

SHETLAND'S LOCAL PLACE PLANS

Leaflet 4 - A Health and Wellbeing Perspective

Why should we think about health and wellbeing?

Healthy communities are happier, more resilient, and more sustainable. Planning decisions about land and buildings can influence physical activity, mental health, access to services, and social connection.

How does health and wellbeing affect land use and buildings?

- Access to green and blue spaces encourages exercise and reduces stress
 - Safe, inclusive public spaces support social interaction
 - Proximity to healthcare and community facilities improves health outcomes
 - Poor housing and lack of active travel routes can harm wellbeing
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Key concepts:

- **Active Travel:** Walking and cycling routes that connect homes, schools, and services
 - **Healthy Places:** Spaces that promote physical activity, mental wellbeing, and social inclusion
 - **Access to Services:** Ensuring everyone can reach healthcare, shops, and community hubs
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What does this look like in Shetland?

- **Remote settlements** may lack easy access to GP surgeries or dental care
 - **Weather challenges** mean sheltered paths and indoor activity spaces are important
 - **Community halls and leisure centres** often double as wellbeing hubs
 - **Blue spaces** like beaches and voes are key for recreation and mental health
 - **Bus, ferry and air travel** can affect access to health services
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Things to think about when planning land and buildings:

- Are there safe walking and cycling routes between homes and key local services and amenities?
 - Is there access to green and blue spaces for recreation?
 - Are community facilities within easy reach, especially for older people?
 - Do designs support mental wellbeing (light, views, quiet spaces)?
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Examples:

- Create paths linking homes to key facilities and amenities in rural areas
 - Provide benches, shelters, and lighting for outdoor spaces in exposed locations
 - Design housing with natural light and good ventilation for long winters
 - Support community gardens and allotments for local food and social activity
 - Maximise community hall use for fitness classes and social events in remote areas
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For information and support:

- [NHS Shetland](#)
- [Public Health Scotland](#)
- [Paths for All](#)
- [The National Cycle Network - Walk Wheel Cycle Trust](#)
- [Voluntary Action Shetland](#)