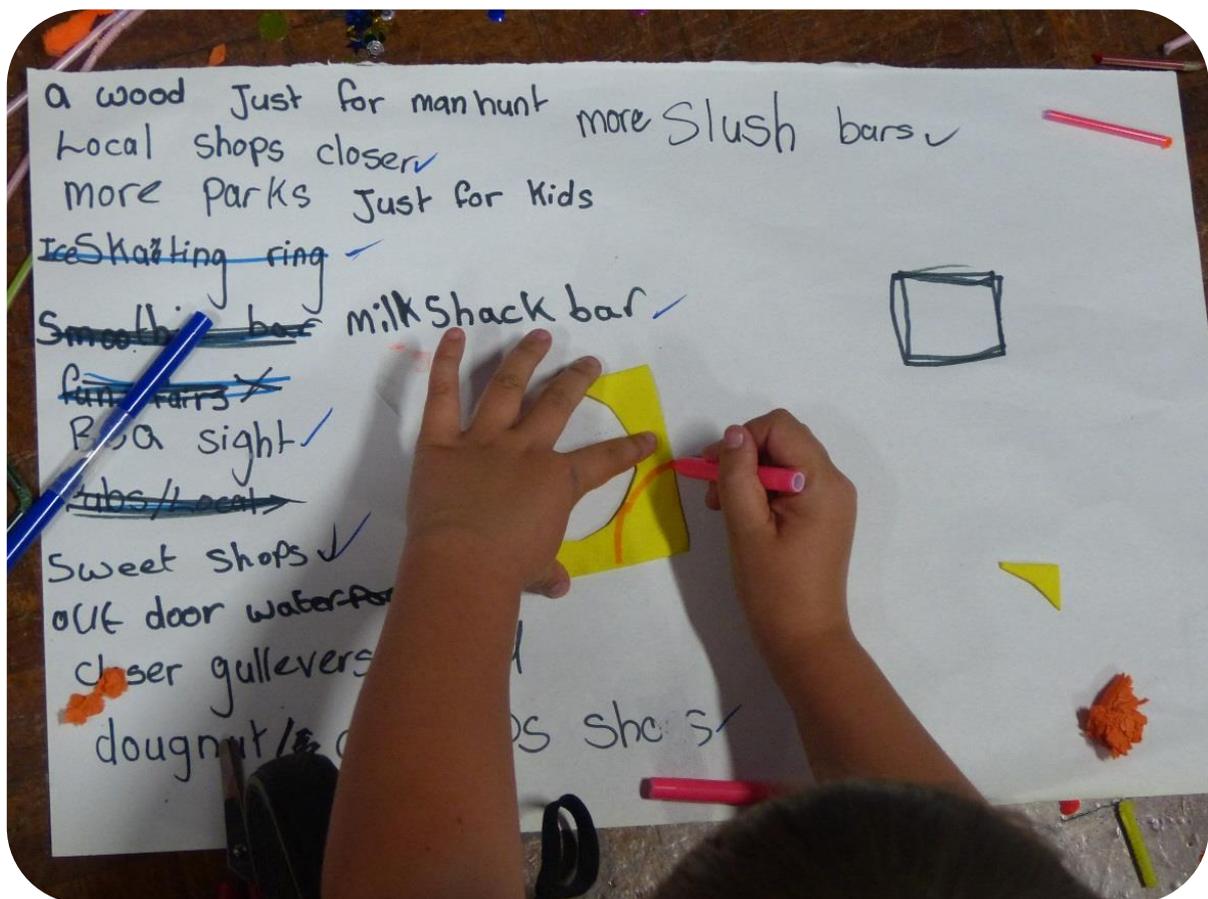


Halton Lea | Healthy Town

Community Insights



Summer 2017

Final Report 17th November 2017

Funded by:



Partners:



Halton Clinical Commissioning Group



Warrington and Halton Hospitals



NHS Foundation Trust

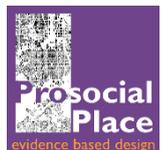
North West
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NHS Foundation Trust



Building a Community of Interest

Creating a Place of Choice

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1. INTRODUCTION

The NHS Healthy New Towns Programme

“Objectives of the Programme

3. Many areas already promote health and wellbeing through “place-shaping”, including through better housing and urban design, and access to well-designed public spaces and facilities. The ambition of this programme is to go beyond existing good practice, developing new and creative approaches that offer the potential to make a substantial contribution to closing the three gaps. It is also to drive closer collaboration between local authorities, planners, developers and the NHS. In our early discussions, we have heard that this collaboration is often lacking or comes too late in the process.

4. More specifically, the programme has three core objectives:

- a.** To develop new and more effective ways of shaping new towns, neighbourhoods and strong communities that promote health and wellbeing, prevent illness and keep people independent;
- b.** To show what is possible when we radically rethink how health and care services could be delivered, freed from the legacy constraints (i.e. existing services) that operate in other areas. This will support the New Models of Care programme by adding to the learning about how health and care services could be integrated to provide better outcomes at the same or lower cost;
- c.** To accomplish the first two objectives in a way that can be replicated elsewhere, making learning available to other national programmes as well as other local areas.”

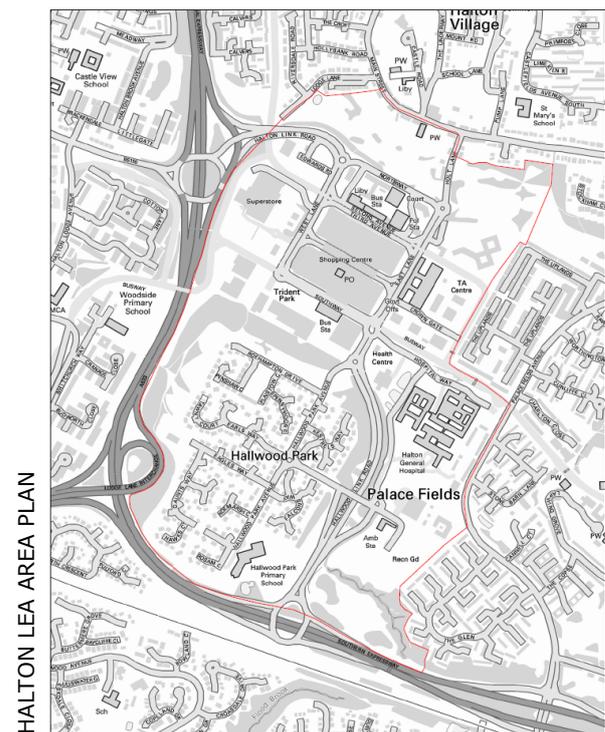
Healthy New Towns Programme Prospectus July 2015

<https://www.england.nhs.uk/?s=healthy+new+towns+programme+prospectus>

“Halton’s Vision

In response to the (NHS) Five Year Forward View to improve local health and integrate health and social care, we are building a connected Healthy New Town – connected by its people; connected by its aspirations; connected by its environment; connected by technology and connected by place. The development at Halton Lea, Runcorn, has the potential to regenerate the area into a thriving community hub, with new opportunities for social and community activities, healthy retail provision and integrated housing, health and social care provision. Our ‘One Halton’ model of care and support is focused on enhancing services in the community and ensuring easy access to those services. We are focusing on developing a health and wellbeing ecosystem, with people at the heart of it, and an infrastructure that supports wellbeing and health.”

<https://www.england.nhs.uk/ourwork/innovation/healthy-new-towns/halton-lea-runcorn/>



Community Insight Programme

Approach

Prosocial Place has pioneered a health focussed place-making approach to urban design, consistent with the New Economics Foundation's **Five Ways to Wellbeing**. Following this method, our primary aim for this engagement plan is to develop a collective understanding of how the urban environment can be improved for the benefit of the local community's health and wellbeing. Working with Halton based **Wellbeing Enterprises CIC**, we designed and delivered six workshops with young people and adults in Halton Lea to provide baseline insights into community need.

Our overall approach aims to initiate a people-centred **place-making** process and, to maintain long-term **social sustainability**, these principles need also to be embedded in **place-stewardship**.

Our technique is to systematically build place-making skills in communities. Through activities and **co-design** workshops, it enables everyone to 'think' like a place-maker by considering their own and others' needs from places.

The process of co-design has clear wellbeing benefits. Being so immersed in creating better **'future-place'** develops a sense of optimism, co-operation and responsibility. These key characteristics need to be nurtured if **'futures'** are to be changed for the better, and places transformed into assets for **'thrival'**.

It is especially important to capture the needs of **young people**. Research consistently shows that the effects of growing up in deprived urban environments increases the likelihood of developing mental and physical health difficulties in later life.

Conventional urban designers focus their attention on the **'built environment'** and on it being **'well-designed'** – but what does this phrase mean and how can it be measured? This ambiguous phrase, like **'good design'**, is an acknowledged weakness in the **National Planning Policy Framework**.

Our work emphasises the social landscape of the public realm which we call the **'living environment'**. Using our concept **"well-design"**, instead of 'well-designed', allows us to measure and monitor the effects of design interventions and stewardship on human flourishing.

Place-making principles, strategies and stewardship must be grounded in a substantive knowledge of wider urban living matters. By using established wellbeing guidance to inform place-making, means that future focussed **'community thrival'** is more likely.



Like the NHS maxim: "no decision about me without me"; 'co-production' means doing 'with' and not doing 'to' communities.

The Concept of Community Wellbeing

Prosocial Place director, Prof Rhiannon Corcoran, oversees the work of a consortium of four universities and five civic organisations that comprises the *Community Wellbeing Evidence Programme*, part of the government advisory **What Works Centre for Wellbeing** (<http://whatworkswellbeing.org>).

An online survey to gather insight about how professionals and policy-makers understood the term ‘*community wellbeing*’, revealed that the concept is multi-faceted, incorporating:

- **People** - strong networks of relationships and support between those in a community, including close relationships, friendships, neighbours and acquaintances.
- **Place** - It is facilitated by physical surroundings that support flourishing
- **Power** - when people can act to improve things in, and influence decisions about, their community.
- **Social Capital** - a strong sense of trust in, belonging to and feeling of safety in an inclusive and just community.

To achieve and maintain strong levels of community wellbeing, and sustain good places where communities thrive, people need an accessible mechanism to enable them to play a direct and active part in the ongoing **stewardship** of their places.

In contrast to consultation, co-production can prevent ‘**post-regeneration relapse**’ by actively immersing communities in decisions and actions about their futures. That includes the prospects of the existing community, their children, incomers and neighbouring communities.

An important element of community wellbeing is ‘**having a say**’ - the co-production of decisions and actions.



Co-Production Activities

We prepared a best practice 'engagement' plan in 2016 to support the development of Halton Lea HNT. The work agreed and undertaken in 2017 is an initial engagement exercise based on this plan. Through this we have established a baseline of community issues and ideas, which should inform ongoing community co-production.

Planned Activities (2016):

- **Photo-Voice** - *Capturing Salient Images*. Inviting people to upload photographs and comments on local issues and desirable or undesirable characteristics etc. This enables people of all ages and backgrounds to capture and share what's important to them about their place.
- **Place Discussions** - *Scoping Local Knowledge*. Open community days to gather insights into peoples 'lived experience' in Halton and how we can improve it in terms of wellbeing through place-making.
- **Co-Design Workshops** - *Fabricating the Future Together*. Workshops staged over four weeks to allow immersion in the place-making process, promoting new skills, relationships and confidence to naturally emerge. We begin by tapping 'knowledge' about place, and move to 'feelings', 'aspiration', 'potentials' and discussions about how these can be practically 'delivered' and 'sustained'. From this, a **collective vision of desired place and community** is produced.

Community world views can be conservative, especially when it comes to perceived abilities to influence change with a pervasive belief that "it is someone else's responsibility".

Sequencing workshops over time, and involving people in a co-design process, can change views and capture a greater breadth and depth of understanding for all involved.

Planned Evaluation (2016)

We proposed methods to evaluate the co-design workshops that would comprise a meaningful, sensitive body of information about the process and wellbeing outcomes of co-operative place-making. Tailored to suit the age of participants, data would be collected in a minimally intrusive way.

For under-18's, it would be qualitative, collected via group discussions, recorded thoughts on post-it notes and simple descriptive words or phrases gathered at the end of the sessions. For adults, we would have collected qualitative and quantitative data to provide a standardised assessment of change in wellbeing, using:

- the **Short Warwick Edinburgh Scale for Wellbeing**
- the short form of the **Scales of Psychological Wellbeing**
- the **Sense of Belonging to Neighbourhood Scale**

These standardised measures enable us to examine not only broad change to subjective wellbeing, but allow a deeper understanding of what psychological changes have arisen, and how involvement in the co-design process has changed the participants' *sense of allegiance to the area*.

While designed to be light-touch, it has the precision to identify where and how change for the better occurs. A robust evaluation would provide a very valuable resource to support the Halton HNT team, as well as potential cutting edge peer reviewed research.

The Delivered Activities (2017):

Between July and September, we ran six half-day workshops. The first two were with pupils from **Ormiston Bollingbroke Academy** (35), with the following format:

- **Feet Finding:** we asked the pupils to draw a map of how they got to school that morning. Partly an ice-breaker to demonstrate that they could all communicate graphically, but also to illustrate the differences in what they noticed about the world dependent upon their mode of travel.
- **Discussion on Key Issues:**
 - *What do we understand about health and wellbeing?*
 - *How do the places that we live in effect these things?*
 - *What would make a good place for everyone?*
- **Designing an Island Neighbourhood:** we asked the pupils to design and make a model of a neighbourhood that 'would make a good place for everyone' based on the discussion above. The 'site' we gave them was the Mersey basin between the old and new Runcorn bridges. While it removes the difficult constraints of an existing place in terms of location, scale and accessibility, it replicates Halton Lea well – but they could start from scratch.
- **Summary Discussion:** between groups on how these ideas could be taken forward.



The third workshop was held with pupils at **Hallwood Park Primary** (38) with the following format:

- **Feet Finding:** we again asked the pupils to draw a map of how they got to school that morning.
- **Experiences:** we opened a discussion about their experiences of playing out in the neighbourhood, what they liked to do and what new things would they like to do. The teachers and facilitators shared their childhood play experiences – there were many similarities.
- **Designing an Ideal Outdoor Play Environment:** we asked the children to work in pairs to design their play space on a cardboard panel. We gently led them to think about the kind of things that make good places for children, including formal and informal play spaces, school gardens, access to nature etc. We steered them away from special occasion things like fairgrounds, but nothing wrong with a dinosaur or 'alien' sculpture park where they can play and learn.
- **Bringing the Work Together:** we brought all their individual panels together to create a geodesic dome – something memorable for them about co-production and building shelter.



Halton Lea | Healthy Town | Community Insights Programme

The fourth and fifth workshops we held with **adults** (50) in Halton Lea Library with the following format:

- **Feet Finding:** we intended asking the participants to draw a map of Halton Lea. Partly an ice-breaker to demonstrate that they could all communicate graphically, but also to discover their definition of the neighbourhood and cognitive map of how it worked for them. (We couldn't run the exercise with either group on the day).
- **Discussion on Key Issues:**
 - *What do we understand about health and wellbeing?*
 - *What do you like about where you live?*
 - *What things would make Halton Lea a healthy place for everyone?*
- **Designing a Healthy Neighbourhood:** we asked the participants to plan and set an agenda for a healthy neighbourhood in Halton Lea based on the discussion above. For this exercise, we gave them a site plan of the Halton Lea HNT area and removed constraints by telling them that they could change anything they wanted to in the plan - they could effectively start designing from scratch.
- **Summary Discussion:** we led a debate between the groups on how these ideas could be implemented, and discussed how they would like to be involved in doing that as the HNT plans develop.

Through these focused workshops we can only introduce people to the process and not expect a deeper impact in terms of their wellbeing or engagement with 'place'.



The sixth workshop we ran as a **Health Summit** with **key stakeholders** (27) including politicians/ authorities/ third-sector/ health/ housing/ business professionals. The purpose of the event was to progress a collective concept of health and wellbeing in the context of place-making with the following format:

- **Area Walking Tour:** we took participants on a circular route of about 1.6 miles, representing different issues and aspects of the area, which allowed for some perspective taking.
- **Introductions from key Stakeholders:**
 - *David Parr, CEO Halton Council*
 - *Mel Pickup, CEO WHH NHS Trust*
 - *Rachel Toms, NHS England*
- **Discussion on Key Issues:**
 - *What do you like about where you live?*
 - *How do places effect our health and wellbeing?*
 - *What things would make Halton Lea a healthy place for everyone?*
- **Presentation:** findings and insights from the Community Engagement programme.
- **Presentation** – learning from Yangzhou Self Care City.
- **Design & Visioning Exercise:** we asked participants to develop a strategy for Halton Lea Healthy New Town based on their discussions and presentations above. Using the same base as the adult workshops, the participants prepared a collage of their ideas.
- **Feedback and final Remarks:** the 'client' was asked to lead this discussion on the way forward for Halton HNT.



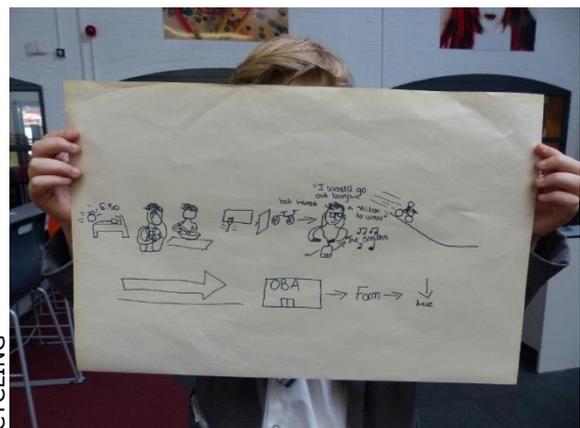
2. YOUNG PEOPLES WORKSHOPS

During July 2017, 73 young local people ranging in age from 9-18, attending either **Ormiston Bollingbroke Academy** (N= 35) or **Hallwood Park Primary School** (N=38), were engaged in half-day workshops. We found the young people in both schools to be interested, reflective and well-mannered – very co-operative with each other. They had a good understanding of what it means to be fit and healthy, with the secondary school students displaying a well-developed comprehension of broad issues to do with public health, community and wellbeing. The students enjoyed the workshops, expressing enthusiasm about being asked for ideas about the development of their town. As anticipated, the creative part of the workshops was enjoyed the most - the design of an island for health and wellbeing (Academy) or the creation of a geodesic dome constructed from panels that the students designed featuring ideas for places of health and wellbeing (Primary).

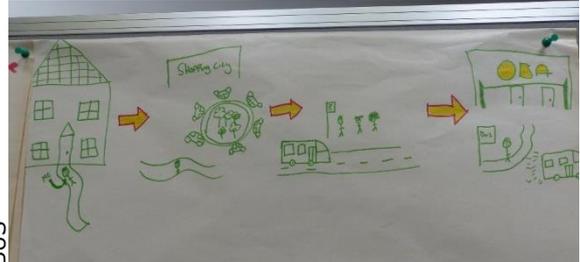
Ormiston Bollingbroke Academy

The workshops were functionally divided into 2 halves, with the first part focussing on the collection of information on attitudes and beliefs about health, wellbeing and their relationship to place. The second half focussed on creative solutions to place-making for health and wellbeing.

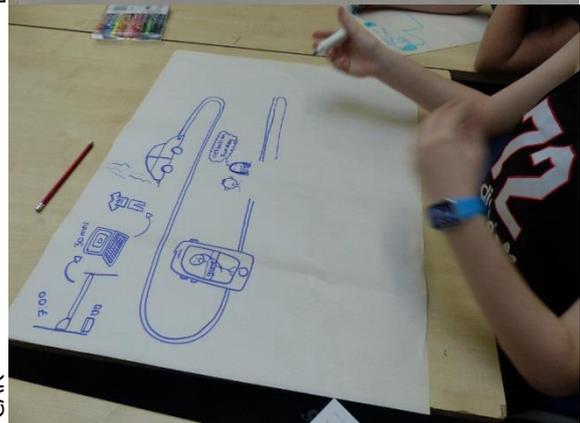
Through the **feet finding** exercise, it was noticeable that many students start the day on a computer, and make their journey to school on the phone or listening to music with earphones. Whether walking, cycling, using public transport or car, there was little notice taken of the environments they passed through on these mornings. Unsurprisingly, walkers interacted more with their environment and tended to create more detailed maps.



CYCLING



BUS



CAR



WALKING

Thematic Analysis

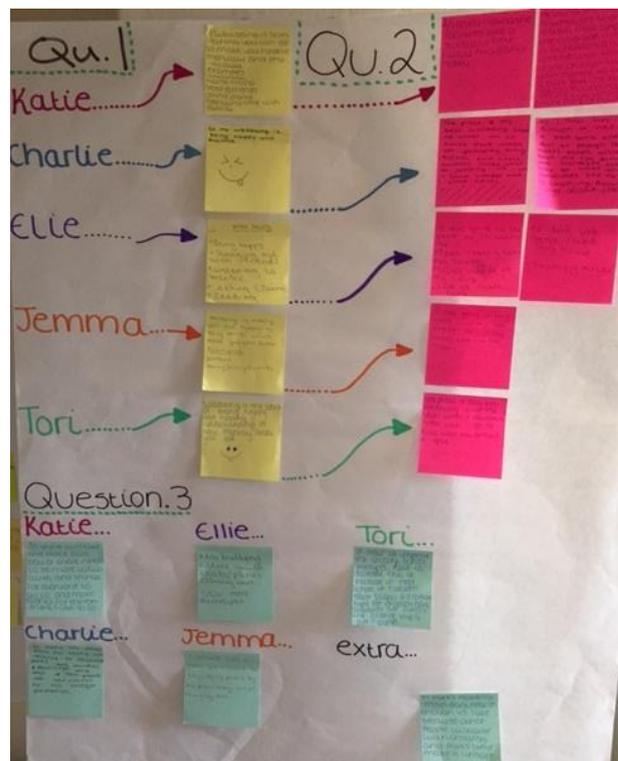
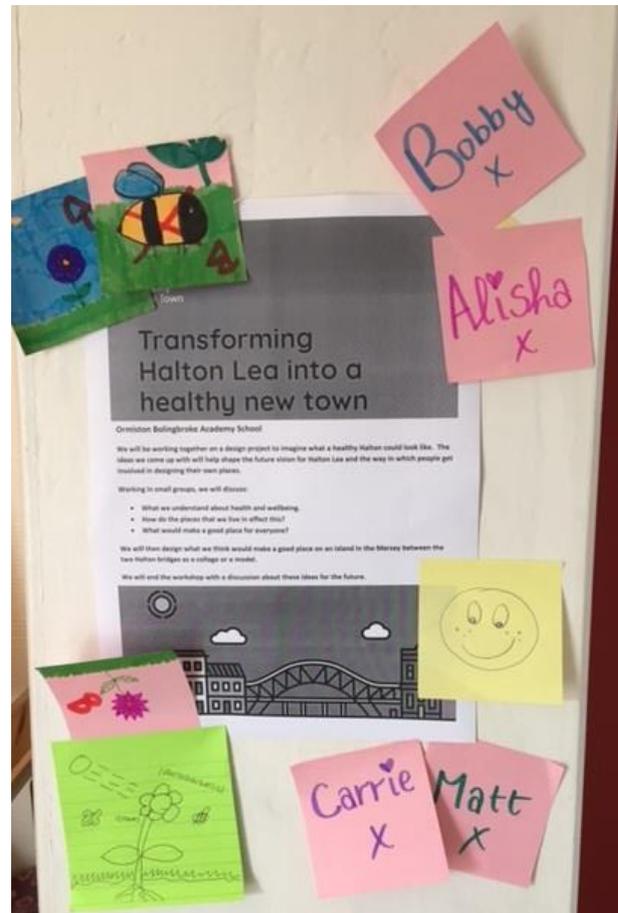
During the information gathering task we engaged the young people in discussion of three key questions and asked that they record their thoughts, feelings and ideas on *post-it* notes so that we could represent their views and ideas within the report. The thematic content analysis that follows is based upon the content of these recorded observations. The questions we discussed were as follows:

- ***What do you understand about health and wellbeing?***
- ***How do the places we live in effect our health and wellbeing?***
- ***What would make a good place for everyone?***

Initial organisation of the written comments made it clear that these questions were responded to in the following general manner:

- *General notions, understandings and principles of health and wellbeing; activities that support H&W; things we ought to do to maintain H&W.*
- *Place-based issues or barriers that prevent the pursuance or maintenance of H&W.*
- *Place-based interventions that could promote H&W across the lifespan.*

Working in groups of 4 or 5, the students were simply asked to discuss the questions and stick their responses to sheets of A1 paper for collection by the team. Each group took different approaches to this task with most producing informal displays. However, this was not always the case. Testament to the depth of understanding of the concepts being discussed and the inter-linking of the questions, some groups took a more structured approach to their work.



Question 1: What do You Understand About Health and Wellbeing?

Overall, **11 substantive themes** emerged from the 233 responses to this question and each of these have implications that can support recommendations to do with core elements that might feature as part of a development aimed at promoting the health and wellbeing of the young people of Halton Lea.

1. Statements of Understanding.

Statements ranged from the general:

- *"Mental + Physical Health"*
- *"Feeling Good and Happy"*
- *"Looking after your body and mental health"*
- *"Health is important to keep us sane and positive"*
- *"Having a good balance."*

...to the more personal and nuanced:

- *"To be safe, fit and being positive"*
- *"Having a healthy balance of work so you're not stressed out"*
- *"People need to be aware of others' emotions. Often people judge others based on their different attitudes, some can't help it"*
- *"Health and wellbeing is important to help people be themselves. They need to be themselves but are afraid to because they want to fit in."*
- *"The important things are to make you and your body happy mentally and physically and to make yourself improve and make you healthy."*
- *"Sometimes we can feel down and alone just because nobody really understands bad emotions and how to cope."*
- *"Wellbeing is the confidence you have for yourself thinking you have to fit in."*

...and the more formal or political:

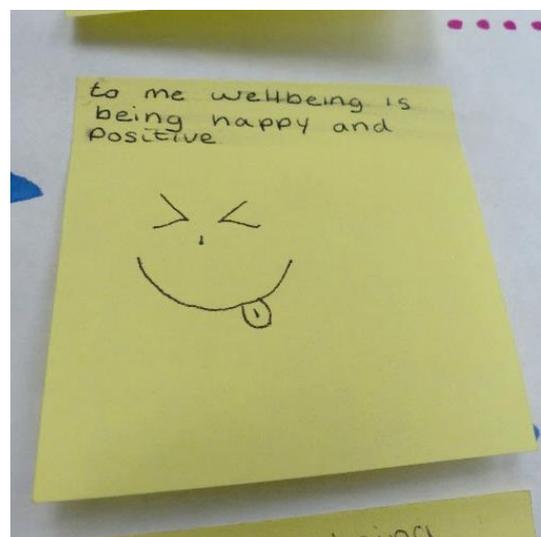
- *"Health is a state of physical, mental and social wellbeing"*
- *"Physical health and mental health are equal but not equally balanced in society"*

- *"A lot of people, including the government, often don't take some cases of mental health seriously. More information should be taught about this to people."*

Implications

Embedded within these 21 statements (9.0% of the total number of responses to Qu. 1) was a strong sense that physical and mental health are equally important. Furthermore, a clear appreciation of the need for emotional self-expression was apparent and equally, so was the need for others to tolerate these expressions of 'difference'. In relation to this and reflecting teenage development, pressure to conform was seen as a potential barrier to the achievement of H & W.

The link between health and wellbeing and self-improvement was also clearly expressed. A well-place vision and ethos reflecting tolerance and diversity which can support, through services and provisions, the representation of views and the ability to have one's voice heard will go some way to addressing these needs.



2. Health and Wellbeing = Happiness and Positivity.

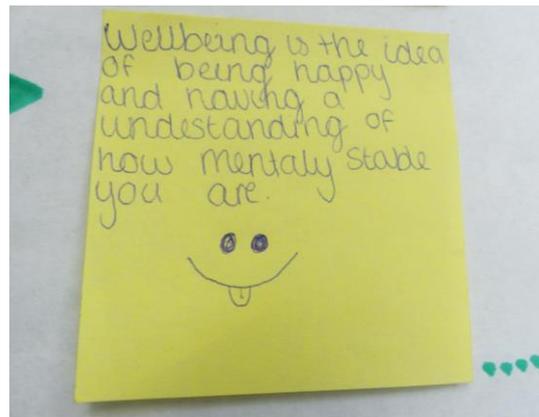
It was clear that in these young people's minds that a state of health and wellbeing could be summarised as happiness and maintaining a positive world view.

- "☺ Happiness ☺"
- "Mind set"
- "Healthy mind set"
- "Positive thoughts"
- "Making yourself happy ☺"
- "The importance of wellbeing is your mindset and how people effect it."
- "Being around positive people can make us feel better. Helping others to be more positive is good too."
- "Functioning well – focus on the positives."
- "Health is about your mind and if it has positive thoughts and happiness."
- "Confidence" was mentioned too.

Implications

The 17 recorded comments (7.3 % of the total number of responses to Qu. 1) make it clear that in the minds of young people, hedonic views of wellbeing where the focus is on the pursuance of happiness dominate the perspective. The dominant idea of the need for a positive mind-set perhaps reflects the formal education provided by the school in relation to wellbeing.

It is notable that there is no mention in the dataset of purpose in life or a meaningful life or of a sense of mastery over their environment – though the single mention of confidence may reflect mastery. Perhaps these notions of 'eudaimonic' wellbeing, reflecting self-actualisation, are naturally experienced only during adulthood. However, their link to life aspiration and personal growth is important and so the lack of them in this dataset could be significant.



3. Choice, diversity and expression.

Although, as evidenced in 2 above, the group endorsed a hedonic understanding of wellbeing, there was nevertheless an acknowledgement that wider societal factors played a part in enabling health and wellbeing. This was shown in single word responses such as:

- "Politics"
- "Passion"
- "Culture"
- "Communication"

The importance of *individuality, diversity* and *choice* was aired as was the need to be able to express them:

- "Making your own choices"
- "Own opinions – freedom of speech"
- "Health and wellbeing is important because it helps people's sexuality come out"
- "Different race"
- "Ranting and venting"

The importance of having a "comfort zone" and of "stepping out of comfort zone" was referred to by 2 individuals.

Implications

Within these 12 responses (5.15 % of the total number of responses to Qu. 1) are clues to the young people's understanding of how the socio-political landscape can affect them as developing people. Thus, the governance and politics of H&W is important, and cropping up again is the need for opportunities to express individuality, something the HNT could support.

4. Formal provisions – healthcare, education and media

The role of the NHS and treatment provision was acknowledged under this theme:

- “NHS”
- “Hospital”
- “Medication”
- “Medicines”

Here, a focus on the future was evident in a few through reference to:

- “Skills”
- “Education”
- “Jobs”

The importance of access to “social media” was mentioned by 2 participants and the need for “Wi-Fi” by a third. Reference was made to the natural environment and to the importance of retail amenities: “Shopping, getting new things”

Implications

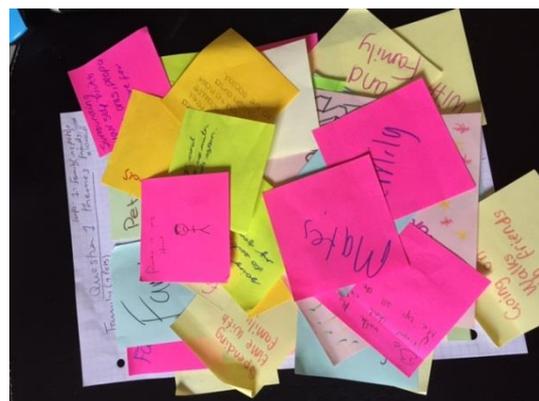
Amongst these 13 responses (5.6% of the total number of responses to Qu. 1) we see an awareness of the need for accessible treatment of ill-health but also a sense that successful management of their future H&W rests upon access to key socio-economic factors. Good quality digital infrastructure is also important to these ‘digital natives’.

5. People – good relationships with family and friends

When thinking turned more directly to what these young people needed as individuals to function well, this theme was by far the most populated in terms of written responses. These varied from single word referents (and included “Pets” referred to specifically by 4 young people) to explanatory statements.

- “Family”
- “Brother and sister”
- “Spending time with my family”
- “Going out to eat with my family”
- “Friends”
- “Mates”

- “friends in my street ☺”
- “talking and meeting up with friends often”
- “Be with my friend that cheer me up all the time”
- “Going on walks with my friends”
- “My family sticks together through hard times. Also push each other into work and school and get high grades.”
- “My family and friends make me feel happy because they make me laugh and talk to me about my feelings”
- “having people you can talk to”
- “Healthy relationships”
- “Family and friends would make me feel happy because its good to have a laugh and to be social”
- “Surrounding yourself with loved ones, people who care for you.”



Implications

From these 39 responses (16.7 % of the total number of responses to Qu. 1), the implications for the development of a healthy new town is very clear. Family and friends seem important in equal measure but have different purposes. Explanatory statements about family seem mostly to reflect reliability, predictability, and support while explanations about the importance of friends for H&W seem to be more about maintaining happiness, having a laugh and sharing feelings.

Young people need opportunities and facilities to enable them to spend time with the people they care about. Inclusive, flexible and accessible social spaces and an ethos of togetherness are both important here.

6. Hobbies and Passions

As would be expected a variety of hobbies and interests were referred to here as important to maintaining health and wellbeing including “because they allow you to do things that you love” or having “something you can focus on”. These included:

“fishing”, “reading”, “volunteering”, “religion”, “travelling”, “games”, “drawing and “watching movies”.

By far the most commonly referred to passion was music where reference was made to listening to music or playing music by 13 participants:

- “Listening to music to be happy”
- “Listening to music”
- “Singing”
- Playing my saxophone”
- “Playing my guitar”
- “Playing piano and drums”

Implications

In total 35 responses (15.0 % of the total number of responses to Qu. 1) referred to the importance of hobbies, interests and passions for health and wellbeing. The prominence of music and music-making to the H&W of these young people is very clear in this data. A healthy new town should provide opportunities to indulge in these passions and might use music more proactively as a means to promoting wellbeing in this age group.

7. An active lifestyle

Not surprisingly, a theme around active lifestyle emerged with general statements about the importance of keeping fit offered alongside indications of the kinds of activities that the members of this young people’s group already engage in:

- “Sports”
- “To keep fit keeping yourself positive”
- “keep fit to feel good about yourself”
- “Keep fit and active despite conditions”

- “Good body healthy”
- “Exercise is really good for well-being -> improves mental health as well as physical”
- “Getting involved with a sports team or other clubs will enhance your well-being”

Dance, football, going to the gym and cycling were the most commonly referred to activities:

- “Go outside and play football, because I really enjoy playing football”
- “I do dance to help me keep fit but also for my well-being because it helps me express what I am feeling. I also go to the gym to keep fit.”

Other activities mentioned were:

- “Boxing for more confidence”
- “Going to the skate park everyday”
- “Trampolining”
- “Going for walks through the woods or along the canal”

Implications

35 responses (15.0 % of the total number of responses to Qu. 1) referred to the need to be able to pursue an active lifestyle for health and wellbeing. The importance of place infrastructure and design is key to enabling this with cycle lanes, walkability, easy access to natural assets and accessible facilities all playing a part.

8. Healthy AND Tasty food.

“Healthy food”; ‘Good food; “a healthy diet”; “eating healthy” were among the general statements endorsing the importance of this theme to the health and wellbeing of young people. There was reference to need for a “well balanced diet” and advice to “drink water” and “eat carrots and apples too”.

Interestingly, and offering a new interpretation to a balanced diet, several responses highlight the importance of eating what you like or enjoy is an important pathway to happiness.

- “I eat food to make me happy!”
- “I eat food to make me happy!!!”

- *"A nice cup of tea."*
- *"Food is important for wellbeing -> eat what is good for you as well as what makes you happy ☺"*
- *"having a healthy diet balance. Chocolate & fruit"*

Implications

Of the 23 responses (9.9% of the total number of responses to Qu 1) that fell into this theme, the emphasis on having access to healthy food provision has clear implications. Healthy food choices should be promoted within the food outlets (supermarkets and take-aways) of the healthy new town. However, a balance needs to be struck in acknowledgment of the role that eating what you enjoy has a function in maintaining hedonic wellbeing in young people.

9. Rest, Relaxation and Restoration

It is easy to forget the importance of rest and relaxation for health and wellbeing which tends to focus on activity and not passivity in the context of what the living environment can facilitate. It is acknowledged that adequate rest is important for teenagers who can often feel under pressure due to school work, for example.

Under this theme we find reference to *"sleeping ☺"; "have enough sleep"; "Good night's sleep"; "Not moving from my bed!"; and "Weekends in bed!!!"*

- *"Holidays!" were the other major sub-theme here:*
- *"Days out"*
- *"Laying in the sun and feeling the warmth on my face"*
- *"Laying on the beach relaxing and listening to the sea"*
- *"Going on holiday is a great stress relief – not having to worry about anything."*

Implications

The implications derived from these 19 responses (8.15% of the total number of responses to Qu. 1) centre on the ability of a healthy new town to provide solace and to

deliver the peace and tranquillity that facilitate restorative relaxation. While it is believed that certain spaces have greater restorative qualities than others (e.g. blue and green spaces) the evidence to support the claim that these environments benefit everyone is not as strong as might be supposed. However, well-maintained, accessible restorative spaces and a tranquil night time environment/ economy would be appropriate recommendations coming out of this dataset.

10. Being hygienic and clean

The 7 responses categorised within this theme harken back to the origins of the public health movement and profession by referring to the importance to health and wellbeing of personal hygiene and environment cleanliness.

- *"Hygiene"*
- *"Good Hygiene"*
- *"Keeping Clean"*
- *"Get a shower so I am not dirty"*
- *"Taking a shower / bath"*
- *"Home conditions that are clean and acceptable keep you MENTALLY healthy as well as physically."*
- *"Health is important for life. Life would be significantly blander and shorter without it. It requires effort, exercise and the right food. Home conditions are important. In my case, my home is clean and constantly cleaned. In others, it is disease filled and filthy."*

Implications

Though fewer responses reflect the theme of cleanliness, (N=7; 3% of the total number of responses to Qu. 1) the implications for place-based promotion of health and wellbeing seem clear. It is not enough to provide the initial infrastructure and services to support health and wellbeing if their ongoing stewardship/ management fails, leading to unclean, dishevelled and neglected buildings and spaces. In this way, elements of place that began as assets can become *'toxic assets'*.

11. Barriers to health and wellbeing.

This final substantive theme focussed on social and environmental factors whose presence prevents good health and wellbeing. Those specifically referred to included behaviours such as “Smoking” and “Alcohol”. “Disease” and “Illness” were also referred to here. “Pollution” and “not recycling” were specific environmental issues referred to as impacting negatively on health and wellbeing. In terms of social factors, “loneliness” was referred to and, again, with reference made to the negative consequences of not fitting in:

- ***“People try to fit in with the “Popular” children and they hurt themselves”***

The negative consequences of social media use were also referred to here by one participant:

- ***“Social media has an impact on everyone’s lives because it makes us feel insecure looking at celebrities and people who are skinny and pretty. Makes it look like competition”***

The dominant factor referred to here, however, was social class and lack of money that was picked up in 7 responses:

- ***“Low class”***
- ***“Social class”***
- ***“Inheritance”***
- ***“Money! (-)”***
- ***“They have a lot of money and they are healthy”***

Implications

The implications embedded within the 18 responses (7.7% of the total number of responses to Qu. 1) that fall under this theme are to do with avoiding the barriers to health and wellbeing. While health behaviours can be promoted by well-targeted campaigns, it is widely acknowledged that behaviour change at scale is difficult to achieve and sustain. The societal issues that these young people were picking up on reflect a desire for equity and equality of access to the resources deemed essential to enable a healthy lifestyle and to

function well. The ethos or vision of the Healthy New Town should reflect these concerns.



Question 2: How do the places we live in effect our health and wellbeing?

Seven substantive themes emerged from within the responses of the young people to this question. As mentioned already, by and large these responses tended to about the barriers that they experience in Halton to sustaining their health and wellbeing.

Before describing the themes, it is pertinent to note the statements provided by 2 young people that warn against over-dogmatic or rigid approaches to understanding the question:

- "YOUR ENVIRONMENT DOES NOT HAVE TO DEFINE YOU OR YOUR HAPPINESS"
- "McDonalds is not all about food"

1. Noticing Mess

Most prominent within this theme were the single word referents:

- "litter"
- "Graffiti"
- "Vandalism"

Explanatory statements included:

- *"A way the environment / community effect is in some areas its hard to have fun with friends outdoors because facilities like parks are being destroyed by graffiti and litter."*
- *"Also the litter can be a big problem in certain areas causing wildlife to be harmed"*

Other specific issues mentioned were:

- "Shards of glass"
- "Cigarette stumps"
- "Chewy stuck to the floor"
- "dog poo everywhere"

Several young people picked up on the quality of the buildings and the public realm:

- "Dull and rundown"
- "Not very appealing"
- "Empty buildings – refurbishment"
- "Bus stops are trampy"
- "Smashed buildings"
- "Abandoned houses. Rough"

Implications

It is telling that 24 statements (26.9% of all responses to Qu. 2) referred to incivilities and place management as being an important way that place effects health and wellbeing. These statements were direct references to how these young people find living in this area of Halton. It is therefore clear that an important element of a healthy new town for young people would be to insure a sustainable regime of place stewardship/ management that deals effectively with regular incivilities and that prioritises the quality and cleanliness of the public realm. Such visual cues to deprivation have a way of priming certain behaviours and attitudes that come out in the themes that follow.

2. Scared and Vulnerable

There were clear expressions of fear that was significant enough to impact on health and wellbeing from this group of young people:

- "Not feeling safe"
- "People are scary"
- "Not being able to go out at night"
- "Scared to go out"
- "Afraid to go out sometimes"
- "Fear of what is around the corner from you"

The presence of drugs and gangs were major concerns:

- "Walking in the street and seeing people drunk or high on drugs"
- "Exposure to drugs/ drug abuse"
- "Drug dealers"
- "Get rid of people that do drugs"
- "Gangs"

- *"Intimidating groups of people hanging around"*
- *"Children's parks that get taken over by groups of older people"*

There was one expression of concern regarding the prevalence of paedophilia:

- *"paedophiles are overtaking Runcorn"*

Implications

That feeling scared and vulnerable while out in Halton is a prominent issue for the area's young people must be of concern (N=18 statements: 20.2% of total responses to Qu. 2).

Understanding and addressing crime, gang culture and drug use is, of course, complex and difficult but, in terms of place design and management, certain key maxims are important. These include designed-in natural surveillance, adequate lighting and sustained upkeep accompanied by a place ethos and governance that aspires to better.



3. Consequences of Living in a Deprived Place

A range of statements were provided under this theme from reference to *"homelessness"*, *"material deprivation"* and *"inequality"* to the longer-term effects of social class:

- *"Norms and values from the area"*
- *"Social class -> can't get out"*
- *"Social exposure -different groups affect your outlook on your life"*
- *"Living in deprived areas limit people to go on and be successful, and therefore happy in the world"*

- *"Money affects wellbeing. The world revolves around money and in poor areas people afford less -> poor wellbeing"*

Further to this there was some mention of:

- *"Stigma"*
- *"getting a bad reputation from living in Runcorn"*

Implications

The 14 statements that form this theme (15.7% of responses to Qu. 2) suggest that for these young people recognising or being regarded as coming from a deprived place has consequences for health and wellbeing. Feeling trapped and experiencing stigma as a result of where you live has repercussions that can be partially mediated by the governance, values and mutual aspirations of local government and its people.

Young people come to recognise their own deprivation partly by comparing their place to other places (i.e. deprivation as a relative and partly subjective concept). Clearly the appearance of the environment is important in this regard and therefore in setting aspirations and ambitions.

4. Feeling Social Pressures

Though related to *"Consequences of Living in a Deprived Place"*, the statements collected under this theme referred more directly to personal experience of what's expected, and of being judged. Statements included:

- *"Social influences"*
- *"social pressures"*
- *"Judgement"*
- *"The people you hang around with"*
- *"The estate you are brought up in"*
- *"Society - whenever anything good happens we all have to fit in with everyone -whatever they want we want"*
- *"Being in a place where everyone knows you"*
- *"Can't go anywhere without somebody knowing who you are."*

Question 3: What would make a good place for everyone?

The students produced a lot of ideas in the form of place interventions in response to this question, indicating a **solid appreciation of the importance of place** to their own and others' health and wellbeing.

1. Over-arching Principles

When asked to consider **what would make a good place for everyone**, many of the young people referred to general notions of fair and just society. Statements of acceptance and judgement were common as were ones about equality:

- *"A good place to be would be a friendly place. There should be activities for local people. And also, people to accept other people for who they are:*
 - Sexuality
 - Religion
 - Gender
 - Individual
 - everything not to be a camp
 - type of music they listen to"
- *"No-one will judge each other on what they wear. Everyone could do what they wanted"*
- *"Stop judging people so much"*
- *"LGBT acceptance"*
- *"No sexism"*
- *"No racism!"*
- *"Have diversity (different colours and race)"*
- *"Everybody to appreciate individuality. Better places shops/buildings. A lot of things were free"*
- *"Equal opportunities"*
- *"Same amount of money so we all feel equal"*
- *"Houses should be equal"*
- *"All should have access to required living substances (i.e. food, gas, electricity)".*

Other aspirations were reflected in single words:

- *"Opportunity"*
- *"Choice"*
- *"Positivity"*
- *"Awareness"*

- *"Warm"*
- *"Comfortable"*

The quality and cost of healthcare featured too:

- *"Better healthcare for everyone"*
- *"Some cures are expensive but should be free to help people to be healthy again"*

On national and local government:

- *"Government shouldn't waste tax money"*
- *"They should ask for our opinion"*

Of community:

- *"Everybody should have a say in THERE community"*
- *"helpful community"*
- *"Not competition. More cooperation"*

Finally, harking back to themes in response to question 2:

- *"Be able to go out without threat of being hurt"*
- *"No graffiti only art!"*

Implications

38 statements fell within this category (18.9% of total responses to Qu. 3). Again, we see a strong emphasis on a tolerant, non-judgemental and equal society. The fairness and justice principles expressed by these young people that they believe would improve wellbeing may feel *utopian* (no place). However, they can feature as aims and aspirations in a healthy new town culture as a **eutopian** (well/ good place) vision.

2. Activities for all

In this theme, the young people considered a range of inclusive activities – *“Something for everyone”*. Some continued to emphasise the importance of these for kids and teenagers:

- *“Access to activities/ facilities –if there’s none it encourages loitering”*
- *“More places for kids”*
- *“Somewhere for kids to be kids”*
- *“Places for kids with no cost”*
- *“Needs to be more places for teenagers to do as we get told off if we sit in the park but there’s nothing to do”*

Other suggestions were focussed on other groups or on inter-generational activities:

- *“Having evenings where young and old people can get together and bond”*
- *“Things for different aged people”*
- *“Place for elderlies to have a laugh and a cup of tea”*
- *“The ability to talk to others, regardless of age is important -> get together to talk”*
- *“Different types of food and places for more mixed race to meet others who are scared of different race”*

Some specific ideas included:

- *“youth clubs”*
- *“therapists”*
- *“sports centres/ restaurants”*
- *“Pubs – not necessarily drinking but socialising and the atmosphere”*

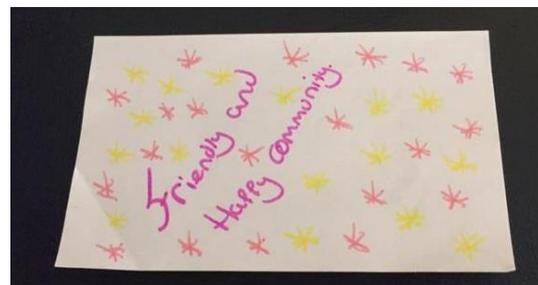
Implications

The statements in this category numbered 19 (9.4% of the responses to Qu. 3) with clear implications for how places can sustain the health and wellbeing of their residents. A diverse range of activities bring people together, helping them to connect particularly across the generations. Facilities that can accommodate and support a flexible range of uses that provide something to do, somewhere affordable and attractive for young people to hang out have great potential to support health and uplift wellbeing in this group.

3. A Sense of Community and Neighbourliness

The idea that a community should *“make sure everyone’s alright”* was encapsulated further in ideas and thoughts like:

- *“Making sure everyone is okay ☺”*
- *“People helping each other”*
- *“A sense of belonging in the environment you’re in is very important to stay happy”*
- *“Living amongst a community can encourage happiness”*
- *“If people around you are happy, it will have a positive effect on your life”*
- *“Tell someone you know a random compliment”*
- *“a community club”*
- *The idea that “Good neighbours are very important” was endorsed as an attribute of where they live:*
- *“My neighbours are very nice people!”*
- *“My neighbours help my Nan and Grandad”*



Implications

18 statements were categorised as reflecting sense of community and neighbourliness (8.9% of total responses to Qu. 3). It is widely acknowledged that the loss of community streets to traffic roads, and car dependant cul-de-sac estate layouts, has impacted negatively on neighbourliness by encouraging an isolated, car-based living style. Design that makes the connection of people to their place paramount will make neighbourliness possible. An important relationship exists between this theme and that of *“Activities for all”* because sharing activities and meeting places supports wider connections beyond the street in communities.

4. Safety, Traffic and Transport

The main emphasis within this theme was the importance of feeling safe. This was often, but not invariably, related to cars and roads:

- *"Feel safe"*
- *"Safety is really important because if people don't feel safe they don't want to be there."*
- *"More security/ cameras"*
- *"More lights KFC bridge. Woods at the top of the lane"*
- *"Street lamps"*
- *"Traffic lights"*
- *"More speed bumps and signs"*
- *"Bikes should go on bus lanes"*
- *"Cars don't have lights on"*
- *"Buses need to go slower"*

Picking up from the theme *"Getting Around"* generated from question 2, some statements specifically emphasised the need for a better public transport service:

- *"A good transport system makes life easier"*
- *"Even more buses"*

Implications

18 statements were categorised under this heading (8.9% of total responses to Qu. 3). In direct antithesis of feeling good and functioning well, the young people of Halton appear concerned about their safety when they go out. It seems from the responses collected to question 3 that much of these concerns could be addressed by traffic control interventions.

It is notable that the dominance of traffic safety concerns here contrasts somewhat with the theme *"Scared and Vulnerable"* that emerged from question 2 that was directed more at fear of other people. General security measures such as design that encourages informal surveillance and improved street lighting would go some way to meeting both needs.

5. A Clean and Pleasant Land

In accord with the theme that emerged from question 2 *"Noticing Mess"*, most statements

under this theme stressed the need for more action to keep Halton cleaner:

- *"A good place would be somewhere where people have a place to go where litter isn't a problem, with less homeless people on the streets"*
- *"Being cleaner"*
- *"No littering"*
- *"more bins"*
- *"Having a good environment around you"*
- *"having clean air"*
- *"Need to have everything neat and tidy ;)"*
- *Other responses included:*
- *"More art"*
- *"Colourful"*
- *"Taking pride in your environment"*

Implications

The 11 statements generated here (5.5% of total responses to Qu. 3) hark back to the dominant theme of question 2 about *"noticing mess"*. While the provision of more bins and the monitoring of air quality are simple interventions to address, it may be that well-targeted and high-profile campaigns like *"Barcelona - Clean up your face"* may also be needed to address littering behaviour.

6. Regeneration

This theme focussed on the need for regeneration in terms of physical infrastructure and in economic and business terms for the purpose of providing more opportunity:

- *"More place re-design"*
- *"Less dull and more colourful"*
- *"More modern"*
- *"Creating more jobs"*
- *"options for students -> work experience"*
- *"More business"*
- *"Retail"*
- *A few ideas of what Halton needs:*
- *"Coffee shops"*
- *"Cineworld"*
- *"Advertisement"*

Implications.

These 11 statements (5.5% of the total responses to Qu. 3) reflect an acknowledgement that, in the views of this group of young people, Halton is lagging behind and needs formal input and investment to support its modernisation so that the place can provide them with future opportunities. The Halton HNT initiative has the potential to act as a driver for further regeneration of the area. Better still if that wider regeneration can maintain a strong focus on health and wellbeing of its people, an area where much economic-led regeneration has failed since the 1970's.

7. Sports and Stuff

Unsurprisingly given the focus on health, interventions that would enable young people to do sports were mentioned under this theme with dedicated facilities for football being particularly stressed:

- *"where we can do sports"*
- *"Football pitches"*
- *"Football teams"*
- *"Football teams/ mates"*
- *"Courts"*
- *"BJJ"*
- *Specifically mentioned was:*
- *"Football clubs getting involved in the community"*

Implications

These 10 statements (5% of the total number of responses to Qu. 3) emphasise the lack of formal and accessible sporting facilities in the area. While Halton benefits from plenty of green space, this is of a ubiquitous nature. There is a need, expressed here, for some of this to be turned into formal pitch and court provision for use by the town's young people.

8. Enjoying Outside

While the implications of the theme above is that some greenspace needs to be formalised to facilitate sports, this theme demonstrates a call for better resourced informal and accessible natural spaces:

- *"Areas of nature"*
- *"Good scenery"*
- *"Good up-keep of the forests and paths"*
- *"Parks that everyone can access"*
- *"Sitting area"*
- *"Enclosed area"*

Implications

Like the theme above, these 8 statements (4% of total responses to Qu. 3) suggest that these young people could derive much more benefit from the wealth of open space that Halton has with a few inexpensive interventions and better stewardship.

9. What Schools can do

The ideas of how schools can promote health and wellbeing ranged from simple to more developed:

- *"good schools"*
- *"feeling safe in school"*
- *"Choices at school"*
- *"More education on happiness"*
- *"Promote togetherness in schools"*
- *"Proper health-related education to ensure hospitals and practices are less congested"*

Implications

The 7 responses within this category (3.5% of total responses to Qu. 3) illustrate a clear role for local schools within an extended partnership working ethos of Halton HNT. The possibility of curricula that covers education around H&W, emphasising the local ambitions of HHNT, alongside the development of wellbeing-focussed school philosophies, could powerfully pull the younger generation into a shared mission.

10. Addressing Poverty by Equal Access

Under question 1, the students showed a good understanding of how deprivation and poverty affected health, wellbeing and longer-term life chances. There were indications in the themes of question 2 that the visual cues to poverty affect the feelings, behaviours and aspirations of this group. It is therefore not surprising that addressing poverty should emerge as a theme under question 3:

- *“Assistance services for all (i.e. police, hospitals) equally and FREE.”*
- *“Equal medical access”*
- *“Free opportunities as well as costed ones”*
- *“More support with money”*
- *“Free food”*

Implications

These 6 responses (3% of total to Qu. 3) show how a health and wellbeing focussed regeneration of an area might provide a more inclusive growth opportunity by aiming to focus its mission on the wider determinants of health and wellbeing inequality.

11. Organised Events

Consistent with the largely hedonic understanding of wellbeing that younger people recognise, several students suggested that organised events would play a part in making a place that is good for everyone:

- *“National Happiness Week”*
- *“Charity events such as running fare and tough-mudder”*
- *“fundraising events”*
- *“Music festivals”*
- *“Festivals”*

Implications.

Although a minor theme in terms of the number of statement (N=5; 2.5% of the total responses to Qu. 3), it provides evidence that this group would like to see celebrations of the healthy new town status. Importantly, such events

would help the community buy into the mission and provide a means to visibly support it.

- *Minor themes - Equal Life-long Homes and Penalties*

Aligned with the theme on addressing poverty, 3 statements were offered about the importance of homes in response to question 3:

- *“Equal conditions in houses”*
- *“Houses with necessities for different age groups – chair lift”*

2 statements referred to a belief that penalising antisocial behaviours might be important:

- *“More punishment”*
- *“Stronger punishment for littering”*

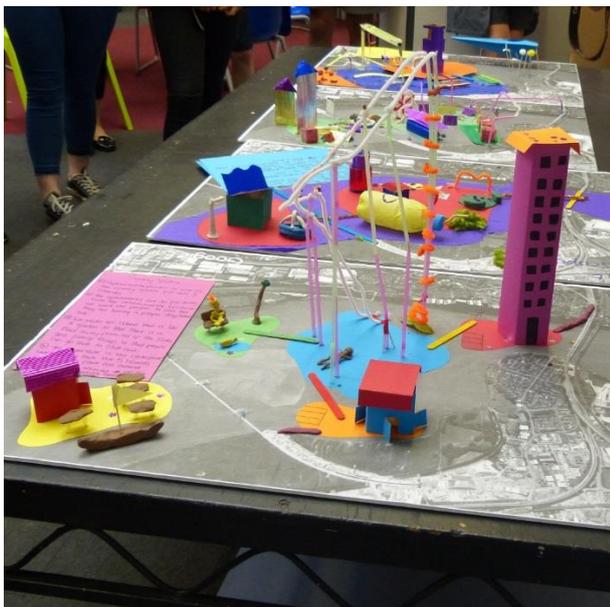
Concluding thoughts

We thank the young people of **Ormiston Bolingbroke Academy** who engaged willingly with our questions and worked hard to provide a rich set of data that allows their views to be thoroughly represented in the ethos and the actions of Halton Healthy New Town. It is a truism of public health that interventions focussed on the earlier years pay dividends by setting up health and wellbeing into adulthood. The HHNT team should therefore heed the recommendations and thoughts of these young people. It may be wise for the HHNT team to consider the establishment of a youth steering group to actively engage with the Town’s young people as the HNT progresses towards positive change. Furthermore, workshops such as this encouraged and facilitated by local schools provide a good way of monitoring how HHNT is developing as it goes forward.

Designing an Island Neighbourhood

We asked the pupils to design and make a model of a neighbourhood that ***'would make a good place for everyone'***. The 'site' we gave them was the Mersey basin between the old and new Runcorn bridges. While it removes the difficult constraints of an existing place in terms of location, scale and accessibility, it replicates the morphology of Halton Lea well.

Programme constraints prevented the collation of qualitative data for this exercise, although there are observations we can report from the process and the outcomes. Over both days we had nine groups working on this exercise, each of them reflecting issues that were prevalent in the previous discussions.



A feature common to all groups was the creation of several islands where activities/ functions could be segregated, and access controlled. Creating a secure environment was a priority for most groups, with many wanting to exclude 'bad' people.

One group suggested *"What we need is a big camera in the middle of the island that can see everything"*; *"we can build a big glass dome over the island so everyone can see what is going on"*. In the centre of their scheme they placed a full-sized *Statue of Liberty*, encased within an apartment block with huge windows to make it transparent. Bridges between their islands were also transparent – a theme explicitly highlighted in their feedback presentation.

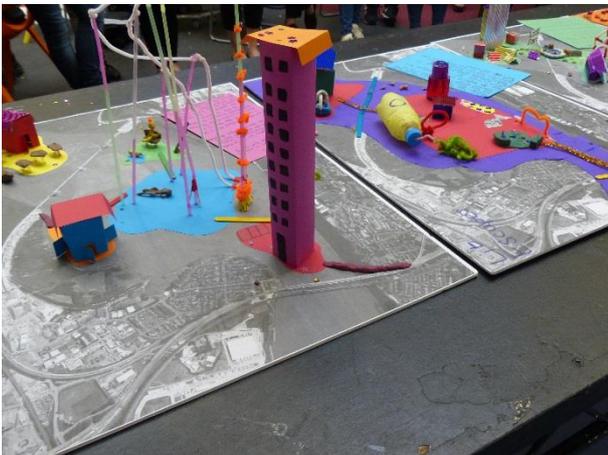
A second feature common to all groups was the exaggerated scale of ***'landmarks'*** that defined their 'centres' to visitors and passers-by. They mostly talked about central spaces too; squares and gardens conceived as communal areas.

Key activities for most groups were developed for wellbeing in terms of making people happy, with hedonistic pursuits prominent too. One group developed their project on sports based activities in a natural environment, and under water, called ***'Secret Escapes'***. They provided a hotel but no homes – *"it is somewhere that you visit"* in the centre of Halton.

When prompted about the lack of housing, they said *"well it is just a holiday resort for everyone from everywhere"*. Discussing this revealed that they couldn't develop a sense of ownership for what they had designed - it was difficult to see it as anything but an 'escape', too different to fully call their own. There was repeated sentiment from all groups of being 'stuck' in Runcorn, and not being able to 'escape'.

Another group based their designs on the contemporary Runcorn townscape, including garages/ petrol station, car parks and formulaic retail parks. When prompted if they really wanted a car focussed island they responded, *“yeah, we just need them”*. This is interesting in terms of their acceptance of the ‘out-of-town’ retail form and inevitability of private transport and its negative impacts. This *‘inevitability’* of car based development needs to be challenged if active lifestyles are to be encouraged.

A further *‘inevitability’* for some groups was the development of shopping and restaurants as a route to happiness - *“having a proper day out”* and *“a place to chill and relax”*. Described as a safe space to enjoy the company of friends or having a meal with the family, these activities all required disposable income. People who don’t have money, referred to as *‘people of a different class’*, will never have a chance to be on the island. It was presented as a way of safeguarding the island from *‘bad people’*.



Each session, the students voted for their favourite *‘island’*. On the second day, the winners were a group of three girls who devised ***‘Fresh Start Island’***. This is an island for everybody, including *‘bad’* people – so, if you misbehave in school, you get a second chance, hence the name. With a central *‘university’* building, the girls stressed the island is about intergenerational learning rather than formal education. Their belief is that if they can build a positive model on *Fresh Start*, then this will naturally spread out to influence the wider town and communities.

This group spent time planning their concept idea and followed it through into their design and presentation. Their summary messages were:

“Welcome to Fresh Start

- *Here at Fresh Start we welcome all in order for them to prosper and enhance their lives for the better. We offer access to university and training centre for students with passion to excel without the fear of being judged. Here you can be yourself!*
- *There is a leisure centre to encourage those who visit to maintain a healthy lifestyle. Also for those who love nature and walking we offer a nature reserve to escape the industrial area surrounding the island.*
- *We also offer accommodation and housing (including student accommodation) for those who love the island so much!*
- *Shops, restaurants, clubs, and even a theme park! We encourage visitors to visit our happy place as we want positivity and joy to spread!*
- *All buildings are solar panelled to conserve energy and be self-sufficient - renewable energy is the future.*
- *Several links including footpaths, bridges and cable cars introduced for accessibility for all.”*



Hallwood Park Primary School

The workshop focussed on thinking about what makes a good *'playscape'* for children. Being too young to think at a strategic level about health and wellbeing, our interest in working with this group was to understand *what they do and what they could be doing more of* – and the barriers to these things.

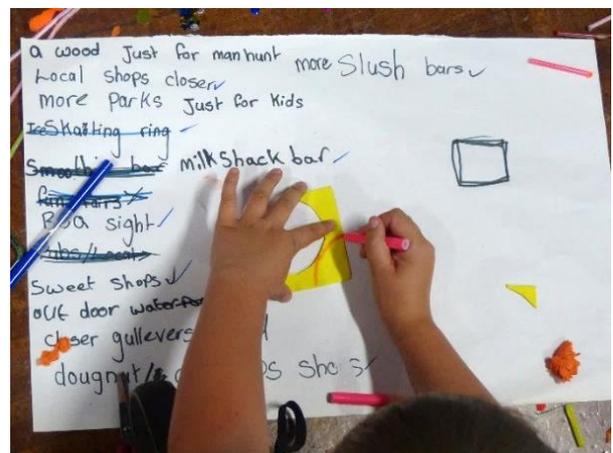
Through the *feet finding* exercise, we noticed that the drawings of the pupils who were driven to school or took the bus, were less rich in detail than those who walked. They spent time on their phone and didn't directly interact with other people on their journey.



We held a short discussion on the things they liked to do when they played out. Their answers included games like *'man hunt'* often played in the woods, *football* on a local pitch, the *skate park*, and an imaginative game called *'everything'*. This game was a reminder that children see the world through different eyes, where everyday things can become sources of adventure.

When asked who preferred indoor or outdoor activities, the group was split. Some liked playing in the woods, others said that playing at home was nice and safe. The children tended to agree that playing out with friends was preferable to playing alone:

"I get bored when I am out alone, and stay much longer when my friends are out with me".



For the creative activity, the children worked in pairs to design a panel with their ideas for the *'kind of place they would like to play in?'* As they designed, the children told us that a lot of areas are not safe for them to play in:

- *'there is broken glass';*
- *'somebody set our swing on fire'*
- *'we find gas canisters lying around'*
- *'older teenagers are taking over the park'*

Several girls independently said that they liked the *'woods'* but didn't go there *'because older kids hit them'* when they found them there.

The pupils' designs often featured sun and clouds, and were typically set outdoors. However, one pair of boys preferred playing video games indoors because this was a nice safe place to play with their friends online. The *indoors* was a feature of some of the other groups too, reminding us that good places are also about home and feeling well and safe.

Another boy told us that he spends time on Instagram looking at pictures of nature. He cut out a picture of a man on top of a mountain to put next to his playground. When asked what he thought of this picture or what it meant to him he said: ***"It's just beautiful, that man is just free"***.

In fact, holiday images and other faraway places, like beaches and parks, either drawn or cut from magazines, featured in several panels. One girl mentioned how nice the colours were when she goes on holiday to Wales, *'everything is green'*. Her own neighbourhood is mostly grey. For this girl, colour is associated with other, better places.

Another group of boys were busy building a safe place that had high walls around it. They described this as secluded and warm, protected from other things. One of the boys said, *"it's a bit like reality, but not really"*, echoing another group's feeling of fear when out, that you can't quite put a finger on, and need for safe spaces.



Finally, we asked each group to give us a couple of words that describe what the place they had designed meant to them, or how it makes them feel. The responses were:

- *'Friends, learning, fun'*
- *'Cool, safe environment (trees), climbing trees, hiding, making ramps and adventure'*
- *'Maintain bike tracks'*
- *'Wrestling, football, wonderful, awesome, addicted (in context with super Mario game), swimming'*
- *'Happy, colourful, imaginative'*
- *'Creative, game lab'*
- *'Enjoyable, happy'*
- *'Creative, thoughtful, fast, safe'*
- *'Happy, trampoline, bikes, gates so no one comes in because it is just us'*
- *'Happy, peaceful, fun, leads to hiding places, shelter, safe areas'*
- *'Happy, safe, awesome'*
- *'Fun, great, exciting, fantastic, safe'*
- *'Passion (like hobbies and interests), adventure, social/socialise'*
- *'Camping, shining'*
- *'Dream, a lovely feeling, amazing'*
- *'Interesting, creative, fun, interesting to think about this'*
- *'Time-taking, fun, funny'*
- *'Happy, hilarious'*

Implications

The dominant message to take from this workshop, is that if we want to encourage children to actively play outdoors, we need to create safe places. To encourage both imaginative and active play, these places need to be more diverse in the way that they are designed to accommodate a range of uses and ages. The environment also needs to be more creative and colourful.



3. ADULT WORKSHOPS

During August 2017 (17th and 23rd) we ran half-day workshops in Halton Lea library with 50 adult residents (20 male/ 30 female - 98% white British) from Halton or surrounding areas. The workshops were structured to enable us to gather a rounded understanding of the overarching issues identified by the participants, and then to elicit solution-focussed ideas about the factors that needed to be addressed in the design of a healthy neighbourhood.

The workshops were functionally divided into 2 halves, with the first part focussing on the collection of information on attitudes and beliefs about health, wellbeing and their relationship to place. The second half focussed on creative solutions to place-making for health and wellbeing.

During the introduction, the participants of both workshops began asking questions about quite specific issues in the area: *are 'they' going to build the flats; is the hospital closing; what's happening with the derelict buildings?* This developed into a lengthy debate, pressed by a few people, with concern focussed on their personal health care and hospital services perceived to be under threat.

An underlying theme was that there was no point in them being there if these questions could not be answered, and a belief that we were just there to 'take their ideas and then ignore them'. When it was explained that the workshops were not directly about the issues they were raising, they wanted to know why our client was not there to answer them.

We tackled this disruption respectfully, but robustly, acknowledging their concern and distrust in the process prompted by a lack of direct information and involvement with the Halton Lea Healthy New Town initiative. We noted that the 'client' was aware of this lack of information sharing, but that there was a lack of information to share effectively.

We brought the discussion to a head by confirming that we were not interested in their ideas! We explained that we were more

interested in their needs and aspirations, and how they would like to be engaged in the development of the HNT. We noted that our ideas may not be listened to either, but that we were all there to undertake the exercise in the hope and expectation that our efforts will have a positive impact.

It was clear that these residents felt disengaged and disempowered in relation to decision-making about their town. There was a need to persuade the participants' away from a default view that their concerns, thoughts and ideas would not be listened to towards embracing the opportunity to have their voices heard.

This feeling disrupted the progress of the sessions meaning that a significant time was needed to set out the aims and objectives of the session and to agree an understanding of the purpose and outcomes of the sessions. We abandoned the **'feet finding'** exercise, so did not get to discover their cognitive understanding of the area. However, we did establish a foundation of trust to build from.

During the first half of the session the participants worked in small groups to consider the following three questions:

- ***What do you understand about health and wellbeing?***
- ***What do you like about where you live?***
- ***What things would make Halton Lea a healthy place for everyone?***

Across the 2 workshops, 398 thoughts, comments and considerations were collected on post-it notes and thematically analysed by question as laid out below.

Question 1: What do you understand about health and wellbeing?

Overall, **14 substantive themes** emerged from the 160 responses to this question and each of these have implications that can support recommendations to do with core elements that might feature as part of a development aimed at promoting the health and wellbeing of the adult residents of Halton Lea.

1. Statements of Understanding + Components or determinants of Health and Wellbeing

Responses in this category reflected an understanding that health and wellbeing was in large part determined by factors wider than the individual:

- *"The health, safety and happiness of residents in and around the area. The impact that the surroundings have on individuals in the community."*
- *"Wealth"*
- *"Connecting with people"*
- *"Good diet, exercise, friends, family, good environment"*
- *"good carers"*
- *"Being connected. A sense of belonging"*
- *"financial security"*

Participants also acknowledged mental health and, less so, physical fitness within this theme:

- *"Positive Mental Attitude"*
- *"having confidence"*
- *"feeling happy"*
- *"freedom to choose what to do and when to do it"*
- *"feeling that you have value"*
- *"good mental health"*
- *"Exercise of body and mind"*
- *"keeping active both in mind and physical"*
- *"Being mobile"*
- *"freedom from disease especially in old age"*

Implications

26 statements fell under this category (16.2% of total responses to Qu. 1) indicating a strong understanding of how the context in which one lives effects health and wellbeing. On the whole, these adults placed greater emphasis on mental attitude than physical fitness but it was clear that having the resources to support health and wellbeing was an important factor.

2. Health Service Provision

Statements under this category referred, by and large, to access to better quality or a broad range of services:

- *"Easy access to GPs"*
- *"Suitable specialist NHS staff in hospital like neurologist"*
- *"support services family"*
- *"Evening wellbeing sessions"*
- *"Hospital that has doctors available in A&E"*
- *"A&E after 10pm"*
- *"drop-in centres"*
- *"Mental health provision"*
- *"Better medical admin services (prescriptions)"*

Implications

The fact that 18 statements fell under this category (11.2% of total responses to Qu. 1) probably reflects the age and health status of the adults who attended the workshops (i.e. the majority were middle aged and/or service-users). Nevertheless, and not surprisingly, the category illustrates that the need for accessible and broad ranging treatment when unwell or suffering as a central component that enables individual health and wellbeing. Halton Healthy New Town should look for opportunities to address this request as part of its objectives.



3. Local Community Facilities

A range of different suggestions emerged that reflected the desire for community activity to be catered for and built in. A few suggestions included a specific call for this to be intergenerational in nature:

- *“Focal point for community (e.g. community centre)”*
- *“choice of various community activities – inter-generational”*
- *“Community-led groups. Walking, reading, knitting etc.”*
- *“Social enterprise hub”*
- *“Places to go with the family that you can afford”*
- *“Community gym/ outdoors health centre”*
- *“Youth Centres”*
- *“picnic areas”*

Implications

14 statements (8.75% of responses to Qu. 1) referred to the importance of local community facilities as a necessary component of health and wellbeing. It suggests the HNT should incorporate provision to facilitate both formal and informal community activity.

4. Accessible and Affordable Public Transport

Comments offered under this theme refer to improved links to places further afield and between local places. There was also emphasis

on improving regularity and affordability of existing services.

- *“Access to reliable public transport”*
- *“Good public transport”*
- *“Cheap and regular public transport links”*
- *“Cheap bus fares for children & teenagers especially in school holidays”*
- *“Good public transport so don’t feel so isolated”*
- *“Access to Old Town Brindley etc.”*
- *“New private estates with no public transport, local shopping.”*
- *“Don’t presume everyone is going to ditch the car. This is not London, not everything is walking distance.”*

Implications

With 14 statements falling into this category (8.75% of total responses to Qu 2) it is clear that part of a healthy new town initiative should be to improve the linkage, reliability, accessibility and affordability of public transport. This is important in part to counter isolation and in relation to social capital arguments, to help residents of the area to link and bond with each other and to bridge to wider networks to improve prospects and opportunities. Although not mentioned explicitly in these statements, it is important to note that public transport systems should themselves be designed as part of an active transport system with emphasis on the quality of the network infrastructure beyond the vehicles themselves to focus on the quality of the experience of walking between public transportation nodes and links for example.

5. Age-related needs – mobility and dementia.

Perhaps reflecting the demographic of those who attended the workshops, this was a relatively prominent theme with emphasis on accessibility for the less mobile being very dominant:

- *“Accessibility – ramps, less stairs etc.”*

- “remove barriers to mobility. Infrastructure disabled friendly”
- “Lifts for any levels”
- “retirement support (depression)”
- “Dementia friendly”
- “Sheltered accommodation”
- “Secure alarm systems”

Implications

11 statements were categorised here (7% of total responses to Qu. 1) with clear implications for the visions, ethos and objectives of HHNT and their translation into the design of the built environment that emerges in Halton Lea.

6. Clean and Green

Suggestions here focussed on dealing with air pollution, to the provision and ongoing maintenance of usable open spaces:

- *“Areas – there are good and bad in Halton”*
- *“Less pollution from industry- CLEAN AIR”*
- *“Clean environment -underground waste disposal”*
- *“Solar energy”*
- *“More green spaces”*
- *“Access to green space/ sports facilities”*
- *“Space/green space for walking is needed”*
- *“Living in a nice environment that is taken care of - e.g. landscaping”*

Implications

11 statements were categorised here (7% of total responses to Qu. 1) with clear implications for the sustainable management practices and stewardship of HHNT. The governance of HHNT should consider routes to reducing air pollution and ameliorating the effects of emissions as well as encouraging sustainable forms of energy. Usable and well maintained, clean open and green spaces are very much regarded as a core part of a town aiming to function well for the health and wellbeing of its residents.

7. Feeling Safe

It seemed clear from these responses that participants were aware that feeling safe requires design-level interventions. Some spoke generally of the need to feel safe in the place while others mentioned lighting, policing and secure walkability:

- *“Feeling safe in the outdoors”*
- *“Feeling safe where you live”*
- *“More community officers”*
- *“No subways”*
- *“Better lighting (especially at night)”*
- *“Easily walkable, light, safe streets”*
- *“well used, peopled places that feel safe and are actively enjoyed.”*

Implications

10 statements reflected the theme of feeling safe (6.25% of total responses to Qu. 1). The implications for the re-thinking of the physical environment of Halton Lea are very clear to enable its residents to get out and about, actively using the area’s places and spaces and feeling secure while doing so. Feeling unsafe while out and about is a clear barrier to a more active everyday life with people likely to turn to vehicular private transport to mitigate feelings of vulnerability link to previous theme.

8. Healthy, Local Food

Responses reflected broad understanding of the need for a healthy diet alongside a recognition that food outlets and retail provision often impede that. A few ideas for change (that re-appear later under question 3) were proposed:

- *“Varied diet (lots of freshly + locally grown fruit and vegetables.”*
- *“Food (fast food ☹️)”*
- *“Easy access to fresh food shops/ outlets”*
- *“Vacant buildings used to create healthy food outlets.”*
- *“Nutrition and healthy eating workshops – allotments, cafes etc.”*
- *“Healthy food growing areas”*

Implications

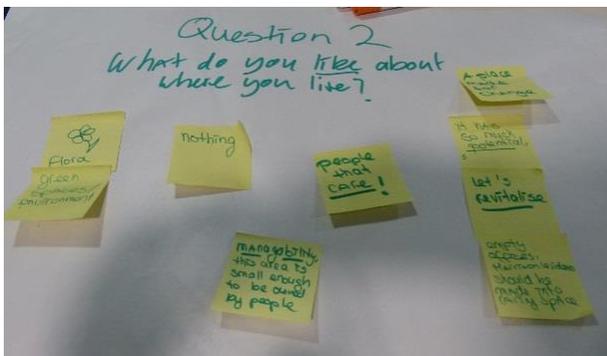
The 8 responses under this category (5% of total responses to Qu. 1) acknowledged the importance of what we eat and what we can find to eat. The increasing appearance of 'quality food deserts' in more deprived areas of the UK is of striking concern and HHNT has the chance to address and actively buck this concerning trend when it considers how to implement its healthy place strategy.

Other Less Populated Themes - these included:

- 9. Community spirit and sense of belonging (N=4)**
- 10. Affordable Cultural activities (N=4)**
- 11. The role of schools (N=4)**
- 12. Improving local employment prospects (N=4)**
- 13. No more bargain stores (N=2)**
- 14. Miscellaneous (N=4; including 1 reference to range of social housing options)**

Question 2: What do you like about where you live?

Overall, **9 substantive themes** emerged from the 112 responses to this question and each of these have implications that can support recommendations informing the development aiming to promote the health and wellbeing of the adult residents of Halton Lea. It is worth noting that, although not frequently reported, a few participants indicated that they liked “NOTHING!” about where they lived, meaning that the contributions of these individuals to the themes emerging from this question will have been limited, by definition.



1. Natural Assets and Parks

By far the most endorsed theme from this question was reference to the natural assets of the Halton area.

- “The canal” was specifically mentioned by several people.
- “Runcorn Hill”, “Victoria Park” “Pheonix Park” “Moore Nature Reserve” and “Pennine Trial” were also directly referred to.

More general referents included:

- “The green spaces and parks”
- “Woodland”

Some participants picked up the importance of biodiversity to them:

- “flora”
- “nature”
- “wildlife”
- “birds”
- “horses”

“PEACE, QUIET” was also referred to as affordances of the natural assets of the area.

In a cautionary vein, one participant noted:

- “Green space, parks / This needs to be balanced though.”

Implications

The 27 responses that fell into this category (24% of total responses to Qu. 2) demonstrate a clear appreciation of the wealth of natural and built public spaces that the area includes. Clearly there is a need to build upon this tremendous asset and get it to work to benefit the health and wellbeing of Halton residents.

2. Treasured Facilities

Again, people tended to refer to specific valued facilities. “The Brindley” and “Norton Priory” were most frequently explicitly referred to. One mention of “The Flower” was made, noting “no-one local knows about it”. Other valued facilities included:

- “theatre”
- “cinema”
- “convenient shops (widnes)”
- “quite good sports facilities”
- “Allotments” but noting “Waiting lists!”

Implications

As for the theme ‘Natural Assets and Parks’, the 14 references within this theme (12% of the total responses to Qu. 2) indicate that specific assets are highly valued and well known. Others though, may be under-utilised because they are not widely known about or because there is under-provision (in the case of allotments). There seems to be room in the strategy of HHNT to make more of, emphasise and encourage use of these successful features but also to use some resources to increase provision where supply is deemed short.

3. The People

The people who make up the places where we live are an often-over-looked asset. There was a feeling that:

- *"It (i.e. Halton) is in majority a friendly place"*

Aspects referred to that support this overall sense included:

- *"family"*
- *"home"*
- *"kids"*
- *"my neighbours"*
- *"people that care"*
- *"family networks"*
- *"Church, sense of community"*

Implications

Referred to 11 times (9.8% of total responses to Qu. 2) the expertise, nature and value of the Halton people needs to be harnessed in the ethos and working practices of HHNT.

4. Good Transport Connections

The selection of good, well supported railway stations was emphasised here, as was the good motorway connections that Halton benefits from:

- *"Runcorn East station visit Wales and Manchester"*
- *"Trains to London and Liverpool Lime Street"*
- *"Close to a selection of railway stations"*
- *"Motorway connections"*
- *"close to good road system to travel away from the area."*

Implications

9 references were made under this theme (8% of total responses to Qu. 2). The future success of the HHNT initiative rests in part on the geography, location and surrounding infrastructure of the place that enables people to get where they need to be to take advantage of opportunities and attractions further afield.

Opening-up and making the most of this asset is critical. However, there is a balance to be struck in relation to the potentially negative effects of recent strategic road building on the Halton Lea neighbourhood where additional mitigation and management may be necessary.

5. Third Sector, Community and Social Provision

Generally, the *"efforts to bring community together"* are valued and the fact that there are *"some good groups locally –lots of voluntary activity"* was recognised. One caveat was noted in that the *"not-for-profit sector" ... "needs a lot of a boost in resource."* Some specific examples were mentioned here including:

- *"Library services"*
- *"The Hive"*
- *"Halton Haven Support"*
- *"Old Town Garden. Millennium Green"*

Implications

The 8 references to the valued work of the third sector (7% of total responses to Qu. 2) illustrate that the sector has a role to play in the future of HHNT. There is much to be gained from close liaison, encouragement and partnership working with the social enterprise sector whose remit is closely aligned to the mission of HHNT and whose good work has a track record with the resident of the area.

6. The Potential

Interestingly, some participants recognised the potential of the place as something they valued even if not translated yet:

- *"It has so much potential"*
- *"let's revitalise"*
- *"A place made for change"*

In recognition of a distinct possibility one participant noted:

- *"manageability: this area is small enough to be owned by people"*

Implications

What's important to note from these 5 responses (4.5% of total responses to Qu. 2) links back to the theme of "*People*" as an asset. The ambition, creativity, understanding and acknowledgement of future in these statements is palpable and re-surfaces strongly in response to question 3. The steering group of HHNT would be wise to tap into this resource of '*community champions*'.

Other Less Populated Themes

These included:

7. **Health Service Provision (N=3)**
8. **Houses (N=3: mentioning 'fit for purpose' and with garden)**
9. **Miscellaneous (N=3; history, local policing and education)**



Question 3: What things would make Halton Lea a healthy place for everyone?

Overall, **14 themes** emerged from the 126 responses to this question. The question was answered by participants in a very positive way with several workable ideas of merit emerging that have distinct potential to promote the health and wellbeing of the adult residents of Halton Lea.



1. Solutions for the Built/ Living Environment

Ideas about what was needed included those that could be predicted from previous responses to questions 1 and 3 such as:

- *“community gardens”*
- *“parks that children can play in”*
- *“No dark corners”*
- *“Well-lit roads and pathways”*
- *“Increased pedestrian access/ areas”*
- *“Benches”*
- *“Plenty of bins for dog waste and litter”*
- *“Unlock Runcorn Project (canal)”*
- *“Make a focal point with good walking access”*

Other ideas seemed to emerge anew in response to this question:

- *“cycle paths”*
- *“A network of cycle paths”*
- *“decoration of buildings - visual”*

- *“Shopping city roof – use it as gardens and social space”*
- *“Open a high street”*
- *“Outside high street with some covered areas”*
- *“Turn it into streets”*
- *“Plant trees”*
- *“No underways”*
- *“Outside toilets needed”*
- *“Central area with good variety of facilities”*
- *“Urban gym equipment”*
- *“Seasonal events”*

Implications

This is by far the dominant theme emerging from question 3 (n=34 statements; 27% of total responses to Qu. 3) with a strong sense of the energy and enthusiasm of the group for the challenge and opportunity ahead. The needs and solutions emerging are usable and achievable, providing a creative resource for HHNT steering group. With some ideas well developed, the strong recommendation that the steering group build in a public reference group or invites nominations for inclusion in the steering group to take into future working arrangement is justified.

2. Access to Fresh and Locally-Produced Food

The desire to eat healthily and to support local growers was clear though the responses here:

- *“Fresh produce grown locally, sold locally”*
- *“Fresh food stalls at market”*
- *“Local farmers market”*
- *“Fresh food shops (butchers, grocers)”*
- *“Fresh produce e.g. fish shops, fruit, butchers”*
- *“healthy eating cafes”*

In terms of interventions the following were suggested:

- *“Healthy food tasting sessions”*
- *“More allotments to grow food”*
- *“Quota on fast food/pubs per 1,000 people”*
- *“No more takeaways”*

Implications

This theme was made up of 16 statements (135 of total responses to Qu. 3). They call for better quality food and it is a fair assumption, based upon these responses, that uptake of healthy local food (if affordable) will be good without need to incentivise. Addressing the quality food desert is an opportunity for HHNT.

3. Governance to Address Democratic Deficit

Empowerment, being involved in decision-making and being listened to were the prominent message here:

- *“Imposing change on to people can be experienced as violence whereas when change comes from people as the community as a whole it can be liberating and empowering”*
- *“Look at what assets are in the community including people!”*
- *“Give power back to people to allow them to control the environment they live in”*
- *“More consultation on any local authority decisions”*
- *“transparent decision-making”*
- *“Really empowering people”*
- *“Create a ‘can-do’ culture.”*

Implications

The 11 responses gathered together here (9% of the total responses to Qu. 3) provide a good indication of the will of people to become involved in the development of HHNT going forward. It is generally believed that when ownership of decisions is built into process, then positive change is more likely to occur without need for further incentivisation.

4. Promoted Leisure and Sports Facilities

A range of suggestions and needs were identified:

- *“Leisure facilities “*
- *“Signpost advertising of services and facilities”*
- *“Need more sports clubs – Kayak, sail etc.”*
- *“Venue for activities – music, dance etc.”*
- *“Active community centres with local involvement”*
- *“Cheaper or fee council gym – the more you use the less you pay”*
- *“Youth centres + Pensioners support”*
- *“Information centre in s Shopping City”*

Implications

These 11 responses (9% of the total responses to Qu. 3) provide a recognition that the facilities as currently available are not sufficient in quantity and quality to enable further promotion and enablement of healthy lifestyles in the area. There is a perceived need for more to be done but it is unclear when/ if there will ever be enough provision of this kind.

5. Improved Health and Social Care Provision

Accessibility of current provision was emphasised by some:

- *“Easier access to health facilities”*
- *“Health centre hospital easily accessible”*

A need for more sheltered accommodation and use of drop-in clinics was identified:

- *“More sheltered accommodation”*
- *“Sheltered accommodation (2 bed)”*
- *“More drop-in clinics (takes up less doctor’s appointments)”*

In terms of supporting services:

- *“health forums”*
- *“More local chemists”*
- *“More dentists and eye-care places”*

Implications

It is clear that the participants who provided these 10 responses (8% of total responses to Qu. 3) see that getting the correct health and social care provision as key to the formula for healthy, well-functioning places. The health campus, part of HHNT plans, should be developed with these and thought provided under question 1 in mind.

6. Enhancing Inter-Generational Community Spirit.

Picking up on thoughts generated in response to question 1, there is a hankering for *“more community spirit”* that can build *“good neighbourhoods”*. This was regarded as a way to reduce *“social isolation”* and increase *“inclusion”*.

The idea of intergenerational activity came through in several statements:

- *“Create communities where young and old people integrate”*
- *“Places for young people and old people to meet in a social way”*
- *“Activities for all ages, families and abilities.”*

One person suggested that it was important to create a:

- *“social interaction network for new residents”*

Implications

From these 10 responses (8% of total responses to Qu. 3) we understand that building of community through formal provision is important to the residents of the area and clearly a part of a healthy new town. Creating community means getting residents out of their homes and into comfortable, adaptable, engaging and secure spaces and surroundings that support wide-ranging, enduring community needs.

7. Clean Air (and Water)

Good, reliable quality of air and water are basic human needs and they are represented in the following statements:

- *“Better air quality monitoring”*
- *“No to recycled water 2030”*

The achievement of these basic needs in the area were, the participants understandable felt, being compromised by the incinerator:

- *“Close down the incinerator”*
- *“Scrap plans for a second incinerator”*
- *“Get rid of the incinerator and ICI”*

Implications

These 7 responses (5.5% of total responses to Qu. 3) represent a prerequisite for healthy living environment. Clearly some people feel the local environment needs action to meet basic needs. Certainly, air and water monitoring is a component that fits into the healthy new town ethos. While action in relation to concerns about the incinerator may be harder to achieve, an acknowledgement of concerns feels important as does an active stance in relation to plans for a second installation.

The health and wellbeing fortunes of those living in more deprived areas are more likely to be compromised by necessary, but unwanted features of industry, due to factors such as land value. But this may also reflect the outcomes for dis-empowered communities who are unable to effectively mobilise to take an opposing stance. Proper engagement of the local residents within the healthy new town initiative may help to mobilise a single empowered voice.

8. Healthy Homes

A few statements cohered around housing and homes and their role in achieving health and wellbeing:

- *“knock down East lane house and replace with healthy housing – gym etc.”*

- *“Co-operative housing”*
- *“Let resident control and manage their housing associations”*

Implications

These 5 statements (4% of total responses to Qu. 3) demonstrate the potential that more equitable stewardship of housing and potentially different models of housing provision can change the fortunes of residents through a developing sense of agency/ control that may generalise and galvanise community.

9. Health and Wellbeing Education

The feeling that the education sector has a role to play here was represented by a few participants. This included schooling but also adult education:

- *“Schools form about the age of 7 teaching healthy meals and exercise”*
- *“Education for children cultural change”*
- *“Enterprise academy”*
- *“Community drop in information place”*

Implications

These 5 statements (4% of total responses to Qu. 3) suggest that collaborative working with those working in the education sector is an important way to build in sustainability to the plans being developed now.

Less Populated Themes

These included:

10. Public Transport (N=4)
11. Jobs and meeting basic needs (N=4)
12. Promoting third sector activity (N=3)
13. Quality and diversity in retail (N=3)
14. Safety (N=3)



4. HEALTH SUMMIT

On 18th September 2017, *Prosocial Place* led a **Halton Healthy New Town Place Summit** where key stakeholders involved in the initiative, Halton Lea and the wider area came together to think about what they wanted to achieve from the NHS HNT funding and how they might progress a collective concept of health and wellbeing in the context of place-making.

The summit began with a walking tour of the area, attended by over 20 participants. Many had seen 'bits' of the area previously, often by car, but had not experienced journeying through Halton Lea on foot – it demonstrated a fragmented area disjointed by links that could be perceived by many as too dangerous to use.

The walk allowed perspective taking by the participants. A key realisation was just how car dominated/ dependant the area is by design, and the impact this has on opportunities for community building. Noting the low income and thus low car ownership within the local population, it is a recipe for isolation and fear of the public realm. Noting the dangers of 'projectitis' in regeneration programmes, there is an opportunity for **'NOW' projects focussed on removing barriers.**

David Parr (Halton CEO) gave an inspiring talk on the opportunities to turn these things around, emphasising that Halton Lea was chosen precisely because it is challenging and will teach us the best lessons for the future. Listening to the feedback from the youth engagements, he responded to the stigma they feel about their hometown. He demonstrated that at the forefront of his leadership thinking that Halton will become a place of choice for all in the community, with a collective vision and opportunity for all to participate in its realisation.

Mel Pickup (CEO Warrington and Halton Hospitals) gave an equally inspiring talk on the future of the health campus and how it will create a mixed urban neighbourhood, emphasising the co-design approach that it will take. Rachel Toms (NHS England) provided an

overview of the HNT programme, describing the dissemination process for the work being undertaken by the 10 pathfinders. These three talks provided a clear context and vision for the HNT initiative and the important opportunity this provides for Halton Lea.

Mike Amesbury MP joined us for the purposefully difficult discussion on questions about what makes a good place and voiced his appreciative of the importance of this initiative, and being based in Halton Lea, he will be actively supporting it.

During this meeting, stakeholders and workers, numbering 27, completed three questions that overlapped in content with the questions asked in both the young people's and adults' community insight sessions. These were:

- ***What do you like about where you live?***
- ***How do the places we live affect our health and wellbeing?***
- ***What things would make Halton Lea a healthy place for everyone?***

These questions were specifically chosen being mindful that several of the participants in this workshop, while all working in Halton, may not live in Halton. We also anticipated that answers to questions 2 and 3 might, for these participants, be informed by their roles as public sector or health professionals and also, for some, through involvement in bid drafting and objective setting for the HHNT initiative.

Participants recorded their thoughts, ideas and comments prompted by table discussion of the 3 questions on a total of 242 post-it notes. These were thematically analysed by question as set out below.

Question 1: What do you like about where you live?

Overall, **8 substantive themes** emerged from the 94 responses to this question. Of these, approx. 65% of the total responses were categorised into the first three dominant themes described below. These provide a robust indication of what are considered place and/ or community assets upon which the choice to move to, and then to stay in places, are based for those with the capacity to make such choices. As a significant proportion of people currently living in Halton Lea will not have the opportunity to make such life choices, it is important that this kind of information is collected from a sample of people who can, and do exercise these choices, while knowing Halton Lea, so that it can be incorporated into design thinking, a strategy and sustainable vision. These are the routes to Halton to becoming a successful thriving place of choice.

1. Convenience - Accessibility of the things we need/require and to the things that make life worthwhile

This was a very dominant theme with 32 responses falling directly into this category and several, formally categorized elsewhere, using phrases that reflected the importance of convenience and proximity (e.g. *close to; easy access to* etc). These kinds of response reflect matters to do with work life balance, reflecting the demands of, and constraints associated with, full time work. There is, in these responses a strong sense of the need to be able to accomplish things or satisfy needs and wants of family life quickly and easily while also embedding the idea that while proximity is important, there is also a need for withdrawal away from core amenities (i.e. *of being close to but not on top of*):

- *“Cycle route close by”*
- *“Walk out of front door to town (10 mins), park next door + access to countryside”*

- *“I like to walk to shops”*
- *“there are lots of jobs within easy reach”*
- *“I can get to eating + entertainment easily”*
- *“Work nearby”*
- *“I can walk to or cycle to pretty much everywhere I need to go”*
- *“There’s a convenience store next door”*
- *“Close to a vibrant city”*
- *“Close to friends and family”*
- *“Train station close. School close by. Family close by”*
- *“Near the train station”*
- *“Nice parks nearby – places to walk the dog”*
- *“The taxi firm is good”*

Implications

These 32 responses (34% of responses given for Qu. 1), alongside several others categorised into other themes demonstrate the singular importance of the need for convenience, ease and proximity for contemporary working lifestyles. Halton Lea is compact enough to satisfy this human drive for convenience and so already has much to offer in this respect as well as being close enough to major urban centres where national events and cultural activities can be accessed. The important questions are:

- ***What do we need and want to be close to? and,***
- ***What is the right balance between proximity and tranquillity?***

Much of what follows addresses the first of these questions while the second is more likely to be a matter of individual preference.

2. Good Quality Public Open Spaces

Perhaps not surprisingly and, as for the community insight workshops, we see in these 16 responses, that having access to good quality parks within walkable distance is an important element of desirable places to live:

- *“Walkable to a nice park with play equipment and social space”*
- *“Lots of great parks nearby”*
- *“Beaches”*
- *“There’s a great park 15 minutes walk away”*
- *“Large open spaces nearby”*
- *“I like to walk and enjoy nature”*
- *“Next to the cemetery – really nice place to walk around + think”*

3. People and Sense of Community

Here the 13 responses collected show how people prioritise being close to the people they love while also acknowledging the importance of good neighbours and feeling a sense of community:

- *“Friends live close by”*
- *“Near our friends”*
- *“Lots of friends”*
- *“I like the people”*
- *“Good neighbours”*
- *“Being part of community – connected to neighbours”*
- *“Feeling of community”*
- *“Friendly village feel”*
- *“I feel at home in my town”*

4. Good Public Transport Links

A place served by good public transport which is easy to access is important to making a good place to live. The 9 responses categorised here tend to emphasise the offer of links to other places further afield that afford opportunity and leisure. In this they contrast to the community insight findings as there is no emphasis on public transport connections within the place. This may reflect a wider access to, and use of, private transport for local movement within this group and perhaps more need or opportunity to travel away from their home neighbourhood:

- *“Easy Access to motorway to get to other places”*
- *“Good / easy transport links”*

- *“I’m close to a train station that takes me out of the city”*
- *“Good location for train services”*
- *“The road networks are good. Close to 2 big cities. Can go to theatre/ concerts easily”*

5. Good Schools

7 responses indicated that being in a good school catchment or having good local schools was a reason for liking where they lived. This is indicative of the importance placed upon the future success of children or planned children when choosing where to live. Happily, Halton benefits from good school provision.

- *“Good school catchment”*
- *“Close to good schools”*
- *“Good schools (catchment)”*
- *“Good links to education”*

6. A Safe Place to Live

Places of choice are safe places to live for people and their families. The 5 responses reflected the importance of all round safety:

- *“Safe for my kids”*
- *“I feel safe enough after dark”*
- *“Quiet area –good, safe vibe”*

7. Good and Affordable Homes

Although only 4 responses stressed this, it is clearly an important attribute that can directly determine where we choose to live. Good value and size with private external space were elements specifically referred to in relation to home choices:

- *“Affordable (ish)”*
- *“Affordability and good value homes”*
- *“Private space and off-street parking”*

8. Quality, Accessible Health Care

Although not a dominant theme (4 responses fell into this category), good health care provision is another asset that people feel needs to be accessible and convenient.

- *“Accessible health service and facilities”*
- *“Local amenities- Dr. surgery, dentist”*

9. Minor themes

In the remaining 4 responses to question 1, reference was made to:

- *“Varied architecture”*
- *“A sense of history”*
- *“Peace and quiet”*

Question 2: How do the places we live effect our health and wellbeing?

The stakeholders and workers generated 67 responses to this question which clustered into **8 themes**. The first 4 themes described below are regarded as dominant themes, with approx. 70% of total responses captured by them.

1. A Social Built Infrastructure

15 responses referred to the need for a functional, supportive social and maintained infrastructure as an important feature of place that directly effects health and wellbeing. These included some comments on a need to remove barriers to walking around and reducing the dominance of the car:

- *"No barriers to get places (crossing busy road) – happier access"*
- *"Barriers to moving around, subways, bridges, confined spaces"*

Some comments refereed to how infrastructure can promote or reduce feelings of isolation:

- *"Isolation, poor connectivity to services/ spaces"*
- *"Can either promote or prevent social interaction"*
- *"If too far away -> social isolation"*
- *"A good place makes people want to go out and about"*

Specific facilities including *shops, clubs, centres* and *hubs* were mentioned by some as features of a social infrastructure:

- *"If its hard to get to shops for food"*
- *"Community centre - arts, crafts, games"*
- *"New towns – hubs to gather not just housing - 'soulless'"*

2. Useable Outdoor Spaces

These 12 responses reflect the acknowledgement that it may not be enough for a place to have lots of green open space. Instead, the sense reflected here was that public open space must be purposeful with enough variety and/ or flexibility to accommodate a variety of uses/ needs. Exercise and tranquillity for thinking was stressed by some showing that it is what the space affords that is important:

- *"A place where kids can get outside easily and roam free – for the physical and mental health of the kids + their parents."*
- *"Open-ness vs density – feeling penned in or vulnerable"*
- *"Able to use space outdoors + feel safe doing so"*
- *"Plenty of community recreational space – sports"*
- *"I like to walk in green spaces"*
- *"Walking allows time to think"*
- *"Access to quiet open space to think"*

3. Feeling Safe

These 10 responses tended to stress that places that are felt to be unsafe are toxic for health and wellbeing:

- *"Crime and criminality makes me feel bad"*
- *"If I don't feel safe I won't go out at certain times + may become isolated/lonely"*
- *"Sense of security without anxiety"*
- *"Safety most important – can be a tough place to grow up in"*
- *"If you dont feel its safe to let the kids go out, they don't get the chance to do physical stuff + that also impacts upon parents too"*

4. Incivility and Stewardship

From these 10 responses, we see how good maintenance of places, linked here sometimes in relation to addressing antisocial behaviour or uncivil acts, is a necessary factor to maintain a flourishing community:

- *"Well maintained inspires pride – 'broken windows'"*
- *"If it feels run down it makes you feel run down"*
- *"Litter / poorly maintained public realm makes me feel bad"*
- *"poorly looked-after areas"*
- *"Unmaintained spaces create unhealthy perceptions"*

5. The People and Sense of Community

The 8 responses categorised into this theme move away from the place and space focus towards a consideration of how the people in our neighbourhoods affect us:

- *"Access to friends/ family/ community"*
- *"Community/ neighbour relations"*
- *Behaviour of neighbours"*
- *"Good quality neighbours – like you!"*
- *"How they facilitate friendliness and community cohesion"*

6. Amenities and Services

The 4 responses here specified services and amenities required in places such as:

- *"Good wifi coverage (children's connectedness)"*
- *"Great variety of bars and restaurants"*

7. Our Houses

Again, only referred a few times (N=3), it's clear that the quality of our homes is important to our health and wellbeing as expressed here:

- *"Good quality housing keeps you well"*

- *"poor quality housing -> mental stress. Basic needs"*

8. Tranquillity

While tranquillity featured indirectly in relation to affordances from outdoor space, it, or its lack, was mentioned explicitly on 3 occasions:

- *"Noise leads to stress"*
- *"Peace and tranquillity is important"*

Other Comments

These two uncategorised useful comments referred to **pollution from being near motorways** (a negative consequence for communities arising from accessible transport links) and how **a lack of natural light** has detrimental effects on health and wellbeing.

Question 3: What Things would make Halton Lea a Healthy Place for Everyone

The stakeholders and workers generated 81 responses to this question which clustered into **9 substantive themes**. The first 5 themes described below can be regarded dominant themes, with approx. 68% of total responses captured by them.

1. Enabling Community Cohesion

Joint top of the list to make Halton Lea a healthy place for everyone are actions that can enable the growth of community cohesion represented in the 13 comments categorised here. Amongst a diverse set of statements and ideas were:

- *“Community events”*
- *“Events and attractions that bring the whole community together”*
- *“Opportunities for different people across the communities to meet and support each other”*
- *“Build places that people want to call home”*
- *“Youth facility”*
- *“Hub for local VCS group”*
- *“Activities for all age groups”*

2. Making and Maintaining a Clean and Safe Public Realm

Also with 13 responses, the sustained improvement of the living environment is considered an intervention that will benefit everyone’s health and wellbeing because people will use it more – walking every day in it. These responses embed a focus on perception of safety as well as cleanliness and resourcefulness:

- *“Safe moving around / between neighbourhoods”*
- *“Physical layout intimidating – perception of safety”*
- *“Open up underpasses and dark areas”*

- *“More open, inviting and safe feeling walking routes”*
- *“Better walkways”*
- *“Less emphasis on cars”*
- *“Good quality public realm”*
- *“Well maintained”*

3. Amenities and Services that Support Activity

A cluster of 12 comments identified specific notions of what ‘things’ are needed. There is overlap here between both of the above themes but the focus on *activity* was more clearly specified here as an outcome. There was also some emphasis on retail, hospitality and the night time economy too:

- *“More amenities – better facilities for sport and leisure”*
- *“making the green spaces safe with activities to attract people of all ages”*
- *“variety of opportunities to exercise”*
- *“Better walking routes”*
- *“Activities in spaces/ parks”*
- *“Good shops, restaurants”*
- *“Not just shops – night time offer/ economy”*

4. Variety and Quality in Local Employment Opportunities

There was some emphasis on ‘selling’ what Halton has to offer within these 9 responses:

- *“Sell’ our available jobs + opportunities”*

For the most part however, statements were generic in emphasising the need for more local jobs across different sectors. Perhaps surprisingly, there was only indirect emphasis on the need for quality jobs however:

- *“Everyone has access to jobs that pay enough”*

- *“Investing in the local economy”*
- *“accessible job opportunities”*
- *“Access to employment for all different sectors”*
- *“Employment opps – low skills/ higher levels skills”*

5. Affordable and Mixed Housing

8 responses reflected the belief that tackling the shared asset of life-time homes in a way that emphasises affordability and quality would make Halton Lea a healthy place for everyone. In some cases, this was emphasised as a way of adding to population diversity in Halton Lea:

- *“Different types of housing to attract new people to come to the area”*
- *“Mixed social make-up. Not a ghetto”*
- *“Housing options for all – young, old, supported”*
- *“‘Homes for Life’ design – adaptable and suitable for needs”*
- *“Affordable, good quality housing”*

6. Available Healthy Food

These 7 responses ranged from local growing, to providing and selling, to education about how to prepare healthy food:

- *“Food growing - allotments, community gardens”*
- *“Healthy eating, farmers markets, eateries & initiatives”*
- *“Making healthy food choices easier and cheaper”*
- *“knowing how to cook”*

7. Building a Culture of Self-efficacy

These 5 sentiments reflected a need to drive community-wide aspiration, motivation and will in the residents of Halton Lea:

- *“Build aspiration and self-belief”*
- *“Build local people’s capacity, capability, ability to act”*

- *“listen to what local people need/want + facilitate it”*
- *“Community activators and motivators”*

8. Transport Links to Beyond

The 5 responses referring directly to public transport emphasized how this will connect to opportunities and jobs further afield but also that the service should be safe and good enough at night time:

- *“Good transport links to jobs, leisure, facilities”*
- *“Safe, accessible public transport”*
- *“Public transport after 9pm”*

9. A Positive Lifestyle Image that will Attract People to Live Here

Although only 4 responses reflected this, the idea stresses the importance of using the HHNT initiative to catalyse change and support the future growth of Halton:

- *“Ensure we sell a lifestyle and make it accessible”*
- *“A greater critical mass of people”*
- *“Mix things up”*

Other Comments

3 references were made to **integrated health and social care**, and 2 to the importance of **having and maintaining good schooling**.

Design & Visioning

Using the same base as the adult workshops, the participants prepared collages of their ideas based on their discussions and thematic responses above.



5. INTEGRATED INSIGHTS

While health behaviours can be promoted by targeted campaigns, it is widely acknowledged that behaviour change at scale is difficult to achieve and sustain. In terms of implications for a *'healthy new town'*, a non-judgemental ethos with a clear statement of aspirations and aims would seem to be the best route to lasting change.

Combining data from all the workshops delivers 12 key themes:

- 1. Fairness**
- 2. Social Capital**
- 3. Social Infrastructure**
- 4. Social & Economic Sustainability**
- 5. Safe Places**
- 6. Stewardship**
- 7. Active Public Realm**
- 8. Healthy Food**
- 9. Movement & Connection**
- 10. Service Provision**
- 11. Respite**
- 12. Housing**

A Wellbeing Foundation

While all participants spoke of physical and mental health, the latter was emphasised rather more. Everyone was clear that having the resources to support H&W was important, demonstrating a good understanding that H&W are largely determined by wider societal factors.

The teenagers expressed a need for emotional self-expression and for others to tolerate 'differences', regarding the pressure to conform as a barrier to achieving good H&W. While having a positive mind-set and being happy were dominant wellbeing themes for these young people, they also understood the link between H&W and self-improvement.

However, the young people did not explicitly mention a purposeful or meaningful life, suggesting that *'eudaimonic'* wellbeing and self-actualisation may be naturally experienced only in adulthood. As the link to life aspiration and personal growth is important, the relative lack of reference to it by the teenagers is ponderable.

1. Fairness

A sense of a 'democratic deficit' was clear in all the workshops with people feeling excluded from decision-making. The HHNT has an accepting the indicated will amongst the people to become involved in the developing initiative. It is widely acknowledged that when ownership of decisions is built into processes, then positive, sustainable change is more likely to occur without need for additional incentivisation. Thus, the governance and politics of H&W are important.

The teenagers placed strong emphasis on the need for a tolerant, non-judgemental and equal society that respects difference and plurality of views. These concerns reflect a desire for equity and equality of access to the resources that enable a healthy, well-functioning lifestyle.

The fairness and justice principles that these young people regarded as underpinning wellbeing may feel *utopian* (no place) to those who are longer in the tooth. However, they can feature as aims and aspirations in a healthy new town culture as a *eutopian* (*well-place*) vision. Significantly, these were leading principles in several of the 'island designs', demonstrating a belief that they can be incorporated into living environment 'interventions'.

2. Social Capital

Top of the list to make Halton Lea a healthy place for everyone amongst the summit 'stakeholders' are actions that can enable the growth of community cohesion.

Family and friends seem important in equal measure to the young people of Halton but these two groups of 'valued others' appear to have different purposes. Statements about family seemed mostly to reflect reliability, predictability, and support while statements about the importance of friends for H&W seem to be more about maintaining happiness, having a laugh and sharing feelings.

People need opportunities and facilities to enable them to spend time with these valued others. Inclusive, flexible and accessible social spaces and an ethos of togetherness are therefore important in the translation of HHNT.

The adults prioritised being close to the people they love while also acknowledging the importance of good neighbours and feeling a sense of community. There was a good deal of consideration of how the people in our neighbourhoods can affect us negatively but this was seen alongside an acknowledgement of the expertise, nature and value of the Halton people. It would be wise to harness this asset in the ethos and working practices of HHNT.

3. Social Infrastructure

Across the UK the loss of community streets to traffic roads, and car-dependant cul-de-sac estate layouts, has impacted negatively on neighbourliness by encouraging an isolated, car-based living style. Design that makes the connection of people to their place paramount makes neighbourliness more possible. Indeed, a social infrastructure can reduce feelings of isolation. Obvious very low-cost interventions include the removal of barriers to walking around and reducing the dominance of the car.

Some specific facilities mentioned as features of a social infrastructure included shops, clubs, centres and hubs. Sharing activities within the adaptable meeting places of an infrastructure that is designed with social interaction in mind, supports wider connections beyond the street in communities.

Creating community means getting residents out of their homes and into comfortable, adaptable, engaging and secure spaces and surroundings that support wide-ranging, enduring and inter-generational community needs. A healthy new town therefore needs to provide age appropriate, accessible and affordable provisions and amenities.

A diverse range of activities bring people together, helping them to connect particularly across the generations. Facilities that can accommodate and support a flexible range of uses that provide something to do, somewhere affordable and attractive for people to spend time have great potential to support health and uplift wellbeing.

The prominence of music and music-making to the H&W of the young people was very clear. A healthy new town should provide opportunities for us to indulge in our passions and could use music more proactively to promote wellbeing in young and older people alike. Spaces and places can also host organised events that might usefully begin with a celebration of the healthy new town status, encouraging the community to buy into the mission while providing a means to visibly support it.

Specific existing assets that are highly valued and well known were regarded as having a clear place in the initiative going forwards. Other assets though, may be under-utilised because they are not widely known about or because there is under-provision (in the case of allotments). There seems to be room in the strategy of HHNT to make more of, emphasise and encourage use of, these existing features of a social infrastructure but also to use some resources to increase provision where supply is deemed short. For example, there was recognition that the currently available leisure and sporting facilities are not sufficient in quantity and quality to enable further promotion and enablement of healthy lifestyles.

The singular importance of the need for convenience, ease and proximity to amenities for contemporary working lifestyles was particularly emphasised by participants in the health summit. Halton Lea is compact enough to satisfy this need for convenience and so already has much to offer in this respect.

4. Social & Economic Sustainability

The young people clearly felt that coming from a deprived place has consequences for health and wellbeing. Young people come to recognise their own deprivation partly by comparing their place to other places. Feeling trapped and experiencing stigma because of where you live has repercussions that can be partially mediated by the governance, values and by mutual aspirations. Clearly the appearance of the environment is important in this regard and therefore in setting aspirations and ambitions.

It was generally felt that Halton is 'lagging behind' and needs formal input and investment to support its modernisation so that the place can provide future opportunities. The HHNT initiative has the potential to act as a driver for regeneration of the area. If regeneration can maintain a strong focus on health and wellbeing through the vision and ethos of the initiative, then sustained progress towards a healthy and well population is more likely.

In this, there is much to be gained from close liaison, encouragement and partnership working with the social enterprise sector whose remit closely aligns to the HNT and whose good work in the area of health and wellbeing has an acknowledged track record with residents. These organisations can also act to bring together *community H&W champions* for the HNT and, in so doing, tap into the strong will of the people to make Halton a better place to live. These champions might start by '*selling*' what Halton already offers in a way that can bring new people into the area, attracted by the ethos of H&W. To be successful, of course, affordable high-quality life-time homes will be needed.

There is justification in strongly recommending that the steering group build a public reference group into future working arrangements so that the message of Halton as a healthy and well place to live goes beyond the professional body.

5. Safe Places

Feeling scared and vulnerable while out in Halton is a prominent issue for the area's young and older people and this must be a major concern. The implications for re-thinking the physical environment of Halton Lea are very clear to enable its residents to get out and about, actively using the area's places and spaces, feeling secure while doing so. Feeling unsafe in the public realm is a clear barrier to a more active everyday life with people likely to turn to cars to mitigate feelings of vulnerability. ***Or they become isolated.***

Understanding and addressing crime, gang culture and drug use is complex and difficult but, in terms of place design and management, certain key maxims are important. These include designed-in natural surveillance, adequate lighting and sustained upkeep accompanied by a place ethos and governance that aspires to better.

6. Stewardship

It is not enough to provide the initial infrastructure and services to support health and wellbeing if their ongoing stewardship fails, leading to unclean, dishevelled and neglected buildings and spaces. In this way, elements of place that began as assets can become ***'toxic assets'*** and can lead to ***'regeneration relapse'***.

The sustained improvement of the living environment is an intervention that will benefit everyone's health and wellbeing because people will use it more – walking every day in it. It is therefore clear that an important element of a healthy new town for the residents of Halton Lea is to insure a sustainable regime of place stewardship that deals effectively with regular incivilities and that prioritises the quality and cleanliness of the public realm. While the provision of more bins and the monitoring of air quality are simple interventions to address, it may be that well-targeted and high-profile

campaigns like *"Barcelona - Clean up your face"* may also be needed to address anti-social acts.

The governance of HHNT should consider routes to reducing air pollution and ameliorating the effects of emissions as well as encouraging sustainable forms of energy. Usable and well maintained, clean open and green spaces are very much regarded as a core part of a town aiming to function well.

The health and wellbeing fortunes of those living in more deprived areas are more likely to be compromised by necessary, but unwanted, features of industry, due to land value. But this may also reflect the outcomes for dis-empowered communities who are unable to effectively mobilise to take an opposing stance. Democratic engagement in the governance of the healthy new town initiative may help to mobilise a single, empowered community voice.

7. Active Public Realm

Place infrastructure and design is a powerful enabler of active lifestyles. Healthy, active places are those which are walkable, have good cycling provision to and from key destinations, have easy access to natural assets and sports and leisure facilities.

While Halton benefits from plenty of green and public open space, this tends to be of a ubiquitous nature. There is a need for some of this to be turned into formal pitch and court provision. It is clear that the people of Halton could derive much more benefit from the wealth of open space that the area has with a few inexpensive interventions and better stewardship.

Open space must be purposeful with enough variety and/ or flexibility to accommodate a variety of uses/ needs. Reference to the use of space for exercise as well as tranquillity for thinking shows that it is what the space affords that is important for H&W.

8. Healthy Food

The strong emphasis placed on having access to healthy food provision by all the people we worked with has clear implications. Healthy food choices should be promoted within the food outlets (supermarkets and take-aways) of the healthy new town. However, a balance needs to be struck in acknowledgment of the role that eating what you enjoy has a function in maintaining hedonic wellbeing in both young and older people.

The increasing appearance of 'quality food deserts' in more deprived areas of the UK is of striking concern and HHNT has the chance to address and actively buck this concerning trend.

It is a fair assumption, based upon the responses across the workshops, that uptake of healthy local food (if affordable) will be good without need to incentivise.

The opportunity to grow food locally was emphasised across the groups and has implications for the future use of open spaces in the area, roof spaces and brownfield land. It also provides a focus for the joined-up mission of HHNT, with schools offering opportunities to learn about healthy food production and consumption.

9. Movement & Connection

Part of a healthy new town initiative should be to improve the linkage, reliability, accessibility and affordability of public transport and also to address traffic movement issues in the town.

This is important, in part to counter isolation and also, in relation to wider social capital arguments. Good public transport helps residents to link and bond with each other and to bridge to wider networks to improve prospects and opportunities.

Public transport systems should themselves be designed as part of an active transport system with emphasis on the quality of the network infrastructure beyond the vehicles themselves

to focus on the quality of the experience of walking between public transportation nodes. Any service improvement should prioritise safety, regularity and reliability at night time.

There is a balance to be struck in relation to the potentially negative effects of recent strategic road building on the Halton Lea neighbourhood where additional mitigation and management may be necessary.

10. Service Provision

Not surprisingly, a focus on health service provision illustrates that the need for accessible and broad ranging treatment when unwell is a central component of a healthy new town. Health service provision tended to be stressed more by the older and frailer adults in the engagements.

Mobility and dementia friendliness were mentioned frequently by the adults and their translation into the design of the built environment that emerges in Halton Lea is important. The health campus of HHNT should be developed with these in mind

There seems to be a clear role for the service provided by local schools within an extended partnership working ethos of Halton HNT. The possibility of curricula that covers education around H&W, emphasising the local ambitions of HHNT, alongside the development of wellbeing-focussed school philosophies, could powerfully pull the younger generation into a shared mission, building sustainability into the plans being developed now.

Reliable digital infrastructure, is a service 'need' expressed more by the '*digital natives*' in the conversations we had.

11. Respite

Tranquillity is a theme that featured indirectly in relation to affordances from outdoor space in the adult discussions. Within the teenage group, *'rest, relaxation and restoration'* featured strongly. While there is need for a more vibrant townscape, it is also important that people can step back from that when they need to. In part, that is within the home in terms of privacy, or peace and quiet from the neighbours. For young people, who do not control the space in their homes, it is perhaps a sanctuary they can retreat to outside of the family.

The public realm can in part satisfy this need for solace and deliver the peace and tranquillity that facilitates restorative relaxation. While it is believed that certain spaces have greater restorative qualities than others (eg. green space) the evidence to support this is not as strong as might be supposed. The need is for a diversity of space that is well maintained, resource rich and accessible. The maxim that *'places are spaces with meaning'* holds well here.

12. Housing

Housing was only mentioned 12 times across all the workshops, emphasising a greater interest and concern for *'living environment'* issues over *'built environment'* ones. However, these contributions emphasised the importance of good quality houses and housing in galvanising a sustainable community. Key issues included affordability which empowers the ability to choose where you live. Equitable stewardship, diversity in stock and tenure were also cited as good models for change in the fortunes of residents' lives. Developing a sense of agency and control over their lives increases wellbeing and thus health.

6. RECOMMENDATIONS

The six participatory workshops brought useful focus to the lived experience in Halton Lea. The **public realm** is a predominant theme, especially its stewardship, how people move through it to connect positively with each other and how safe they feel in it. Linked to this is stewardship, image (stigma/ self-worth) and perceived quality and access to community 'resources'. The following section makes recommendations based on the findings which can be organised using a **Power, People, and Place intervention framework**.

Power

1. Town Team – 'democratic-place'

In the next stage of public engagement and development, the community needs to be represented on the Healthy New Town 'Steering Group' to develop trust and open channels of communication. Importantly, these representatives need to be politically neutral and selected from a 'community of interest' within the Halton Lea.

Town Teams are a well-tested method for genuinely involving people in the social regeneration of their places. However, while there are successful examples that can be cited and reviewed, it is important to recognise that each is unique, and a product of their individual communities.

The process has begun in Halton Lea with this summer's engagement programme. It should now involve a wider constituency via a co-design process around the emerging 'masterplan'. The themes outlined in this report establish an agenda – the next step is to transform this into a **collective vision** with clear purpose. This will require light touch facilitation and adequate resource to ensure that it becomes established and sustainable.

Appropriate methods of building community capacity could include a combination of 'Appreciative Inquiry', 'World Café' etc, - tailored to Halton Lea and the needs of this community. A starting point may be the

establishment of a hub – perhaps a 'Healthy Community Café' – set up as a social enterprise.

It is essential that young people have an independent voice, requiring a process led by them. This could be facilitated in partnership with local schools, youth clubs and youth arts programmes. It must be inclusive, inviting, interesting and rewarding – perhaps their own autonomous *Town Team*.

The most important outcome is to reduce inequalities over the long term and to recognise that social regeneration is as important as, and underpins, economic regeneration. Any form of a *Town Team* must primarily be about the social health of Halton Lea, and in part that will mean having and perceiving control over the stewardship of their area.

Once established, *Town Teams* can mature into *Community Interest Companies (CIC)* – or other legal entities – and become a hub to the Social Enterprise and Third Sectors. Importantly, whatever the constitution, it must 'champion' the local community to mobilise an empowered voice. Halton Lea will never become a place of choice if the people who live there do not believe that it is.

The following social and physical recommendations are predicated with an assumption that the community will be fully engaged in the design, delivery and decision-making process.

People

2. Eutopia – ‘well-place’

The establishment of *well-places* is a core aim of the NHS Healthy New Town initiative and, in the case of Halton Lea, is predicated on the Government policy of “**no health without mental health**”. ‘*Life History Theory*’ provides the supporting theory arguing that the qualities of an environment directly determine people’s life course strategies. Currently, the residents of Halton Lea perceive resources to be unstable and unreliable. This perception drives sadly unsustainable, short term survival choices not long term, planned thrival choices.

Life-course choices that support thrival happen where resources are considered stable, reliable and predictable enough to allow people to plan for their futures and to cooperate with others towards community prospects.

This understanding of how place quality and opportunity determine life-course health and wellbeing puts place design and stewardship at front and centre of **all** strategy and implementation in *Halton Healthy New Town*.

This will require capacity building amongst professionals and communities, together with co-production of ideas, their implementation and ongoing stewardship. Involving the community in future decision making will initiate thrival behaviours and change perceptions.

3. Haven – ‘safe-place’

Just as short-term health-related behaviours are to be expected in places of perceived low resource, so too is antisocial behaviour and incivility. To change this requires a change in the perception of place (c.f. ‘*Life History Theory*’ above). In part, this can be achieved by changes or improvements in maintenance regimes, removal of barriers to civility, increasing the community’s sense of ‘ownership’ of space and

through design that builds in passive surveillance.

Addressing the dominance of traffic is key to removing barriers to civility. The quality of the pedestrian landscape needs to be improved, isolated places opened up and the night-time environment better lit. Attracting more people to use the public realm for longer will make it safer and friendlier. This, in turn, will build a sense of community and neighbourliness, making it more likely that people will look out for each other through increasing familiarity and sense of responsibility.



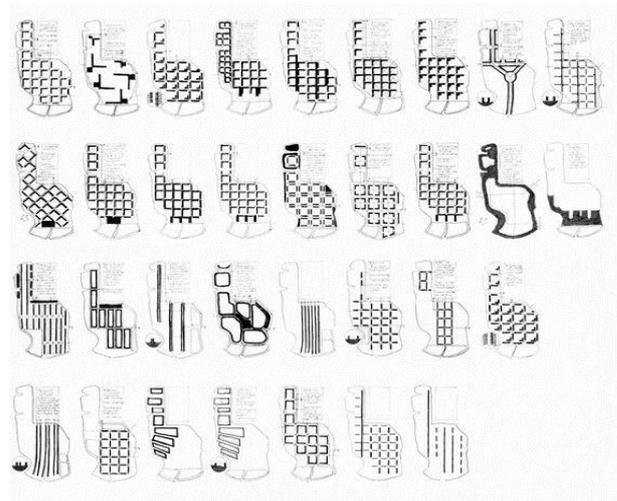
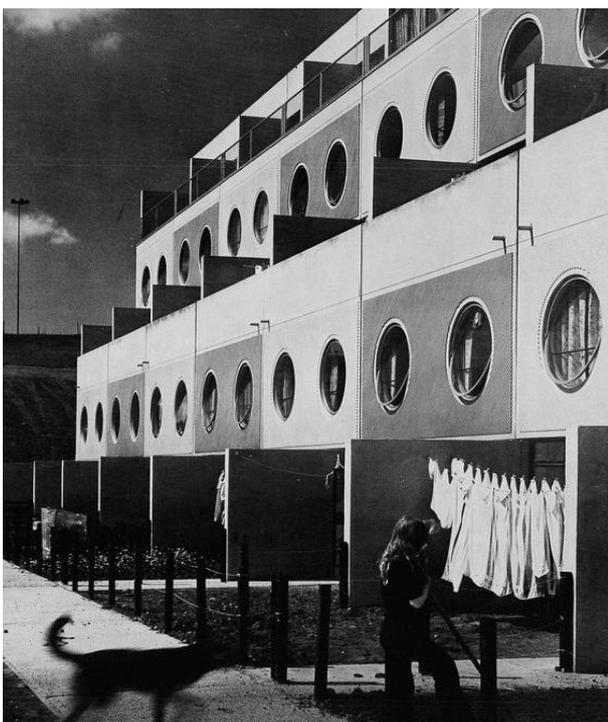
4. Respect – ‘place-of-choice’

This is about the ‘image’ or ‘character’ of place. Unfortunately, a negative place image is dominant currently. This, as we heard in the workshops, can lead to self-stigma, limited aspirations and less prosperous futures.

For Halton Lea to become a place of choice for an aspiring community, there should be well-defined opportunities for the community to make their personality felt, marking the place as their own. Currently, there is a characterless ubiquity in the remnants of the New Town, in

the recent retail additions and the highways that dominate the town. There is an opportunity to engage and involve people in creating a unique and non-corporate identity here, shaped by a vision that places their wellbeing at its core, creating an ethos of togetherness and harnessing the lived experience of the people.

The arts will have a role here, but only in so much as it can provide residents with hands-on experience and foster a sense of control within their place. There are many opportunities beyond the arts too. For example, in established private residential areas (villages and towns, not just estates) there is often a sense of high resource in the landscapes that people tend (and own). In public housing areas and places like Halton Lea surrounded by highway landscapes, there is a municipal feel to 'greenspace', dictated by minimal maintenance budgets and a lack of intimate 'caring'. If people had consent to, and were encouraged to tend and invest in the municipal landscape, it would have greater value to everybody – from a say in the budget dispersal, to hands-on work. Sense of ownership and control over the 'commons' is key to creating a place of choice, rather than the allegory of home ownership and individualism in an anonymous place.



Original architectural options for the New Town – unfettered by people or underlying landscape.

Place

5. Fabric – 'place-of-meaning'

The harmful effects of the New Town concept on communities has been well demonstrated through the ill health and deprivation that people continue to suffer. Despite investment and regeneration, many of these ills persist because the original design and car dominated ethos endures in the cellular structure of Halton and its domineering strategic transport infrastructure. Halton needs to reinvent itself with a design ethos based on people not machines – its *meaning* embedded in health not a misguided concept of convenience.

A '*strategic framework*' is required that brings balance to economic, environmental and social regeneration, with appropriate weight given to each of these aspects to deliver sustainable change. In the workshops, we saw that participants consistently discussed and designed the components of traditional townscapes. According with national urban design best practice, the participants discussed and designed safe, well-connected, interesting streets, squares, gardens and parks. Something organic and adaptable, unlike Shopping City, and not an architectural masterplan or volume housebuilders mono-layout.

However, the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and its 'best practice' guidance use imprecise, ill-defined phrases like 'good design' and 'well designed' which are hostages to fortune and interpretation (c.f. the award winning New Town concept). Halton Healthy New Town has an opportunity of working with the community to develop innovative '**social regeneration practice**' which can be more precise in its definition of what constitutes a successful, well-functioning place. We recommend the idea of '**well-design**', setting new standards to achieve a rich human habitat based on ecological principles supported by our increasing understanding of public health and evolutionary psychology.



6. Movement – '*balanced-place*'

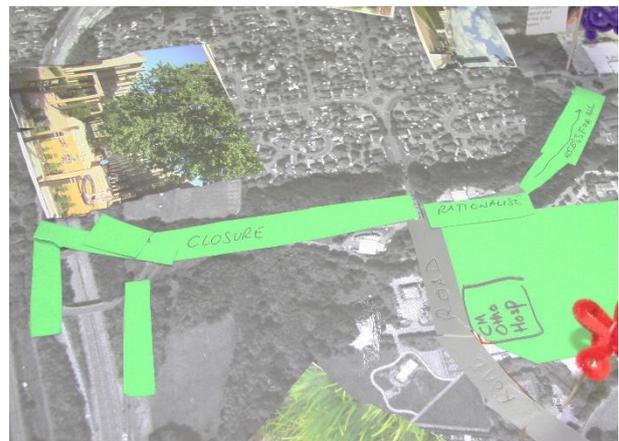
A key and recurring theme in the workshops was the quality of the movement network within the neighbourhood, its links into the wider town and the far-reaching impact this has on people's lives. A bespoke *movement strategy* is required that works at both the strategic and detailed level if people are to connect and bond, and experience the wider resources currently withheld from them. However, if it is to be a quality network, **movement & public realm** must be considered together.

To 'balance' this car dominated place, the concept of **pedestrian priority** should be a leading principle for the Healthy New Town to encourage active walking. In terms of scale it is

a walkable neighbourhood, but there are many real and perceived barriers, the removal of which could be 'quick wins'.

To get people out of cars, walking, cycling and public transport alternatives need to be real and attractive options. Every journey should be a quality experience from door to door which demands safe streets, direct routes, clean and comfortable bus stops, reliable and affordable services. This is especially important at night (hours of darkness). There is much to do to establish this re-balanced movement consistency. We advise against wasting resources on gimmicks, which at best may only change behaviour in the short term., Instead, invest in getting the foundations right first to establish new and sustainable behaviours.

Big questions need to be asked here. The town isn't working for people, but it does work for cars, significantly for passing through, retail visitors and business. We know that these things are linked because movement patterns establish the structure and thus performance of places. What could we change? Remove roundabouts; narrow the roads; lower speed limits, change priorities; introduce shared space; close roads; put busses on the surface and cars accessing Shopping City in the air. These are ideas but this change requires an open, inclusive and honest conversation.



7. Opportunity – ‘market-place’

The community were concerned about the lack of opportunities in the area to start and develop businesses, which would also lead to local trading and employment. They were speaking about an independent high street where there would be start-up prospects like market stalls or pop-up spaces, through to the ability of developing and owning their own properties. This was envisaged as an organic place with open streets and outdoor spaces, rather than an inflexible mega-structure like Shopping City.

While Shopping City and the other car-based multi-national retailers will be here for the foreseeable future, it is possible to develop a finer grain commercial townscape to complement them and build a real and dynamic town centre. It is a matter of understanding the scale of Halton Lea and how it connects to adjacent neighbourhoods too, whilst addressing and rebalancing car dependency. Part of this is about acknowledging that mistakes have been made in allowing ‘out of town retail’ to be developed in the centre.



8. Assets – ‘social-place’

The overall sense in the community was that there is a shortage of amenities and facilities. At the same time, they noted that some are underused or overlooked, particularly ‘everyday’ assets. Amongst the young people, accessibility and cost were real barriers.

A community audit of what is required and what exists, is a good starting point to a conversation around how a social-place can be established. Many of the older adults talked about the underuse of existing assets (e.g. the canal) whilst the young said that many amenities were not attractive to them – being over supervised or patronising etc.

In part, things could be linked up better, but developing critical mass is also important. A vibrant town centre will get people out of their houses and participating in more things than they would have imagined, especially if these things are complimentary but independent to shopping.

It is also important that amenities are age appropriate, which includes affordability. For young people, that will mean a plentiful supply of ‘play’ and sporting opportunities with no or very minimal cost. These facilities also need to be visible and valued to encourage social interaction – older people being able to watch younger people play from a safe place of their own.

The young people we worked with also spoke about intergenerational contact and interaction. This could be the basis of local clubs and informal seasonal and festival celebrations within Halton Lea – fairs, fetes, sports days, food festivals town, barbecues, music and dance. The importance of music for wellbeing was a key focus of conversation in the younger groups.



9. Ownership – ‘my-place’

One of the noticeable things about Halton Lea is the street names, – ‘Hallwood Link Road’; ‘Hospital Way’; ‘Third Avenue’. These inherently impersonal labels emphasise the concept of moving through. They do not signal destinations within a unique place with history, culture and community. We have already referred to these ‘functional’ images of the town, and the impact that they have on people’s ‘sense of belonging’. These street labels could be changed to street names and the utilitarian landscapes that surround them need to become owned.

This is about re-establishing the ‘commons’, which should be nurtured at all scales to create a culture where people are able to ‘own’ and feel ‘responsible’ for their town – moving from residents to citizens. This might involve artists working with the community, but also in tree planting programmes, design of playgrounds, skate parks, adventure playgrounds, gardens, gateways, and even self-build homes and other structures.



10. Food – ‘growing-place’

‘Incredible Edible Todmorden’ is an inspirational town and community initiative that is a real-life example of what the community were talking about in the workshops, yet none of them had heard of it when asked. It is worth showing the film <https://vimeo.com/36838823> and taking interested people there on a bus to discuss the project first-hand.

From the discussions we held with participants, it does not seem necessary to incentivise people to eat healthier foods. They already know what to do and are eager to get on with it – but it needs to become part of an accessible lifestyle. Allotments were frequently mentioned amongst

the adults, and the young people were interested in growing food and learning to cook.

Bringing these things together is a perfect opportunity for intergenerational activity within the wider environment, schools and in a community market place. In place of ornamental trees in parks, there could be community orchards or nut bushes in hedgerows. Not everybody will join in, but it will normalise the idea of healthy eating and reposition food as an asset of place. It’s the taking part and working as a community that will change behaviours as noted earlier, and not the final harvest.



Halton Borough has the potential to become a renowned centre for the production and processing of healthy food, capitalising upon its transport infrastructure, local producers (Cheshire, Wales and the Irish Sea) and the port of Liverpool. The example of Yangzhou World Self-care City has this as one of its strands to deliver health in all policies – this is their industrial policy which includes food tourism and research, as well as processing.

11. Landscape – ‘ecological-place’

The landscape does not flow through Halton, except as a buffer to highways and between planned zones. It needs to become more purposeful and of human scale, reflecting a successful human habitat. That requires a step change from the ‘naturalised landscape’ designs

of the New Town towards something more productive.

In the workshops, variety, activity and tranquillity were all talked about in reference to the landscape, with a sense of flow and connectedness. People were interested in transforming dull municipal spaces into sequences of interesting places, from the historic cemetery to the establishment of ponds for fishing and feeding ducks, to ecological habitats.

They were also interested in the adaptability of spaces for different functions and activities throughout the year, which harks back to stewardship of the place and the opportunity for different people to get involved. This can range from an interest in flora and fauna, to sports and other outdoor activities. Many of these things can be inexpensive early wins, or the foundation to funding bids. Urban farms were also discussed in the workshops; this could extend to horse riding, dog training and other activities that are directly participatory, and also opportunities for volunteering.



12. Built for Living – ‘lifetime-place’

Although ‘housing’ was not prominent in the discussions, the quality of homes and their affordability was part of the conversation – either in terms of ownership or rental. Despite the lack of focus on ‘houses’, regeneration is often ‘housing-led’ with a great deal of focus on the buildings by the professional delivery agents – designers, house builders, RSL’s and local authorities.

Within the Healthy New Towns initiative, there is an opportunity to develop a placemaking code for health that brings together the identified needs of communities in a ‘lifetime-place’. It could be applicable to new designs and regenerating existing places equally, and be measurable against health and life course outcomes, setting up a sustainable monitoring and feedback loop. Health Impact Assessments would be the basis of such a tool.



APPENDICES

HNT Steering Board

David Parr	Chief Executive - Halton BC
Mil Vasic	Strategic Director - Halton BC
Susan Wallace-Bonner	Director Adult Services - Halton BC
Sarah Johnson Griffiths	Public Health - Halton BC
Gary Cleland	HNT Coordinator - Halton BC
Wesley Rourke	Economies/Development/Regeneration - Halton BC
Sara Munikwa	Regen Officer - Halton BC
Mel Pickup	Chief Executive - WHH NHS Trust
Lucy Gardener	Director Transformation – WHH NHS Trust
Carl Mackie	HNT Programme Manager – WHH NHS Trust
Pat McLaren	Communications Director – WHH NHS Trust
Leigh Thompson	Director Primary Care/Commissioning – Halton CCG

Invitees to Health Summit

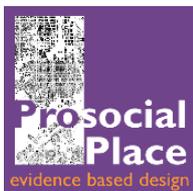
Liverpool City Region Combined Authority	
Steve Rotheram	Metro Mayor
Luciana Berger MP	Metro Mayor Advisor – Mental Health
Members of Parliament	
Derek Twigg MP	Halton
Mike Amesbury MP	Weaver Vale
Halton Borough Council	
Cllr Rob Polhill	Leader of The Council
Derek Twigg MP	Halton
Mike Amesbury MP	Weaver Vale
Cllr Marie Wright	Board Member for Health & Wellbeing
Cllr Tom Mcinerney	Board Member for Transportation & Children
Cllr Phil Harris	Board Member for Community & Sport
Cllr Ron Hignett	Board Member for Physical Environment
Ian Leivesley	Community & Resources Directorate

Halton Lea | Healthy Town | Community Insights Programme

Eileen Omeara	Directors Of PH
Cllr Dave Cargil	Member for Norton North
Cllr John Gerrard	Member for Mersey Ward
Cllr Kath Loftus	Member for Halton Lea
Cllr Dave Thompson	Member for Halton Lea
Paul Wright	Open Spaces Manager
Lisa Taylor	Health Improvement Team Manager
Pam Worrall	Health Improvement Manager
Dave King	Health Improvement Specialist
Charlotte Smith	Public Health Registrar
Rebecca Taylor	Transport
Martin Mccoy	Landscape Architect
Mike Andrews	Community Safety Team
NHS/ PHE	
Sara Mcafferty	NHSE HNT
Rachael Toms	NHSE HNT
Dan Northam Jones	NHSE HNT
Prof. Mel Sirotkin	PHE Centre Director North West
Louise Williams	PHE Health & Wellbeing Support Manager
Andre Pinto	PHE National Health/Homes
Gill Leng	PHE Housing/Health
Dr Ann Marie Connolly	Deputy Director - Health Equity & Mental Health
Local Health Services	
Dr David Lyon	Chair – Halton CCG
Dave Sweeney	Acting Director – Halton CCG
Joe Rafferty	CEO - Mersey Care
Michael Crilly	Director - Mersey Care
Steve Mcguirk	Chair - WHHT
Simon Barber	CEO - NW Boroughs
Colin Scales	CEO - Bridgewater NHS
Dawn Heggarty	Brookvale Practice Manager
Dawn Randles	Weavervale Practice
Richard Harding	Digital Innovation Lead: <i>Improving Me</i> - Cheshire And Merseyside Women's & Children's Services Vanguard
Gill Smylie	LJMU – working with <i>Improving Me</i>

Third Sector Partners	
Hitesh Patel	Director - Halton CAB & Chair Health Watch Halton
Matthew Roberts	Halton And St Helens Voluntary & Community Action
Rachel Owen	CEO - Halton Chamber of Commerce
Nora Rimmer	Four Estates
Clare Lightfoot	Halton Open
Marilyn Hampson	Halton Speak Out
Sue Molyneux	Old Town Enabled
Fr Ravi Bosco	Parish Priest for the 3 Runcorn Churches in 'The Divine Saviour Parish'
Halton Stakeholders	
Karl Clawley	Manager - Runcorn Shopping City
Lindsey Whitley	WYG - Masterplan Consultants
Thalia Bell	Riverside College
James Rule	Widnes Vikings CEO
Mike Larkin	Cheshire Fire & Rescue Policy & Project Manager
Sara Dilmamod	Cities Mode - Consultants
Philip Liu	Cities Mode - Consultants
Housing	
Nicky Harris	Development Manager - Halton Housing Trust
Callum Henderson	Project Manager - Halton Housing Trust
Steven Elliott	Plus-Dane - Project Manager Property Team
Kathryn Muscroft	Neighbourhood Team Leader - Liverpool Housing Trust.
Andrew Denton	Land & Partnerships Manager - Keep Moat
Merseytravel	
Cllr Liam Robinson	Chairman
Cllr Pam Thomas	Co-opted Member of the Merseytravel Committee

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