

# Health Impact Assessments

The health and wellbeing theme was established to recognise how the positive characteristics and qualities of the environment can promote healthier lifestyles, support preventing poor health and encourage inclusivity and accessibility whilst reducing health inequalities.

To further support this theme, the 2008 Essex Planning Officers' Association Health Impact Assessment guide has been up-dated and now includes the wider Essex Healthier Places guidance which gives more in-depth information on what needs to be considered when looking at health, wellbeing and the environment. Embedded throughout all documents are the Sport England Active Design Principles which are a key element that should underpin all new development across Essex and Southend.

The Essex Healthier Places Guidance has been divided into specific sections relating to health and wellbeing through;

- The design of homes and spaces including the promotion and application of Sport England Active Design Principles;
- Supporting the development of new communities and neighbourhoods and connecting to existing communities;
- Promoting access to education, skills, training and employment opportunities;
- Providing appropriate access to NHS healthcare services and opportunities for self-care;
- Increasing access to interesting and stimulating open spaces and natural environments to encourage people to be physically active;
- Ensuring developments embody the principles of lifetime neighbourhoods and promote independent living;
- Promoting better access to healthy and locally sourced food;
- Encouraging active travel through the promotion of cycling and walking and measures to reduce reliance on motorised transport;
- Creating a safe and accessible built environment with well-designed public spaces that encourage community participation and designing out crime measures;
- Addressing environmental sustainability including future-proofing measures and the use of technology/digital

The guidance also provides advice on environmental impact assessments and health as well as the main contacts across the health and wellbeing system.

The health and wellbeing theme is addressed further within the following sections of the guide:

- [Landscape and Greenspaces](#)
- [Layout Design](#)
- [Street and Roads](#)
- [Internal Design Details](#)
- [Architectural Details](#)

Endorsements for the Essex Healthier Places and Health Impact Assessment Guidance includes;

**Director of Wellbeing, Public Health and Communities, Essex County Council and Director of Public Health, Southend-** ‘Public Health and planning have been working together for hundreds of years. The recent resurgence of this historic relationship, coupled with the move of Public Health into Local Authorities, has provided a platform for us to jointly start to re-address some of the most pressing health and wellbeing issues facing society today. These healthy places notes provide advice, information and guidance on issues such as physical activity, community cohesion, access to green space, access to employment and environmental sustainability. This document plays upon the theme of health and wellbeing in the Essex Design Guide which is leading the way promoting health in design. The use of health impact assessments, supported across Essex and Southend, plays a key role in allowing us to identify positive and less positive impacts from development and, for the first time, identify groups who are more likely to be impacted by development. We fully endorse these notes and welcome the support from other key partners such as the NHS and Sport England in working together with EPOA to ensure that developments going forwards in Essex and Southend optimise their potential impact on health and wellbeing for both current and future generations for decades to come’.

**North East Essex Clinical Commissioning Group** – ‘The NHS is made up of a complex multi-layered structure comprising of NHS England/NHS Improvement, Clinical Commissioning Groups, providers of health services such as Hospital, Community and Mental Health Trust, GPs and ambulance trusts. Consequently, the NHS landscape can be confusing with developers frequently reporting difficulty in finding the right NHS people to engage with when planning new developments. The Essex Healthy Places guidance provides clarity for developers on how to engage the health system but more importantly sets out how consideration should be given to the wider determinants of health when planning developments. The CCG are therefore delighted to endorse the Essex Healthy Places notes and look forward to working with developers and other partners to ensure our citizens benefit from new and improved neighbourhoods and communities which will provide healthy places for people to live and prosper in the future.’

**Sport England Planning Team-** ‘The Essex Healthy Places advice note brings together the latest policy and advice on planning for healthy places in Essex and builds on the success of the Essex Design Guide’s innovative approach to embedding health and well-being and active design themes. The focus on the importance of creating active environments especially through active design is particularly welcomed as this ensures that the guidance goes beyond conventional planning for health considerations as well as supporting the implementation of the Essex Design Guide and the wider objective of delivering high quality design in new development. Sport England endorses the guidance and considers it to be an

example of good practice in relation to advice aimed at developers on the subject of planning for health and physical activity.'

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