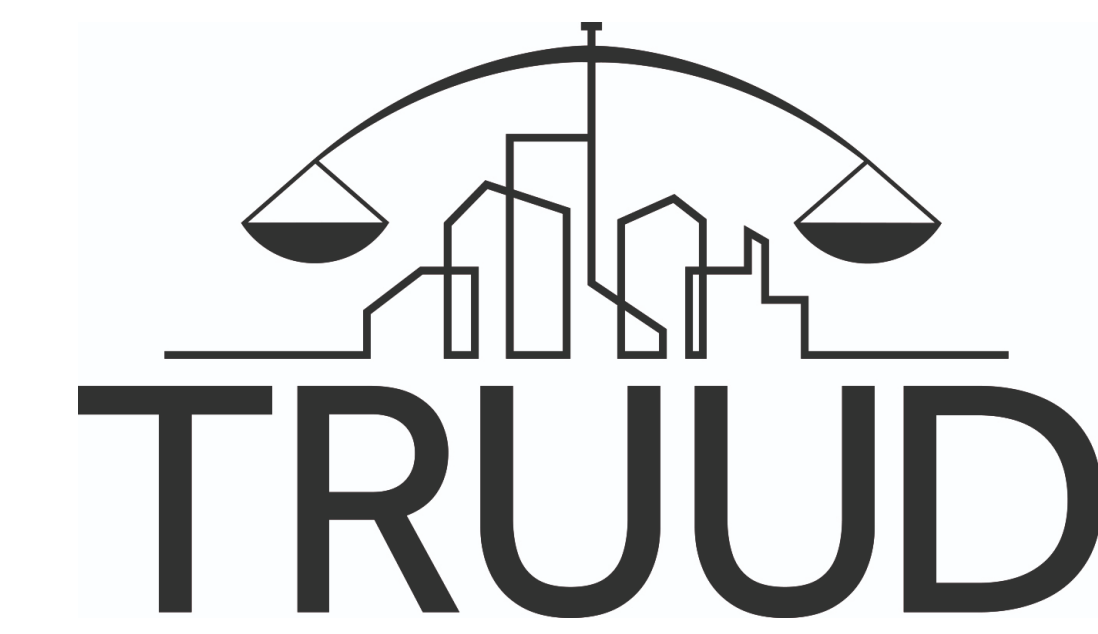


Integrating health in Local Plans: An impact evaluation

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Introduction

Local plans are a set of development policies used by local planning authorities in England for future development in an area.

Local plans need more specific requirements regarding wider health determinants to address potential health outcomes and health inequalities¹.

Aim

To explore the impact of *developing* and *implementing* a co-produced framework^{2,3} to strengthen the integration of health in local plan development.



Methods

Qualitative evaluation involving collection and analysis of data from:

- In-depth online semi-structured interviews with stakeholders, including planning and public health professionals and local councillors.
- Researcher-in-Residence fieldnotes.

Findings

Six themes were derived from the data:

- 1) Increased health coverage
“It had a direct impact on what we’ve been able to include in our [local] plan...able to incorporate a much more detailed policy about build-to-rent.”
- 2) Importance of precedent and detail
“Having evidence of what other local authorities do was really important.”
- 3) Stakeholder buy-in
“Councillor recognised that health was not at the centre of the Local Plan and questioned how you make the interventions and outcomes about people and not bricks and mortar.”
- 4) Relationship building
“Public Health’s involvement has been positive and [created a] space for sharing between officers.”
- 5) Researcher-in-Residence added value
“[It has] had a direct positive impact on the attention we’ve been giving to public health.”
- 6) Range of resources required
“Resource is really challenging, and you see it across all levels of the council – it’s austerity.”

Conclusions

The framework review process was valuable for the local government partner involved and its emerging local plan, in addressing barriers and creating facilitators for better integration of health in local development planning policies.

Next steps...

To develop the framework into transferable and sustainable guidance to support its use more widely across English local planning authorities.

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