Plan No.4 makes provision for an increased population and whilst some of the policies may have the effect of reducing demand for health and social care services, overall it is anticipated that there will be an increase in demand. The plan makes provision for this and directs new and improved health facilities to where there is already a concentration of health care (the Alexandra



Hospital) and to the most sustainable and accessible locations in the Borough (the town and district centre).

## Conclusions and Recommendations

This HIA shows that there can be many positive impacts on health and wellbeing resulting from Local Plan No.4. There are also potential negative impacts that will require mitigation to try and reduce the impact.

Implementing the Local Plan policies can, however, only go so far in tackling the health and wellbeing issues in Redditch. To realise health benefits fully these policies need to work in conjunction with the plans and policy initiatives of other council departments and external organisations.

This HIA should be reviewed if any Local Plan No.4 policies are revised prior to the plan being adopted. A new HIA should be carried out whenever the Local Plan is revised.

The effects of all Local Plan No.4 policies will be monitored annually through the Monitoring Report. Links should be made between this HIA, the current health profile for Redditch and the indicators used in the Monitoring Report.