

PLANNING POLICY AND LOCAL PLAN COMMITTEE

29 OCTOBER 2019

REPORT OF THE CORPORATE DIRECTOR (PLANNING AND REGENERATION)

A.5 – LIVEWELL DEVELOPMENT ACCREDITATION SCHEME

(Report prepared by William Fuller)

PART 1 – KEY INFORMATION

PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

The purpose of this report is to provide the Members with an overview of the Livewell Development Accreditation Scheme, to seek endorsement of the scheme and to outline the next steps for the promotion of the scheme.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Livewell Development Accreditation is based on a two-stage assessment embedding the new HIA (Health Impact Assessment) criteria (as set out within the Essex Design Guide¹) where developments considered to make a positive contribution to health and wellbeing would be awarded different levels of accreditation. The 'Livewell' brand is used on a wide range of the local authority health and wellbeing initiatives and is jointly owned by Essex local authorities.

Officers at both the District Council and Essex County Council considered that there was need to encourage developers to go beyond policy requirements. To incentivise developers to do so, the Livewell Development Accreditation is seen as a means to add value to development schemes and fully utilise the Active Design principles embedded in the Council's new Local Plan.

This is a voluntary scheme. Developers can express their interest to the Development Management team at masterplanning, pre-application or planning application stages.

RECOMMENDATION

That the Planning Policy and Local Plan Committee:

- a) Notes the report and the Livewell Development Accreditation Scheme and endorse the promotion of the scheme.

PART 2 – IMPLICATIONS OF THE DECISION

DELIVERING PRIORITIES

The report relates to the following priorities in the Corporate Plan:

¹ Healthy Places Guidance for Developers, Planning and Designers to be published in 2019

- Make the most of our assets
- Engaging with the community
- Support rural communities
- Effective partnership working,
- Promote healthier lifestyles and wellbeing
- Local regeneration
- Support business growth
- First rate leisure facilities
- Attractive events programme

RESOURCES AND RISK

Funding: There is an appropriate fee for applicants to the scheme to cover the costs of the assessment above what would normally be required to be undertaken as part of the assessment of a Health Impact Assessment (HIA) submitted with development proposals.

Recourses:

Stage 1 is incorporated into the local authority arrangements for planning applications, i.e. through pre-application advice and planning application fees. Health Impact Assessment would be included on the local validation list as a requirement within the submission of a planning application.

For Stage 2, the fees would be set by the Essex Quality Review Panel and information published on the website with further information about the arrangements for the panel and panel members.

Risk: As the scheme is voluntary, it is considered that the risk is low for applicants to challenge its outcome

LEGAL

The Livewell Development Accreditation is a voluntary scheme which does not rely on any statutory requirements.

OTHER IMPLICATIONS

Crime and Disorder: Indirect benefits could be made in terms of well-designed places that promote surveillance.

Equality and Diversity: An Equality and Diversity Impact Assessment has been undertaken for the Council's emerging new Local Plan. The Policy objectives of which underpin this voluntary scheme.

Health Inequalities: The Accreditation Scheme will support the Tendring Health and Wellbeing Strategy which has been adopted by all the partners at the Tendring Local Health and Wellbeing Board and has as its key priorities, mental health, obesity and activity and long term conditions. The Accreditation Scheme will directly help to deliver improvement in these areas for example through active environments as activity promotes improvements in mental health and

obesity and can also be useful in those developing long term conditions by giving them the opportunity to build resilience by accessing the environment. Similarly design of homes and spaces and supporting communities will also lead to improvements in the priority areas and work to assist improved public health.

Area or Ward affected: All

Consultation/Public Engagement: This report has been prepared following informal consultation within district councils in Essex and Essex County Council and also with developers to evaluate the response to the process and form an accreditation should take.

Sport England also had vital input in the evolution of the scheme to ensure Active Design principles were embedded and have also agreed to endorse the scheme.

PART 3 – SUPPORTING INFORMATION

Background

It is widely recognised that health and wellbeing are intrinsically linked to both individuals and their environment. Health inequalities are heavily influenced by a wide range of socio-economic factors including housing, education, jobs, and worklessness. Planners, developers and public health professionals acknowledge the multiple benefits that incorporating health and wellbeing principles into development proposals can have on individuals and the community.

The Essex Design Guide (EDG) incorporates health and wellbeing into its overall themes and promotes the use of Health Impact Assessments (HIA). The Essex Planning Officers Association in partnership with Essex County Council Public Health has developed the accreditation scheme to recognise developers that are committed and contribute to improving health and wellbeing through their developments.

Livewell Developers Charter

The Livewell Developers' Charter provides the opportunity for developers to commit to supporting the health and wellbeing principles within the Accreditation Scheme. It is based on an annual review and a commitment to ongoing training and predominately focused at medium or smaller developers and builders.

As part of the Charter, training will be provided on behalf of the local authorities involved in the scheme, and advice provided by the local authorities working alongside public health practitioners and ECC Public Health. It is anticipated that this will be provided by Essex Place Services/EPOA.

Stage 1 – Livewell Design Award

The Livewell Development Accreditation Scheme actively encourages early engagement through pre-application advice with planning professionals and public health practitioners. At this stage developers are assessed on how they have embedded healthy design principles into their emerging schemes using the Health Impact Assessment or the Healthy Checklist together with

Sport England Active Design Principles. Schemes that have a positive influence would be awarded a 'Livewell Design' award.

For Tendring, HIAs are required through the Local Validation checklist.

Stage 2 – Livewell Development Accreditation

There are 6 categories for assessing development against and it is based on a credit scoring process. These categories are:

1. Design of homes and spaces
2. Active environment and connectivity
3. Environmental Sustainability
4. Supporting Communities
5. Access to healthier food environments
6. Improving access to education, skills, and employment

Successful Livewell developments will be awarded at either bronze, silver or gold level accreditation, subject to approval of a design panel. A health and wellbeing sub-panel of the newly formed independent Essex Quality Review Panel² will undertake this work under the co-ordination of Essex Place Services. This will involve evidence-based assessments from case studies and may involve a site visit. The sub-panel will include representatives from a variety of background from urban designs, planners and health professionals.

Smaller-scale schemes which do not meet the minimum size criteria (50 dwellings +) for an HIA can still submit their proposal for accreditation. These would be assessed against three of the core principles home/space design; active environment and connectivity; and environmental sustainability using a Healthy Checklist.

Scheme Evolution

The Livewell Development Accreditation Scheme has involved stakeholders from local authorities across Essex, both planning professionals and public health practitioners as well as Essex County Council's Public Health Lead for healthy places and people. These task and finish groups helped to inform the assessment criteria and provide useful insight to a range of different development types and priorities.

In addition, informal consultation was undertaken with strategic developers, including in Tendring, to evaluate the response to the process and form an accreditation should take.

Sport England also had vital input in the evolution of the scheme to ensure Active Design principles were embedded and have also agreed to endorse the scheme.

Benefits of the Scheme

The Livewell Development Accreditation Scheme can contribute to achieving a broad number of

² The Essex Quality Review Panel provides a well-established method of offering independent and impartial guidance on the design of new buildings, landscapes and public space. More information can be found at: <https://www.essexdesignguide.co.uk/qualitypanel/about/>

national and Essex Health and Wellbeing objectives and priorities. These align with the council's corporate objectives; the Joint Essex Health and Wellbeing Strategy³ and the National Planning Policy Framework on ensuring developments are safe, inclusive, and accessible and promote health and wellbeing. This will also help developers demonstrate their contribution to high-quality growth and delivering the EPOA's Essex Quality Charter.

Next Steps

The scheme will feature on the Essex Design Guide website⁴.

The scheme will also be promoted to developers through the Essex Developers' Forum later this year. Officers are not aware of a similar scheme in the country and so it has attracted significant interest from other Councils and organisations. It is anticipated that other Councils across Essex and indeed across the country will adopt the Livewell Development Accreditation Scheme.

APPENDICES

Appendix 1 – Livewell Development Accreditation Scheme

APPENDICES

Appendix 2 – Livewell Developers Charter

BACKGROUND PAPERS

None

³ <https://www.livingwellessex.org/media/621973/jhws-2018-cabinet-aug-2018.pdf>

⁴ <https://www.essexdesignguide.co.uk/supplementary-guidance/livewell-development-accreditation/>