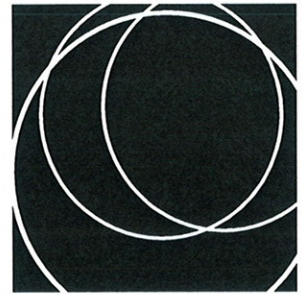


Guidance Note:  
Health Impact  
Assessments  
(HIA's)



**EPOA**

Essex Planning  
Officers Association

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# Essex Planning Officers Association

## Guidance Note – Health Impact Assessments

### Background

The relationship between health and a good built environment has long been established. Indeed the establishment of the Planning System that we have emerged out of the public health acts of the late 19<sup>th</sup> Century. In recent years there has been a growing acknowledgement that the quality of the built environment and its sustainability are key factors in the both the direct health of people and the life style choices affecting the health of residents, workers and visitors of new developments.

The first Essex Local Authority Agreement (LAA) recognised this relationship within a priority to promote healthier living in the built environment (Priority 3) within its Community Wellbeing and Older People block of priorities. Priority 3 identified two targets the first of which was to introduce the assessment of the Health impacts of new developments. This is to be done by the use of Health Impact Assessments (HIA's):

**Target: 3.1: All Local Authorities will ensure that their Local Development Frameworks (or equivalent development plan document) contain a policy requiring Health Impact Assessments for the relevant planning applications by 2009.**

This guidance is intended to cover how such a policy can be incorporated into a Local Development Document and how such a policy could be operated through the Development Control process.

### What is an HIA?

Health Impact Assessment (HIA) <sup>1,2</sup>, is a practical approach that seeks to assess how a proposal will impact on people's health. HIA is typically used to assess the likely significant specific health impacts and allow an assessment of the overall health impacts of proposals be that a strategy or specific development. Health is affected by a number of determinants including transport, housing, education, the environment and economic activity. The analysis using a HIA results in recommendations that can inform developers and decision-makers.

The purpose of HIA is to:

- Identify the potential health consequences of a proposal on a given population

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.hiagateway.org.uk/page.aspx?o=WhatisHIA>

<sup>2</sup> <http://www.integratedcarenetwork.gov.uk/index.cfm?pid=446&catalogueContentID=1926>

- Maximise the positive health benefits and minimise potential adverse effects on health and inequalities.

As health is not the only impact that local authorities will want to consider, the HIA would therefore need to connect with other evaluative methods such as Environmental Impact Assessments (particularly Schedule 1-3) and Transport Impact Assessments (*see Glossary for definitions*) which professionals should already be used to applying.

### **Why Undertake an HIA?**

The impact of development on health has been a long established material consideration in assessing development proposals. Usually this has been in the context of a very direct impact or potential impact on health such as Noise nuisance or contamination. Road safety and reducing crime are established considerations in assessing the safety and health consequences of development. In addition in agreeing mitigation of impact through conditions or Section 106 agreements there are many examples of ways to reduce the adverse impact on people's health or positively improve the impact by providing appropriate services to meet the new demands generated by the development, such as the provision of open space and play equipment. However there has not been to date a systematic means of assessing the full health impact nor therefore the appropriate mitigation measures, assuming that such impact is not so significant the proposal should be refused permission.

The Government has clearly signalled its commitment to promoting HIA in the 2003 Tackling Health Inequalities<sup>3</sup> and 2005, Choosing Health White Paper<sup>4</sup> report which recognises the importance of assessing the impact of policy on health inequalities. European level commitment has also been given in Article 152 of the Amsterdam Treaty. The government newly-published Dept of Health Guides now provide an introduction to planning for NHS staff and vice-versa for Planners to the Health Service which emphasize the importance of considering the health impacts of new development:

[http://www.dh.gov.uk/en/Publicationsandstatistics/Publications/PublicationsPolicyAndGuidance/DH\\_078977](http://www.dh.gov.uk/en/Publicationsandstatistics/Publications/PublicationsPolicyAndGuidance/DH_078977)

[http://www.dh.gov.uk/en/Publicationsandstatistics/Publications/PublicationsPolicyAndGuidance/DH\\_078980](http://www.dh.gov.uk/en/Publicationsandstatistics/Publications/PublicationsPolicyAndGuidance/DH_078980)

Parliament has indicated the potential for HIA to become a statutory requirement within the Health Select Committee's Third Report<sup>5</sup> on obesity in 2004. To achieve this, the regulatory impact assessment guidance has been strengthened to highlight the need for policy makers to assess health impacts (Cabinet Office, 2004<sup>6</sup>).

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<sup>3</sup> Tackling Health Inequalities: A programme for action. London: Department of Health, 2003.

<sup>4</sup> Choosing Health: Making healthy choices easier. London: Department of Health, 2004.

<sup>5</sup> <http://www.parliament.the-stationery-office.co.uk/pa/cm200304/cmselect/cmhealth/23/2302.htm>

<sup>6</sup> [http://www.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/regulation/ria/toolkit/specific\\_impact\\_tests.asp](http://www.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/regulation/ria/toolkit/specific_impact_tests.asp)

For policy and strategy development there is no regulatory requirement to carry out a separate HIA, but it is now a test which is required by Government of its own departments and health impacts should be considered at all appropriate stages of policy development.

The value and importance of HIA have been identified in a range of other UK government policies, programmes and guidance (see Appendix). However at this time HIA's are not a statutory requirement and their use at a local level has been limited to major proposals such as the new runway at Stansted Airport and the Port expansion of Bathside Bay at Harwich. The LAA priority seeks to get an early screening of all significant developments as to whether an HIA should accompany an application. In order to do this Planning Authorities need to introduce within their LDF a policy to this effect.

### **Local Development Framework**

At the local level, HIA has a potential contribution to make to many areas of activity and can provide a valuable tool for the assessment of proposals and policies through the Local Strategic Partnerships (LSP) and Local Development Allocations, but this guidance concentrates specifically on creating the local policy context and development control process that enables local assessment of development proposals.

The new Local Development Framework (LDF) system enables local authorities to integrate town planning and community planning initiatives. **Authorities should ensure that within their submitted Core Strategy there is reference in a policy to the need for Health Impact Assessments** in order to ensure development is genuinely sustainable. **The detailed policy requiring the screening and submission of HIA's with development proposals should be contained in the Development Policies Document (or separate DPD).**

Chelmsford Borough Council introduced in its submission document a specific Development policy requiring the submission of a HIA for schemes in excess of 50 residential units and 1,000 sq.m. commercial floorspace. This has now been confirmed as "sound" and has been adopted. See Appendix for suggested policy wording. This accords with the LAA, and other Essex districts should follow this approach to deliver the necessary policy framework.

### **How to undertake an HIA?**

It is not intended that every development above the criteria needs a full HIA, just that they should be screened to see if a HIA is required at all and if so should it be a 'rapid' or full HIA. Also this approach does not mean that developments below these criteria are exempt from consideration of their Health impacts together with any other impacts in the normal way. **Authorities also need to ensure that once the policy framework is in place that the necessary references are made in 1 app to the need for a developer to prepare a HIA screening of their development above this criteria.**

The broad approach to undertaking an HIA is:

- Decide whether to undertake an HIA (screening);
- Decide how to undertake the HIA (scoping). Is it a rapid or full HIA that's required;
- Identify and consider the evidence of impact on health & equity (appraisal). There may be direct or indirect health impacts on the future users of the development e.g. is walking and cycling encouraged to help reduce potential obesity issues, or there could be health service equity issues e.g. does this new population generate a need for a new doctors surgery;
- Decide on and prioritise specific recommendations. You will need to negotiate the appropriate level of mitigation;
- Engagement with applicant and decision-makers to help reinforce the value of the evidence-based recommendations;
- Ongoing monitoring and evaluation to assess implementation of recommendations.

A range of methods and approaches can be used to help identify and consider the health and equity impacts of a proposal on a given population dependant on the scale of the proposal, for example:

- Policy analysis (where appropriate);
- Profiling the areas and communities affected;
- Involving stakeholders and key informants in predicting potential health impacts using a predefined model of health;
- Evaluating the importance, scale and likelihood of predicted impacts;
- Considering alternative options and making recommendations for action to enhance or mitigate impacts.

A potential wide range of stakeholders need to be engaged and consulted in the HIA process such as providers and recipients of health services, residents, recreation and leisure professionals, voluntary organisations, among others. Some of these will be engaged during the LDF process while others may need to be considered in development appraisal whilst undertaking a specific HIA. The HIA framework is designed to take account of, and to balance, the best available evidence from a variety of sources. Some may take several months for very large developments or major allocations and involve a large number of people and would need to be built into the development process early, not unlike an EIA. Others could be done in a day through a Rapid Appraisal – *see Example 1*. Although this relates to an appraisal of a strategy it could equally apply to a specific development.

### Example 1: A Rapid HIA<sup>2</sup>

A Health Impact Assessment was undertaken to ascertain the potential health effects of a local public health policy Active St Helens. This is an integrated sport, physical activity and physical education strategy. The HIA was used to make recommendations about how the strategy could be tailored to maximize positive and minimize negative health effects.

Stakeholder participants took part in a focus group, and completed a postal questionnaire. The participants followed the stages of the Devon Health Forum 'Health and Well-being screening checklist' a rapid HIA process (Devon Health Forum, 2003). Results revealed that the main potential health impacts of the strategy as identified through a thematic framework were:

- **Positive**
  - Healthy lifestyles; and
  - Healthy beginnings for children.
- **Negative**
  - Affordability; and
  - Individually targeted and not population.

The main actions points arising from the thematic framework were:

- The partnerships, collaboration and co-ordination;
- Information and education, and
- Community involvement.

### When would an HIA be requested locally?

In Essex, district councils will expect each proposed development above the size criteria of 50 residential units and 1,000sq.m commercial floorspace to include an initial screening prepared by the developer of any potential impact on health and the determinants of health as highlighted in the Screening Template (*see attached HIA Gauge Flowchart for details*). The key stages of the process will include:

- Assessment of whether full HIA is required by local authority supported by the local PCT (**screening template enclosed**) based on completed screening tool submitted with application or ideally before it is made, from the developer.
- If required, local authority will request Rapid HIA from developer and report will be assessed by the PCT's nominated lead.
- If deemed necessary, a full HIA will be requested and reviewed by the PCT's nominated lead – this is only likely to be for major residential and commercial schemes and this would have normally been flagged up a lot sooner in the process during informal pre-application discussions.

**Each PCT will need to have a nominated lead for liaison with each Planning Authority**

### Note for PCT's nominated lead and Development Control Planners:

DC Planners will undertake the assessment of the screening report. It will be the LA's decision as to whether an HIA is required, but it would be expected to do this in consultation with the PCT lead unless the screening was clear cut. LA will pass this and any Rapid HIA and full HIA to relevant PCT's nominated lead.

PCT's nominated person would be expected to have regular liaison procedures in place with the LA and that assistance with screening assessments would occur at weekly or fortnightly liaisons. PCT's will provide the technical support to appraise Rapid HIA and/or full HIA and validate recommendations with a turnaround time of 14 days. With a Full HIA this might be an initial assessment identifying areas of prioritisation and negotiation or indeed further information required from the developer. It is the developer's responsibility to produce the evidence.

### **Resources available**

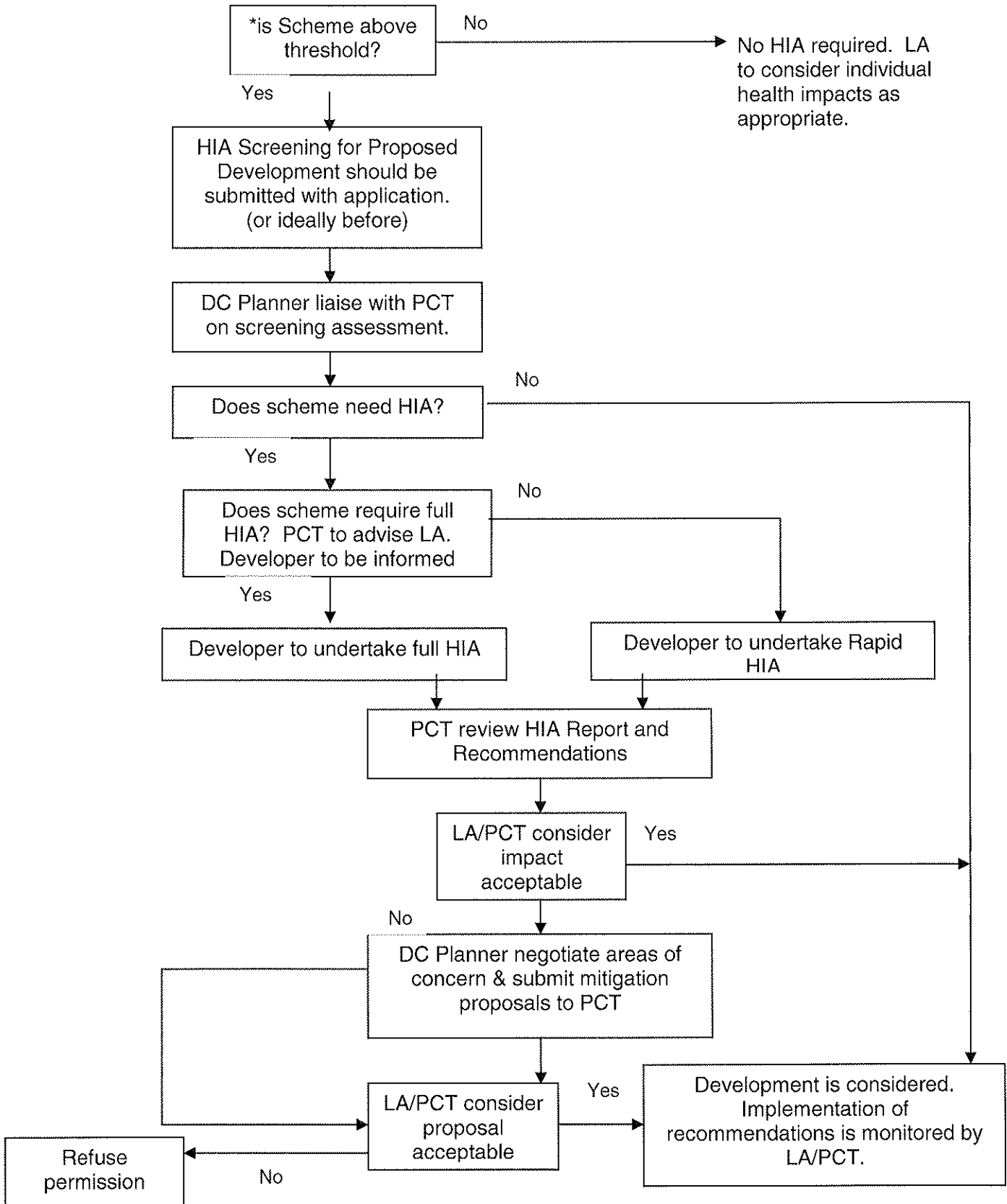
HIA has a short history in England but a number of specialist centres, specialist practitioner and independent HIA practitioners have emerged to support the development of this tool. Please refer to the 'further information' section if you wish to commission an external consultant to complete your Rapid HIA and/or full HIA.

The cost of undertaking a full HIA cannot be easily assessed. Given the individual circumstances and diversity of each scheme, developers are advised to consider making use of the London Health Observatory's (LHO) HIA calculator at:

[http://www.lho.org.uk/HIA/Attachments/Excel\\_Files/HIA\\_Calculator.xls](http://www.lho.org.uk/HIA/Attachments/Excel_Files/HIA_Calculator.xls)

The LHO website also has a list of contacts who have expertise in undertaking HIA's and points to consider when commissioning an HIA.

## HIA Process



\*Threshold = Development in excess of 50 residential units and 1,000 sq.m. commercial



### **Possible Development Policy**

The authority must ensure there is an appropriate reference in their Core Strategy Document to relate this Development Policy to.

#### **POLICY DC8 - HEALTH IMPACT ASSESSMENTS**

**The Borough Council aims to ensure that development is designed to promote healthier living in the built environment. Health Impact Assessments will consider the environmental impact upon health which would include the safety of an environment and if it encourages healthy activities such as walking and cycling. Development proposals will also be required to assess their impact upon existing health services and facilities. For residential development in excess of 50 units and non-residential development in excess of 1,000 sq. m. this will take the form of a Health Impact Assessment, which will measure wider impact upon healthy living and the demands that are placed upon health services and facilities arising from the development. Where significant impacts are identified, planning permission will be refused unless measures to meet the health service requirements of the development are provided and/or secured by planning obligations.**

**The Borough Council will require Health Impact Assessments to be prepared in accordance with the advice and best practice for such assessments as published by the Department of Health and other agencies.**

Most development has a potential impact upon the health services and facilities that are provided in the Borough. Likewise, through the design of new development, healthy living can be promoted. The extent of these impacts needs to be assessed to ensure that adequate health and services continue to be provided for the community as a whole. For developments which have relatively little impact upon health services, an initial assessment may be sufficient to satisfy the requirements of this policy. For developments where an initial assessment indicates more significant health impacts, a comprehensive Health Impact Assessment will be required. The current Essex Local Area Agreement (LAA) also gives a target for the introduction of Health Impact Assessments (HIA's) for developments over 50 units and requires the Borough Council to promote healthy living environments and make policy provision to secure health services provision. The Borough Council will liaise with the East of England NHS and Mid Essex Primary Care Trust when assessing the scope and scale of likely impacts.

## Further information

Other UK government policies, programmes and guidance referring to HIA's include:

- Bringing Britain together: a national strategy for neighbourhood renewal (Cabinet Office, 1998)
- Creating healthier communities: a resource pack for local partnerships (Office of the Deputy Prime Minister and DH, 2005)
- Modernising government (Cabinet Office, 1999)
- National service framework for Coronary Heart Disease (DH, 2000)
- Power to promote or improve economic, social or environmental well being (DETR, 2001)
- The future of transport: a network for 2030 (DfT, 2004)

[www.hiagateway.org.uk](http://www.hiagateway.org.uk) – provides further information about HIA and links to completed HIA case studies, reports, journal articles, HIA toolkits, training courses, and contact details of people working in HIA.

Other useful HIA websites are:

- [www.dh.gov.uk/PublicationsAndStatistics/Legislation/HealthAssessment/fs/en](http://www.dh.gov.uk/PublicationsAndStatistics/Legislation/HealthAssessment/fs/en) – Department of Health, Health Assessment
- [www.hda.nhs.uk](http://www.hda.nhs.uk) - Health Development Agency
- [www.ihia.org.uk/about.html](http://www.ihia.org.uk/about.html) – IMPACT consortium (England and international)
- [www.londonhealth.gov.uk/hia.htm](http://www.londonhealth.gov.uk/hia.htm) – London Health Commission, HIA
- [www.msoc-mrc.gla.ac.uk](http://www.msoc-mrc.gla.ac.uk) – Medical Research Centre, Glasgow, Evaluating non-health-care policies, programmes and projects
- [www.hiadatabase.net](http://www.hiadatabase.net) – Health impact assessment database (Netherlands and international)
- <http://online.northumbria.ac.uk/faculties/hswe/hia/index.htm> – Northumbria University HIA
- [www.plymhealthimpact.co.uk](http://www.plymhealthimpact.co.uk) – Plymouth HIA
- [www.publichealth.ie](http://www.publichealth.ie) – Institute of Public Health in Ireland
- [www.pcpoh.bham.ac.uk/publichealth/hia](http://www.pcpoh.bham.ac.uk/publichealth/hia) – University of Birmingham HIA
- [www.hpw.wales.gov.uk/English/national/index.htm](http://www.hpw.wales.gov.uk/English/national/index.htm) – National Assembly for Wales, HIA
- [www.whiasu.cf.ac.uk](http://www.whiasu.cf.ac.uk) – Welsh Health Impact Assessment Support Unit
- [www.euro.who.int/echp](http://www.euro.who.int/echp) – WHO Regional Office for Europe, European Centre for Health Policy
- [www.euro.who.int/eprise/main/WHO/Progs/HMS/Home](http://www.euro.who.int/eprise/main/WHO/Progs/HMS/Home) – WHO Regional Office for Europe, HIA methods and strategies
- [www.who.int/hia](http://www.who.int/hia) – World Health Organization, HIA Integrated impact assessment

## Glossary

- **Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA)**

Strategic environmental assessment is a process to ensure that significant environmental effects arising from policies, plans and programmes are identified, assessed, mitigated, communicated to decision-makers, monitored and that opportunities for public involvement are provided.

- **Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA)**

Environmental impact assessment is an important procedure for ensuring that the likely effects of a new development in the environmental and local infrastructure are fully understood and taken into account, before the development is allowed to go ahead.

- **Transport Impact Assessment (TIA)**

This is required on significant applications to outline what additional transport impacts a particular development will generate, and or how it will integrate into existing transport patterns, with the expectation that impacts are acceptable in sustainable development terms.

## ESSEX HIA Screening Tool

### Tool kit for Health and Well- being

#### HOW TO USE THE TOOLKIT

Use the following list of prompts to check if the policy, project or programme has a potential impact and tick the relevant column, stating whether you think the impact is High, Medium or Low, then proceed through the different stages. You will need to record the outcome of your screening. There may be follow up actions and the report may be subsequently modified.

<b>Developer:</b>	
<b>Date of Screening:</b>	
<b>Site:</b>	

**STEP 1: What are the potential impacts of the report on the following determinants of health?**

Determinant of Health	Potential				Comments	Recommendations
	Positive	No impact	Negative	Not sure		
<b>Environmental conditions</b>						
External air quality, air pollution						
Air quality in buildings						
Water quality and pollution						
Clean City & recycling						
The Built Environment & open space						
Energy consumption						
Public transport infrastructure						
Noise						
Soil quality and pollution						
Smell / Odour						
Vibration						
Hazards (e.g. radiation)						
Natural Habitats						
Biodiversity						
Green spaces and parks						
Civic areas						
Use / consumption of natural resources						
Solid waste management						
<b>General Socio-economic and cultural conditions</b>						
Poverty						
Community safety						
Housing conditions						
Level of crime and disorder						
Fear of crime and disorder						
Level of anti social behaviour						
Fear of anti social behaviour						
Discrimination						
Fear of discrimination						
Creation of wealth						
Distribution of wealth						
Retention of wealth in local area / economy						
Business activity						
Job creation						
Employment						
Education						
Training and skills development						
Work environment						
Leisure						
Accidents						
Agriculture & food production						
Traffic congestion						
<b>Social and Community Network</b>						
Social exclusion						
Community development						
Health services						
Social services						
Social Contact						
Social support						
Neighbourlessness						
Participation in the community						
Membership of community groups						
Reputation of community / area						
Participation in public affairs						
Public safety measures						

Determinant of Health	Potential				Comment	Recommendations
	Positive	No Impact	Negative	Not sure		
Lifestyle						
Diet						
Physical activity						
Smoking						
Alcohol						
Sexual behaviour						
Drugs						
Other						

**STEP 2: What populations are affected by the policy?**

*Tick the appropriate column and indicate whether it affects Some (S) or All (A)*

Population Groups	Potential Impact				Comments	Reccomendations
	Positive	No Impact	Negative	Not Sure		
Residents						
Non residents – workers						
Non-residents – visitors						
Black and minority ethnic groups						
People with disability						
Children						
Women						
Older People						
Other vulnerable groups e.g. people with mental health problems; homeless people; refugees and asylum seekers, gay and lesbian groups (detail) .....						

**STEP 3: How are you addressing the positive or negative impacts?**

*If you have identified a negative impact for any section, describe what impacts are anticipated and what actions will be taken to minimise the impact on these groups.*

Determinants of Health	Anticipated Impacts	Suggestions of Actions to be taken to reduce impact
Population groups	Anticipated Impacts	Suggestions of actions to be taken to reduce impact