

Subject:	The Annual Public Health Report 2017
Reason for briefing note:	This report has been prepared to provide the Adult Health Overview & Scrutiny panel with an overview of the Strategic Director of Public Health's Annual Report "Creating the Right Environments for Health"
Responsible officer(s):	Teresa Salami-Oru, Head of Public Health
Senior leader sponsor:	Tessa Lindfield, Strategic Director of Public Health
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SUMMARY

"Creating the Right Environments for Health" provides information and evidence that can support placed-based strategies to realise the potential of green and natural spaces for the health and wellbeing of local residents and communities and showcases local examples of how communities are already using the natural environment to stay healthy or improve their health and wellbeing.

Publishing an Annual Public Health Report is a requirement for all upper tier local Authorities. The intention is to stimulate discussion and identify opportunities to improve the health of local residents.

1 BACKGROUND

- 1.1 It is a requirement for councils to publish an independent annual public health report from their Director of Public Health. The annual report is the DPH's view on the health and wellbeing of our local communities and the opportunities to improve the public's health.
- 1.2 The report aims to reconnect professions, communities and landowners and highlight opportunities for them to work together to support the public's health through creating and maintaining accessible high quality green spaces and natural environments. The report provides information and evidence that can support placed-based strategies to realise the potential of green and natural spaces for the health and wellbeing of local residents and communities, and showcases examples of how local communities are already using the natural environment to stay healthy or improve their health and wellbeing.

2 KEY IMPLICATIONS

- 2.1 The natural environment is a wider determinant of health and presents a real opportunity to improve our health and wellbeing, both physically and mentally. It is helpful to think of the natural environment as green and blue spaces. Examples of green spaces include open fields and forests, examples of blue spaces include the sky, rivers and lakes.
- 2.2 Both spaces can enable exercise, time in nature, leisure and relaxation. There is evidence that the natural environment has a positive influence on health in a variety of ways.

2.3 The report makes four recommendations. To date the Royal Borough has made strides to achieve these in the following ways:

2.3.1 *Make the most of natural space available, to improve mental health, physical activity and strengthen communities.*

Local Action: Maidenhead library looks out over the amphitheatre and waterway and is made up of large widows so that staff and customers can sit and enjoy the 'view'. Boyne Grove is situated in the park – again users and staff can take breaks in the park. Where there is a 'green space'; story time and author events are held outdoors in the park and amphitheatre. We undertake regular walks, treasure hunts around Windsor to support the history and museum. Reading events are undertaken at the Great Park and Windsor Castle.

2.3.2 *Improvement of existing green space and design developments with green spaces and active travel in mind.*

Local Action: The Royal Borough is currently undertaking a review to see if there are cycle racks at each library to encourage the use of bikes. Additionally a review of cycle racks. The borough has an ongoing programme of capital improvements to parks and open spaces to increase use and encourage participation. The recent example of the new Foot bridge linking Oldfield Road to the strategically important open park of Braywick is an example of the strategic improvements being made through the capital programme. This footbridge opens up a series of connections across the Bray Cut, a waterway that was previously a barrier to access from the Oldfield School and Fisheries area to the Braywick Park and local nature reserve

2.3.3 *Planning guidance for new developments to specifically consider the use of green and blue space to improve health and wellbeing.*

Local Action: Plans to develop healthier communities are currently underpinned by the National Planning Policy Framework (2018). It sets out what planners should do to support healthy living, healthy environments and access to healthy food. Public Health and Planning aim to work together to deliver the healthy living and healthy environment recommendations in the framework.

2.3.4 *Fostering new relationships with organisations aiming to improve the natural environment and its use.*

Local Action: The Borough actively works with strategic and local partners to improve the local natural environment. The strategic development and improvement plan for Thriftwood and Ockwells Park, working with for example the Environment Agency and Wild Maidenhead, is a good example involving both a national and local partner, to seek to achieve strategic short, medium and long term improvements in the value of the park and its environment. The Royal Borough also continues to encourage schools and customers to come and to the libraries and museum through Friends of the Museum and Friends of the Library

3 DETAILS

3.1 There are many factors, or determinants, that come together to affect our health. Of the modifiable factors, some are individual and personal choices, such as taking up smoking or choosing to exercise.

- 3.2 At a population level, there are the wider determinants of health: a diverse range of economic, environmental and social factors that affect people's health and influence their choices and lifestyles. Difficult to quantify, many of these determinants are shaped by national and local government policies, our environment and the distribution of wealth. They include:
- Income and social status
 - Educational attainment
 - Quality of housing
 - Community and social networks
 - Activity – the way we live

4 RISKS

- 4.1 None

5 NEXT STEPS

- 5.1 The Panel is asked to note the DPH Annual Report and endorse the local action identified.