

Draft Allocations and Designations Plan Health Impact Assessment

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1. Introduction

- 1.1 Sunderland City Council (the Council) are in the process of preparing its Local Plan. The Plan is being prepared in three parts as follows:

Core Strategy and Development Plan (CSDP) – sets an overarching strategy, strategic policies and strategic allocations and designations for the future change and growth in Sunderland. The CSDP also includes local policies for Development Management purposes. CSDP covers the plan period from 2015-2033 and was formally adopted in January 2020.

Allocations and Designations Plan (A&D Plan) – will set out policies for site-specific policy allocations and designations to help deliver the overarching vision and strategic priorities contained within the CSDP. This includes housing and retail allocations and the designation of historic assets, natural environmental sites and areas potentially suitable for wind energy development.

International Advanced Manufacturing Park Area Action Plan (IAMP AAP) – sets out site-specific policies for the comprehensive development of the IAMP. IAMP AAP was jointly prepared with South Tyneside Council and was adopted in November 2017.

- 1.2 The A&D Plan represents the final part of the Sunderland Local Plan and once adopted will replace the remaining Unitary Development Plan (UDP) and Unitary Development Plan Alteration No.2 policies.
- 1.3 The Council recognises the importance of the health and well-being of its residents. Therefore, in order to ensure that health and wellbeing has been taken into consideration when preparing the Local Plan, the Council have prepared a Health Impact Assessment for the A&D Plan.
- 1.4 A Health Impact Assessment was also prepared for the CSDP and after taking into consideration its recommendations, changes were made to further enhance its impact upon health and wellbeing.
- 1.5 The purpose of this report is to undertake a Health Impact Assessment of the policies contained within Draft A&D Plan in order to identify any impacts of the policies upon health and wellbeing and in order to identify any potential enhancements which could result in further benefits.

2. Policy Context

- 2.1 The importance of health and wellbeing is embedded within planning policy, from ensuring that the most sustainable and accessible sites are chosen, to providing access to greenspaces for outdoor exercise and recreation and to ensuring that appropriate health care facilities are provided within accessible locations.

National Policy

- 2.2 National planning policy is set out within the National Planning Policy Framework (2019) and associated Planning Practice Guidance (PPG).
- 2.3 The overarching aim of the NPPF is to contribute towards the achievement of sustainable development. In order to achieve this, the Framework identifies three overarching objectives; an economic objective, a social objective and an economic objective.
- 2.4 Health is identified as a key consideration in the social objective as follows:
- “a social objective – to support strong, vibrant and healthy communities, by ensuring that a sufficient number and range of homes can be provided to meet the needs of present and future generations; and by fostering a well-designed and safe built environment, with accessible services and open spaces that reflect current and future needs and support communities’ health, social and cultural well-being”*
- (NPPF 2019: Paragraph 8)*
- 2.5 Section 8 of the NPPF specifically seeks to promote healthy and safe communities through the planning system. Paragraph 91 of the Framework indicates that *“planning policies and decisions should aim to achieve healthy, inclusive and safe places which:*
- a) promote social interaction, including opportunities for meetings between people who might not otherwise come into contact with each other – for example through mixed-use developments, strong neighbourhood centres, street layouts that allow for easy pedestrian and cycle connections within and between neighbourhoods, and active street frontages;*
- b) are safe and accessible, so that crime and disorder, and the fear of crime, do not undermine the quality of life or community cohesion – for example through the use of clear and legible pedestrian routes, and high quality public space, which encourage the active and continual use of public areas; and*
- c) enable and support healthy lifestyles, especially where this would address identified local health and well-being needs – for example through the provision of safe and accessible green infrastructure, sports facilities, local shops, access to healthier food, allotments and layouts that encourage walking and cycling.”*
- 2.6 Paragraph 92, with regard to the social, recreational and cultural facilities and services that the community needs, indicates that planning policies and decisions should (amongst other things) take into account and support the delivery of local strategies to improve health, social and cultural well-being for all sections of the community.
- 2.7 Paragraph 96 of the Framework indicates that *“access to a network of high quality open spaces and opportunities for sport and physical activity is important for the health and well-*

being of communities. Planning policies should be based on robust and up-to-date assessments of the need for open space, sport and recreation facilities (including quantitative or qualitative deficits or surpluses) and opportunities for new provision. Information gained from the assessments should be used to determine what open space, sport and recreational provision is needed, which plans should then seek to accommodate.”

Local Policy

- 2.8 The CSDP includes a range of policies which help to support the health and wellbeing of local communities. This was borne out by the Health Impact Assessment undertaken on the CSDP which concluded that the Plan would likely have a positive impact upon the health and wellbeing of the local population.
- 2.9 Section 5 of the CSDP sets out planning policies which seek to create healthy and safe communities. Policy SP7 sets out the overarching strategic policy to improve health and wellbeing, which is expanded upon by various policies within the Plan.
- 2.10 Policy HS1 seeks to protect the amenity of residents from a number of sources. Policy HS2 seeks to prevent noise sensitive development from being located close to areas which may result in noise impacts (including vibration).
- 2.11 Policy HS3 seeks to ensure that any contaminated land is adequately remediated prior to its reuse for an alternative form of development.
- 2.12 Policy HS4 sets out the circumstances in which an application should be referred to the Health and Safety Executive.
- 2.13 Policy VC4 seeks to prevent the creation of new hot food takeaways in areas which have the highest levels of childhood obesity within the city.
- 2.14 In addition to the policies contained specifically within the health and wellbeing chapter, health impacts are embedded throughout the policies in the Plan. This includes ensuring a good quality of design, requiring some homes to be built to an enhanced accessibility standard, providing affordable housing, protecting greenspaces and ensuring that development proposals contribute to improvements to health care facilities and other necessary infrastructure, where required.

Sustainability Appraisal

- 2.15 A critical part of preparing a Local Plan is undertaking a Sustainability Appraisal (SA) and Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA).
- 2.16 The preparation of a SA is an iterative process which involves assessing the policies and allocations contained within the Draft A&D Plan and any reasonable alternatives against a range of sustainability objectives.
- 2.17 Where adverse impacts are identified as part of the SA process, the Draft A&D Plan has been revised as far as practicable to mitigate any impacts identified.
- 2.18 Health and wellbeing is identified as one of the sustainability objectives within the SA and therefore the impact of the policies, allocations and designations within the Plan upon health and wellbeing have already been assessed as part of the SA/SEA process. Where adverse impacts have been identified as part of this process, the draft A&D Plan has been

updated where possible. Further details are set out within the Sustainability Appraisal report.

3. Health and Wellbeing within Sunderland

- 3.1 Public Health England publish regular data with regard to health and wellbeing, including a Local Authority profile summarising health outcomes on an annual basis. This section presents the latest published findings for Sunderland, as set out within the latest published Local Authority Health Profile for Sunderland (2019)¹.

Health in summary

- 3.2 The health of people in Sunderland is generally worse than the England average. Sunderland is one of the 20% most deprived districts/unitary authorities in England and about 23.6% (11,395) children live in low income families. Life expectancy for both men and women is lower than the England average.

Health inequalities

- 3.3 Life expectancy is 11.5 years lower for men and 8.5 years lower for women in the most deprived areas of Sunderland than in the least deprived areas.

Child health

- 3.4 In Year 6, 24.8% (765) of children are classified as obese, worse than the average for England. The rate for alcohol-specific hospital admissions among those under 18 is 86 (rate per 100,000 population), worse than the average for England. This represents 47 admissions per year. Levels of teenage pregnancy, GCSE attainment (average attainment 8 score), breastfeeding and smoking in pregnancy are worse than the England average.

Adult health

- 3.5 The rate for alcohol-related harm hospital admissions is 993 (rate per 100,000 population), worse than the average for England. This represents 2,725 admissions per year. The rate for self-harm hospital admissions is 181 (rate per 100,000 population). This represents 485 admissions per year. Estimated levels of excess weight in adults (aged 18+), smoking prevalence in adults (aged 18+) and physically active adults (aged 19+) are worse than the England average. The rates of new sexually transmitted infections, killed and seriously injured on roads and new cases of tuberculosis are better than the England average. The rate of hip fractures in older people (aged 65+) is worse than the England average. The rate of statutory homelessness is better than the England average. The rates of violent crime (hospital admissions for violence), under 75 mortality rate from cardiovascular diseases, under 75 mortality rate from cancer and employment (aged 16-64) are worse than the England average.

¹ See <https://fingertips.phe.org.uk/static-reports/health-profiles/2019/E08000024.html?area-name=Sunderland> for more information.

4. Health Impact Assessment

- 4.1 This section of the report assesses the impact of the site allocations, designations and policies in the draft A&D Plan upon health and wellbeing.

Allocations

- 4.2 The Draft A&D Plan proposes to allocate two strategic sites, fifty seven residential sites and one site for main town centre use development.
- 4.3 In identifying the proposed strategic sites and the residential allocations, the Council has taken into consideration the sustainability of each of these site allocations. This includes the proximity of the sites to public transport routes, local shops and services, healthcare and schools.

Riverside Sunderland

- 4.4 Riverside Sunderland is a highly sustainable location comprising of a number of development sites within the Urban Core. The site is located in close proximity to a range of shops, services and job opportunities, with employment uses also promoted as part of the proposals, particularly at the Vaux. The site is also highly accessible by a range of public transport methods including bus and Metro.
- 4.5 The allocation also proposes a number of other community uses which will be of benefit to the health and wellbeing of residents of the site and surrounding neighbourhoods, including a new health centre. Accessibility will be improved through delivery of new pedestrian/cycle routes across the River Wear and upgraded parkland and public open space along the river corridor.
- 4.6 The Riverside Sunderland SPD has been prepared to provide guidance on the delivery of the site and the allocation requires development proposals to be delivered in accordance with the SPD.
- 4.7 It is therefore considered that the proposed allocation could result in benefits to the health and wellbeing of local communities.

Land East of Washington (Washington Meadows)

- 4.8 Land East of Washington (Washington Meadows) would involve the creation of a new urban extension to the east of Washington. As an urban extension, it is recognised that improvements to the accessibility of the site and its infrastructure will be required.
- 4.9 In recognition of the sustainability improvements to the site, Policy SS9 which seeks to allocate the site includes a requirement to address impacts and make provision or contributions towards education provision and healthcare where justified and necessary. The policy also requires the proposals to enhance access to local facilities and services, where appropriate.
- 4.10 The policy includes a requirement to deliver 15% affordable housing on the site which will be of benefit to new residents by providing new affordable housing stock. In addition, the policy requires the development to provide greenspace and green infrastructure within the site. This will improve the overall quantity and quality of accessible greenspace within this area, as the site is currently in agricultural use and is largely inaccessible.

- 4.11 It is also recognised that the proposals identify an area to be safeguarded for a future Metro/rail station as part of the reintroduction of the Leamside Line. This will not only be of benefit to residents of the new housing site, but also to existing Washington residents which do not currently have access to the Tyne and Wear Metro.

Housing Allocations

- 4.12 The Draft A&D Plan includes a total of fifty-seven residential allocations across the administrative area of draft A&D the city.
- 4.13 At Appendix 1, the Plan identifies a number of site-specific criteria which will be expected to be delivered as part of each housing allocation. These have been informed by Development Frameworks which have been prepared for each of the sites.
- 4.14 A common thread through each of these allocations is the need for proposals to address the impact of the development on local infrastructure including roads, schools and health care; that access to local facilities and services are enhanced where appropriate, that a mix of house types are provided including affordable housing and that the impacts upon air quality levels are acceptable. All of these requirements will have a positive benefit upon health and wellbeing.
- 4.15 In addition to the common elements identified above, other site-specific requirements are set out many of which would have a positive impact upon health and wellbeing. Examples of this include the provision of greenspaces within the site and improvement of pedestrian/cycle routes.

Retail Allocations

- 4.16 The Draft A&D Plan seeks to allocate land at the former Houghton Colliery Site for the development of main town centre uses. The proposals would form an extension to the existing town centre.
- 4.17 It is considered that the proposals would result in positive benefits in terms of health and wellbeing by creating more job opportunities within the local area and improving the vitality and viability of Houghton Town Centre. Improvements to the town centre would help to reduce the distance which local residents need to travel to access the range of shops that they require.

Designations

- 4.18 The Draft A&D Plan includes a range of designations which have been informed by various evidence-based documents. The designations cover heritage assets, natural environment, sustainable transport and minerals extraction.
- 4.19 The designation of built and natural environmental assets is considered to have a positive impact on health and wellbeing by providing a more amenable environment in which residents live. In addition, it protects the greenspaces that people value and use for leisure and recreation purposes.
- 4.20 The sustainable transport policies within the Draft A&D Plan seeks to safeguard land for future Metro expansion. This will be of benefit to local communities by increasing access to the Tyne and Wear Metro to significantly more residents. The Park and Ride stations also provide the opportunity to improve air quality within the urban areas through encouraging

the use of parking facilities on the edge of the urban area and use of public transport to access the Urban Core.

Policies

4.21 Building upon the analysis identified above in relation to site allocations and designations, this section seeks to summarise the health impacts of each of the policies contained within the A&D Plan.

Policy	Summary of Potential Health Impacts
SP12: Allocations and Designations Development Strategy	Overarching strategic policy. Positive impacts on health and wellbeing through protection of natural environment and greenspaces. Expansion of Metro network will have positive benefits by creating more sustainable methods of transport which are more readily available that in turn may help to improve air quality. Similarly, development of wind energy will help facilitate a move away from the use of fossil fuels which will be of benefit to health.
SS8: Riverside Sunderland	Policy would significantly increase population of Urban Core which is a highly sustainable location. This would in turn reduce the need to travel and the distance travelled for work and other amenities, benefitting public health. The policy includes a wide range of uses including job opportunities, health centres and community facilities which would improve public health. Supporting drinking establishments may result in some negative impacts on health, however this can be achieved through careful management and licensing.
SS9: Land East of Washington (Washington Meadows)	Policy allocates an urban extension to Washington. It will be important that clear linkages are provided between the site and existing shops, services and facilities within Washington. The site does have the potential for health and wellbeing benefits through the provision of affordable housing, provision of new accessible greenspace and helping to reintroduce the use of the Leamside Line, with a station and carpark to be safeguarded as part of the development of the site.
H8: Housing Allocations	Policy seeks to allocate a range of new housing sites across the city. Sites will include affordable housing and seek improvements to public services where required, including healthcare.
VC7: Former Houghton Colliery Site	Proposed retail allocation on the edge of Houghton Town Centre. Seeks to improve shopping provision in the Coalfield sub-area which will be of benefit to local residents and would help to reduce travel to other areas to meet shopping needs, which could help reduce congestion and improve air quality.
BH10: Conservation Areas	Designates Conservation Areas for protection. Protection of local character will help to improve the liveability of local areas and in turn have positive benefits on health and wellbeing.
BH11; Scheduled Ancient Monuments	Identifies Scheduled Ancient Monuments on Policies Map. Limited impact on health and wellbeing.
NE13: Regionally and Locally protected Wildlife and Geodiversity Sites	Policy seeks to designate Local Wildlife and Geodiversity Sites. Limited impact on health and wellbeing but will help to protect species habitat which will improve the liveability of local communities.

NE14: Wildlife Network	Policy seeks to designate the Local Wildlife Network. Limited impact on health and wellbeing but will help to protect species habitat which will improve the liveability of local communities.
NE15: Greenspace	Policy seeks to designate greenspace which will be protected from development. This policy will have significant positive benefits to health and wellbeing by protecting areas for outdoor sport and recreation.
NE16: Views of the City	Policy seeks to designate local views and vistas for protection. Limited impact on health and wellbeing but will help to improve the environments in which people live.
NE17: Burial Sites	Policy seeks to designate existing burial spaces and areas for expansion. Limited impact on health and wellbeing but will ensure that sufficient burial space is provided to meet future needs.
WWE11: Wind Energy Development	Policy identifies areas that are potentially suitable for wind energy development. Policy has potential for health benefits by moving energy generation away from fossil fuels towards green energy which in turn could improve air quality.
ST4: Safeguarding land for potential future Metro and rail expansion	Policy safeguards land for potential future metro and rail expansion. The policy would have significant benefits on health and wellbeing by significantly expanding the reach of the Tyne and Wear Metro to more residents in Sunderland and Washington. This would improve access to public transport and reduce the reliance on the private car, which will allow a greater proportion of the population to access a wider range of employment opportunities and services, whilst reducing congestion and air pollution.
ST5: Park and Ride	The policy seeks to safeguard land for Park and Ride adjacent to proposed new stations. This could have positive impact upon health and wellbeing by promoting a modal shift to public transport.
M5: Eppleton Quarry	The policy seeks to safeguard the operations of Eppleton Quarry. Whilst the quarry operations have the potential to impact upon the health and wellbeing of residents, it is recognised that the quarry is already operational and the impacts have been considered to be acceptable through the relevant planning consents. The policy seeks to ensure that no sensitive development takes place in close proximity to the quarry and that the site is restored following its completion. These aspects of the policy will provide positive benefits to health and wellbeing.

5. Conclusion

- 5.1 This Health Impact Assessment has considered the potential impacts of the Allocations and Designations Plan upon health and wellbeing.
- 5.2 As the scope of the Draft A&D Plan is limited, the potential for positive health and wellbeing impacts is constrained. However, notwithstanding this, the report does identify that overall the allocations, designations and policies contained within the Draft A&D Plan would have a number of positive benefits in terms of health and wellbeing.
- 5.3 Strong themes that arise from the assessment include the designation of greenspaces for outdoor sport and recreation, the safeguarding for expansion of the Tyne and Wear Metro and the identification of areas that would potentially be suitable for wind energy.
- 5.4 The assessment also recognises that in identifying sites for allocation the sustainability of sites has been a key consideration, underpinned by a Sustainability Appraisal and Strategic Environmental Assessment.

