

**13 March 2024**

**Agenda Item: 5**

## **REPORT OF THE INTERIM DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC HEALTH**

### **THE BUILDING BLOCKS OF HEALTH – AN UPDATE ON AMBITION TWO: HEALTHY AND SUSTAINABLE PLACES**

#### **Purpose of the Report**

1. To introduce the ‘Building Blocks of Health’ as an approach to framing the important issues impacting health and wellbeing for Nottinghamshire residents and to drive action on the Nottinghamshire Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy (JHWS) ambition to create healthy and sustainable places.
2. To share some of the successes in supporting delivery of the JHWS ambition to create healthy and sustainable places in 2023.
3. To request that the Health and Wellbeing Board approve the draft Healthy and Sustainable Places Framework for Action and support its further development with partners in 2024.

#### **Information**

*Building Blocks of Health as an approach to support the healthy and sustainable places ambition.*

4. The JHWS sets out the priorities for the Nottinghamshire Health and Wellbeing Board and how it plans to improve the health and wellbeing of residents and reduce health inequalities amongst our communities. Creating healthy and sustainable places, where everyone can grow, live, work and age in places that promote good health, tackle the causes of health inequalities, and address the climate crisis, is one of the four key ambitions within the JHWS.
5. The ‘Building Blocks of Health’ is an evidenced based approach from the Health Foundation, based on research and testing from FrameWorks UK, which can help to frame our communications on the JHWS ambition to create healthy and sustainable places. It allows us to tell a more powerful story about health inequalities in Nottinghamshire, which increases understanding and drives action.
6. Health is impacted by almost every aspect of life, including homes, employment, connections with friends and family and access to good nutrition and transport. The ‘Building Blocks of Health’ metaphor can help to frame these factors, it compares building a healthy society to building a sturdy building, where a thriving community needs all the right building blocks, such as jobs, housing, food, family, and friends.

7. The way important issues impacting health and wellbeing are framed can have a significant impact on understanding and support for action. The 'Building Blocks of Health' metaphor is an evidenced based approach to framing these wider determinants of health which has the potential for wide application across the Council and with system partners to support understanding and drive action to address health inequalities.
8. Public Health, supported by FrameWorks UK, will be working with partners in 2024 to develop a common understanding and a core story of the 'Building Blocks of Health' for Nottinghamshire.

*Some examples of the Building Blocks of Health in Nottinghamshire.*

9. Warm and safe housing is a key building block of health, however for too many households in Nottinghamshire this block is missing. Living in a cold home can have severe impacts on physical and mental health, exacerbating inequalities for people who are more vulnerable to health problems, including people with cardiovascular, respiratory, and mental health conditions.
10. More than 1 in 8 households in Nottinghamshire (13.6%) are estimated to experience fuel poverty meaning they cannot meet their energy needs at a reasonable cost. Some groups are more likely to experience fuel poverty, including households with children, households home to people living with disabilities, minority ethnic households, and single parent households. Fuel poverty is associated with deprivation, and in Nottinghamshire there are higher proportions of households estimated to be experiencing fuel poverty in Mansfield (16.2%), Ashfield (15.5%) and Bassetlaw (15%).
11. The Nottinghamshire Fuel Poverty Joint Strategic Needs Assessment Profile Pack further explores the role of fuel poverty as a building block of health, providing recommendations for local action and research, including the development of a Countywide housing stock database. This will help better inform the targeting of interventions and improvements.
12. Access to good nutrition is another important building block of health which for too many is missing. Affordable and healthy food is central to health and wellbeing, impacting many aspects of life and the number of years people live. Not having access to good nutrition has wide ranging impacts which can include increased risk of cardiovascular disease, obesity, poor sleep and depression, and negative impacts on child development.
13. Food insecurity, defined by the Food Standards Agency as 'having access at all times to enough food that is both sufficiently varied and culturally appropriate to sustain an active and healthy life' is increasing in Nottinghamshire and nationally. Estimates indicate that almost 1 in 5 Nottinghamshire residents (19.5%) were living in areas at higher risk of food insecurity in 2021. There is significant inequality within the County, with the proportion of residents living at risk of food insecurity being higher in Mansfield (53.1%), Bassetlaw (29.9%), and Ashfield (29.1%).
14. Reducing food insecurity is a priority within the JHWS. The vision and call to action on food and health is set out in the County's Food Charter, endorsed by the Nottinghamshire Health and Wellbeing Board in February 2022. The Nottinghamshire Food Insecurity Joint Strategic Needs Assessment Profile Pack further explores the role of food insecurity as a building block

of health, providing recommendations for further local action and research, including the development of a Nottinghamshire Sustainable Food Plan. This will build on the ambitions of the Nottinghamshire Food Charter and set out the steps required for Nottinghamshire to become a healthy and sustainable food county.

15. Work on the food insecurity agenda in Nottinghamshire is informed and supported by the countywide Sustainable Food Network and district-based partnerships which bring together local authorities, social eating and food growing networks, and national organisations such as Feeding Britain with the NHS, voluntary and community sector, and other stakeholders such as academics, food producers and businesses. The local networks have been a valuable source to engage with communities, understand food insecurity issues for residents and local infrastructure pressures and risks.

#### *Successes in delivery against Ambition Two in 2023.*

16. **Appendix A** provides a snapshot of some of the successes achieved in delivery of Ambition Two in 2023, recognising that significant broader important work is happening across Nottinghamshire. Three of the successes highlighted in further detail in this report are the development and evaluation of the Nottinghamshire Spatial Planning for Health Framework, the continued delivery of the Healthy Housing Service, and delivery of food redistribution grants to voluntary and community sector partners.

#### *Evaluation of the Nottinghamshire Spatial Planning for Health Framework.*

17. The Nottinghamshire Spatial Planning for Health Framework (SPFHF) aims to create a built environment which improves health and wellbeing, providing guidance to support the assessment and addressing of health and wellbeing impacts of proposals and plans. The tool includes a rapid health impact assessment matrix, which focuses on the built environment and issues directly or indirectly influenced by planning decisions. As a rapid assessment tool, its purpose is to quickly ensure that the health impacts of a development proposal are identified, and appropriate action taken to address negative impacts and maximise benefits.
18. In 2023 Nottinghamshire County Councils' Planning Policy Team and Public Health Team commissioned an evaluation of how the Nottinghamshire SPFHF is used by local authority officers and external partners, its effectiveness, and how the SPFHF and the Rapid Health Impact Assessment Matrix have become embedded within public and private sector practices, and what their impact has been.
19. While the evaluation found that the SPFHF and Health Impact Assessment Matrix were being effectively used in some parts of Nottinghamshire, recommendations are made to simplify the SPFHF and to continue the Council's strategic leadership in enabling its use by partners. There is an ongoing need for engaging, training, sharing of experience, and overall raising awareness of the interaction between spatial planning and health and wellbeing. It remains crucially important for building a more sustainable, inclusive, safe, and healthy environment for communities across Nottinghamshire, now and in the future. The SPFHF will be further developed in 2024 in line with the recommendations of the evaluation.

#### *Continued delivery of the Healthy Housing Service.*

20. The Healthy Housing Service, delivered by the Nottingham Energy Partnership, provides valuable support via a one stop Healthy Housing referral system to support residents in Nottinghamshire to access energy grants, appropriate advice, and support in accessing preventative adaptations. The Service prioritises support to groups at higher risk of fuel poverty and cold related illnesses.
21. The service aims to reduce fuel poverty and improve health and wellbeing by working in partnership with a range of public, private, and voluntary sector organisations to ensure the maximum impact of insulation and heating improvements, energy efficiency measures, and preventative adaptations. The Service provides training to health and social care staff and collaborates with strategic partners to ensure fuel poverty is incorporated into local policy and initiatives.
22. During 2022/2023 the service provided help and advice to almost 500 people from groups at higher risk, with improvements to over 400 homes following referrals by the service. Following a review of the Healthy Housing Service in 2023, funding has been approved to continue to the service until 2026.

*Food redistribution grants to voluntary and community sector partners.*

23. During 2023/2024 the first round of the County Council's food redistribution grant scheme for voluntary and community sector organisations to utilise surplus from the food sector for home preparation and cooking was delivered.
24. Recognising that the Local Communities Fund (LCF) is the County Council's key vehicle for delivering grant funding to the voluntary and community sector, colleagues from the Place department and Public Health team used this mechanism to invite grant applications for the LCF Food Redistribution Fund.
25. Specific criteria included: meeting the definition of a food redistribution scheme (utilises surplus from the food sector, requires payment and must be for home preparation and cooking); increasing access to affordable, nutritious food for families and individuals experiencing food insecurity; showing how they will positively impact environmental sustainability by decreasing food waste, and showing evidence of population need and addressing health inequalities.
26. The first funding round opened in February 2023, inviting voluntary and community organisations to apply for up to £10,000. Fourteen applications have been funded in this first round. Learning from this first round will inform delivery of two further rounds of grant funding planned in 2024/25 and 2025/26.

*Developing a Healthy and Sustainable Places Framework for Action for Nottinghamshire.*

27. **Appendix B** outlines a draft Healthy and Sustainable Places Framework for Action to drive collaborative action to support further delivery of Ambition Two. The Framework proposes key strategic objectives, aligned with the 'Building Blocks of Health' approach, and key cross cutting strategic enablers. The Framework also highlights some of the key actions to support delivery during 2024. Key actions will initially include the development of the Food Plan and progressing the Building Blocks of Health approach.

28. A strategic plan with phased delivery will be developed with partners during 2024, identifying timescales and shared deliverables, which will form the basis of future reporting to the Health and Wellbeing Board.
29. In the next 12 months the draft Framework for Action will be further developed with partners to agree clear statements and high impact areas to guide system partners to deliver meaningful progress across all areas of the healthy and sustainable places ambition.
30. The Framework for Action will support delivery of several ambitions of the Nottinghamshire Plan, including protecting the environment and reducing our carbon footprint, and helping our people live healthier and more independent lives. Delivery of the Framework also supports the County Council's Prevention and Early Help approach and delivery of the Corporate Environment Strategy Action Plan.
31. Key areas of work within the Framework for Action, primarily on housing and climate, will align with planning for the East Midlands Combined County Authority.

*Developing community-centred approaches to creating healthy and sustainable places.*

32. There is an increasing body of evidence that community-centred approaches can have positive effects on health and wellbeing and can help to reduce inequalities. Community-centred approaches are ways of working at a place level which focus on building on community assets which can help in addressing health inequalities by targeting areas most in need, and support delivery of the healthy and sustainable places ambition.
33. One area of work within the Framework for Action will be the delivery and evaluation of the Investing in Communities through Place Based Partnership programme. This programme of work aims to strengthen the ability of the Nottinghamshire Integrated Care System (ICS) Place Based Partnerships (PBPs) to deliver on the healthy and sustainable places ambition from 2023/24 to 2025/26.
34. The programme will increase the provision of community development worker capacity within the community and voluntary sector and increase support to existing and new community groups, with a focus on identified priority communities. It will provide opportunities for co-production, supporting residents to have a voice and a role in shaping health and wellbeing interventions within their communities. Developing resilient communities is a key project within the Nottinghamshire County Council's prevention transformation programme. This programme will help to deliver on the Council's continued commitment to prevention and early help.
35. Public Health have supported each of the PBPs (South Notts, Mid Notts and Bassetlaw) in developing local proposals and the PBPs have identified local Community Voluntary Services (CVSs) alongside Citizens Advice in Mid Notts, as key delivery partners. Learning from existing work with partners across the PBPs has highlighted the importance of supporting community-level interventions through the voluntary and community sector to best enable delivery of the healthy and sustainable places ambition.
36. Delivery of the programme will take a test and learn approach, with ongoing evaluation to improve understanding of which community initiatives and approaches deliver the best improvement in outcomes and the most sustainable positive impact for residents.

## *Next Steps*

37. This paper has presented a snapshot of the successes achieved in delivery of Ambition Two and an outline of strategic aims and key actions for the future. It is recognised that significant broader important work is happening across Nottinghamshire which delivers impact on the Building Blocks of Health and benefits for the health and wellbeing of our residents.
38. The added value of Ambition Two of the JHWS will be to identify within the Framework for Action where working to a shared purpose with common policy or goals will strengthen and maximise our impact as a meaningful partnership.
39. It is proposed that progress on development of the Framework for Action and delivery against key areas is brought to the Health and Wellbeing Board in December 2024. Further support from the Health and Wellbeing Board on the Healthy and Sustainable Places ambition is being considered as part of the current Health and Wellbeing Board review.

## **Other Options Considered**

40. There was an option to not provide an update to the Health and Wellbeing Board on Ambition Two. This option was discounted as the report provides important information relating to the delivery of the healthy and sustainable places ambition of the Nottinghamshire JHWS.

## **Reasons for Recommendation**

41. Development of the Healthy and Sustainable Places Framework for Action will be informed by current available evidence and local evaluations and will support and enable delivery against the JHWS ambition to create healthy and sustainable places, utilising the evidence based 'Building Blocks of Health' approach.

## **Statutory and Policy Implications**

42. This report has been compiled after consideration of implications in respect of crime and disorder, data protection and information governance, finance, human resources, human rights, the NHS Constitution (public health services), the public sector equality duty, safeguarding of children and adults at risk, service users, smarter working, sustainability and the environment and where such implications are material they are described below. Appropriate consultation has been undertaken and advice sought on these issues as required.

## **Financial Implications**

43. There are none arising from this report.

## **Implications for Residents**

44. Development of the proposed Healthy and Sustainable Places Framework for Action will have a positive impact on communities, with a focus on areas of highest need and deprivation.

## **Implications for Sustainability and the Environment**

45. Development of the proposed Healthy and Sustainable Places Framework for Action will have a positive impact, influencing action on climate change to secure health and wellbeing co-benefits and supporting delivery of the Councils' Environment Strategy Action Plan.

## **RECOMMENDATION**

The Health and Wellbeing Board is asked:

- 1) To approve the draft Healthy and Sustainable Places Framework for Action (**Appendix B**) and support its further development with partners in 2024.

**Vivienne Robbins**  
**Interim Director of Public Health**  
**Nottinghamshire County Council**

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## **Constitutional Comments (LW 20/02/24)**

46. The Health and Wellbeing Board is the appropriate body to consider the content of the report.

## **Financial Comments (DG 19/02/24)**

47. There are no direct financial implications arising from this report.

## **Background Papers and Published Documents**

Except for previously published documents, which will be available elsewhere, the documents listed here will be available for inspection in accordance with Section 100D of the Local Government Act 1972.

- [The Nottinghamshire Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy for 2022 – 2026](#)
- [The Nottinghamshire Plan 2021 – 2031](#)
- [Report of the Deputy leader and cabinet member, Transformation: The council's prevention and early help approach – Supporting a resilient, healthy Nottinghamshire. September 2023.](#)
- [Nottinghamshire County Council Corporate Environment Policy](#)
- [Nottinghamshire County Council Winter Warmth booklet](#)

## **Electoral Division(s) and Member(s) Affected**

- All