

## Public Health Annual Report 2019-20

Report of the Chief Officer for Communities, Public Health, Environment and Prosperity

*Please note that the following recommendations are subject to consideration and determination by the Cabinet (and confirmation under the provisions of the Council's Constitution) before taking effect.*

**Recommendation:** Cabinet is asked to receive the annual report of the Director of Public Health 2019-20 on 'Planetary and Human Health' and to note its recommendations.

~~~~~

### 1. Background

- 1.1. The Director of Public Health has a statutory duty to write an annual report, and the local authority has a statutory duty to publish it (section 73B [5] & [6] of the 2006 NHS Act, inserted by section 31 of the 2012 Health and Social Care Act). This enables the Director of Public Health to make an independent judgement about the state of health of the local population and ensures that the report will be published and in the public domain. The annual report by the Director of Public Health is therefore different from all other reports received from an officer in that it is not a Cabinet Member report.

### 2. Introduction

- 2.1. This Annual Public Health Report for Devon County Council is the 13th in a series of annual reports on the health of the population of Devon which began in 2007-08.
- 2.2. Each report covers the general health of the population of Devon; increasingly the detail about health and wellbeing can be found in the annual Joint Strategic Needs assessment which is available at: [www.devonhealthandwellbeing.org.uk/jsna](http://www.devonhealthandwellbeing.org.uk/jsna)
- 2.3. This year's public health annual report takes as its theme planetary and human health. In 2019-20 there has been a global increase in concern about the effects that human beings are having on the health of the planet, and the impact that this has on public health.
- 2.4. A recent global report on health and climate change has noted that, without change, a child born today will face a world that is, on average, 4°C warmer by their 71<sup>st</sup> birthday – putting their health under threat for a range of reasons.
- 2.5. The structure of this report covers different aspects of our environment and our health and explores the evidence, the impact on health and wellbeing and what can be done to manage the impact to create greater resilience. It complements Devon's new Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2020-25: "Healthy and Happy Communities".
- 2.6. The purpose of this report is to explore that human dimension: the relationship between the health of people and the health of our planet, and to make recommendations which will improve the health and wellbeing of both.

### **3. Recommendations**

3.1 The 13 recommendations set out in the report are:

1. To recognise and mitigate (wherever possible) the impact of changes to the health of the planet on health and social inequality.
2. The wider public health community to contribute to the Climate Emergency response.
3. Local authority policies to describe their impact on planetary health as well as public health by extending the 'Health in All Policies' approach.
4. Policies on cutting greenhouse gases and improving the environment should also be used to 'level up' and reduce inequalities in health.
5. To embed sustainable commissioning, by ensuring providers are reducing their carbon footprints.
6. To use the Government's plans for housing and new developments to embed health in 'place' – for example to improve air quality and increase active travel; building Passive Houses<sup>1</sup> to reduce carbon footprints and building houses to withstand extreme weather events.
7. To take every opportunity, individually and collectively, to increase active travel.
8. To support the understanding of, access to and use of the natural landscape to promote health and wellbeing.
9. To promote 'reduce' and 're-use' as extensively as recycling.
10. To promote healthy eating advice which advocates a diet rich in vegetables, nuts, seeds and fruit<sup>2</sup>.
11. To improve air quality in those areas or at those times of day when air pollution is increased.
12. To actively support the United Nations 17 Sustainable Development Goals.
13. At an individual level, change your behaviour, for example by making one or more of the Eden Project's "What you can do" pledges<sup>3</sup>.

### **4. Financial considerations**

4.1 Contained within the report.

### **5. Legal considerations**

5.1 The publication of the annual report of the Director of Public Health by Devon County Council discharges a statutory responsibility under the Health and Social Care Act 2012.

### **6. Environmental impact considerations**

6.1 Contained within the report.

### **7. Equality considerations**

7.1 Contained within the report.

---

<sup>1</sup> Passive House – an architectural approach to building energy-efficient homes: the only internationally recognised, performance-based energy standard in construction.

<sup>2</sup> [https://eatforum.org/content/uploads/2019/07/EAT-Lancet\\_Commission\\_Summary\\_Report.pdf](https://eatforum.org/content/uploads/2019/07/EAT-Lancet_Commission_Summary_Report.pdf)

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.edenproject.com/make-the-change/what-you-can-do/pledge>

**8. Risk assessment considerations**

8.1 Contained within the report.

**9. Recommendation**

9.1 Cabinet is asked to receive the annual report of the Director of Public Health and to note its recommendations.

**Dr Virginia Pearson  
CHIEF OFFICER FOR COMMUNITIES, PUBLIC HEALTH, ENVIRONMENT AND  
PROSPERITY  
DEVON COUNTY COUNCIL**

**Electoral Divisions:** All

Cabinet Member for Community, Public Health and Transportation and Environmental  
Services: Councillor Roger Croad

**Background publications**

Previous annual reports and this 2019-20 annual report of the Director of Public Health can be found at:

[www.devonhealthandwellbeing.org.uk/aphr](http://www.devonhealthandwellbeing.org.uk/aphr)