



Planning Healthy Communities

Health Inequalities and Sustainability



Strategic Review of Health Inequalities in England post-2010

The 'Strategic Review of Health Inequalities in England post 2010 – Fair Society, Healthy Lives (The Marmot Review)' was published on 11th February 2010.

There are some key messages that have come out of this review:

- Doing nothing is **not an economic option** – the report estimates 2.5 Million years of life are potentially lost to health inequalities by those dying prematurely each year in England alone;
- By knowing the **nature and size of the problem** and understanding how we can make a difference, we are now in a position to take action to reduce health inequalities;
- It is time to move **beyond economic growth** as the sole measure of social success; and
- The **Health Inequalities and Sustainability Agendas** must come together.

The report makes Six Policy recommendations to reduce Health Inequalities with creating and developing healthy and sustainable communities overarching all other objectives and life course stages.

Policy Objective A –	<i>Give every child the best start in life.</i>
Policy Objective B –	<i>Enable all children, young people and adults to maximise their capabilities and have control over their lives.</i>
Policy Objective C –	<i>Create fair employment and good work for all.</i>
Policy Objective D –	<i>Ensure healthy standard of living for all.</i>
Policy Objective E –	<i>Create and develop healthy, sustainable places and communities.</i>
Policy Objective F –	<i>Strengthen the role and impact of ill health.</i>

What next?

The planning system in the UK is focused on achieving sustainable development but currently provides limited opportunity to consider the health of the community at project level. A healthy development is a sustainable development. This view was also echoed by the Royal Commission on Environmental Pollution in a the Urban Environment report (March 2007), who recommended that Health Impact Assessments (HIA) be incorporated explicitly in Environmental Impact Assessments given the importance of considering health issues within the planning process.

Policy Objective E of The Marmot Review discusses four key recommendations that are already being considered to some extent when planning new major developments – see table below

Create and Develop healthy and sustainable places and communities	Examples of how these can be achieved
Improve active travel	<i>Green Travel Plans, Provision of cycle lanes, bike storage. Pedestrian studies.</i>
Good quality open and green spaces	<i>Landscape strategies, play space strategies, provision of green open space and biodiversity action plans.</i>
Improving the food environment in local areas	<i>Provision of community facilities, local shops and allotments. Green roofs and walls used for local food production and education.</i>
Improving energy efficiency of housing / reduction of fuel poverty	<i>Improved insulation, all new homes built to Code for Sustainable Homes / Part L standards.</i>

However, what currently is not happening is an assessment of how the recommendations above impact on the health of the local community, and evaluation of the economic and health benefits arising from new developments.



Planning Healthy Communities

Who is responsible?

Developers, architects and masterplanners

- The focus needs to be on design and master planning for healthy sustainable communities and not on assessing healthcare capacity when consulting with PCT and local NHS Trusts.
- There is a need for Health Impact Assessment to be considered at the scoping stage as part of the EIA process pre-planning.
- There needs to be a sharing of evidence of what works and what does not.

Local Authorities & NHS Trusts

Local Authorities and NHS Trusts need to understand the importance of dialogue between the key parties – developers, planners, architects, CABE, PCTs and consultants with respect to health inequalities when planning new major developments.

e.g. The London Health Inequalities Strategy, Draft for public consultation was issued by Greater London Authority in August 2009. This document states that 'The GLA will lead by example and ensure that major initiatives consistently evaluate potential negative or positive health impacts. The Mayor will work with the London Health Commission to encourage policy and decision-makers to use HIA, preferably as part of an integrated impact assessment process, to predict changes in health outcomes and identify ways to measure change'

Communities

Effective community engagement and consultation needs to include local community groups and health professionals so that benchmarks to define what is considered to be a healthy community are shared and monitored post planning.

How can WSP help?

As an independent and specialist environmental, energy and transport consultancy, we provide impartial advice and skills to support the entire planning and development cycle from inception through to design, planning and implementation - from assessing initial constraints and opportunities, to undertaking an integrated impact assessment including Health Impact Assessment. We can also provide support through to the implementation stage with a community engagement programme.

We can manage all of the aspects required to assist with delivering a healthy, sustainable development. The diagram below summarises the expertise we can provide throughout the development stages.

INCEPTION

- SEA & Sustainability Appraisals
- HIA Scoping and initial consultation
- Due Diligence
- Opportunities and constraints
- Energy Demand Strategies
- Plan Allocations

DESIGN

- Sustainable Master Planning
- Infrastructure & Resource Planning
- Green Building Design, CfSH & BREEAM Neighbourhood
- Movement & Access Strategy
- Consultation & Public Participation
- Biodiversity & Landscape Strategy

PLANNING

- Development Briefs
- Screening & Scoping Studies
- EIA
- HIA
- Transport Assessment
- Sustainability Statement
- Community Engagement

DELIVERY & IMPLEMENTATION

- Negotiation / Discharge S106 / Conditions
- Monitoring
- Construction & Operation Management Plans
- Enhancement & Mitigation

Let's talk

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