

## Report of Chief Planning Officer

### Report to Joint Plans Panel

**Date: 11<sup>th</sup> July 2019**

### **Subject: Planning and Design for Health and Well-Being**

|                                                                                 |                                                                     |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Are specific electoral wards affected?                                          | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No |
| If yes, name(s) of ward(s): All                                                 |                                                                     |
| Has consultation been carried out?                                              | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No |
| Are there implications for equality and diversity and cohesion and integration? | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No |
| Will the decision be open for call-in?                                          | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No |
| Does the report contain confidential or exempt information?                     | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No |
| If relevant, access to information procedure rule number:                       |                                                                     |
| Appendix number:                                                                |                                                                     |

## Summary

The City Council's Planning and Design for Health and Wellbeing group was set up in 2017. The purpose of this is to further establish cross cutting working across services (including Public Health, Active Leeds, Planning, Highways and Parks & Countryside) to build on the work of Leeds' 2014 Public Health report. Its aim is to achieve the best possible outcomes for Leeds' communities, where active travel and outdoor activity is an easy choice and to raise awareness and identify practical steps to achieve benefits and added value between good design in planning for health and wellbeing. Within this overall context, the focus of this report is to set out the work undertaken to date and to identify next steps.

## 1. Main issues

The City Council will review the implementation of existing policy and identify areas of best practice, to ensure that improving Health and Wellbeing (linked also to the Climate Emergency) is delivered as a priority and that the Core Strategy and associated Supplementary Planning Documents and Guidance notes are fit for purpose. There is an urgency to do this work now, with particular reference to the Sustainable Energy and Air Quality's lead on the climate emergency and the targets Leeds has set itself. The relationship between climate change and health and wellbeing are integral and it's important therefore to take a joined up approach through planning policy and design solutions. In addition to the delivery and monitoring of existing policies, the future Local Plan review also provides an opportunity to take a longer term view and to strengthen policy interventions.

## **2. Best Council Plan Implications** (click [here](#) for the latest version of the Best Council Plan)

The Leeds Local Plan and supplementary planning documents/ guidance, play a key strategic role in taking forward the spatial and land use elements of the Vision for Leeds and the aspiration to be the 'the Best City in the UK'. Related to this overarching approach and in addressing a range of social, environmental and economic objectives for planning and design for Health and well being, these Plans seek to implement key City Council priorities. These include the Best Council Plan (in particular priorities relating to 'Health and Well-Being; Inclusive Growth, Sustainable Infrastructure, Child Friendly Leeds, Age Friendly Leeds, Housing and Safe and Strong Communities'.

In addition there are clear alignments to Leeds Inclusive Growth Strategy and Leeds Health and Wellbeing Strategy and the recently announced Leeds commitment to the Climate Emergency

## **3. Resource Implications**

Health and Well-being has strategic implications across all directorates. Joint partnership working allows shared knowledge and staff resources. Additional, specialised staff resource may be required to fully embed Public Health engagement into the Planning Application process. External funding sources could be sought to assist in exploring exemplar projects through case studies for example Beckhill and Lincoln Green (looking at theoretical indicative concept layouts and the integration of the Health and Well –being principles.)

### **Recommendations:**

- i) to note the contents of this report and the work of the Planning and Design for Health and Wellbeing (PDHW) group and
- ii) endorse next steps

## **1. Purpose of this report**

- 1.1 This paper sets out the context and background of Planning and Design for Health and Wellbeing (PDHW); the establishment of a cross Directorate officer working group involving colleagues in Planning, Design, Highways, Public Health, Active Leeds and Parks and Countryside; the work that this group has undertaken to date and future actions.

## **2. Background information**

- 2.1 Leeds' 2014 [Director of Public Health report](#) detailed ways that Leeds could plan a healthy city around housing growth. Further, the principles of health & wellbeing are embedded into Leeds' Health and Wellbeing Strategy (2016-2021) alongside the Best Council Plan (2018/19-2020/21) and Leeds Growth Strategy (2018-2023). There are also clear links between a healthy city and the City's commitment to the Climate Change emergency.
- 3. The City Council's Planning and Design for Health and Wellbeing group was set up in 2017. The purpose of this is to further establish cross cutting working across

services (including Public Health, Active Leeds, Planning, Highways and Parks & Countryside) to build on the work of Leeds' 2014 Public Health report. Its aim is to achieve the best possible outcomes for Leeds' communities, where active travel and outdoor activity is an easy choice and to raise awareness and identify practical steps to achieve benefits and added value between good design in planning for health and wellbeing. Main issues

- 3.1 The quality and form of the built environment has a major impact on public health and wellbeing, *'The characteristics of the environment where we live influence our lifestyles and daily experiences, contributing significantly to our health and wellbeing. Today, compared to 70 years ago, the disease burden is increasingly associated with lifestyle... In short, town planning, transport planning and house building have inadvertently contributed to the lifestyle associated diseases that place an unacceptable burden on both individuals and the NHS.'* **Healthy by Design, NHS England, 2018**
- 3.2 It is widely acknowledged that using education to improve health through changes in behaviour has had limited success, and indeed has contributed to health inequalities. It is now known that a 'whole systems approach' is needed. The Healthy Places programme was set up in 2013 by Public Health England to work with planning, housing and transport bodies in recognition that homes and neighbourhoods have a big impact on our health and wellbeing.
- 3.3 The relationship between health and planning has been entrenched since the 'Housing and Town Planning Act of 1909' (and subsequent re-writes) when urban planning was being advanced to mitigate the consequences of the industrial age to provide healthy living spaces and environments.
- 3.4 This is a timely reminder of the purpose of the planning system (National Planning Policy Framework NPPF2) which is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development. The NPPF sets out three objectives that broadly contribute to the wider factors that influence health and wellbeing:
  - a) An economic objective to help build a strong, responsive and competitive economy, by ensuring that sufficient land of the right types is available in the right places and at the right time to support growth, innovation and improved productivity; and by identifying and coordinating the provision of infrastructure;
  - b) a social objective – to support strong, vibrant and healthy communities, by ensuring that a sufficient number and range of homes can be provided to meet the needs of present and future generations; and by fostering a well-designed and safe built environment, with accessible services and open spaces that reflect current and future needs and support communities' health, social and cultural well-being; and
  - c) an environmental objective – to contribute to protecting and enhancing our natural, built and historic environment; including making effective use of land, helping to improve biodiversity, using natural resources prudently, minimising waste and pollution, and mitigating and adapting to climate change, including moving to a low carbon economy.
- 3.5 Furthermore, the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) specifically sets out that planning policies and decisions should aim to achieve healthy, inclusive and safe places which promote social interaction, safe and accessible spaces and promote healthy lifestyles. It also acknowledges that planning policies and decisions

play a key role in the provision of social, recreational and cultural services that meet community needs and support the delivery of local strategies to improve health, social and cultural well-being for all sections of the community.

- 3.6 All development plans produced in Leeds, as part of the Local Plan, have sought to provide a framework for sustainable and healthy communities, having regard to quality of life and to protect and enhance the environment. . This is achieved through a strategic and spatial approach and a suite of policies relating to the overall scale and distribution of development, location, layout and fabric of places. Primarily, (through the Core Strategy (CS)) the greatest levels of development are directed to the existing main urban area (including the City Centre) and major settlements to avoid travel by private car, as sustainable locations.
- 3.7 Further, all development proposals are subject to a range of specific detailed policies<sup>1</sup> to achieve a layout, design and fabric efficiency which both mitigates climate change and addresses impacts, such as flooding but has clear physiological and psychological benefits on health and well-being. These plans are underpinned by comprehensive sustainability appraisals, which take into account the social and environmental consequences and strengthens policies accordingly. These have been tested extensively through a public examination process, based on evidence.
- 3.8 To that end, planning for health and well-being is embedded within Leeds as part of an integrated approach. But it is important to plan, monitor and review policies to see if they are working most effectively and respond to new pressures. An example of this is the Core Strategy Selective Review (CSSR) which has recently targeted planning policies on sustainable design & construction through minimum space and accessibly housing standards and electric vehicle charging points.
- 3.9 In addition to the Core Strategy, the Planning Service (Environment Design Group) have led on the Supplementary Planning Guidance of 'Neighbourhoods for Living' which provides guidance to developers for delivering quality housing designs and this is supplemented by Sustainable Design and Construction' and 'Accessible Leeds' alongside Highways guidance in 'Street Design'. These documents all provide recognised and useful design guidance on how development should be laid out alongside the provision of pedestrian and cycle facilities, high quality public realm and buildings and provision of green spaces and planting.
- 3.10 The above documents (developed since 2003) provide an important base line to address Health and Well-being issues through Planning. It is fundamentally important also to ensure that policy effectiveness with regard to good design and its contribution to overall health and well-being benefits, is subject to on-going monitoring and review. This is recognised by the Policy and Plans work programme recently agreed by Development Plans Panel (15<sup>th</sup> May 2019) which includes a review of the Local Plan.

Whilst the existing suite of Local Plan policies provide a comprehensive framework from which to progress, the future Local Plan Review provides an opportunity to review policies in relation to climate change policies and their implications for health and wellbeing.

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<sup>1</sup> in the Core Strategy (2014), the Core Strategy Selective Review (pending 2019), the Site Allocations Plan (pending 2019), Aire Valley Leeds Area Action Plan (2017) and supplementary guidance / design guidance

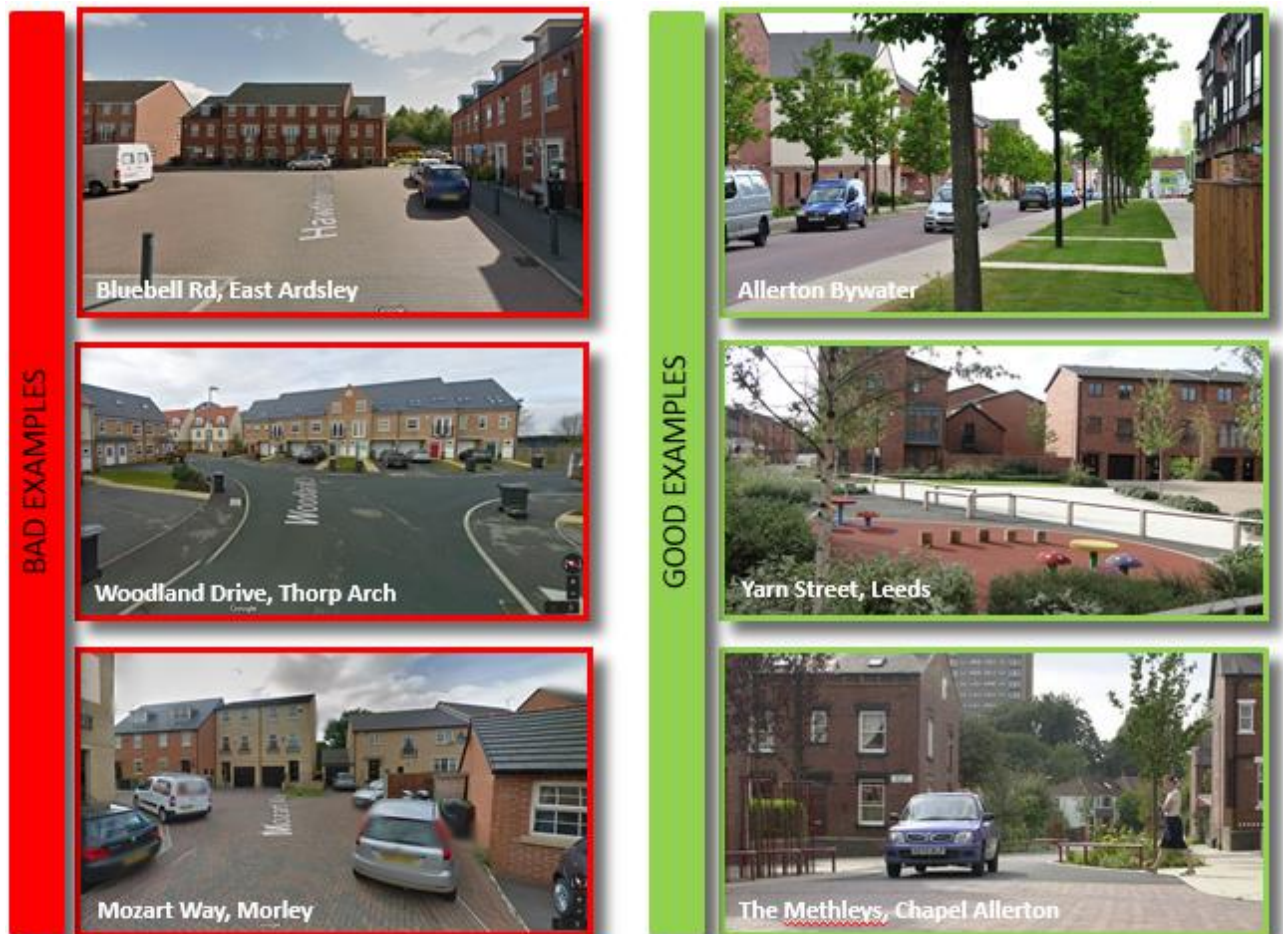
- 3.11 There are a number of ways to review policy, including:
- through more focussed implementation of existing planning policy
  - consistent monitoring of built development to better understand what works
  - influence of other service areas, agencies and investors
  - through a wider Local Plan review, which can provide more ambitious statutory policies.
- 3.12 The wealth of Design Guidance/SPD's that Development Management colleagues are asked to consider is considerable. Highways have taken the lead by condensing 4 Highway documents into one Street Design Guide (currently being finalised for approval). There is a similar intention that the key design guidance in Neighbourhoods for Living and the Sustainable Design and Construction SPD be amalgamated, with 'Health and Wellbeing' with 'Climate Emergency' incorporated.

Work to date by the PDHW group

- 3.13 The PDHW group's first aim was to establish key principles that are underpinned in national and local planning policy and meet strategic priorities for the city, which can be signed up to by all partners at a senior level:
- **A**ctive neighbourhoods – promoting cycling and walking, reducing car usage and improving children's opportunities for independent mobility.
  - **B**etter air quality and green space – using green and blue infrastructure to provide opportunities for outdoor recreation and promote mental wellbeing.
  - **C**ohesive communities – encouraging co-located services and high quality neighbourhood spaces to encourage social interaction and combat isolation.

A graphic illustrating these key principles and how they align with Council strategy is included in the background document (section 7) below. This is also available online (<https://www.leeds.gov.uk/docs/Planning%20Design%20for%20Health%20and%20Wellbeing.pdf>)

- 3.14 The aim of this project is not to introduce additional 'burdens' but to continue to mainstream best practice and collaboration to deliver the existing guidance and to focus on the key principles. By embedding this understanding inside and outside the Council, LCC hopes to develop a common language of 'healthy planning' so that designs consider the principles at the very earliest stage of a development project.
- 3.15 Illustrated below are some examples of bad practice and good practice, particularly focusing on the public realm outside residential properties. The bad examples do not conflict with planning policy but the spaces created do not entice people to actively play or travel by alternative means than the private vehicle. Officers will present some other examples at the meeting.



3.16 To date, the PDHW group has:

- Responded to the TCPA Sponsored Raynsford Review to influence national planning policy development
- Gained Planning Board (Planning & Sustainable Development) support for the key principles
- Presented to and received endorsement from Leeds' Health and Wellbeing Board
- Presented a Masterclass to 50 Council staff representing all directorates; with further masterclasses to be arranged
- Embedded the key principles within the emerging Neighbourhood Plans and Design Toolkit
- Had the project included as a key priority in LCC's Healthy Weight Declaration
- Published a [webpage](#) which can be accessed from the [Planning Guidance](#) section of our website including a summary of the group and the key principles
- Delivered a workshop attended by 9 major housing developers, with a presentation by a group of young people from Young Ambassadors, to explore healthy neighbourhoods
- Included the key principles in the East of Otley development brief

3.17 The PDHW group are continuing to work on the following actions:

- Continuing to facilitate best practice across the Council, assisted by Development Management colleagues to integrate best practice into advice to developers
- Progressing theoretical case studies to facilitate best practice (Lincoln Green Priority Neighbourhood – strategic; and Beckhill LCC Regeneration - site specific)
- Contributing to key changes in the wording of the emerging Leeds Street Design Guide SPD
- Taking a lead from Highways and combining 3 placemaking/sustainability documents into one
- Strengthening links to Highways and Transport teams
- Delivering a workshop for the locality partners team
- Improving the web-based resources and promoting them more widely
- Embedding the principles in further Site Allocation development briefs
- Investigating the possibility of exemplar projects by working with developers more closely, such as East of Otley, East Leeds Extension, Lincoln Green and Beckhill (please note: this is a theoretical reinterpreting of an indicative layout to test the principles, whilst ensuring that the layout is not contrary to the Street Design Guide)
- Assisting with the development of a Design Code for East Leeds Extension (5,000 houses) to embed the PDHW principles

3.18 Further ahead, the PDHW group aim to work with Universities to research the impact of the above work, building an evidence base for further projects, with the potential of working with other authorities in the region.

3.19 The key message is that LCC should improve on the implementation of existing policy and aiming towards doing things differently if Leeds is to have a significant impact on improving Health and Wellbeing (linked also to the Climate Emergency) and ensure that the Core Strategy Policies and Natural Resources and Waste Policies are fit for purpose. There is an urgency to this work now, with particular reference to the Sustainable Energy and Air Quality's lead on the climate emergency and the targets Leeds has set itself. The only way to achieve this is for a total change in approach and by putting Health and Wellbeing at the forefront of all planning policy and design. This needs to be undertaken through Local Plan review of Policies.

3.20 The group's longer term ambition is to work with partners to more fully integrate and implement the principles on key sites, including new housing developments, and gather evidence about their impacts. It is therefore important that these issues continue to be raised at a very early stage in the development process. Leeds has very comprehensive design policies and guidance available to developers, but this has not always resulted in neighbourhoods that encourage outdoor activity, and there are therefore opportunities for improvement. Although Leeds has some exemplar development sites (Allerton Bywater Millennium Village, Citu's Climate Innovation District and the emerging Kirkstall Forge).

3.21 Many new developments can be dominated by traffic and parking and lack features (such as small front gardens, street trees, safe walking 'loops' and informal areas for seating and play) that bring physical and mental health benefits. Including such

features leads to many desirable outcomes such as cleaner air, reduction in carbon emissions, reduction in social isolation, better community cohesion and enhanced financial value (well evidenced). Consequently, applying the good design principles outlined in this report can transform the form and quality of development and its integration within existing and established communities.

3.22 In order to embed health and wellbeing into planning policy and decisions, Public Health are also proposing to:

- Input into reviews of plans and policy to ensure that all aspects of health and wellbeing are considered at an early stage.
- Investigate utilising a 'Health and Wellbeing Checklist' (note: ongoing discussions on this with colleagues in DM regarding validation and staff resource implications) in pre-application discussions with developers.
- Submission of applications to be accompanied by brief written explanation around the positive and negative health and wellbeing impacts, covering the range of themes/topics set out in the 'checklist'
- Public Health, Planning and partners to develop criteria to help decide which planning applications will be reviewed from a Public Health perspective so that planning colleagues can receive appropriate advice/recommendations

#### Next Steps

3.23 This report is intended to provide an initial overview of the responsibilities, contribution to date and future work programme of the PDHW group and wider planning service as regards implementation and policy review. It sets out that the City Council already has a number of planning policies in place, which embed health and well-being principles. However, it recognises the need to investigate the implementation of these and to update and review the Local Plan to take account of both the revised climate change context and emphasis on health and well-being and seek to identify where more ambitious policies may be needed.

3.24 Review the Neighbourhoods for Living and Sustainable Construction Design Supplementary Planning Documents/ Guidance.

## **4. Corporate considerations**

### **4.1 Consultation and engagement**

4.1.1 Discussion has taken place at Planning Services Leadership Team (PSLT), Leeds Chamber of Commerce. Further consultation will take place with the Executive Member for Climate Change, Transport and Sustainable Development, Ward Members and other local stakeholders as further details are developed

### **4.2 Equality and diversity / cohesion and integration**

4.2.1 Due regard has been given to Equality, Diversity, Cohesion and Integration issues. This has included the completion of EDCI Screening. As the recommendations are to review and update in the context of existing principles and the Council's role in design and planning policy implementation, it is assessed that at this stage there are no EDCI implications but this will be kept under review through the next stages of work. A key focus of the declaration of the Climate Change Emergency and the

principles of sustainable development is to ensure that there is intergeneration equity in terms of environmental conditions and quality of life.

### **4.3 Council policies and the Best Council Plan**

- 4.3.1 The adopted Core Strategy, UDPR 2006 saved policies and the highly advanced SAP and Core Strategy Selective Review alongside a number of supplementary planning and design documents/guidance play a key strategic role in taking forward the spatial and land use elements of Leeds Best Council Plan. Related to this overarching approach and in addressing a range of social, environmental and economic objectives, these Plans seek to support delivery of our ambition to be a strong economy and a compassionate city. In particular, they support the Best Council Plan 2019/20 – 2020/21 priorities on Sustainable Infrastructure, Inclusive Growth, Health and Wellbeing and Safe, Strong Communities.

#### Climate Emergency

- 4.3.2 A Climate Change Emergency was declared by the City Council on 27th March 2019. It is therefore critical that the statutory plan-making process and the implementation of those plans contributes to the sustainable development of the District and the ability to mitigate and adapt to the consequences of climate change (including the need for carbon reduction to meet agreed targets).
- 4.3.3 Taken as a whole, the Leeds Local Plan (and Supplementary Planning and Design Documents and Guidance), including the adopted Natural Resources and Waste Plan, Core Strategy, Aire Valley Leeds Area Action Plan,, and the Core Strategy Selective Review and the Site Allocations Plan (both at an advanced stage), have a positive impact on reducing carbon emissions and protecting and enhancing biodiversity which all has health and well-being benefits. A consequence of not having these plans in place and ensuring they are delivered is poorly planned, un-co-ordinated and adhoc development proposals, being determined on their merits outside an integrated planning framework.
- 4.3.4 A fundamental purpose of a plan-led approach, is to plan the spatial and inclusive growth of the District, with regard to the longer term strategic imperatives of Sustainable and Healthy Development and Climate Change. Consequently, the integration of land use allocations and transport planning, the provision of renewable energy and sustainable infrastructure for new development, the protection and enhancement of green infrastructure and the management of waste flows and the consumption of natural resources, are integral to the policy framework for influencing investment decisions and the determination of planning applications.
- 4.3.5 Significantly also, the Core Strategy and supplementary planning guidance aims to create and integrate improved green space and landscaping; serving to provide important local amenity and recreation (having health and wellbeing benefits) but will also from part of a wider green infrastructure and habitats network (biodiversity benefits, tree protection/planting), which in turn contributes mitigating the effects of climate change through urban cooling, flood storage, sustainable drainage and reducing greenhouse gases with associated physiological and psychological health benefits.

- 4.3.6 In addition all development needs to consider building regulations and energy efficiency standards and tighter water consumption standards alongside provision of electric vehicle charging points and the potential to design in renewable energy generation, as set out in Local Plan policy and ensure that development is consistent with policy and necessary responses to climate change issues and related health and well-being principles are addressed.

#### **4.4 Resources, procurement and value for money**

Health and Well-being has strategic implications across all directorates. Joint partnership working allows shared knowledge and staff resources. Additional, specialised staff resource may be required to fully embed Public Health engagement into the Planning Application process. External funding sources could be sought to assist in exploring exemplar projects through case studies for example Beckhill and Lincoln Green (looking at theoretical indicative concept layouts and the integration of the Health and Well-Being principles).

#### **4.5 Legal implications, access to information, and call-in**

- 4.5.1 No legal implications at the present time. Any review of policy will be in accordance and compliance with the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 and the Town and Country Planning (Local Plans) Regulations 2012 (as amended).

#### **4.6 Risk management**

- 4.6.1 None.

### **5. Conclusions**

- 5.1 This report has outlined the initial work and next steps in delivering improvements to Health and well-being. A focus of this work has been via the Planning and Design for Health and Well-Being (PDHW) group. A series of future actions have been identified to investigate the implementation of existing policies and to update and review the Local Plan (and where appropriate Supplementary Documents) to take account of both the revised climate change context and health and well-being priorities and seek to identify where more ambitious and deliverable policies where needed. From a Development Management perspective there are opportunities to work with Public Health, to identify opportunities at an early stage to reflect these priorities as part of the planning application process.

### **6. Recommendations:**

- i) To note the contents of this report and the work of the Planning and Design for Health and Wellbeing (PDHW) group and
- 6.1 ii) Endorse next steps

### **7. Background documents<sup>2</sup>**

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<sup>2</sup> The background documents listed in this section are available to download from the council's website, unless they contain confidential or exempt information. The list of background documents does not include published works.

- 7.1 The ABC Planning and Design for Health and Well-being Principles is included below. A copy of this can also be found online at:

<https://www.leeds.gov.uk/docs/Planning%20Design%20for%20Health%20and%20Wellbeing.pdf>

## Planning and Design for Health and Wellbeing

The key principles of planning and design for health and wellbeing have been brought together on a page. These principles are underpinned by national and local planning policy, meet the strategic priorities for the city and can be signed up to by all partners.

### Key Principles

- Active neighbourhoods** – promoting cycling and walking, reducing car usage and improving children's opportunities for independent mobility.  
*The increasing volume and speed of traffic over the last few decades have been shown to impact negatively on healthy outdoor activity. Attractive, safe streets and networks lead to more children's informal Wplay and active travel for all ages and abilities, and can add to the financial value of development.*
- Better air quality and green space** – using green and blue infrastructure to provide opportunities for outdoor recreation and promote mental wellbeing.  
*New development should provide and link to existing green and blue infrastructure wherever possible and should provide new natural features including green roofs, hedges, street trees and gardens. Environmental sustainability is integrally linked.*
- Cohesive communities** – encouraging co-located services and high quality neighbourhood spaces to encourage social interaction and combat isolation.  
*A well-overlooked street or space that provides places for chance encounters or to sit and chat is more likely to lead to more neighbour friendships, helping those from different backgrounds get to know each other and feel safe. Facilities and workplaces should be easy to reach, and communities helped to play an active part in managing their area.*

