Introduction

This is an innovative project that is working at four levels to create substantial and lasting improvements in the health and wellbeing of local residents and the urban environment of Stoke-on-Trent, North Staffordshire, England.

The four levels are:

- **Healthy Local Public Policy:** integrating the consideration of public health into all local policy and decision-making structures.
- **Healthy Regeneration and HIA:** embedding Health Impact Assessment (HIA) into the masterplanning process of the major regeneration projects happening in the City.
- **Healthy Urban Planning:** embedding WHO Healthy Urban Planning Principles into the statutory planning process within the City.
- **Healthy Community Development:** empowering and enabling local residents to directly tackle local neighbourhood environmental barriers to health improvement through health-focused community development.

Background and context

Stoke-on-Trent like many other major cities of the industrial revolution has had difficulty in moving from its potteries and mining heritage to a knowledge, services and high tech manufacturing economy. This industrial legacy is reflected in residents experiencing high levels of poor health and wellbeing, long term illness and disability, and significantly lower life expectancy and quality of life than other parts of England.

Stoke-on-Trent’s Primary Care Trust (PCT) and City Council recognised the need to re-energise the relationship between public and environmental health, policy and planning in order to tackle the burden of chronic diseases in the City. Their first step was to become a World Health Organization (WHO) Healthy City to work with cities in the UK and across Europe to be at the leading edge of Cities internationally working to promote health and health equity in all local policies.

Healthy Local Public Policy

The Healthy City Partnership is committed to ensuring that health considerations are taken into account at the outset of local policy and decision-making alongside other key concerns such as the environment and economy. A review was carried out of existing policy-making processes and decision-making in the City for the six months leading up to April 2009. The key action agreed from this work, is the adoption and adaptation of ‘Policy Watch’. A web-based integrated assessment tool to support policy-making based on a prototype developed by the West Midlands Public Health Observatory (WMPHO). We are now at the stage of adapting the tool to local circumstances prior to implementing it across the City including encompass the Local Strategic Partnership.

Healthy Regeneration and HIA

The Healthy City Partnership (Stoke NHS and Stoke City Council) and RENEW North Staffordshire, North Staffordshire PCT, Staffordshire Moorlands District Council have commissioned four Health Impact Assessments on major regeneration projects in the City and wider sub-region. Three of these HIAs directly concern Stoke-on-Trent and include an assessment of a proposed Rapid Bus Transport scheme (The Streetcar Scheme); a HIA of the Middleport and Burslem Masterplan which has involved reviewing draft masterplan designs; and a HIA of the City Waterside East Masterplan.

Healthy Community Development

Our local University, Staffordshire University, has identified environmental and individual level predictors of physical activity in urban communities as part of its work on obesogenic environments. The Healthy City Partnership has built on this and commissioned a programme of work in three of the most disadvantaged communities in Stoke on Trent to support residents to overcome individual, community and environmental barriers to improving their health and wellbeing and promoting physical activity and healthy eating. This three year project started in May 2009.