

Local Plan Review Topic Paper

Health and Well-Being



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Contents

	page
Introduction	3
Summary	4
Part 1: Context	5
1.1 National Park Context	5
1.2 National Planning Policy	5
1.3 Local Plan: Core Strategy and Development Management Policies	7
Part 2: Performance of Policy	8
2.1 What are we judging policy against?	8
2.2 Evidence	8
Part 3: Issues and Evidence Driving New Policy	10
Part 4: Requirement for Further Evidence and Questions Arising	14
4.1 Further evidence	14
4.2 Questions arising	14

Introduction

This topic paper has been prepared to inform the review of the Peak District National Park Local Plan. Its focus is health and well-being.

Its purpose is to:

- set out the national and local planning policy context
- examine the latest research, guidance and evidence that will impact on new policy
- highlight gaps in knowledge and generate areas of further research

Other topic papers in this series cover:

- Climate Change and Sustainable Buildings
- Economy
- Heritage and Built Conservation
- Housing
- Landscape, biodiversity and nature recovery
- Minerals (pending)
- Recreation and Tourism
- Shops and Community Facilities
- Spatial Strategy
- Sustainable Transport and Infrastructure
- Utilities

Executive Summary

The Peak District National Park plays a vital role in the health and well-being of people who visit, live and work here.

Planning policy has an important role in creating healthy built and natural environments by:

- safeguarding community facilities and open space, including for recreation and sport
- protecting and enhancing public rights of way
- tackling air pollution
- delivering high quality, well-designed homes that can meet the needs of an ageing population
- creating public spaces and easy walking and cycling to promote social interaction

Planning policy needs to be based on robust and up-to-date assessment of the need for open space and sport/recreation facilities, and should seek to provide new facilities where they are lacking.

The National Park Authority works in partnership with constituent authorities and healthcare professionals to ensure that residents' health and well-being is considered in all aspects of the Authority's work. A Health Impact Assessment (HIA) should be undertaken alongside the local plan review to ensure that policies aim to create healthy, inclusive and safe places to live.

The need for people to have access to nature and open spaces is increasingly understood and clearly brought into focus by the Covid-19 pandemic. Health and well-being issues in relation to Peak District *visitors* is also covered in the 'Recreation and Tourism' topic paper.

Part 1: Context

1.1 National Park context

1.1.1 National Park statutory purposes are outlined in the Environment Act 1995 (section 61):

- (i) To conserve and enhance the natural beauty, wildlife and cultural heritage of the national parks;
- (ii) To promote opportunities for the understanding and enjoyment of the special qualities of the park by the public.

Section 62 of the Act also places a duty on the National Park to seek to foster the economic and social well-being of local communities. If there is irreconcilable conflict between the statutory purposes, the conservation of the national park will be given priority (established through the Sandford Principle).

The English National Parks and the Broads: UK Government Vision and Circular 2010

1.1.2 The *Vision and Circular* commits to fostering and maintaining healthy communities. National Parks were originally designated to be the ‘lungs of the nation’, for a largely industrial and urban society. This essential purpose remains.

1.2 National Planning Policy

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

1.2.1 Para 172 of NPPF states that great weight should be given to conserving and enhancing landscape and scenic beauty in National Parks, along with the conservation and enhancement of wildlife and cultural heritage. It states that planning permission should be refused for major development, other than in exceptional circumstances and in the public interest. Para 11 exempts the national park from allocating housing sites.

1.2.2 National parks therefore, have the highest level of protection in terms of planning policy. Although the remainder of the national guidance is a material consideration in determining a planning application, it has to be balanced in the context of national park status.

1.2.3 Chapter 8 promotes healthy and safe communities, and states that ‘planning policies and decisions should achieve healthy, inclusive and safe places which’:

- promote social interaction
- are safe and accessible

- enable/support healthy lifestyles (e.g. through the provision of green infrastructure, sports facilities, local shops, access to healthier food, allotments and layouts to encourage walking and cycling).

1.2.4 Sustainable transport is promoted and acknowledged to have a positive impact on air quality and public health. The section on ‘making effective use of land’ covers appropriate densities and the importance of securing well-designed, attractive and healthy places.

National Planning Policy Guidance (NPPG)

1.2.5 The design and use of the built and natural environments, including green infrastructure¹ are major determinants of health and wellbeing. Planning and health need to be considered together in two ways:

- creating environments that support and encourage healthy lifestyles
- identifying and securing the facilities needed for primary, secondary and tertiary care, and the wider health and care system (taking into account the changing needs of the population).

1.2.6 Engagement between plan-making bodies and relevant organisations should ensure that local strategies to improve health and wellbeing and the provision of the required health infrastructure are supported and considered in plans (including in the preparation of strategic policies for community facilities). Where these comprise strategic cross-boundary matters, agreements, joint working and progress can be documented in statements of common ground².

National Design Guide (2019)

1.2.7 The National Design Guide promotes social interaction through inclusive design. Development should meet the needs of children and young people to grow and develop, and be adaptable for the elderly and those with dementia and other sensory or mobility impairments.

Duty to co-operate

1.2.8 The duty to cooperate was created by the Localism Act 2011. It places a legal duty on local planning authorities (LPAs), county councils in England, and public bodies, to engage constructively, actively and on an ongoing basis with each other to maximise the effectiveness of local plan preparation relating to strategic cross-boundary matters.

¹ Green infrastructure is a strategically planned and delivered network comprising the broadest range of high quality green spaces and other environmental features.

² Under the 2018 NPPF all local planning authorities have a requirement to produce, maintain and keep up to date a Statement of Common Ground (SCG) to highlight agreement on cross boundary strategic issues with neighbouring authorities and other relevant organisations.

1.3.0 Local Plan

Core Strategy

- 1.3.1 Paragraph 7.21 of the Core Strategy states that development should take into account 'encouraging good health, safety and well-being.' Core Strategy policy HC4 deals with the provision and retention of community services and facilities, which includes services important to health and well-being. Core Strategy policy HC5 relates to shops, professional services and related activities. It notes the impact of traffic congestion on health, and encourages sustainable travel.

Development Management Policies

- 1.3.2 The Core Strategy is supplemented by the Development Management Policies (DMP) document, adopted May 2019.

- Policy DMS2 relates to the change of use of shops, community services and facilities
- DMS6 relates to the safeguarding of sites for community facilities
- DMS7 deals with retaining community sites or sports facilities.

Public health is referenced within DMC14, DMC15 and DMMW2, which deal with pollution/disturbance, contaminated/unstable land and minerals/waste development.

Part 2: Performance of Policy

2.1 What are we judging policy against?

2.1.1 There are no specific planning policies or policy objectives for 'health and well-being'. Paragraph 7.21 of the Core Strategy states that development should take into account 'encouraging good health, safety and well-being.' Performance of policy in relation to the provision and retention of community facilities is assessed the 'Shops and Community Facilities' topic paper.

The National Park Management Plan 2018-2023

2.1.2 The National Park Management Plan (NPMP) outlines seven special qualities, with the most relevant to this paper being:

- Special Quality 3: Undeveloped places of tranquillity and dark night skies within reach of millions.
Being immersed in tranquil, undeveloped places allows people to step outside their busy lives and be refreshed. It improves mental and physical wellbeing and is one of the most sought-after qualities of the countryside.
- Special quality 6: An inspiring space for escape, adventure, discovery and quiet reflection, which nurtures physical and mental well-being.

2.1.3 The NPMP also sets out that it will focus activity, with partners, on six 'Areas of Impact', including 'supporting thriving and sustainable communities' and 'allowing people to become healthier through physical activity in the outdoor environment.'

2.1.4 The Authority has worked with residents and partner organisations to define a 'thriving and sustainable community'. Included in this definition is that the environment is safe and healthy; that air, water and soil are not polluted; and that:

- there are opportunities to develop and participate in community activities
- there is access to nature and outdoor green space for sport, play and recreation
- there are essential services, including shops, entertainment and medical facilities

2.2 Evidence

2.2.1 The performance of planning policy with regard to shops and community facilities can be an indirect measure of the health and well-being of residents and this is set out in the 'Shops and Community Facilities' topic paper.

2.2.2 The performance of planning policy with regard to access and visitor facilities can be an indirect measure of the health and well-being of visitors and this is set out in the 'Recreation and Tourism' topic paper.

PDNP Residents Survey 2019

2.2.3 The survey found that:

- many available activities and Authority-run sites in the National Park are only undertaken and used by a small proportion of residents.
- the majority of residents go walking in the National Park, with a significant minority also cycling.
- other activities available in the area, such as climbing, wildlife watching, fell/trail running, mountain biking and caving are only undertaken by small proportions of residents.
- the use of Authority-run centres such as cycle hire centres, estates and visitor centres was low.

National Park Management Plan 'Communities Topic Paper'

2.2.4 Research for the National Park Management Plan (residents' surveys and workshops³) highlights the following health and well-being issues:

- Risk of flooding
- Lack of affordable housing
- Size and type of housing needed within the community
- Loss of community services
- Broadband connectivity issues
- Impact of tourism
- Ageing population

8-point plan for England's National Parks (2016)

2.2.5 82% of National Park residents describe themselves as being in good or very good health, above national average. ⁴

³ Parishes Day is the annual meeting between parish council representatives and the Authority

⁴ *Characteristics of National Parks* (2011). Office for National Statistics

www.ons.gov.uk/ons/dcp171776_300668.pdf

Part 3: Issues and Evidence Driving New Policy

3.1 *Heritage and the Environment 2020*⁵

It is likely that COVID-19 has had and will continue to have a detrimental effect on health and well-being. Lockdown has highlighted the importance of the natural environment and green spaces to our nation's mental health and wellbeing (Barton and Rogerson, 2017). The national park has a part to play in the national recovery for residents and visitors.

3.2 *Coronavirus and the Social Impacts on Great Britain Opinions and Lifestyle Survey*

When asked if they had visited a park or public green space, less than 30% of the survey respondents said "yes" at the beginning of lockdown in 2020. However, this increased to nearly 50% by the end of May 2020. (ONS 2020c).

United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development

3.3 This sets out 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) for all countries in a global partnership. Ending poverty and other deprivations must also improve health and education, reduce inequality, and spur economic growth.

8-point plan for England's National Parks (2016)

3.4 The ambitions for health and well-being are to:

- Promote innovative schemes for National Parks to serve public health and support National Park Authorities in their ambitions for further engagement with local Clinical Commissioning Groups to grow the evidence base on green prescriptions⁶.
- Realise the immense potential for outdoor recreation in National Parks. In 2015, the Government published its new strategy on sport and physical activity, *Sporting Future: A New Strategy for an Active Nation*. People need opportunities to get active outdoors and infrastructure to facilitate this.

Landscape (Glover) Review (2019)

3.5 The UK population is increasing and living longer, but health problems and inequalities persist, for example those associated with more elderly people, mental health conditions and child obesity. It was a founding principle of the National Parks movement that access to open space enhanced quality of life through physical and mental wellbeing. Evidence confirms this - spending time in the natural environment improves physical and mental health, lowers blood pressure, increases cardio-vascular health and improves mood.

3.6 There is a huge and almost untapped opportunity to utilise open spaces, cost-effectively treating health conditions against a backdrop of financial pressures on health services and an ageing population. This is reflected in the

⁵ <https://historicengland.org.uk/content/heritage-counts/pub/2020/heritage-environment-2020/>

⁶ A green prescription is a prescription for a monitorable activity that involves spending time in natural environments for the benefit of human health and wellbeing.

increasing focus on 'social prescribing', offering patients activities in their community rather than drugs. Whilst the evidence base for its effectiveness is growing, current projects are small scale and mainly run by the third sector. There is scope for National Parks and AONBs to be at the heart of this developing field.

Derbyshire Health and Well-being strategy 2018-2023

3.7 This sets out five priorities for improving health and wellbeing across Derbyshire:

1. Enable people in Derbyshire to live healthy lives – through physical exercise, healthy diet and informed living choices.
2. Work to lower levels of air pollution - support work that brings together individuals, communities and organisations to improve air quality.
3. Build mental health and wellbeing - support programmes that help people in Derbyshire to fulfil their mental health and wellbeing potential, through investing in prevention, early intervention and mental health promotion throughout life.
4. Support vulnerable populations to live in well-planned and healthy homes. Effective planning and healthy housing is key to preventing ill health and enabling people to live independently into old age. Poor housing is known to have significant impact on health and wellbeing, particularly for people who spend a lot of time at home (for example, children and older people). Housing that is cold, damp, or overcrowded can also impact on people's ability to access and sustain employment.
5. Strengthen opportunities for quality employment and lifelong learning - Education and employment are important for both physical and mental health and wellbeing.

Derbyshire Strategic Statement – Planning and Health across Derbyshire and Derby City (2016)

3.8 The document outlines that local planning authorities can use the following principles to enable them to achieve a healthy built and natural environment across Derbyshire:

- Embed sustainability and protection of the environment across the planning system
- Help provide accessible service centres, shared spaces and community facilities which serve day-to-day needs
- Encourage walking and cycling through the provision of pedestrian/cyclist friendly infrastructure, measures to prevent road traffic accidents and concentrating development as close as possible to service centres and employment
- Create healthy living environments through the provision of community open space, recreation and sport facilities
- Help protect and enhance public rights of way
- Protect people's health from air pollution, noise, flood risk and accidents

- Ensure the delivery of high quality homes and good design standards that meet the varied needs of local communities and an ageing population
- Active consultation between local planning authorities, healthcare commissioners and public health teams to help understand, and plan for, the impact of development on health services and the health of communities
- Consult with communities to help understand local perspectives on health and any concerns that can be addressed through the planning system
- Look to pro-actively address areas of health inequality wherever possible
- Where appropriate seek contributions towards new health-related infrastructure to support development through planning obligations
- Maximise the opportunities for recreation and connecting people with the outdoors, the natural world and cultural heritage through Derbyshire's unique assets, such as the National Park.

3.9 The document notes that planning can also contribute to healthy ageing by:

- ensuring new homes promote independence and respond to changing needs
- providing infrastructure for dementia-friendly communities and social connectedness.

Public Health England: Spatial Planning for Health 2017

3.10 The following aspects of planning healthier places are highlighted:

- Design – improving social interactions via public realm improvements, enhanced 'walkability', 'complete and compact' neighbourhoods with diverse land uses, greater residential densities and provision of local amenities
- Housing – improvements to housing can be via energy efficiency, refurbishment, addressing fuel poverty, increased provision of affordable and diverse housing, and housing for specific needs
- Food – making healthier food more accessible, enabling gardening in an allotment or community garden
- Natural environment – protecting the natural environment, improving air quality, accessing and engaging with the natural environment and the cooling effect of green space. Flooding and the risk of flooding can have a physical and mental impact
- Transport – active travel can increase physical activity as well as reduce pollution levels. Encourages separate cycling and pedestrian infrastructure and traffic calming.

Edge Analytics PDNP Population Forecast (Feb 2018)

3.11 The report notes that between 2001 and 2016, the proportion of the population aged 65+ living in the Peak District National Park increased from 19.5% to 28.2%. The National Park has an ageing population, with a median

age of 52 in 2016 compared to 45 in 2001. The ageing population profile is reflected in the Old Age Dependency (OAD) ratio, which has increased from 31 in 2001 to 48 in 2016. This means that in 2016, the proportion of the population aged 65+ was equivalent to 48% of the population aged 15–64.

*Heritage and Society 2019*⁷

- 3.12 Parks and green spaces are a key component of social infrastructure⁸. A recent evidence review commissioned by National Lottery Heritage Fund and the National Lottery Community Fund, conducted by Sheffield Hallam University and The University of Sheffield includes a peer review of 385 studies. It highlights the social benefits of parks and green spaces and underlines their potential to deliver multiple health benefits for local communities and support long-term mental and physical health (Dobson et al, 2019).

Public Health England Health Impact Assessment (HIA) Sept 2020

- 3.13 Local authorities, with the assistance of the Department for Public Health and the public health team, should undertake a HIA during any policy review, to include:

- Screening – is a HIA needed?
- Scoping – identify potential health impacts and target populations
- Assessing – significance of health impacts
- Reporting – engage all relevant stakeholders and recommend preventative/mitigation actions
- Monitoring/evaluation – include indicators and mechanisms for regular monitoring

Derbyshire County Council Planning Guidance for Specialist Housing in Derbyshire 2020-2025

- 3.14 The report focuses on the need for specialist housing and on 'homes not hospitals'. The document also outlines that 2020 and the ongoing pandemic is responsible for an increase in mental health problems and other health issues. Issues include anxiety, isolation, reduced support, reluctance to access medical care, increased redundancy and reduced income, alongside an increase in house prices.

⁷ <https://historicengland.org.uk/content/heritage-counts/pub/2019/heritage-and-society-2019/>

⁸ The physical places and organisations that shape the way people interact. (Klinenberg, 2018, p.5).

Part 4: Requirements for Further Evidence and Questions Arising

4.1 Further evidence

- 4.1.1 Any new evidence identified in the National Park Management Plan 'State of Communities Report, will be taken into account.
- 4.1.2 Any new research with regard to the impact of Covid-19 will be taken into account.
- 4.1.3 To ensure that health and well-being is a cross-cutting theme in the new local plan, a Health Impact Assessment (HIA) should be undertaken. Further research should be undertaken to determine whether a HIA should be undertaken for specific development in the national park. Systems to ensure good partnership working with constituent authorities should be established, for example by including health and well-being within the Statements of Common Ground.
- 4.1.4 More research is needed to determine whether there are any health or well-being inequalities across the National Park as this may indicate that a spatial approach is required. For example with regard to broadband and other digital connectivity.
- 4.1.5 Up to date assessments of open space, playing fields and recreation facilities are required, to ensure adequate provision now and in the future. (See also Shops and Communities Facilities paper)

4.2 Questions Arising

- 4.2.1 This report has identified several ways in which the planning system can impact on people's health and well-being. These are:
 - safeguarding community facilities, open space and recreation/sports facilities
 - protecting and enhancing public rights of way
 - tackling air pollution
 - delivering high quality, well-designed homes that can meet the needs of an ageing population
 - enabling development that can lead to social interaction, via public spaces, easy walking and cycling, diverse land uses, greater residential densities and provision of local amenities

It should be established whether there are any other ways planning can influence health and well-being.

Appendix

Taken from Public Health England Health Impact Assessment Sept 2020:

Table 2. Wider determinants of health and wellbeing outcomes

HIA health considerations (Annex 2)	Wider determinants of health and wellbeing			
	Access	Traffic and Transport	Socio-economic	Land Use
Reduce Health inequalities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Local public key services and facilities Good quality affordable housing Healthy and affordable food Natural environment Green spaces and public realm Leisure, sport, recreation, play and physical activities within the environments 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Accessibility Access to public transport Opportunities for active travel (cycling and walking) Links between communities Community severance Connections to jobs Connections to services, facilities and leisure 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Employment, including skills development and training opportunities Local business activity Regeneration Tourism and leisure industries Community/ social cohesions and access to social networks Community engagement 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sustainable and efficient land use in urban and/or /rural settings Quality of Urban and natural environments, such as air and noise pollution Climate change impacts
Improve mental health and wellbeing				
Improve diets and weight				
Improve musculoskeletal health				
Improve respiratory health				
Improve cardiovascular health				
Protect environmental health				
Provide access to health and care infrastructure				

Figure 1. Policy basis for considering health in the National Planning Policy Framework

