**Health Impact Assessment - explanation**

Knowsley Council encourages new development in the borough that supports and stimulates the economy, provides good quality housing and improves the health and wellbeing of residents. The inclusion of a Health Impact Assessment (HIA) in this process is intended to ensure that health and health inequalities are considered in the decision making and that stakeholders are engaged during the planning process.

The commitment to creating healthy living and working environments is already contained within Knowsley’s [Local Plan](https://localplanmaps.knowsley.gov.uk/documents/knowsley-local-plan-adopted-core-strategy.pdf) and is a key thread running through Knowsley’s other high-level strategies such as [Knowsley 2030](https://councillors.knowsley.gov.uk/documents/s64698/Item%204%20-%20Appendix%20One%20-%20Knowsley%202030%20draft%20for%20consideration%20-%20Better%20Together%20Board.pdf?StyleType=standard&StyleSize=none), [Knowsley’s Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy](https://www.knowsleyhwb.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2022/02/Joint-Health-and-Wellbeing-Strategy-2020.pdf) and the [All Together Fairer report for Cheshire and Merseyside](https://www.instituteofhealthequity.org/resources-reports/all-together-fairer-health-equity-and-the-social-determinants-of-health-in-cheshire-and-merseyside).

The box below demonstrates where health is explicitly mentioned in the Local Plan but the plan covers many of the wider determinants of health and therefore, even where health is not explicit the links can be demonstrated.

Box 1 – Health in Knowsley’s Local Plan

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| --- | --- | --- |
| Section | Page | Details |
| Chapter 2 – Knowsley the Place | 29 | Brief overview of health in Knowsley |
| Strategic objective 3 | 38 | **Regenerate and transform** – reduce health inequalities by creating more sustainable, safer, healthier and more cohesive communities |
| Strategic Objective 6 | 39 | **Sustainable transport** - Prioritise sustainable transport (cycling, walking, public transport) to ensure accessibility and linkage between housing areas and employment locations, shopping, leisure, culture, health care, education, community and sporting facilities, green spaces and other services |
| Strategic objective 8 | 40 | **Green infrastructure and rural areas** – support and strengthen the role of Knowsley’s green infrastructure including recognising their positive effect on health and wellbeing through leisure and recreational use |
| Strategic objective 9 | 41 | **Promoting health and wellbeing** - address health inequalities and encourage enhancements to health and wellbeing by ensuring health promoting environments and the provision of healthy lifestyle options for those living and working in borough  This objective encourages new development to have a positive impact on the health and wellbeing of both individuals and population groups  Cross cutting - all previous objectives will contribute |
| Policy CS2 | 50 | **Development principles**  Principle 1- reduce inequalities by tackling the causes of deprivation and disadvantage by:  a) meeting needs for housing, employment, retail and other service provision  b) improve business productivity and employment levels  c) reduce economic, environmental, education, health and other social inequalities  d) provide opportunities for positive lifestyles choices and health improvement for all ages |
| Policy CS7 | 76 | **Overall transport strategy**  Planning powers and other interventions will be used to support a sustainable and integrated transport system that will:  f) improve the health and wellbeing of local people |

What is a Health Impact Assessment?

In the planning context a HIA is undertaken to consider the health and wellbeing implications of a new development (see [Knowsley's Validation Checklist](https://www.knowsley.gov.uk/knowsleycouncil/media/Documents/Validation-Checklist-Nov-2018-adopted.pdf) for when a HIA is required). A HIA provides a means of assessing how a proposed development will affect the health and wellbeing of the population. The HIA aims to avoid or mitigate against negative aspects of the plan and enhance positive ones thereby creating an overall plan with health-related benefits. The HIA should pay particular attention to disadvantaged communities or population groups for whom negative impacts may be greater and contribute to widening health inequalities.

Use of a formal HIA during the planning process can influence the wider determinants of health such as access to energy efficient, adaptable and warm homes, safe, quality and useable public spaces, good quality employment, active travel opportunities and high levels of community capital and cohesion to reduce loneliness and social isolation.

Knowsley Council have designed a HIA template for use by developers to help frame the Knowsley context, guaranteeing plans are submitted that reflect Knowsley Council’s overarching priorities and ensuring all relevant concerns have been considered.

Why is health important in Planning decisions?

Over recent years the links between the environment in which we are born, live, work, play and age have become better understood and more widely published. The conditions around us such as the natural environment, education and employment opportunities and the local infrastructure can either create opportunities for us to thrive or create barriers in achieving good health and wellbeing. Many of these barriers can be avoided or reduced by well thought out, considerate, measured and sustainable planning decisions. Decisions made by Planning Authorities today last well into the future and continue to impact on people’s lives for years to come, therefore it is important that we get it right.

In 2010, the [Marmot review](https://www.instituteofhealthequity.org/resources-reports/fair-society-healthy-lives-the-marmot-review) of health inequalities in England explained how the wider, or social, determinants of health have impacted health outcomes leading to a disparity in health for disadvantaged and marginalised communities when compared to more affluent areas. It demonstrates how our health can be influenced and impacted by a variety of cross-cutting and interlinked variables which should all be addressed together. The review proposes that the planning system be fully integrated with transport, housing, environment and health policy to reduce and prevent these health inequalities.

Planning responsibilities in better health promotion and reducing health inequalities can be seen as a stepped process. Firstly, the simple provision of things which allow users to be healthier and make healthier decisions – cycle lanes, local amenities, sports facilities. Secondly, going beyond this to influence the wider determinants – ensuring cycle lanes provide connectivity, for example, between a new residential development and a business park, designing the development in such a way as to reduce crime and help residents feel safe, creating opportunities through design for social interactions to reduce loneliness and isolation and build social and community capital, designing new workspaces to incorporate health promoting spaces for employees, providing employment opportunities throughout the construction period or developing sustainable and efficient homes that will keep people safe and warm at low cost.

The purpose of the HIA is to bring these together in consideration of the demographics, socioeconomics and need of the local population. For example, Knowsley traditionally has low car ownership so a development where a car is essential to access facilities, places of work, public transport networks, schools and shops is not always appropriate.

The embedding of health considerations in planning decisions is also reflected in planning literature and guidance.

The [National Planning Policy Framework](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1005759/NPPF_July_2021.pdf) states that ‘*planning policies and decisions should aim to achieve healthy, inclusive and safe places’* and should *‘enable and support healthy lifestyles, especially where this would address identified local health and well-being needs’* . It goes on to highlight key themes such as:-

* promotion of social interaction through strong neighbourhood centres and streets that allow for cycle and pedestrian use and connectivity plus active street frontages.
* Safe and accessible places to create community cohesion through high quality public space and pedestrian and cycle ways which are attractive and well-designed

The [National Planning Policy Guidance](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/health-and-wellbeing) sets out a healthy place as *‘one which supports and promotes healthy behaviours and environments and a reduction in health inequalities for people of all ages. It will provide the community with opportunities to improve their physical and mental health, and support community engagement and wellbeing’*.

Various agencies including the Office for Health Improvement and Disparities (was Public Health England) have published a variety of guides and evidence resources to bring health considerations into the forefront of planning decision-making. These may be useful resources for planners in considering and completing the HIA. These include:

[Building for a Healthy Life toolkit](https://www.udg.org.uk/sites/default/files/publications/files/14JULY20%20BFL%202020%20Brochure_3.pdf) (2020) – Homes England

[Using the planning system to promote healthy weight environments](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/863821/PHE_Planning_healthy_weight_environments_guidance__1_.pdf) (2020)

[Spatial planning for health – an evidence resource for planning and designing healthier places](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/729727/spatial_planning_for_health.pdf) (2017)

[Putting Health into Place: Executive Summary](https://www.england.nhs.uk/publication/putting-health-into-place-executive-summary/) (2019) - NHS

[Planning healthy weight environments](https://www.tcpa.org.uk/Handlers/Download.ashx?IDMF=7166d749-288a-4306-bb74-10b6c4ffd460) (2014) – The Town and Country Planning Association

[The 20-minute neighbourhood](https://www.tcpa.org.uk/the-20-minute-neighbourhood) – The Town and Country Planning Association

[Healthy New Towns](https://www.england.nhs.uk/ourwork/innovation/healthy-new-towns/) – NHS

The Knowsley Context

Knowsley Council has set out its strategic vision for how the borough will look in 2030. This is represented by five key objectives:

1. A place with welcoming, vibrant, well-connected neighbourhoods and town centres
2. A place with a thriving, inclusive economy, with opportunities for people and business
3. A place where people are active and healthy and have access to the support they need
4. A place where people of all ages are confident and can achieve their full potential
5. A place where strong and safe communities can shape their future

These objectives will be delivered by the Council and wider partners working in the Better Together Partnership. The delivery of new developments are key to this vision and must be completed in such a way that promotes good health and wellbeing by improving the wider determinants for both existing and new residents of Knowsley.

The [Knowsley’s Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy](https://www.knowsleyhwb.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2022/02/Joint-Health-and-Wellbeing-Strategy-2020.pdf) and the [All Together Fairer report for Cheshire and Merseyside](https://www.instituteofhealthequity.org/resources-reports/all-together-fairer-health-equity-and-the-social-determinants-of-health-in-cheshire-and-merseyside) demonstrates the current health status of Knowsley residents and particularly that in many areas it lags behind the regional and national averages. There are concerns around non-communicable diseases such as cardiovascular disease, cancers and obesity and also around the prevalence of mental health conditions, especially as a result of or worsened by the pandemic and rising rates in young people. The Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy sets out two priorities – reducing health inequalities and improving mental health, wellbeing and social isolation. The following infographic gives some detail about the main challenges for health improvement in Knowsley.

Health and Wellbeing in Knowsley

Graphical user interface

Description automatically generated with medium confidence

According to the Index of Multiple of Deprivation (2019) Knowsley is the 2nd most deprived borough in England with over a third of the population living in the most deprived income decile. This indicator includes variables such as education, crime, living environment and health and therefore is a good way of measuring the overall deprivation of an area including the wider determinants.

Knowsley has also been particularly hard hit by the Covid-19 pandemic having some of the highest rates of infection in the country. There are a number of variables which made Knowsley more susceptible to infection:-

* Low car ownership resulting in use of public transport or car sharing
* A high proportion of residents working in the frontline care and hospitality sectors
* A high proportion of residents working in jobs which cannot be done from home eg manufacturing and factory operations
* An ageing population
* High supply of 3-bedroom homes meaning larger multi-generational family groups living together, and some overcrowding
* Poverty levels restricting choice over where and how to access essential goods
* A proportion of vulnerable people living in cold homes leaving them susceptible to infection

By carefully considering how it can influence some of the factors which made Knowsley more susceptible to infection effective planning can aid recovery and reduce the risk of this happening again. Initiatives may include creating more active travel opportunities, creating a wider variety of employment opportunities, building good quality, energy efficient homes of all sizes, providing safe outside spaces for exercise as well as ventilated indoor capacity within community buildings and creating employment and training opportunities to raise the skills base of residents.

How to complete the HIA

HIAs are required where proposed developments have the potential to impact on public health including large scale housing, industrial and commercial developments. Knowsley’s [Local Validation Checklist](https://www.knowsley.gov.uk/knowsleycouncil/media/Documents/Validation-Checklist-Nov-2018-adopted.pdf) should be consulted to verify whether or not a HIA, and other documentation, is required for the specific development. Those developments requiring an EIA will receive guidance from the Planning Team as to how to incorporate the HIA within that document.

The HIA should be completed at the earliest opportunity in the planning timeline, ideally this would be at pre-application stage or during the consultation phase. This will help to identify any issues from the start, to improve any positive aspects to reap the most benefit and prevent costly adjustments later in the process. It is expected that the HIA is completed by the applicant although it is acknowledged that developers may choose to commission specialists to complete it. Knowsley Council expect that consultation be conducted as part of the planning process. Consultation with the public and other stakeholders is a helpful tool in completing a HIA as it allows future users and those affected to share their thoughts and experiences.

There are overlaps between the requirements of the HIA and other documents in the planning process. This can sometimes cause repetition for developers in completing required forms and misunderstanding over what each assessment sets out to achieve. To make this process clearer and simpler for developers Knowsley has designed a HIA template to be filled in where a HIA is required. This should also reduce the need for developers to commission specialists to complete the assessment. The HIA should focus clearly on how the proposed development impacts the current and future population’s health by considering how it influences health behaviours, health promotion and the wider determinants of health. It should be noted that different population groups may be impacted in different ways, for example children and older people will have individual requirements and needs. It is also noted that health and social inequalities may be both improved and exacerbated by proposals. The HIA helps developers reduce those negative aspects while improving the positive ones to create an overall positive impact. It is expected that the HIA and the development consider the socioeconomic and health needs of the direct population to be impacted as well as looking at the population of Knowsley as a whole as this can hide local variance.

Data sources and guidance

There are various places where reliable health, demographic and socioeconomic data can be found. These are not exclusive but if additional data is used it must be from reliable sources.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Topic** | **Geographic level** | **Source** |
| Overview of Knowsley including   * Ward profiles * Joint strategic needs assessment (health) * Knowsley 2030 Evidence Base * Area profiles | Borough, area and ward level | [Home - Knowsley Knowledge](https://knowsleyknowledge.org.uk/) |
| Knowsley Public Health Annual Reports | Borough | [Public health annual reports | Knowsley Council](https://www.knowsley.gov.uk/residents/health/public-health-annual-reports) |
| Health conditions and inequalities in Knowsley | Borough | [All Together Fairer: Health equity and the social determinants of health in Cheshire and Merseyside - IHE (instituteofhealthequity.org)](https://www.instituteofhealthequity.org/resources-reports/all-together-fairer-health-equity-and-the-social-determinants-of-health-in-cheshire-and-merseyside) |
| Knowsley Housing Needs Assessment 2021   * Current housing provision * Affordability and income levels | Borough and town level | [Knowsley Housing Needs Assessment 2021](https://www.knowsley.gov.uk/knowsleycouncil/media/Documents/Knowsley-MBC-Housing-Need-Assessment-2021.pdf) |
| Public Health Fingertips Database   * Physical and mental health * Wider determinant indicators | Borough – with national and regional comparisons | [Public Health Outcomes Framework - Data - OHID (phe.org.uk)](https://fingertips.phe.org.uk/profile/public-health-outcomes-framework/data#page/1) |
| Ward level – with borough and national comparisons | [Local Health - Data - OHID (phe.org.uk)](https://fingertips.phe.org.uk/profile/local-health/data#page/0/gid/1938133180/pat/401/par/E08000011/ati/8/are/E05010935/iid/93744/age/28/sex/4/cat/-1/ctp/-1/yrr/1/cid/4/tbm/1) |
| Nomis Labour Market Profile | Borough level - with regional and national comparisons | [Labour Market Profile - Nomis - Official Labour Market Statistics (nomisweb.co.uk)](https://www.nomisweb.co.uk/reports/lmp/la/1946157103/report.aspx?town=knowsley) |
| ONS Local Statistics - Various data sets covering demographics,   * Health and wellbeing * housing, * GDP   \*\*not all data is the latest version | Borough level | [Local statistics - Office for National Statistics (ons.gov.uk)](https://www.ons.gov.uk/help/localstatistics) |
| Shape Atlas – mapping system   * Deprivation * GP practices * Health data | Borough level through to neighbourhood level | [SHAPE | Strategic Health Asset Planning and Evaluation (shapeatlas.net)](https://shapeatlas.net/) \*\*requires registration (NHS and Local Government have free registration) |

Developers are encouraged to contact Council Officers including Public Health where they feel additional information and data relevant to the area is required (details provided below).

The template

The HIA is grouped into the 5 Knowsley 2030 themes. Each theme has a series of questions to be considered. Not all questions will be relevant to every development so you may tick ‘N’ and leave the evidence section blank where necessary.

When answering a question you should provide a brief summary of the evidence for your answer, including mitigation where appropriate. All population groups should be considered as part of the answer – these are listed on the HIA.

The Knowsley Public Health team will be involved in reviewing the HIA and will provide feedback to the planning department and the applicant. If additional assistance is required please contact Public Health, publichealth@knowsley.gov.uk