

Document type:	Island Planning Strategy (Reg 19 Stage)
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Date of comments:	14/08/2024
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Isle of Wight Council Public Health response

Isle of Wight Council Public Health Team welcome the opportunity to respond to the Island Planning Strategy. The Public Health Team is grateful to see that many of their comments made at Regulation 18 Consultation have been considered and included within the policy framework. Public Health have now reviewed the latest version of the plan at Reg 19 Consultation and would make further comments below.

We know instinctively that the places where we live, work and play have an affect our health and wellbeing and there is powerful evidence and research to support this. However, turning this understanding into practical planning actions that will help the Island create healthy environments requires a strong health focused policy approach. If we can create places in which it is easy to have a healthy lifestyle, we will help prevent illness, improve people's health and create planning outcomes that proactively assist in improving people's quality of life.

Public Health Links

We are encouraged to see that health forms a golden thread throughout the plan and is considered in many of the policies. Reference is made to the Health and Wellbeing Strategy, although we suggest this needs to be updated to the current Strategy document (2022-2027): Healthy Places for Healthy People to lead Healthy Lives.

We would welcome reference being made to the Public Health Strategy, currently being developed and due to be launched in 2025. Reference and evidence is also made with the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA) in relation to demographics and people, but Healthy Places links are not yet clear. It is suggested that this would be an important place focused link to make within the Plan. [JSNA Healthy Places \(iow.gov.uk\)](https://www.iow.gov.uk/jsna/healthy-places)

Response regarding Section 3: How the Island Planning Strategy reflects corporate priorities

CC1: Climate change. This policy clearly makes the link to health and wellbeing and we welcome this inclusion. There are key impacts on public health from climate change and in mitigating these impacts the co-benefits to health are well established. These impacts tend to fall upon those communities in greatest need and we would support the aims of this policy and encourage any strengthening of its wording through the Regulation 19 stage. [How does climate change threaten our health? From flooding to wildfires – UK Health Security Agency \(blog.gov.uk\)](https://www.blog.gov.uk/2023/07/14/how-does-climate-change-threaten-our-health-from-flooding-to-wildfires-uk-health-security-agency/)

We would highlight the evidence set out within the UK Climate Change Risk Assessment (CCRA3) which although national has particular relevance to the Island. This report assesses 61 risks and opportunities from climate change to England,

including to business, infrastructure, housing, the natural environment, our health and risks from the impacts of climate change. [Summary for England \(CCRA3-IA\) - UK Climate Risk](#)

Point 3.42. This section summarises the 6 key areas: Environment, Community, Growth, Housing, Economy and Transport. We would suggest that links to health being clearly articulated within these paragraphs, particularly in sections on Environment, Housing and Transport where it is currently not mentioned.

Response regarding Section 4: Environment

General Comment: Public Health acknowledges the Plans ambition around environment but would welcome additional references in this policy which enhance key links to climate and health. [Health and climate change: complex problems with co-benefits - The Health Foundation](#)

EV5: Trees, woodlands and hedgerows: We would welcome inclusion in this policy underpinning the climate resilience and health benefits this policy brings. Such environments will help mitigate climate impacts, which in turn reduces the negative impacts on the population's physical health. The benefit of such environments will also positively impact on people's mental wellbeing.

EV6: Protecting and providing green and open spaces. We would welcome some additional wording within this policy to reference space that is inclusive, safe, accessible and designed for all ages (in particular older children and younger adults) and meets the needs of all people in the community.

EV7: Local green spaces: Public Health would like to see clarification around loss of green space and as such would seek clarification on what is meant by 'special circumstances'. If a green space is lost, it should ideally be replaced with an improved green space which benefits the community. This is of particular importance within areas where the JSNA or local needs indicate there is a deficiency of accessible quality green space. This could also benefit in having some recognition and specific focus on the more deprived LSOA's.

Response regarding Section 5: Community

General comment. One of the key areas we outlined in the previous response was that around food and food insecurity but note that this hasn't yet become a policy area. Considering the JSNA evidence base we would welcome some reference made to food environments with this section. We would reiterate that good quality retail options and possible limits on hot food takeaways, this is important especially for more deprived LSOA's. The Public Health Team recognises that this is a more complex policy area so there may be other food environment opportunities to seek some consideration around the use of allotments, allocation for food hubs, growing spaces and possibly community orchards as part of some developments. [enabling-healthy-placemaking.pdf \(rtpi.org.uk\)](#)

C1: High quality design for new development. We welcome the inclusion of health promotion in this policy. We would strongly suggest that measures are included to

assist in the effective monitoring of the delivery of healthy places. The use of frameworks such as Building for Healthy Life (BHL) within policies creates an iterative tool for developers and local authorities to achieve proactive healthy urbanism approaches. In alignment with the transport policy, we feel that links or reference to the Healthy Streets approach offers a street design approach and is referenced in the current IOW draft LTP4. Both BHL and the 10 Healthy Street indicators are a useful monitoring tool and inclusion of this provides an alignment with other Isle of Wight Council strategies, particularly transport. [What is Healthy Streets? — Healthy Streets](#)

We also support the policy as it makes clear reference to environment, 20 minute neighbourhoods, SuDs, minimising pollution and improving air quality. This policy would be strengthened with the consideration of the benefits of designing site layouts and buildings for climate change and climate resilience.

C2: Improving our public realm. It would be welcomed if reference is made to the Healthy Streets approach as referred to in our comment in C1. Healthy Streets contributes to key human health-focused improvement of the public realm.

C3: Improving our health and wellbeing. We welcome all links to health within this policy that support the needs of a diverse and ageing community. We are encouraged to see reference to the IW JSNA .

Public Health supports Health Impact Assessments as part of new development and used proportionately to the application. Thresholds set around major applications and those for fast food outlets are similar to those considered by other authorities. The use of HIAs will allow a more comprehensive consideration of the human health aspects of a development and appropriate mitigation of any impacts. [Health Impact Assessment in spatial planning \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](#)

C4: Health hub at St Mary's Hospital. We are encouraged to see within this policy, residential development for key workers is supported and that land is allocated for independent living provision. A masterplan for the site would be helpful in ensuring the long-term planning of a complex site delivers for climate, health, place and accessibility. We note reference is made in point 5.30 to Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) which has now evolved into the formation of the integrated Care Service (ICS).

C5: Facilitating Independent Living. As noted in our response to C4, it is welcomed that the facilitation of independent living is supported. <https://iwc.iow.gov.uk/documentlibrary/download/isle-of-wight-independent-island-living-strategy-2023-2038>

We are encouraged by the requirement of 20% of dwellings in major developments to meet Part M4(2) of the Building Regulations ensuring our communities can live in their homes for longer, which is particularly important given our ageing demographic. In light of the Islands increased ageing population it would be beneficial if policies outlined the use of standards such as Lifetime Homes and for older peoples care provision the best practice set out within the HAPPI guidance [HAPPI - Design - Topics - Resources - Housing LIN](#) [Lifetime Homes - Accessible Design - Design -](#)

[Topics - Resources - Housing LIN](#). We feel that these provide some key design focused approaches around health and ageing which are supported at a national level through the NPPF.

C15: Community led planning. Public Health reiterates the importance of Community Engagement within the Plan to give that sense of control and influence. This policy would be strengthened with more detail around this.

We encourage broad engagement throughout the planning process. This is of particular importance in the field of health and wellbeing. One of the biggest issues that disempowers communities is feeling unsafe and vulnerable. A sense of wellbeing comes from believing that there is something that communities can do to improve or shape their area and address local problems. This is particularly important when major change is planned within a local plan. It would be beneficial if this policy identified how and where local communities can be better involved through participation and engagement as part of new development proposals within the plan.

Response regarding Section 7: Housing. We support the focus on addressing housing needs, especially that of affordable housing. Affordable housing provision has been effectively identified as a key building block for health and wellbeing. This could usefully be included within the evidence and justification within the plan.
[Inequalities in housing affordability - The Health Foundation](#)

Public Health's comments around housing have been covered in previous responses within this document particularly in regard to affordable and accessible housing, healthy homes and lifetime homes to promote independent living. We would reiterate and refer to those comments again.

Response regarding Section 9: Transport

T1: Supporting sustainable transport. This policy identifies the importance of sustainable transport, highlighting walking, cycling and public transport. It could, however, be strengthened by acknowledging the positive health and climate benefits that active travel would bring to the community. We would recommend reference to [The-role-of-active-travel-in-Improving-Mental-Health.pdf \(healthyplacemaking.co.uk\)](#) in demonstrating the link between physical activity, physical and mental health.

We would welcome the incorporation of the 10 Healthy Street indicators approach within this policy to ensure alignment with the local transport plan and to underpin the priority matrix set out in Manual for Streets 1 and 2. Reference or linkage across to C1 design policy would also be useful to ensure the design of streets and space linked sensitively with those around the built form.

T2: A better connected Island. We suggest, as with policy T1, a reference is made here to the Healthy Streets concept. This will align the Isle of Wight LTP4 and the work being delivered through the greenway link project.

Summary

The Public Health Team supports the health focused policies set out within the emerging Island Planning Strategy document. Many of these policies recognise the importance of health and wellbeing, and the role Planning contributes in tackling the wider determinants of health. We would underpin that health outcomes are an important consideration in the social, economic and environmental delivery of the plan. In general, we feel that there are areas that could be enhanced, clarified and strengthened and have made the above comments to assist in that process.

We understand that we have raised some considerations and recommendations and that not all may suit the policy ambitions of the Local Authority. However, when balancing the evidence base through the JSNA and other data/research we feel this emerging Local Plan represents a positive and highly influential tool in improving the health and wellbeing opportunities for the local population of the Isle of Wight. In taking this early and proactive approach to health and wellbeing, we feel that this work will help to tackle health outcomes and inequalities throughout the local plan period.

Public Health look forward to continuing to support the implementation of this strategy.