

Developing a Healthy Planning Framework

The issue

Planning policy, nationally and locally, shapes the environment we live in, and Local Plans can play an integral role in improving both physical and mental population health. Local Plans are produced by local authorities to provide the scope and legal basis for all their urban planning decisions. However, [TRUUD research](#) with more than 130 public and private urban development actors in 2021 found that Local Plans are inconsistent and weak regarding the health requirements that are expected from developers when making a planning application.

Many local planning authorities in England recognise the role of planning in shaping good population health and want to strengthen the 'health' aspects of their plans and policies but are unsure exactly how to do this. Local authority officers from various departments may not understand why, how and when in the planning process health can be embedded into local policy. Weaknesses and a lack of clarity in policy mean developers are often unclear about their responsibilities to address local health priorities and incorporate healthy urban development principles and features into their proposals.

Our response

Based on [in-depth TRUUD research](#) and more than a decade of practice supporting local authorities across the UK, TRUUD and the Town and County Planning Association (TCPA) are collaborating on the development of a Healthy Planning Framework. The framework is designed to translate our experience into transferable and sustainable guidance that will raise awareness about the important links between planning and health, and support those working in local authorities to maximise opportunities for promoting health through local planning policies, including Local Plans.

Building on work already completed by TRUUD and the TCPA, the framework will be co-developed with a sample of planning and public health professionals from six local authorities across England. Planning and public health professionals will provide feedback and 'sense check' draft content before its launch in September 2024.

The framework will include detailed guidance on 1) specifying local health priorities; 2) signposting to guidance and standards; 3) clarifying health-related requirements for developers; and 4) strengthening implementation requirements. Examples of good policy language from existing adopted policy will be provided throughout.

The intended audience is primarily:

- Planning officers working in planning policy and development management
- Public health professionals working on health in all policies, the wider determinants of health and healthy places
- Councillors with responsibilities for place, planning, public health, and community wellbeing

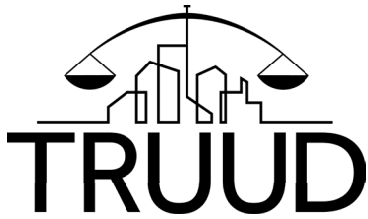
Other local stakeholders (e.g. transport planners, sustainability and climate teams, those working with local communities on neighbourhood plans) and national stakeholders may also find the guidance useful, for example, the Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG), the Planning Inspectorate, the Local Government Association (LGA), the Association of Directors of Public Health (ADPH).



Local authority partners



University consortium



Next steps

Co-development of the Healthy Planning Framework will conclude in Summer 2024, with a formal webinar launch in September 2024 open to stakeholder audiences involved in making local planning policy and Local Plans.

An impact evaluation, using interview and online survey methods, will follow the launch. It will aim to 1) determine if and how the framework has been used in practice, 2) assess framework value, relevance, and usefulness, and 3) identify anticipated and/or realised barriers to (facilitators of) framework adoption.

About Truud

'Tackling the Root causes Upstream of Unhealthy Urban Development' (TRUUD) is a 5-year, £6.7m research project that aims to design policy interventions to support the development of healthier urban environments. Our research seeks to promote a fundamental shift in thinking about how to prioritise healthy urban development. We are funded by the [UK Prevention Research Partnership](#).

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