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Does the Barking Riverside NHS Healthy New Town principles present wider opportunities to other areas of the borough?

We are starting to see many developments that will gain momentum over the next year. Further increases in the expected growth of our borough, with 50,000 homes and 20,000 jobs being introduced by 2042. The new Mayor of London, Sadiq Khan has included Social Inclusion in his manifesto pledge and the national landscape in now one of moving towards Brexit, alongside the continued wholesale cuts in public services. However last year we introduced London’s Healthy New Town and describe the story of its first year and the achievements already made.

We are one of the higher achieving Healthy New Towns of the three-year NHS England programme. We are delighted to have secured additional funding for two years. However, one year on, our population remains one of poor health and social outcomes and to change this will, as our Borough Manifesto describes take up to 15-20 years. Therefore, our commitment to use the increasing growth of the borough to benefit the borough as a whole remains steadfast. In Barking Riverside and in the rest of Barking and Dagenham we are putting some of the “building blocks” for this in place and supportive policies are emerging from City Hall. I discuss therefore ways of maximising the opportunities for our residents, albeit in a very challenging national and international context building on the key messages from my 2015-16 report see Box 1.
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Box 1: Key messages from the chapter on “Growing the Borough” in last year’s Annual Public Health Report

- Social inequalities drive health inequalities. Addressing the social determinants of health is not a new approach. It will have the greatest impact on health inequalities in the longer term.
- Key approaches to addressing health inequalities in the long term include: a “Health in all Policies” approach, the use of health impact assessments, putting resources into monitoring and evaluation and involving communities in decisions.
- Growth presents an opportunity for an area. However, there are also serious risks of widening social and health inequalities.
- We have much more evidence of how to improve health than how to reduce health inequalities. We want to rise to the challenge of how we grow areas in ways that narrows rather than widen inequalities so that everyone benefits from growth.

Barking Riverside – London’s Healthy New Town.

Barking Riverside sits in Thames ward, one of the most deprived wards in Barking with poor health and social outcomes. Historically Thames View and the early houses at Barking Riverside comprise an area that is quite geographically cut off.

Improving the connections such as transport as well as social infrastructure is critical to the new development as the number of homes on Barking Riverside expands from 800 to 10,800 by 2030. Plans for the area are being refreshed and reviewed as the development of the new over ground station at Barking Riverside, on the Gospel Oak to Barking rail link progresses.

In this first year, we have built on the historic work of Barking Riverside to bring all health-related activities under one umbrella. We have made a number of achievements as shown in Box 2. Moving forward the growth of Barking Riverside presents an opportunity to build communities and for economic, physical and social regeneration of the area with the associated benefits to health. However, there is a risk that these benefits are only reaped by a few. We are determined that this won’t happen – but to achieve this is a major challenge.

Box 2: The key achievements in our first year as a Healthy New Town (HNT) include that we:

- Developed 10 Healthy New Town Principles (see box 3) derived from a review of evidence and good practice, which are central to the Section 106. This is being built into other plans and is a fine example of a health in all policies approach and has been copied by other HNTs.
- Modeled our community-centered approach from the outset, commissioning engagement activities to understand community perceptions and identify leaders, and engaging actively with the Community Interest Company (CIC) (that will, as the population grows, mean the community will manage the assets).
- Ensured our work is evidence-based, with integral research and knowledge exchange, including through an innovation summit bringing together researchers and practitioners from across the UK.
- Embedded health and care space requirements in Section 106 (S106) for a new facility in 2020 on Barking Riverside. This is based on an innovative and integrated model linked to the BHR Health and social Care System locality model, developed in partnership with stakeholders. We have also facilitated engagement with the NHS and developers to strengthen the interim offer for health and care for residents.
- Undertook population projections based on leading-edge practice, with the involvement of the GLA, Public Health England and others. This suggests the population is likely to be particularly young with families and children.
- Through our governance model, ensuring tight co-ordination and strong leadership from the developers, council, Care City and other key factors.
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Box 4: Our approach to achieving inclusive and healthy growth in Barking Riverside

• Put the community at the centre: 4 months of community engagement activities, with more planned and engaging with the Community Interest Company.
• Political leadership: advocacy by our local politicians.
• Partnership: with the NHS, developers, council departments, academics and the community throughout our work.
• Evidence based: evidence reviews and collaboration with top academics.
• Embedding health in planning frameworks: within the Section 106 and sub framework plans. This is a fine example of a “health in all policies” approach.
• Proactive communications: with the public and professionals, for example New London Architecture conference and the BOLD magazine and development of a sustainable communication strategy, managed by residents and supporting knowledge sharing and upskilling.
• Monitoring and evaluation: developing a framework for learning what works in Barking Riverside.

As the homes develop on Barking Riverside, the railway will be put in and a district centre will emerge. Imagine if the new Barking Riverside was a destination for people to come to from the area to take up jobs, to play along the Thames and walk through the blue and green spaces. To connect easily across Barking Riverside and the neighbouring areas through cycle lanes, walk ways, good public transport leading to a new vibrant hub.

This is our vision for Barking Riverside:

‘A place which is healthy for all who live and work in and around the area.’

Central to this ambition is that Barking Riverside is a healthy place for all, irrespective of wealth, background and personal characteristics and whether from new or existing communities.

Box 3: 10 Healthy New Town Principles

1. Actively promoting and enabling community leadership and participation in planning, design and management of buildings, facilities and the surrounding environment and infrastructure to improve health and reduce health inequalities.
2. Reducing health inequalities through addressing wider determinants of health such as the promotion of good quality local employment, affordable house, environmental sustainability and education and skill development.
3. Providing convenient and equitable access to innovative models of local healthcare services and social infrastructure, with the promotion of self-care and prevention of ill health.
4. Providing convenient and equitable access to a range of interesting and stimulating open spaces and natural environments (“green” and “blue” spaces) providing informal and formal recreation opportunities for all age groups.
5. Ensuring and development embodies the principles of lifetime neighbourhoods and promotes independent living.
6. Promoting access to fresh, healthy and locally-sourced food (for example, community gardens, local enterprise) and managing the type and quantity of fast-food outlets.
7. Encouraging active travel, ensuring cycling and walking are safer and more convenient alternatives to the car for journeys within and outside the development, and providing interesting and stimulating cycle/footpaths.
8. Creating safe, convenient, accessible, well-designed built environment, and interesting public spaces and social infrastructure that encourage community participation and social inclusion for all population groups including older people, vulnerable adults, low income groups and children.
9. Embracing the Smart Cities by incorporating and future-proofing for new technology and innovation that improves health outcomes across a range of areas, both at an individual level and also within the public realm.
10. Ensuring workplaces, schools, indoor and outdoor sports and leisure facilities, the public realm and open spaces are well designed in ways which promote an active and healthy lifestyle, including regular physical activity, healthy diet and positive mental health.
Moving forward, building on our achievements of the last year, our overlapping priority themes are shown in figure 1. Below are some examples of our plans for taking them forward.

**A. Connected Community:**
The four-months community engagement and liaison with the Community Interest Company have given us insights into what the community wants to see which has helped to inform our activities. They have told us they would like: more events and activities for all ages, and a space for these to happen - highlighting the local will for a more connected community. They would value better promotion and communication: finding an innovative way for local activities and events to be promoted and communicated to people in one central place or through one clear channel. They also suggested more local participation, leadership and skill building and introducing an improved mechanism for local people to participate in activities and be involved in running and leading on initiatives in the area. Some quotes are shown in Box 5

**Box 5: Quotes**

“Through the process I learnt about collaboration. Events like “Feel Good Friday” should come up more often!” (Sola - Fruit Stall from Ace Events)

“People want us to do more activities like this, if we could let residents get involved in an affordable way that would encourage us to do it again.” (Triangoals Unlocking Potentials)

In response to this we are working with the community to develop sustainable communication vehicles that will be shaped and delivered by the community. We will also codevelop and test with Ebbsfleet Healthy New Town a best practice tool for supporting “inclusive growth” – including engaging with communities and community asset management.

**B. Life Long Health:**
Professor Nick Tyler, from University College London, will work with the community on topics relating to access, mobility and design of the built environment- for example access to the river and enhancing older people’s mobility.

**C. Sense of Place:**
Link with plans across the borough for how we encourage use of our open spaces – green spaces and “blue” (water) spaces and maximise the cultural opportunities.

**D. Healthy Mind and Body:**
SUSTRANS has started work to develop engagement, education and behaviour change interventions that will focus on improving local air quality and promoting active travel. We are offering opportunities to develop healthy eating and food skills for example, healthy eating on a budget and enterprise development.

**E. Future Health and Care:**
The NHS is developing increased capacity in the GP surgeries bordering on Barking Riverside. The NHS financial envelope and capacity planning does not allow for a new facility on Barking Riverside until 2020, when the population will have increased. However, there is now a pharmacy in Barking Riverside that will offer a range of services and we will work with the NHS to ensure that health and care facilities are as accessible as possible for Barking Riverside residents.

For 2020, the NHS, planning team, developers, public health and national experts are working to develop a truly integrated, innovative model of care in the new district centre – in line with, albeit even more ambitious than the new care models for the BHR Health and Social Care System. We are embedding this in planning frameworks for the development.

Moving forward there are key important challenges. How can we ensure that healthy policies are embedded for the long term? How can we ensure we have inclusive growth, improving health inequalities rather than health? How will we know if we are successful? Lastly, if we are successful – how can we scale up the successes to the borough, to London? In the context of this final question, I will look back at the story for the borough and for London over the last year.
Our growth agenda
We are the fastest growing borough in London and one of the fastest changing communities in the UK. We are expecting a growth of approximately 32,000 new homes and the population will have increased to 280,000 by 2030. Beyond that year it will continue to grow. The health and social outcomes of the borough continue to be a challenge. The key population and demographic facts on page 4 shows key statistics that demonstrate the challenges to be addressed through our Borough Manifesto.

Last year we mentioned the Growth Report – a prestigious commission that gave 109 recommendations on how to ensure as a council, we maximise the opportunities of Growth in the borough. Since then we have made some key achievements.

- The Borough Manifesto is likely to describe our vision for 2037 and cross cutting ways to support that vision including strategic views on...
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housing, education, employment, green spaces and strengthening communities.

- The local plan has progressed and we’ve undertaken a health impact assessment of the local plan to maximise the opportunities for health. A characterisation study commissioned to fully understand the complex nature of the borough has given a wealth of information.

- The 10 HNT principles are embedded in the local plan – for all to follow. The Health and Wellbeing Board and Corporate Strategy Group have committed to ensuring the 10 HNT principles are embedded in future developments - the start of our journey to ensure that the learning from Barking Riverside is replicated elsewhere. The council is moving to a “New kind of council” with a commissioning core and innovative new agencies such as “Be First” that will deliver regeneration and inclusive growth for the borough.

- Our best practice examples and ambition for the borough are being shared e.g. at the New London Architecture conference – Barking and Dagenham on Location.

We have firm plans for a film studio in the borough and Coventry University is opening a new site at Dagenham Civic Centre, further developing skills and education. Utilisation of green spaces across the borough remains a challenge. There are examples, such as the pilot of a healthy lifestyle hub at Mayesbrook park.

Our Borough Manifesto puts the community at the heart of Barking and Dagenham’s core activities and is central to our approach. Some examples of our approaches and actions moving forward are:

A new kind of council – a shift in council focus/delivery: Be First – to deliver regeneration and inclusive growth. Community solutions – to work with some of the most vulnerable in our community. Responding to public safety concerns and understanding the needs of specific communities e.g. through a population community needs assessment of the LGBTQ+ community locally. We are working with the Participatory City Foundation to develop Everyone Every Day – a five-year programme to engage our communities - potentially with a hub on Riverside. Key strategies are being developed – arts and culture, open spaces.

A key theme throughout and a “raison d’être” for the Healthy New Town is about shared learning, therefore we will move from local -Barking Riverside and surrounding areas – to Barking and Dagenham borough – to London on our journey.
A Healthy London For All

Context

Sadiq Khan came into post (May 2016) with a number of election promises. Improving public health and health inequalities are key to his manifesto commitments. His vision is for a London where “no one is left behind” mirrors our Borough Manifesto and for:

“A healthier, fairer city for all Londoners, where nobody’s health suffers because of who they are or where they live” (City for All Londoner’s, 2016)

In his first year some of his key successes impacting upon health are – a consultation on air quality, freezing of Transport for London fares and opening a night tube. He has published a “City for All Londoners” that outlines his intentions across all the mayoral strategic areas including: growth, housing, economy, environment/transport and public space and community cohesion. He recognises in this the importance of wider determinants in improving health. The document is a precursor to the Mayoral strategies.

The City for All Londoners proposes key priorities – impacting on health. These include improving air quality e.g. through Ultra Low Emission Zone, Healthy Streets – encouraging people in active travel through changes to the environment and a commitment to a goal of 50% affordable housing. A refresh of all the statutory strategies is planned, mostly within this year – this will include the Health Inequalities Strategy in 2017.

The refresh of the statutory strategies gives a perfect example of the Health In all Policies, or preferably Health Equity in All Policies approach. Monitoring the impact of Healthy New Town or the subsequent growth areas would be key.

Conclusions

The story above has three layers. London, our borough and Barking Riverside HNT. At each layer there are common challenges - how do we make this sustainable? How do we address inequalities in health rather than just improve the average health of the population – with winners and losers? How do we strengthen the evidence base and evaluate what we have achieved to be assured of impact? In Box 6 below I propose a few key elements that I think would be common to all approaches.

The synergies in vision and approaches offered by London’s Healthy New Town (Barking Riverside), London’s Growth Opportunity (Barking and Dagenham) and the Mayor of London provide a unique opportunity to further tackle the “wicked issue” of ensuring growth benefits the many and not the few in our borough. This is exciting and timing is crucial.

To seize this opportunity there are a few key things we must do over the following year. The first is to ensure that the learning from what works and what doesn’t work in the Barking Riverside Healthy New Town is digested and applied for other growth areas in the borough. We should replicate, with appropriate adaptations, what is of benefit and find new solutions to issues that we have not succeeded in overcoming. Much of the activities of the HNT are being achieved through the additional focus of partners and through working with the community. The additional budget is very modest and, arguably not the greatest driver for our achievements.

The second is to put in place mechanisms that will ensure the longevity of our achievements. No doubt much of this is out of our control with uncertain changes in the national and international context. However, as at London level, embedding the Health Equity in All Policies approach our Barking and Dagenham strategies can be powerful. A key example is the Local Plan.

Finally, our biggest challenge is to ensure that our policies narrow rather than widen the gap in inequalities. We will hold our own workshop and develop a tool and collaborate actively with emerging knowledge leaders to take steps towards developing approaches to “inclusive growth” over the year.

Box 6: Commonalities of Vision and Approaches between London, the borough and Barking Riverside HNT

- Visions: “No one left behind”
- Strong political leadership: Commonality of vision.
- Addressing wider determinants of health/Health Equity in All Policies – Agreed and is central to all levels of planning.
- Engaging the community and involving in the decision making, planning, delivery. - Central to all levels
- Monitoring and evaluation of our impact. London, Borough, Barking Riverside. Outcome measures. E.g. Healthy Life Expectancy. Essential to be able to demonstrate that we are achieving.
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Notes: