

CHESHIRE EAST COUNCIL

Cabinet

Date of Meeting:	22 nd July 2013
Report of:	Corporate Manager Health Improvement
Subject/Title:	Health Impact Assessment Policy (Key Decision Ref CE 13/14-33)
Portfolio Holder:	Cllr Janet Clowes, Health and Adult Care

1.0 Report Summary

- 1.1 The Health and Adults Social Care Policy Development Group has been considering the introduction of a Health Impact Assessment Policy. This would allow the Authority to make more effective judgements on the health and wellbeing implications of decisions being made and drive better health outcomes allowing the Authority to improve the health of its residents.
- 1.2 The Policy Development Group has referred the attached draft Health Impact Assessment Policy (Appendix One) to Cabinet for consideration for adoption.

2.0 Recommendations

- 2.1 That the Health Impact Assessment Policy be endorsed and adopted.
- 2.2 That Cabinet authorise Officers to take all necessary actions to implement the Policy.

3.0 Reasons for Recommendations

- 3.1 Health Impact Assessments will help to ensure that decisions on policies, programmes and developments take into account the health impact. A key reason for developing the use of health impact assessment is to add value to the policy and decision making processes thus resulting in better decisions in terms of their potential contribution to improving health or negative health impacts. It will also help to identify further opportunities to address cross-cutting issues such as health and to contribute to reducing inequalities in health.

4.0 Wards Affected

- 4.1 All

5.0 Local Ward Members

5.1 All

6.0 Policy Implications

- 6.1 Good health is related to good quality housing and developments, well designed streets and neighbourhoods, good transport systems, opportunities to experience leisure and cultural services, and access to activities and green spaces. These factors are known as the wider determinants of health and if they are considered at the planning and design stage can improve physical and mental health of the population. Health Impact Assessments are important tools in determining the potential benefits of a development, and negative impacts that might occur.
- 6.2 In addition Health Impact Assessments can be undertaken as budget decisions are made, strategies are developed and policy proposals drafted. By incorporating them into the fabric of the Authority's decision making they help to ensure that health and wellbeing are central to all that the Council does.

7.0 Financial Implications

- 7.1 There are no direct financial consequences in relation to this report.
- 7.2 What we know nationally is that Local Authority finances are undergoing significant changes as part of the Government's overall deficit reduction programme. The overall, grant funding is still expected to reduce, but will vary depending on economic levels, which are more unpredictable at a local level. There is no doubt that funding for Councils will further reduce significantly over the next five years, and is likely to continue to reduce beyond this timeframe to 2020.
- 7.3 Further work is required by the Council to develop proposals to address financial pressures and the Budget Report sets out a framework including continuously reviewing management levels and staffing structures, its own services and also the value for money achieved in its commissioning of services in the wider market. Health Impact Assessment may prove useful tools in helping make judgements on such key decisions.

8.0 Legal Implications

- 8.1 It is lawful for the Authority to take such assessments into account. Under the Amsterdam Treaty 1997 HIAs are encouraged but not compulsory within the EU. They will assist in demonstrating the Authority's commitment to its strategic role under the Social Care Act 2012 and NHS Act 2006 S12(b).

- 8.2 Health Impact assessment does not have the statutory basis of the Equality Act 2010 S149. It cannot replace the need to have regard to the public sector equality duties though it may go some way toward fulfilling them, it is therefore important that detailed consideration of Equality Duties is fully encompassed within the combined assessment.
- 8.3 If the policy is adopted, HIAs must be applied consistently across the Authority; we would be open to challenge if HIAs were applied in some instances but not in other similar ones.

9.0 Risk Management

- 9.1 The introduction of a Health Impact Assessment Policy will require Officers to undertake or ensure that external stakeholders undertake Rapid Impact Assessments (RIA) for major developments, policies, programmes and business decisions. Where the RIA indicates potential significant impact a full health impact assessment will be required. This will add an additional layer of work that will need to be planned for by Officers.

10.0 Background and Options

- 10.1 The Health and Adults Social Care Policy Development Group has spent some time considering the merits of Health Impact Assessments and how they are used by other Authorities. Following a workshop held in June it was agreed that a draft Policy would be circulated electronically for the PDG to consider and this was reviewed and commented upon at the meeting of the PDG on 4th July, with a final draft being agreed.
- 10.2 The 'Fair Society, Healthy Lives: Strategic Review of Health Inequalities in England post 2010', led by Michael Marmot recommended the need to 'create and develop healthy and sustainable places and communities (Policy Objective E). To achieve this outcome, local areas need to integrate planning, transport, housing and health policies to address the social determinants of health.
- 10.3 The Public Health White Paper 'Healthy Lives, Healthy People' (department of Health 2010) reinforced this approach and laid out the Government's aspiration to 'support local areas with streamlining planning policy that aligns social, economic, environmental and health priorities in one place'. Evidence is growing that demonstrates the links between the environment, spatial planning and their potential impact on mental health and wellbeing, coronary heart disease, obesity, respiratory disease and some injuries. There are many opportunities to improve outcomes and reduce health inequalities.
- 10.4 Health is determined not only by access to quality healthcare services and lifestyle choices but also by the social and economic conditions in which people live. Policies which make up the Local Development Framework (and in future the Local Plan) are critical in this regard. For example transport policies can promote active travel through

supporting walking and cycling; shifting away from a common dependence on car use, thus building physical activity into daily life.

- 10.5 However, there are obviously positive and negative influences of transport and competing agendas in today's more environmentally aware society. Motorised transport is both a source of injury, physical inactivity, air and noise pollution, whilst being an enabler of access to work, education, social networks and services.
- 10.6 There is recognition of the various factors that can affect health, such as housing, employment, transport, access to fresh food and individual lifestyle behaviours and the different levels of influence that can be brought to bear from and on individuals, communities and neighbourhoods to see policy changing for a greater public health impact.
- 10.7 Health Impact Assessments allow these complex interrelationships to be considered as decisions are being made, and the potential positive benefits or negative impacts identified. Informed decisions can then be made.
- 10.8 Whilst very important for decision making around major developments, health impact assessments are relevant when considering budget decisions to invest in or decommission services, during the development of strategy or policy proposals, and for many other business decisions being made within the Council. For this reason the Policy Development Group recommends that:

The Cheshire East Health Impact Assessment Policy requires all new and revised strategies, policies and business decisions to undergo Rapid Impact Assessment. If significant issues are identified, a more detailed Health Impact Assessment will be carried out, the nature of which depends on the impacts identified.

- 10.9 Discussions within the PDG have highlighted examples such as planning decisions, changes of use of premises, strategy development, and decisions to commission or decommission services. The phrase 'business decisions' has been included to try to encompass this range of activity

11.0 Access to Information

The background papers relating to this report can be inspected by contacting the report writer:

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