North Wales Coast Strategic Regeneration Area (SRA) Plan

The North Wales Coast SRA was created in 2008.

It covers the geographical areas of Conwy and Denbighshire and focuses particularly on regenerating the coastal towns of Rhyl, Prestatyn and Colwyn Bay – some of which contain areas that register significantly on the Wales Index of Multiple Deprivation (WIMID).

Since early 2010, WHIASU has been working together with a number of local partners to develop, integrate and use HIA as an important way through which to consider the health and wellbeing implications of SRA regeneration plans and contribute to the long term sustainability of these communities.

At the start, it was agreed to focus on the coastal town of Rhyl (containing 2 of the most deprived areas in Wales) and Colwyn Bay. Both suffer from a huge range of health, social and environmental inequalities and economic issues. 5 HIAs have been completed to date.

HIA of ‘BayLife+’ Programme, Conwy (2012)

More than just physical regeneration – it aims to improve and bring together all the things that make up a community and ensure that it and its people thrive both now and in the future.

The HIA
A rapid participatory HIA was carried out with a wide range of local professional and community stakeholders. Aimed to highlight issues that needed to be addressed, review the delivery of the Programme so far and get recommendations for future sustainable planning.

Practical Recommendations included:

•Understanding the role of newly reconfigured primary care and community services and how what is being planned can be integrated with these in order to enhance prevention and promotion work for healthier communities
•Continued close working with Communities First partnerships in deprived areas of Colwyn Bay
•Plan to seek opportunities for sustainable funding to continue the Programme once SRA funding ends
•Try to crystallise the identity of Colwyn Bay ie ‘what its known for’ and sell it to draw people and businesses into the town - now and in the future
•Use HIAs and community impact assessments for large development projects and obtain feedback as part of review processes for current plans.

Rhy1 ‘Going Forward’ Regeneration Delivery Plan, Denbighshire (2012)

Focuses on physical and environmental factors ie housing and outlines the interventions in Rhyl that are planned in sites, buildings and neighbourhoods over three years. It includes an Area Renewal Plan HIA’d in 2010.

The HIA
A short evidence review and a participatory stakeholder workshop. It aimed to identify and assess potential health and community impacts and highlight future projects contained within the Delivery Plan to be subject to a HIA.

Practical recommendations included:

•Continuing to encourage physical activity with the extension of cycle paths
•Filling in the flood defences in order to minimise accidents and injuries
•Recommend to the Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG) group that they liaise with the architects who will be designing new buildings/areas in Rhyl in order to take a creative approach to planning and creating a balanced community and healthier built environment
•Attempting to enhance social capital through community development projects such as ‘The Cut’ (Community green space)
•Trying to attract more families to live in areas with a high number of current HMO’s by providing high quality family orientated housing and green space.

Future HIA’s identified

•West Rhyl Regeneration Plan (includes a major housing project)
•Town Centre Review and a potential Health and Leisure Zone
•Sun Centre/Pavillion Theatre options review
•Rhyl ‘Cut’

Lessons Learned

Time
The current work is the culmination of development work that WHIASU has done within the SRA localities over 3 years. It builds on previous HIAs and training.

Capacity and relationship building
Building strong relationships and HIA skills, knowledge and confidence with a number of local public health practitioners over time meant that when the SRA was created a core base was in place to take advantage of it, use HIA as a lever for health improvement, address inequalities and further develop knowledge and skills in others.

Partnership working and resources
Whilst much of the work has been led by WHIASU, this has been made easier by working in collaboration with PHW’s Public Health Practitioners as a team – engaging with the agencies responsible for the delivery of SRA plans, sharing responsibilities and taking individual leads and roles in the HIAs.

HIA Champions and knowledgeable stakeholders
The WG Programme Director for the SRA attended one of the first HIAs as a participant in 2010. He has become a keen proponent of HIA. In October 2011, the Partnership Board (many of whom had attended local HIAs) agreed that all capital build projects funded by the SRA must be subject to a HIA.

Prioritisation
With a huge geographical area and number of plans and projects, it was essential to target and influence the main plans and/or those that have the biggest impact on vulnerable groups and health and wellbeing. Work on West Rhyl Housing Improvement Project and with Communities First in Colwyn Bay is ongoing with more planned.

Dissemination and Influence
The work has been shared and disseminated widely in Wales and has transferred to other Welsh SRA areas such as Aberystwyth, Anglesey and Newport. Reports are published on the WHIASU website (www.whiasu.wales.nhs.uk). Briefing and Evidence Papers have been written and shared locally and nationally.

And finally...
Not all HIAs pencilled in came to fruition – however much effort was put in to make them happen! Resource/timeframe issues and personnel changes stopped at least 2.