



Northumberland  
County Council

# Healthy Planning Checklist

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## Purpose of the Guidance Note

The purpose of this guidance note is to provide advice and guidance on undertaking Healthy Planning Checklists (HPC) for development proposals within Northumberland. The guidance supports the implementation of Policy STP 5: Health and Wellbeing in the Northumberland Local Plan.

For all major developments we expect applicants to complete either a Healthy Planning Checklist (HPC), Rapid Health Impact Assessment (RHIA) or Full Health Impact Assessment (HIA). Each of these types differ in complexity, the range of stakeholders who might be involved in the process and the time they take to complete. Full HIA is the most intensive form of HIA.

If an HPC is required, applicants will need to refer to the guidance and framework sections included in this document. The document refers to 'the applicant' but it may be that a competent expert in health assessment completes the HPC on behalf of an applicant.

For a Rapid or Full HIA, please refer to the [Rapid and Full HIA guidance document](#).

# Healthy Planning Checklist

## Healthy Planning Checklist (HPC):

An HPC assesses the potential health impacts of development proposals and helps to identify simple measures to maximise the positive health impacts and minimise or mitigate against the negative health impacts. The Council has the discretion to request an HIA on the basis of the HPC.

### Threshold:

- Major applications for Full Planning Permission or Approval of Reserved Matters.

## Rapid Health Impact Assessment:

A thorough process. It involves a more focused investigation of health impacts. Mitigation and enhancement measures should be recommended.

### Threshold

- 100 or more residential dwellings/housing units.
- 10,000sqm (non-residential) floor space to be created.
- Minerals and waste applications.

## Full Health Impact Assessment:

The Full HIA follows the above Rapid HIA process. However, it should include a fuller analysis of potential health and wellbeing impacts. This should include quantitative and qualitative evidence. For example:

- Data from health needs assessments.
- Reviews of the evidence base.
- Community engagement.

This is likely to take 4-6 months.

### Threshold

- 400 or more residential dwellings/housing units.
- 400,000sqm (non-residential) floor space to be created.

Figure 1 illustrates when an HPC, Rapid HIA or Full HIA is required.

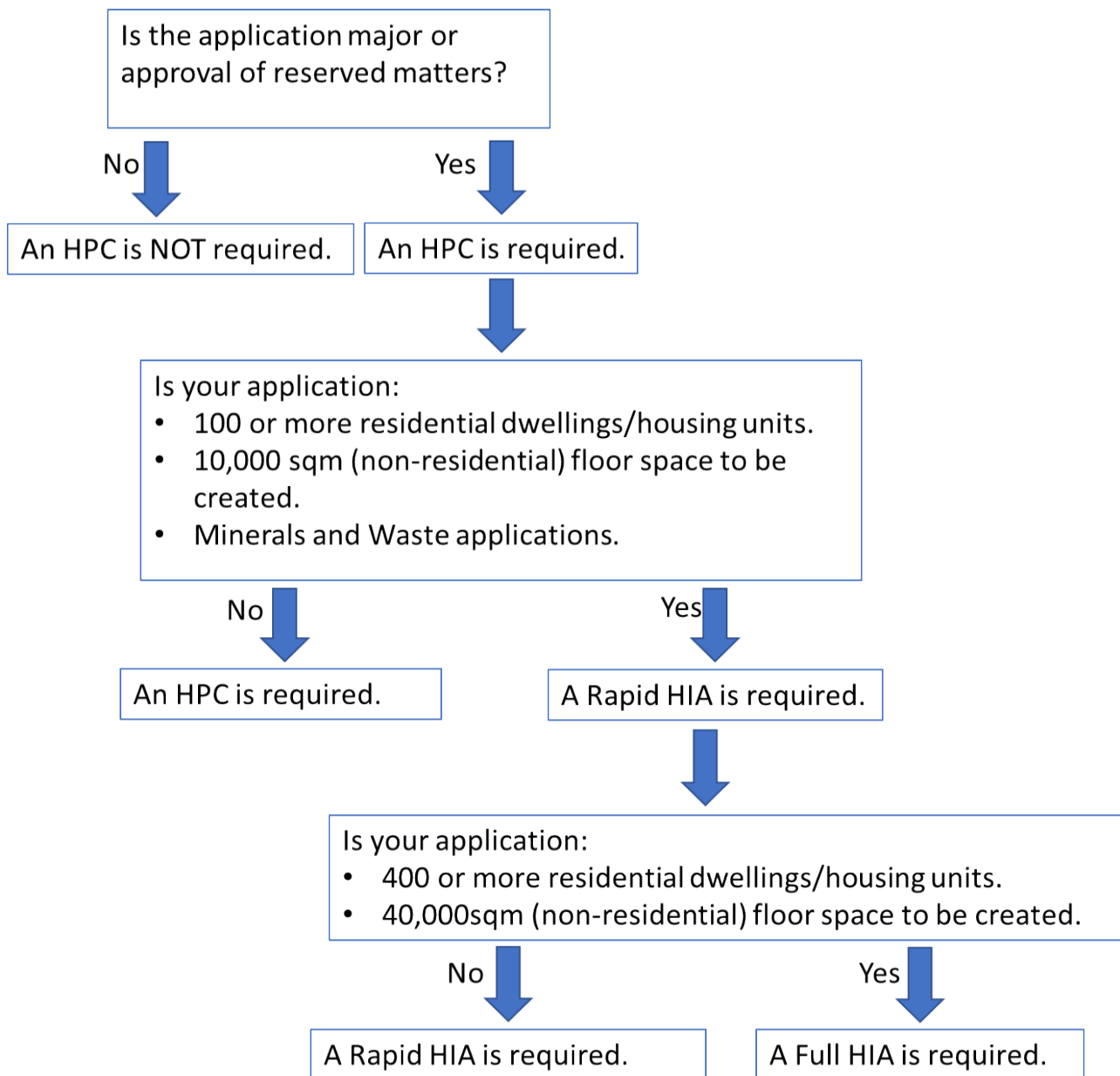


Figure 1 A flowchart identifying if an HPC, Rapid HIA or Full HIA is required.

A Healthy Planning Checklist (HPC) draws on existing knowledge and evidence, often using checklists or templates which provide a broad overview of potential health impacts.

This Healthy Planning Checklist must be completed and submitted with your application. It has been designed to quickly assess the potential health impacts of development proposals and help to identify simple measures to maximise the positive health impacts and minimise or mitigate against the negative health impacts.

It is recommended that you systematically work to address each of the questions in this document. Parts 1, 2 and 3 have corresponding guidance in the subsequent sections.

If the theme is covered within another submitted document, please reference the document and provide a summary.

### **Part 1. Applicant and Scheme Details**

<b>Name of applicant</b>	
Description of proposal	
Address of proposal	
Date assessment completed	

**Part 2. Healthy Planning Checklist (refer to Population Groups Table below throughout)**

	<b>Theme</b>	<b>Description of Impact</b>	<b>Positive</b>	<b>Negative</b>	<b>Neutral</b>	<b>Unknown</b>	<b>Recommendation (to minimise or maximise impact)</b>
1	Climate change						
2	Construction						
3	Healthy homes						
4	Active Travel and Connectivity						
5	Access to Services and Social Infrastructure						
6	Open Spaces and Access to Nature						
7	Healthy Foods						
8	Community Safety						
9	Social Relationships and Community						
10	Employment						
11	Environment and Resources						
12	Sex/Gender related groups (refer to Appendix)						
13	Age related groups (refer to Appendix)						
14	Groups at higher risk of discrimination, or other social disadvantage						
15	Income related groups						

16	Geographical groups and/or settings						
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### Part 3. Checklist Outcome

Conclusion	Applicant's Response	Council Comments
What population groups have you identified that are directly or indirectly impacted? Please summarise the impacts here. See themes 12,13,14,15,16.		
Are any changes proposed to the scheme to improve health outcomes and/or address negative impacts?		
Will the proposal require further assessment via a Rapid or Full Health Impact Assessment?		

## Guidance Notes

### Part 1

Must be completed in full by the applicant.

### Part 2

Theme: The checklist is based on a list of 11 wider determinants of health relevant to planning. Guidance on the planning issues that may impact on health under each broad determinant, potential health impacts and examples of mitigation measures to improve health outcomes, is provided in Table 1.

Description of Impact: Briefly describe how the proposal impacts on the health and wellbeing of existing and future residents/users of the site/local area. Include information on which population groups are likely to be affected by the proposal (e.g. older people, children and young people, working aged people) and when the impacts will take place (e.g. construction phase, operational phase).

It is recommended that you systematically work to address each of the questions in the template using both tables in the guidance notes. You may refer to other documents (such as those submitted as part of a planning application), however the relevant information must also be summarised in this document.



Assessment of Impact: Identify whether the impact is positive, negative, neutral, or not known at this time.

Recommendation: Where an impact is identified, based on the description and assessment of impacts, include recommendations on how the proposal could minimise negative impacts and/or maximise positive impacts. Northumberland County Council welcomes schemes which have a positive impact on health.

### **Part 3**

Must be completed in full by the applicant outlining how the scheme will address any identified health impacts.



**Table 1. Planning Issues by Broad Determinant, Health Impacts and Measures to Improve Health Outcome**

This table should be used by applicants to complete the Healthy Planning Checklist. It provides guidance to applicants on the planning issues that may impact on health under each broad determinant, potential health impacts and examples of measures to improve health outcomes. The table focuses on the wider determinants of health that are most relevant to the built environment and which can be influenced by planning decisions.

Theme	Headline Planning Issues	Potential Impact on Health	Possible Mitigation/ Enhancement Measures to Improve Health Outcomes
<p>Climate change</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Does the proposal reduce surface water flood risk (for example, through sustainable drainage techniques, use of permeable surfaces, green roofs etc)?</li> <li>Does the design of buildings and spaces avoid internal and external overheating (e.g. through passive cooling techniques and urban greening).</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Flood risk and drainage</li> <li>Building design</li> <li>Renewable energy</li> <li>Sustainable transport</li> <li>Resilience to future climate change</li> <li>Sustaining and enhancing biodiversity and geodiversity</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Poorly designed homes can lead to fuel poverty in winter and overheating in summer, contributing to excess winter and summer deaths.</li> <li>Flooding can result in risks to both physical and mental health from actual and fear of flooding. Exposure to contaminated flood water increases the risk of illnesses such as respiratory illness.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Urban trees, green roofs and soft landscaping can help prevent summer overheating by reducing the heat island effect.</li> <li>Energy efficient, well insulated and well-designed buildings can reduce carbon emissions. Sequential approach to locating development and mitigation measures such as sustainable drainage systems can reduce the risk of flooding.</li> </ul>
<p>Construction</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Does the proposal minimise construction impacts such as dust, noise, vibration and odours?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Construction impact from operations during the development phase, including increased vehicle movement and noise.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Noise and vibration can cause sleep disturbance and stress, which can have a detrimental impact on mental health. Poor air quality from dust is linked to heart conditions, lung disease and asthma levels among children.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ensure mechanisms are put in place to control hours of construction and vehicle movements, such as a construction management plan.</li> <li>Community engagement before and during construction can help alleviate fears and concerns.</li> </ul>

<p>Healthy Homes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Does the proposal encourage and promote housing quality, taking into account daylight, sound insulation, private space, and provision of accessible and adaptable dwellings?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Housing design - orientation, layout and internal space</li> <li>• Accessible and adaptable housing</li> <li>• Housing mix – tenure, sizes</li> <li>• Affordable homes</li> <li>• Energy efficient and affordable to run homes</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Unhealthy living environments, e.g. lack of daylight, ventilation, noise and overcrowding can impact negatively on mental health conditions such as depression and can exacerbate health conditions such as respiratory diseases, cardiovascular diseases and cancer.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Orientate buildings to maximise natural light.</li> <li>• Accessible and adaptable homes can meet the changing needs of current and future occupants.</li> </ul>
<p>Active Travel and Connectivity</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Does the proposal promote walking and cycling?</li> <li>• Does the proposal seek to minimise car use?</li> <li>• Does the proposal include traffic management and calming measures, and safe and well-lit pedestrian and cycling routes and crossings?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Promoting and prioritising walking and cycling.</li> <li>• Wheelchair and pushchair access</li> <li>• Minimising the need to travel</li> <li>• Connectivity</li> <li>• Access to public transport</li> <li>• Streetscape</li> <li>• Car dependency</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Transport is a key wider determinant of health. Reducing car dependency and the provision of safe, sustainable transport options can impact on health by increasing physical inactivity and promoting social interaction, as well as reducing air pollution, noise and accident rates.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide safe, well-lit, attractive and clearly signposted walking and cycling routes.</li> <li>• Link new walking and cycling routes with the wider network to ensure people can use them to access education, employment and services and facilities.</li> <li>• Provide cycle parking and storage to encourage cycle participation.</li> <li>• Developments should be accessible by public transport to reduce social isolation and promote participation in physical activity.</li> <li>• Traffic management and calming measures can reduce road accidents involving pedestrians and cyclists and create</li> </ul>

			<p>a safer environment.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The integration of services in a single location can reduce the need to travel and contribute to a reduction of congestion, noise and air pollution.</li> </ul>
<p>Access to Services and Social Infrastructure</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Does the proposal contribute to new social infrastructure that is accessible, affordable and timely?</li> <li>Have opportunities for multiuse and co-location of services been explored?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Demand for and access to healthcare services</li> <li>Access to education</li> <li>Access to social infrastructure</li> <li>Multi use of buildings and colocation of services</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Access to health and social care, education and community facilities has a direct impact on human health.</li> <li>Poor access and quality of healthcare services and exacerbate ill health and make effective treatment more difficult. Poor accessibility to community facilities can limit opportunities for social interaction and lead to isolation and depression.</li> <li>Access to a range of good quality education opportunities can improve self-esteem, job opportunities and earning capacity.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Assessing the demand new development generates for new and existing services and facilities ensures those services meet or continue to meet the needs of the local community.</li> <li>Good public transport links to essential services and facilities can reduce social isolation.</li> <li>Services located in buildings that are safe and accessible to all encourage people to access those services.</li> </ul>
<p>Open Spaces and Access to Nature and Physical Activity</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Does the proposal retain or replace existing open space and or provide new open space or improve access to existing spaces?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Open spaces</li> <li>Natural spaces</li> <li>Play spaces</li> <li>Views and landscaping</li> <li>Buildings designed to maximise physical activity</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Lack of good quality, accessible open space can lead to physical inactivity, cardiovascular disease and obesity.</li> <li>Contact with nature can have</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provide opportunities for recreation and physical activity that can be accessed by all population groups and support physical activity across all ages.</li> </ul>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Does the proposal encourage and promote physical activity?</li> <li>• Does the proposal create space for wildlife?</li> </ul>		<p>positive impacts on blood pressure, cholesterol, outlook on life and stress reduction.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure the location of play spaces are accessible by walking and cycling routes that are suitable for young children to use.</li> <li>• Improve existing, and/or create new habitats or use design solutions to enhance biodiversity.</li> </ul>
<p>Healthy Foods</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Does the proposal maintain and enhance opportunities for food growing?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Local food growing – gardens, allotments</li> <li>• Access to local, affordable fresh food</li> <li>• Healthy food supply</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Opportunities for food growing promotes healthy eating and physical activity. Redevelopment of allotments, gardens and agricultural land can reduce the potential for locally grown food.</li> <li>• Limited access to healthy food and poor diet is linked to obesity, diabetes, heart disease, cancer and stroke.</li> <li>• Overconcentration of hot food takeaways can restrict healthy eating choices.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide space for communal and individual food growing opportunities, for example allotments, community orchards etc.</li> <li>• Ensure provision and/or easy access to local food shops and farmers markets.</li> </ul>
<p>Community Safety</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Does the proposal encourage and promote safety and the feeling of safety in the community?</li> <li>• Does the proposal reduce opportunities for people to commit crime?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Designing out crime</li> <li>• Security and street surveillance</li> <li>• Mix of uses</li> <li>• Community ownership</li> <li>• Engagement</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Perception of crime and fear of crime can impact on mental wellbeing of residents, by limiting how they live their lives leading to social isolation.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Community engagement in the design and planning of development proposals can lessen fears and concerns as well as create a sense of ownership.</li> <li>• Design and layout of residential and commercial areas should ensure natural</li> </ul>

			<p>surveillance over public space.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Streets and public spaces should encourage active use through the use of materials, effective lighting, street furniture and signage.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Does the proposal facilitate equal access to services, facilities and open spaces for all social groups?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Social interaction</li> <li>• Mixed communities</li> <li>• Preventing community severance</li> <li>• Lifetime neighbourhoods</li> <li>• Local inequalities</li> <li>• Access to community facilities which promote social interaction (e.g. village hall, community centre)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Inequalities and divisions in a community can lead to health inequalities.</li> <li>• Social interaction in the community has positive effects on mental health and wellbeing and can aid recovery after illness.</li> <li>• Lack of certain facilities, such as public toilets, can impact negatively on vulnerable groups, for example older people and young children.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mixed use developments can support linked trips and widen social options for people.</li> <li>• Ensure design and layout of new development creates safe and permeable environments where people can interact, socialise, organise and work together.</li> <li>• Maximise opportunities for community ownership of community space, community centres etc.</li> </ul>

<p>Employment</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Does the proposal promote access to employment and training opportunities?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Access to local employment and training</li> <li>• Job diversity</li> <li>• Healthy workplaces</li> <li>• Childcare</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Employment and income are key determinants of health and wellbeing. Having a job can increase health and wellbeing and make it easier to lead a healthier lifestyle</li> <li>• Those who experience unemployment, poverty, and low income are less able to make healthy choices.</li> <li>• Healthy workplaces can reduce ill health and employee sickness absence.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure people can access local work opportunities by a variety of transport modes, including walking and cycling.</li> <li>• The internal and external layout and design of buildings should promote opportunities for physical activity, such as located in close proximity to walking and cycle routes and promotion of staircases.</li> <li>• Childcare and other support services located close to areas of employment can make job opportunities more accessible to a wider range of people.</li> </ul>
<p>Environment and Resources</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Does the proposal minimise air pollution caused by traffic and energy facilities?</li> <li>• Does the proposal minimise the impact of noise caused by traffic and commercial uses?</li> <li>• Does the proposal prevent the inappropriate disposal of hazardous waste?</li> <li>• Does the proposal mitigate risks from contaminated land?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Air quality</li> <li>• Air pollution</li> <li>• Soil pollution - contaminated land</li> <li>• Noise pollution</li> <li>• Potential hazards</li> <li>• Minimise waste, recycling and reuse of waste</li> <li>• Making best use of existing land</li> <li>• Sustainable design and construction methods</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Poor air quality can lead to life shortening lung and heart conditions, cancer and diabetes.</li> <li>• Inappropriate disposal of hazardous waste can impact negatively on the health of nearby communities.</li> <li>• Noise pollution can contribute to sleep deprivation, and mental health problems such as stress and depression.</li> <li>• Contaminated land can be</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure local recycled and renewable materials are used wherever possible, including in the construction process.</li> <li>• Make best use of existing land to reduce pollution, provide shade and cooling and reduce flood risk.</li> <li>• Encourage and maximise reduction, reuse and recycling of resources.</li> </ul>



		hazardous to the health.	
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## Local Policy Context

The Northumberland Local Plan was adopted in March 2022.

One of the strategic objectives is:

“To support sustainable communities across Northumberland, working to improve the quality of services and facilities to support physical and mental health, social and cultural wellbeing for all including responding to the needs and opportunities created by Northumberland’s population” (Northumberland County Council, 2022).

Paragraph 4.59 of the Northumberland Local Plan:

“Policy STP 5 requires that a Healthy Planning Checklist is completed for all major development proposals, to determine whether the potential impact on health resulting from the development warrants any further assessment. Where there is likely to be an impact on health, a proportionate HIA will be required to be submitted as part of the application process. A HIA may be a separate statement or may form part of a Design and Access Statement or a required environmental assessment”.

Policy STP 5 – Health and Wellbeing – part 3:

“A completed Healthy Planning Checklist will be required to be submitted for all major development proposals to determine whether the potential impact on health resulting from the development warrants any further assessment. Where further assessment is warranted, a proportionate Health Impact Assessment will also be required to be submitted as part of the application process. A Health Impact Assessment will be required to be submitted as part of the application process. A Health Impact Assessment will be required to include proposals to mitigate any potential adverse health impacts, maximise potential positive impacts, and help reduce health inequalities”.

# Appendix

## Identification of population groups affected by the development

Below lists the identification of population groups affected by the development, this should be used by applicants to complete the Healthy Planning Checklist. It provides guidance to applicants on which groups of the existing population would be affected by the proposed development. Most proposals will not affect all individuals or groups across a community in the same way and listed below are a range of groups to consider. By understanding the composition of a local population, the assessor will be able to identify groups most vulnerable to impacts resulting from a proposed development.

### Sex/Gender related groups

- Female
- Male
- Transgender
- Other

### Age related groups

- Children and young people
- Early years (including pregnancy and first year of life)
- General adult population
- Older people

### Groups at higher risk of discrimination, or other social disadvantage

- Black and minority ethnic groups
- Carers
- Ex-offenders
- Gypsies and travellers
- Homeless
- Language/culture
- Lesbian, gay and bisexual people
- Looked after children
- People seeking asylum
- People with long term health conditions

- People with physical, sensory or learning disabilities/difficulties
- Refugee groups
- Religious groups
- Lone parent families
- Veterans

### **Income related groups**

- Economically inactive
- People on low income
- People who are unable to work due to ill health
- Unemployed/workless

### **Geographical groups and/or settings**

- People in key settings: workplaces/schools /hospitals/care homes/prisons
- People living in areas which exhibit poor economic and/or health indicators
- People living in rural, isolated or over-populated areas
- People unable to access services and facilities
- students

Acknowledgement: This Healthy Planning Checklist has been adapted from the Healthy Planning Checklist developed for the Central Lincolnshire Local Plan, with permission.

## Contact details

### Planning Policy

Planning Services, Development Management, Place and Regeneration, Northumberland County Council, County Hall, Morpeth, Northumberland, NE61 2EF.

Telephone 0345 600 6400 please leave a message. A member of our team will aim to respond to you within three working days. An officer will advise you if we require further time to respond.

Email [planning@northumberland.gov.uk](mailto:planning@northumberland.gov.uk)

[Visit our Northumberland County Council website](#)

