

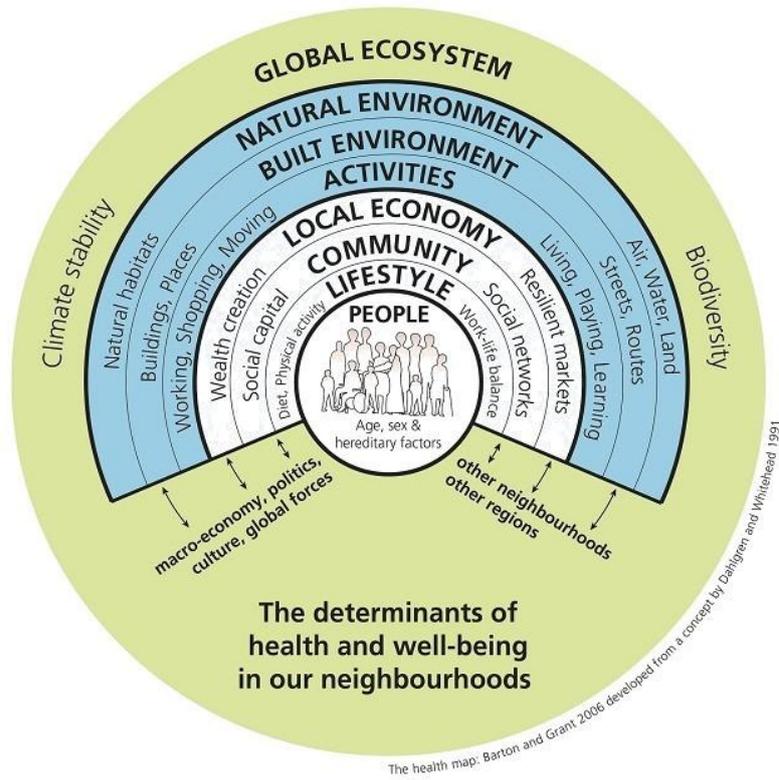
**Rapid Desktop  
Health Impact Assessment  
Toolkit**

## **1.0 Introduction**

- 1.1 The purpose of this toolkit is to provide clear guidance on undertaking a Health Impact Assessment (HIA) on relevant development proposals. A HIA is a requirement for certain developments in the wider Bootle area as set within the Bootle Area Action Plan (see below). It is also recommended that this toolkit can also be used on development proposals outside the Bootle area to demonstrate that health considerations have been taken account of.
- 1.2 This toolkit aims to describe the process for carrying out a HIA and how it fits with the planning application process.

### **What is a Health Impact Assessment?**

- 1.3 A Health Impact Assessment (HIA) provides a systematic approach for assessing the potential impacts of development on the social, psychological, and physical health of communities. Ensuring issues are considered at an early stage in developing planning proposals can lead to improvements in the health of the population. HIAs are designed to consider whether a development proposal might reinforce health inequalities and inadvertently damage people's health or have positive health outcomes for the local community. A HIA should identify how negative impacts can be avoided or mitigated, and positives impacts increased.
- 1.4 A range of social, economic, environmental and cultural factors influence health and wellbeing and are the focus of a HIA. These factors are identified in figure 1 below. Wider (non-local) factors can influence other issues that can ultimately impact on people's health.

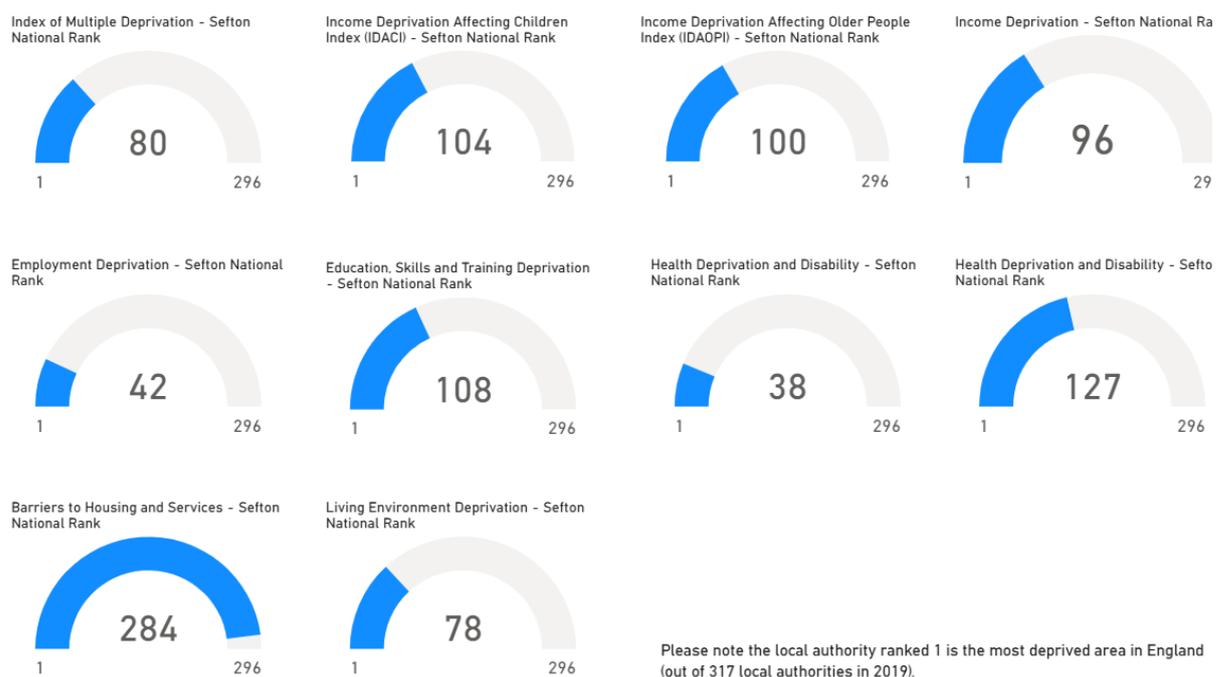


**Figure 1 The Determinants of Health and Well-being in our Neighbourhoods.**

## 2.0 Local Context for Health Impact Assessment

2.1 Sefton's Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2020-2025 (which is currently being reviewed) sets out that improving health and wellbeing is a corporate priority for Sefton. The vision for Sefton in this strategy is *'a confident and connected borough that offers the things we all need to start, live and age well, where everyone has a fair chance of a positive and healthier future'*.

2.2 The 2025 Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) shows that Sefton is ranked 80<sup>th</sup> in the country for deprivation, an improvement since 2019 when the Borough were ranked 58<sup>th</sup>. Figure 2 below shows Sefton's ranking across each index.



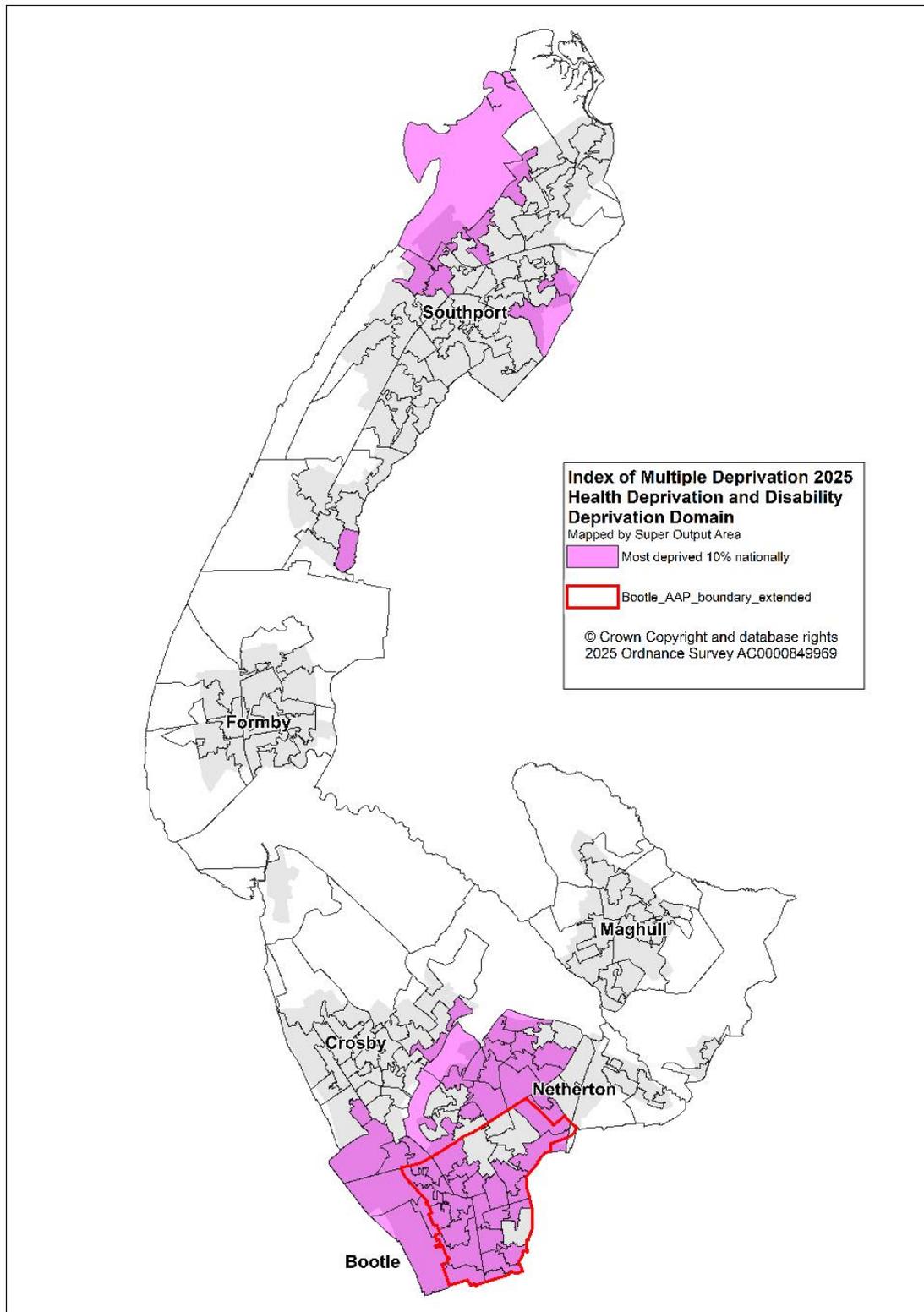
**Figure 2** Indices of National Deprivation, Sefton's rankings

2.3 The category in which Sefton ranks highest in levels of deprivation is Health & Disability, ranking 38<sup>th</sup> most deprived in this category in the country.

2.4 The Index of Multiple Deprivation shows that 25.6% of Sefton's population lives within the 20% most deprived neighbourhoods in England. This is a decrease since 2019 when 30.5% of Sefton's population were in the 20% most deprived neighbourhoods. Five wards within the Borough were among the top 10% most deprived in England, with Linacre, located within the Bootle Area Action Plan area, ranked 10<sup>th</sup> overall (out of 6,785).

2.5 Figure two highlights the Sefton neighbourhoods that are the most deprived 10% nationally in the domain of Health Deprivation and Disability. The majority of the Bootle

Area Action Plan area is comprised of these neighbourhoods with the ward of Linacre placing 9<sup>th</sup> most deprived nationally.



- 2.6 The Sefton relationship between deprivation and BMI categories is strongly positive for severe obesity, followed by obesity; negative for healthy weight and absent for overweight and underweight.
- 2.7 If Sefton were a village of 100 people; 60 would be living with a long-term health condition, 71 adults are overweight or obese, 10 will die from heart disease, 28 will die from cancer, and 38 children are overweight or obese by the time they leave primary school.
- 2.8 The proportion of adults living with obesity has increased in Sefton compared to before the pandemic, with the Borough now being significantly worse than the national average.
- 2.9 Obesity prevalence in children at both Reception and Year 6 age is above the national average for 2024-25, with 24.7% of children aged 10 to 11 years classified as living with obesity.

### 3.0 Policy Context

- 3.1 Bootle Area Action Plan policy BAAP10 ‘Healthy Bootle’ sets out that ‘development should maximise opportunities to improve quality of life to make it easier for people in Bootle to lead healthy, active lifestyles’, introducing the requirement for a Health Impact Assessment for development proposals that meet the threshold.
- 3.2 In accordance with Bootle Area Action Plan policy BAAP10 ‘Healthy Bootle’, all development meeting the threshold set out below will be expected to submit a Health Impact Assessment.

Development	Threshold for HIA
Residential	30+ dwellings
Hotels, Residential Institution, General Industrial; Storage or Distribution; Commercial, Business and Service; Sui generis uses	Buildings of 1,000m <sup>2</sup> or site area of 1 hectare or more

### 4.0 Health Impact Assessment Process

- 4.1 Health Impact Assessments can be incredibly detailed and time-consuming. It is not our intention to introduce an onerous process and to slow the development process down. Therefore, we propose that most proposals that exceed the thresholds above will only have to undertake a rapid, ‘desktop’ assessment using the template provided in Appendix A.

- 4.2 Only on very large schemes (see below) would we expect a more bespoke, rigorous, and detailed HIA process to be put in place. The HIA for these larger schemes should be designed specifically for the proposal in question and agreed with the Council beforehand, ideally as part of pre-application discussions (see section 6).
- 4.3 The thresholds for the very large schemes that should use a bespoke HIA process are:
- 500 dwellings or more
  - Buildings with floorspace of 10,000m<sup>2</sup> or more
  - Sites of 10 hectares or more (if dwelling numbers or floorspace is not known/relevant)
- 4.4 It is considered for the majority of development coming forward in Bootle, it is considered likely that a rapid, desktop HIA will be most suitable, for which the Council has provided this note.
- 4.5 When completing the HIA tool, developers should consider the health impacts throughout the construction period (e.g. noise and air pollution), as well as of the proposed development when completed and in use.

## **5.0 Completing a Rapid, 'Desktop' Assessment**

- 5.1 The table below shows the themes that the Council would expect to be addressed by applicants in a rapid, desktop Health Impact Assessment. The applicant should go through each of themes are determine if the proposal would affect the health issue (either negatively or positively) associated with the theme.
- 5.2 An HIA is expected to be completed in the form of a report, setting out (as headers) each of the themes. The report should provide commentary, supported by evidence, on the affect the health issue and how negative impacts can be removed or reduced and positive impacts increased. It will be helpful if the report includes plain English and use maps and charts where appropriate to make it more accessible.
- 5.3 As already stated, it is not the intention of the Council to introduce an onerous process that would slow the development process down. A desktop review should therefore include information and evidence that is readily available online, as opposed to original research. However, original research and engagement with groups involved with improving health outcomes are likely to be required for a bespoke HIS (see paragraph 4.3 above).
- 5.4 Evidence included in the HIA report should reference relevant plans and data that demonstrates how the proposed development seeks to address each of the identified health issues.

Theme	Health Issue	Key questions
Access to health and social care services and other social infrastructure	Population increases associated with new developments will increase pressure on public services, which are important for both physical and mental health (e.g. education, health, cultural and leisure services)	Will the proposal have a direct impact on public services (e.g. GP surgeries or schools)? If so, which ones and how will this impact be mitigated?
		Does the development have the potential to impact social care services?
Promoting physical activity and active travel	<p>Regular physical activity has been shown to mitigate the health impacts of obesity as well as reduce the risk of various conditions including cardiovascular disease and some cancers. It has been shown to benefit mental health.</p> <p>Good, well-lit routes to local shops and services can encourage people to walk or cycle short trips, and connect to other walking routes. Open space, amenity space and play space are also important in encouraging physical activity.</p>	How will the development promote cycling and walking?
		Does the proposal minimise the need to travel and support sustainable travel?
		Does the public realm allow all people to move easily between buildings and places, including consideration for people with mobility problems or a disability to access buildings and places?
Air Quality, noise and impact on neighbourhood amenity	<p>During the construction phase, both air quality and noise are likely to increase which can affect people living or working near the site.</p> <p>Developments can maximise the quality of air inside the building and immediately outside. Noise is a recognised nuisance in many circumstances, in addition to vibration.</p>	What measures will be put in place to mitigate the adverse impacts of air quality, noise and vibration during demolition/construction?
		<p>Does the design minimise exposure to sources of air and noise pollution for future and existing inhabitants?</p> <p>Are there any land contamination issues affected with the site?</p>
Healthy Food Environment	A poor diet is associated with obesity in younger children, and obesity, chronic illness and early death in adults.	Does the proposal include opportunities to increase access to healthy food?

Theme	Health Issue	Key questions
	<p>Opportunities for food growing, ranging from opportunities on balconies and gardens to the provision of allotments, can promote access to healthy food and can help to improve physical activity and social cohesion.</p>	<p>Will the proposal promote healthy eating and how will access to unhealthy eating be mitigated?</p> <p>Does the proposal provide opportunities for food growing?</p>
<p>Social inclusion and mental health</p>	<p>Inclusive neighbourhoods are those that encourage members of a community to interact with each other, helping reduce social isolation.</p> <p>Developments should consider how they can integrate with the existing environment and communities.</p> <p>Community facilities can be particularly important in promoting social inclusions as well as offering a range of important services. If a community facility is proposed to be lost, its impact on the community should be considered.</p>	<p>Does the development seek to deliver flexible public spaces, streets and buildings that provide opportunity for social interaction?</p> <p>How will the proposal promote the integration of existing and new communities and promote social interaction?</p> <p>Will the proposal result in the loss of a community asset? If so, what alternatives for existing provision of this asset already exists and how accessible is this alternative?</p> <p>Will the proposal improve access to nature?</p> <p>Where appropriate, has the proposal considered design elements to minimise the risk of suicide (e.g. barriers around public roof top areas, or barriers/netting on bridges)</p>

Theme	Health Issue	Key questions
<p>Climate change adaptation and mitigation</p>	<p>Developments can exacerbate the impacts of climate change, for example increasing urban heating or flood risk. This can have negative implications for the population, including for its most vulnerable.</p> <p>New developments must consider that climate change will lead to more extreme weather including extreme heat as well as cold.</p>	<p>How will the proposals ensure that developments are able to adapt to extreme heat and cold?</p>
		<p>Is the proposal in a Flood Risk Zone, or will it lead to an increase in surface water run-off? If so, how will this be mitigated?</p>
		<p>How will proposals increase biodiversity and enhance green and open spaces?</p>
		<p>Does the proposal integrate design features including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Designing ventilation systems for efficient heating and cooling</li> <li>• Using energy-efficient lighting and appliances</li> <li>• Installing water-saving plumbing fixtures</li> <li>• Landscaping with native vegetation and passive solar energy</li> <li>• Minimising harm to the natural habitat</li> </ul>
		<p>Are any buildings, including dwellings, energy efficient?</p>
<p>Healthy Housing</p>	<p>Our indoor environment has a significant impact on our health. Housing with inadequate ventilation or insulation can result in damp, mould, cold or overheating indoors.</p>	<p>Does the proposal comprise accessible and adaptable dwellings?</p>
		<p>Does the proposal comprise the optimum internal space standards, orientation and layout?</p>
		<p>Does the proposal meet the affordable housing and dwelling mix?</p>
		<p>Does the development provide housing choices for people as they age or have different care needs?</p>
		<p>How will the proposal ensure that development has adequate ventilation to prevent damp and mould?</p>

Theme	Health Issue	Key questions
Employment and Training	Work is good for physical and mental health and wellbeing. Job security and simply having a job can increase health and wellbeing as well as making it easier to pursue a healthy lifestyle.	Does the proposal create jobs for local people?
		Does the proposal promote the upskilling of local people?
		Will construction be offered locally (including through the use of contractors and subcontractors)
Reducing Crime	<p>Crime, and the fear of crime, can have a huge impact on a victim's or witness' physical and mental wellbeing.</p> <p>Developments can help reduce crime and anti-social behaviour through crime-preventative design, such as ensuring streets are well-lit and receive "passive surveillance".</p> <p>Concentration of certain uses can promote anti-social behaviour.</p>	Does the proposal incorporate features to help deter crime and promote safety? How has the development helped to "design out" crime?
		Will the proposal lead to a concentration of uses in the local area that could give rise to anti-social behaviour?

## **6.0 Useful Information**

### **Key Contacts**

[Planning.department@sefton.gov.uk](mailto:Planning.department@sefton.gov.uk)

[Public.health@sefton.gov.uk](mailto:Public.health@sefton.gov.uk)

### **Key Data**

Department of Health & Social Care Local Authority Health Profiles

[Local Authority Health Profiles | Fingertips | Department of Health and Social Care](#)

NHS Local Services [NHS services - NHS](#)

### **Pre-application Advice**

[Pre-application advice on development proposals](#)