

COMMUNITY, HEALTH AND WEALTH BUILDING STRATEGY

Introduction

Why does this document exist?

The first priority in Huntingdonshire District Council's (HDC) Corporate Plan is to improve the quality of life for local people. Our residents benefit from many services, that we and other organisations deliver, but ultimately their overall quality of life will be driven by factors beyond the control of any single organisation.

The Office of National Statistics are clear what the data shows:

“After controlling for a range of factors, the following individual characteristics and circumstances were shown to have the largest contribution to adults' average ratings of life satisfaction:

- self-reported health (large contribution)
- marital status (large contribution)
- employment status (moderate contribution)[i]”

This strategy outlines how we as an organisation will work to deliver against these objectives through the way we work with partners and how we deliver our core business. We embrace the principles of Community Wealth Building, which set out practical ways to ensure that the way public sector organisations operate directly benefits local people. We also acknowledge that the factors that create community wealth also support community health. This will play a key part in supporting the delivery of Huntingdonshire's Futures Strategy, the Corporate Plan and the Integrated Care System's requirements to work preventatively to improve health.

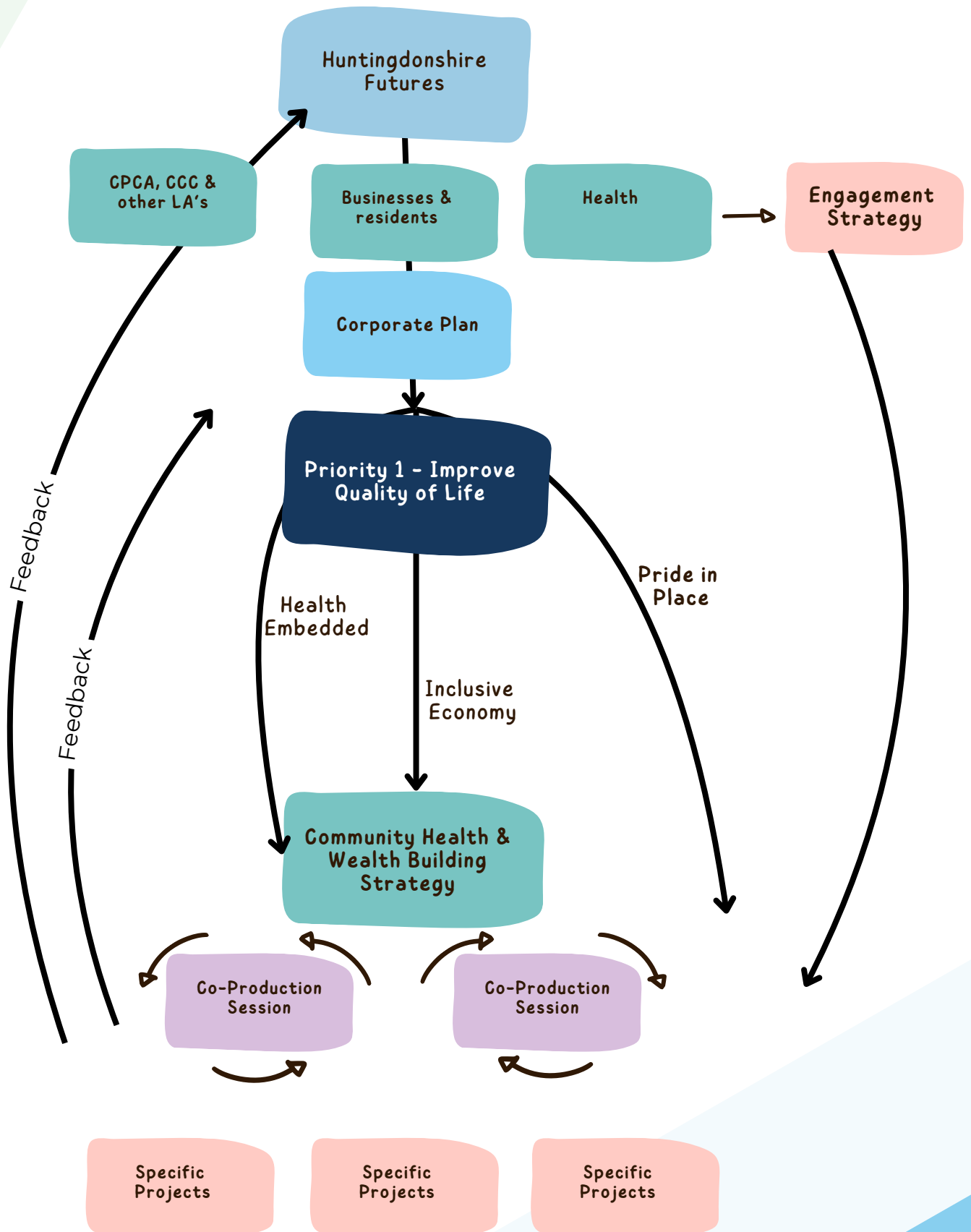
Why this work is important

Good employment, having friends and being socially connected, being healthy and physically active are all proven to improve lives. The evidence shows that these factors contribute to quality of life for our residents and positively reinforce each other. The more you earn the longer you live.[ii] The more active you are, the happier you will be, and the less likely you are to suffer from low mood[iii]. People who have a wide network of friends, are happier and more independent, are less likely to need help from the state.

As a Council we work hard to create the conditions for Huntingdonshire residents to lead fulfilling, healthy lives. Supporting business investment and job creation. Sponsoring skills projects which link residents with these jobs. Running leisure centres and parks and providing outreach activities in communities to support physical activity. Providing financial support and income maximisation services for our residents and doing lots of this in partnership with the community.

There are financial limitations to what any organisation can do, and we recognise that most people do not understand public sector structures. There are also organisations, public, private and voluntary, that want to help and who welcome a partnership approach to improving their community impact. This document is designed to be clear on what we are trying to achieve for our communities and how we are trying to do it, to streamline and turbocharge our combined efforts for our local population.

How Community Wealth Building supports our existing strategies



Why is health so prominent? There are a few key reasons.

1. Quality of life is an inexact term. Good health and the years spent in good health are widely recognised as central to it.
2. Due to the financial costs involved in caring for people with long term poor health.
3. Health colleagues produce most of the key evidence bases on what contributes to good quality of life. The more you earn the longer you live as an example. Given the demographics of the country and the proportion of public revenues spent on health and care, it is likely that prevention will become a much more significant in the future where it can evidence impact.

Why is this relevant to Huntingdonshire?

Huntingdonshire is a large (900 square kilometres), predominantly rural and affluent area. With an estimated 180,800 residents, the population has grown significantly over recent decades (up by 47% since 1981).

In addition, the district has an ageing population with 36,500 residents aged 65 plus, up by 33% since 2011. The over 75 population is due to double in the next twenty years. More people are now living alone, with the number of one person households up by 22% since 2011. 28% of all occupied households are now one-person households.

Qualification levels for Huntingdonshire residents are broadly in line with national averages. However, they are much lower than neighbouring areas, potentially impacting our resident's ability to compete in the regional jobs markets.

The challenges of an aging population, increasingly living alone in a large rural area, with restricted public transport, or the need to support residents to up-skill and support their overall quality of life, are complex and require action by residents themselves, and local partners – commercial, public and community. This document lays out how we in partnership are intending to respond to these challenges.

Our [contextual measures dashboard](#) shows how Huntingdonshire as an area performs in relation to a number of key outcome measures, and highlights a number of areas for focus. The percentage of overweight adults in the area (69.2%), is above the national average (64%) (which we had been below in 2015/16), with weight a key contributor to poor health. Sports England data on the % of people who are “active”, puts us below the national average, and toward the bottom of a table of comparable authorities. We are also higher than the national average in terms of inequality in life expectancy at birth, and again compare unfavourably to similar areas. Gross disposable household income is lower than the national average, and places us in the bottom half of a league table with others. Our further education and skills achievement rates are similar, something replicated in children's education performance. Happiness in the district is currently below the national average, having fluctuated above and below the national average over recent years, but again placing us in the lower reaches of tables with comparable councils.

We recognise the importance of these factors to the quality of life for our residents and the success of Huntingdonshire as an area. This strategy lays out how we will take proactive steps to contribute to their improvement.

What are we seeking to achieve through this work?

This strategy aims to improve the quality of life for local people by focussing on three themes:

- To improve physical and mental health via supporting an increase in physical activity
- To support economic resilience via a focus on employment and skills and barriers to this.
- To support social connection and sense of community.

Limiting to these areas gives a clear direction to the strategy, supporting measurable outcomes and buy in from strategic partners whilst delivering on the commitments made in the Huntingdonshire Futures strategy.

Community Health and Wealth Building Objective	Huntingdonshire Futures Journey	Resident Outcome supported
Economic Success	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Inclusive Economy	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Life expectancy• QoL & happiness
Physical activity	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Health Embedded	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• QoL & happiness• Work readiness• Physical and mental health
Social Connection	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Pride in Place	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Better places better lives• QoL & happiness

How will this be delivered?

We already undertake lots of activity that supports good outcomes for our residents. This strategy outlines what more we will do to enhance this work.

- 1.** We will adopt a Community Wealth Building model, which will maximise social benefits – local employment, housing supply, and social connection. These are driven through the decisions we make, and what we do in running our organisations, such as how we recruit and what we buy. We will encourage our partners to do the same.
- 2.** A continued focus on prevention, root causes and social determinants of health, via employment and skills, physical activity and social connection. In line with our commitment under the Integrated Care Act, seeking to join up this activity with partners in a way that makes sense for residents.

Our Council has long adopted a partnership approach to improving lives for residents. We have a track record of working with partners, particularly in the community sector, to create sustainable upstream interventions that create the conditions for success and reduce the risk of damaging crises. Delivering services designed around the user, not the provider.

This strategy builds on the foundations of Huntingdonshire's previous [community strategy](#), working in partnership with a focus on root causes and social determinants, creating the building blocks that support great outcomes.

- 3.** Community co-production. The final essential element of this strategy is active working with our residents. Whilst the outcomes we are trying to achieve may be clear, transferring this policy into action with residents is often the most challenging part. We believe that by involving residents in the decision-making process, we are more likely to identify and support activity that creates the conditions for our residents and communities to succeed. This role of influencing and enabling will see our council work in partnership with communities and seek input from residents in the form of a programme of community co-production. Our experience has shown us that co-produced solutions are both more impactful, and more enduring than solutions delivered in isolation



What will success look like for our residents? [iv]

The data above, and national research indicates where opportunities exist to improve outcomes for Huntingdonshire residents.

The objectives we have set are evidence based, as the ones most likely to improve outcomes for residents. If successful, these should support:

- Increased employment and income
- Improved physical and mental health
- Reduced isolation Increased pride of place
- Overall increase happiness and quality of life.

Community co-production

Engagement with the community will be key to understanding how we support great outcomes for residents. We are committed to hearing from the lived experience of our residents, and to ensure residents shape the operation and delivery of the strategy.

Initial feedback from the community co-production sessions held in August 2024, welcomed the approach, and supported the key objectives of the strategy. Identifying numerous practical areas where Community Health and Wealth outcomes could be more effectively supported.

Hunts Futures Journey	Community Health & Wealth Priority	Community Co-production session feedback	What came out of Community Co-production sessions?	Outcome
Inclusive economy	Economy and Skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Our High Streets drive social connection and wellbeing not just retail • Create community to business links 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Link communities and local employers • Local talent pathways and improved skills offer for young people • Enhanced work experience placements • Make community use of empty units • Skills exchanges • Revitalise technical training 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase employment • Improve Mental Health • Increase GVA
Health Embedded	Physical activity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Address access issues • Recognition of need for prevention 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support sports clubs to expand • Maximise potential of One Leisure • Support physical activity campaigns • Promote use of off-road routes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase physical activity and health • Increase social connection
Pride in Place	Social Connection	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Area is a nice place to live • Tackling isolation for young people • Some highways schemes a barrier to active travel 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cross generation mentoring • A single tool to tailor activities to residents • Transport support for remote communities • Support such as community board game cafes for isolated young people 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improved mental health • Improved social connection • Reduced community safety concerns

Other anticipated benefits

We will track delivery of activity with an intention of:

Increasing the number of public sector vacancies filled by local people

- The creation of more local recruitment pathways for Huntingdonshire residents
- Increase in apprenticeships and public sector job opportunities for young people

They will see an increase in the proportion of the council's funds spent with local businesses and supporting more local jobs.

- More local spend, supporting more jobs.
- Encouraging local capital investment for social benefit, through investment in employment sites, creation of additional housing, and other community projects.
- Influencing partners to do the same.

They will see more services delivered in a way that makes sense to residents

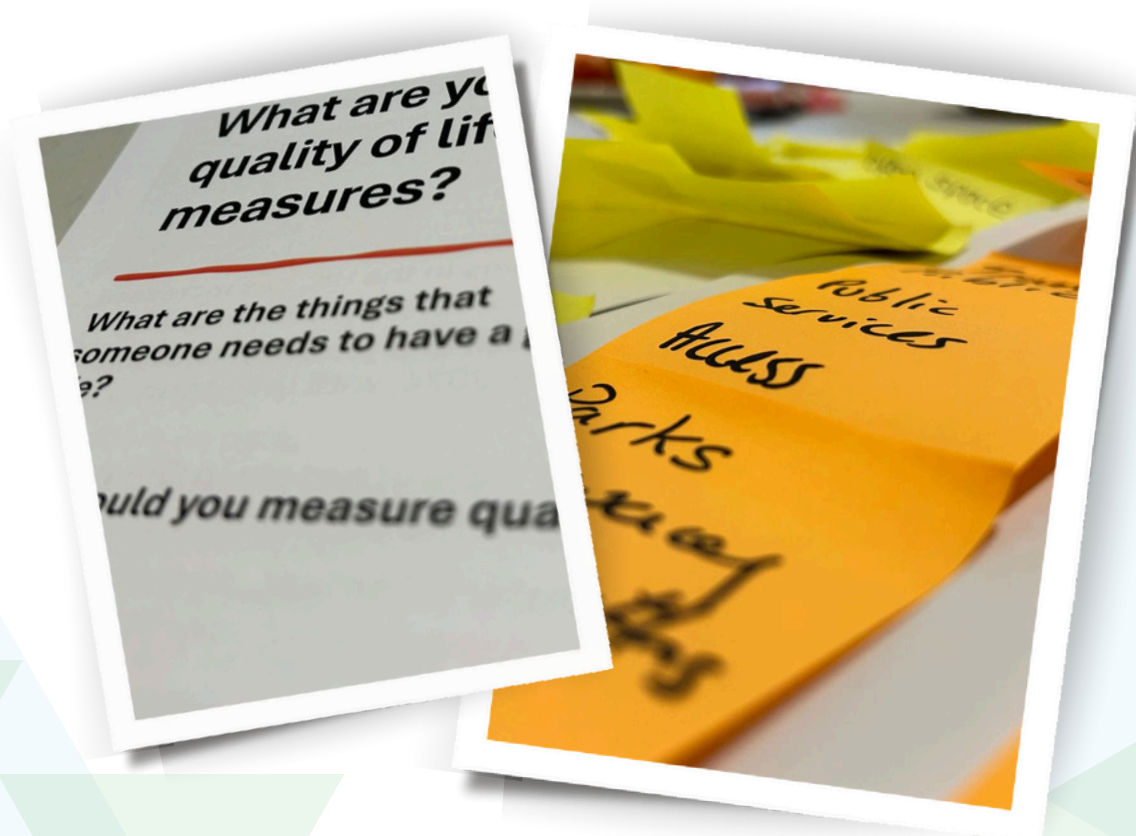
- Common sense service delivery
- More integrated services, with a single front door, which do not require separate application processes

They will see improved quality of life

- This approach recognises that good quality of life is shaped by a range of factors[v]. Whilst no place or organisation can guarantee quality of life, the factors that contribute are relatively well known, and these conditions can be nurtured.

They will see openness and transparency

- They will be part of the process and we will seek feedback and will report quarterly on progress in public meetings.



Action Plan - How will we do this?

1. We will make active efforts to deliver local economic, social and wider benefits.

We will encourage our partners to do the same. This includes:

- To pursue progressive procurement – seeking to maximise local spend and the employment and wider benefits that flow from this
- To continue to move toward being a real living wage employer.
- To develop employment pathways for our residents into jobs with local major employers
 - To support the creation of more apprenticeship and local training programmes, and to work with partners to invest in and co-create solutions, such as the REED Enviro project.
- To maximise our use of land in ways that contributes to outcomes for residents, through supporting housing, employment and other benefits.
 - To play an active part in the £3/4 Billion investment in Huntingdonshire that is the re-build of Hinchingbrooke hospital to maximise local benefit.

2. We will develop and formalise a Community Health and Wealth Delivery Fund, to resource the delivery of this Strategy.

3. We will undertake an audit of all procurement spend, which will inform a refresh of the social value policy to ensure we maximise our contribution to the strategy objectives.

4. We will run a programme of community co-production sessions, engaging the community on how best to address the objectives of the strategy. These sessions will seek to be demographically balanced, listen to our residents and community groups, and ensure their feedback informs what we do and the way it is done.

- We will run focussed targeted sessions with specific demographic groups where issues and opportunities are identified.

5. We will work to proactively create pathways for residents to find enhanced employment opportunities. Skills, education, training and supply chain engagement programmes will become normal for large projects.

6. We will align the work we do with partners wherever sensible to do so, as we have with the co-location of CAB alongside Council teams to ensure we are delivering consistent and holistic support for residents.

7. We will support and encourage direct community activity wherever possible. Encouraging local communities, who are best placed to understand residents' needs, to deliver activities that do this. We will proactively funnel funding to support community efforts which boost community connection and other beneficial outcomes.

8. We will reach out to those who will benefit most, to offer these solutions in a way that makes them easy to access. We will reduce the barriers between different organisations and encourage other organisations who contact our residents to do the same.

9. We will leverage our role as a convener and trusted partner to form new relationships which can deliver the outcomes of this strategy

10. We will maximise the use of our levers at all levels of Government to secure inward investment and support others to secure investments

11. We will consciously encourage those we work and engage with to adopt these principles, and advocate to wider audiences.



Appendix 1 – What is Community Wealth Building?

The Centre for Local Economic Success (CLES) define Community Wealth Building as follows:

“Community Wealth Building is a progressive approach to economics and economic development.

It seeks to change the way that our economies have come to function by aiming to retain more wealth and opportunity for the benefit of local people.

Community wealth building achieves its aims by harnessing the economic and social power of locally rooted institutions. These are commonly referred to as anchor institutions. Typically, this means local councils, health boards, universities, colleges and housing associations, and potentially, the private sector too.” [vi]

Community Wealth building has five principles: [vii]

1. Plural ownership of the economy.
2. Making financial power work for local places.
3. Fair employment and just labour markets.
4. Progressive procurement of goods and services.
5. Socially productive use of land and property.

These areas of focus seek to increase the local social benefit that public sector institutions have when they make decisions about how they operate. Encouraging more money that public sector institutions spend to be retained locally, and to ensure that other decisions influence the social determinants that will increase quality of life and reduce demand in the future.

Information



Preston – developing an anchor approach



- Increased total spend by anchors
- £70m more for city economy
- £200m more for regional economy
- Created 1,600 more jobs
- 4,000 more people being paid the real living wage
- Food co-op and tech co-ops supported by anchors
- Using local pension funds to invest in local area
- Local at municipal energy
- Preston has moved up deprivation index
- Most improved place to live in UK

Part of the reason for an approach like this, is the momentum that already exists across local partners, and the close alignment with local shared objectives. Figure 4 identifies opportunities in the area, and work already underway, that link neatly to the community wealth building pillars. There is no desire or intent to pursue everything all at once, but to measured view across opportunities and to progress with those where the opportunity is greatest, and the appetite strongest.

CWB Pillar	What we already have planned	Challenges in the public sector system	Opportunities for us and our residents	Why would a Hunts resident care?	What would we need to do?
Progressive procurement of goods and services	1. Social value policy review	How to deliver community outcomes with limited capacity	7% of HDC spend is within Hunts. Could generate £XXm of local contribution.	Jobs for local residents.	4. Invest in progressive procurement and work with partners.
Socially productive use of land and estate	OPE Development of housing	Housing availability	3. Rebuild of H'brook Hospital A428, EWR.	Housing supply More pleasant place	6. Enhanced land holding review and approach.
Fair employment and just labour markets	Apprentices 1. Continue toward employer of choice	NHS workforce strategy. Extensive use of locums. Social care workforce Food waste work	Linking of local jobs to residents who will benefit A428, EWR build. Leisure build.	More local jobs. Delivered by local people.	5. Develop employment pathways with partners for our residents.
Making financial power work for local places	1. CIS review & CIL refresh	Inequality and housing affordability	CIS reserve and partner investment approaches & local pension fund		6. Influence investment of local Pension & inv funds
Plural ownership of the economy		CCC are pursuing in social care	Support of CIC's and Co-ops		

Appendix 2 – What is Community Co-production?

When we are seeking to support improved outcomes for residents, we need to accept that as an organisation we influence only small aspects of what contribute to great lives. The role of the community is equally if not more important. In supporting this HDC adopted a set of [Engagement principles](#) in September 2023. They laid out how we plan to work with our residents and where we would seek to involve them in helping us better understand how we can improve outcomes for local people.

In relation to our Community Health and Wealth building strategy there are two key components of this.

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1. The factors that contribute to a good life are complex, and relatively few are within our direct control. [Work on obesity](#) shows just how many factors influence outcomes, and the complexity of the relationships between these. The more we understand the factors preventing improved outcomes for residents, the better able we are to influence outcomes. This is particularly true when there are dozens of organisations all operating in similar areas.

2. We cannot live people's lives for them, nor would we wish to. The Council also often lacks the ability to trigger community action particularly in hard-to-reach community groups. Due to this, work that focusses on what is important to the resident and seeks to engage them in how best to achieve this tends to be both better designed, and build community participation, due to it being seen to respond to their needs, not an organisation's needs.

Community co-production covers a range of activity from feedback on current services, to shaping service design, to full deliberative democracy activity, where power is given to the community to decide how things are delivered.



[i] Personal well-being in the UK - Office for National Statistics (ons.gov.uk)

[ii] Fair Society Healthy Lives (The Marmot Review) - IHE
(instituteofhealthequity.org)

[iii] What Are Health Inequalities? | The King's Fund (kingsfund.org.uk)

[iv] Deliver and Measure Social Value - Social Value Engine

[v]

https://www.researchgate.net/publication/278767179_The_causes_of_happiness_and_misery

[vii] What is community wealth building? | CLES

[vii] The principles of community wealth building | CLES

