



WHIASU

Wales Health Impact
Assessment Support Unit
Uned Gymorth Asesu
Effaith ar Iechyd Cymru

Planning for the health
of Wales: 28th October
2010



Health Impact Assessment in Wales: current
opportunities and risks

What Is Health Impact Assessment?

‘Health Impact Assessment is a combination of, procedures, methods and tools by which a policy, programme or project may be judged as to its potential effects on the health of a population, and the distribution of those effects within the population’

Gothenburg Consensus 1999

It’s a way of looking at a policy, project or programme and asking who is likely to suffer or benefit and how.

Wales 1998



Developing Health Impact Assessment in Wales

‘All policies impact on people's lives, some to a greater extent and with more immediacy than others. The health experience of a population, at national or local level, can reflect the impact of such policies... Health Impact Assessment is a relatively recent idea which is designed to be supportive but critical, and to inform the policy making process.’ (*Better Health, Better Wales*, 1998, section 8.7 and 8.8)

Wales Health Impact Support Unit (WHIASU) (2001-)

- Three aims:
 - Develop the capacity for HIA in Wales
 - Provide information and advice
 - Conduct research and evaluation
- 2 HIA development staff & 1 full-time researcher
- Based at Cardiff University School of Social Sciences in partnership with Public Health Wales



PLANNING AND HIA IN WALES



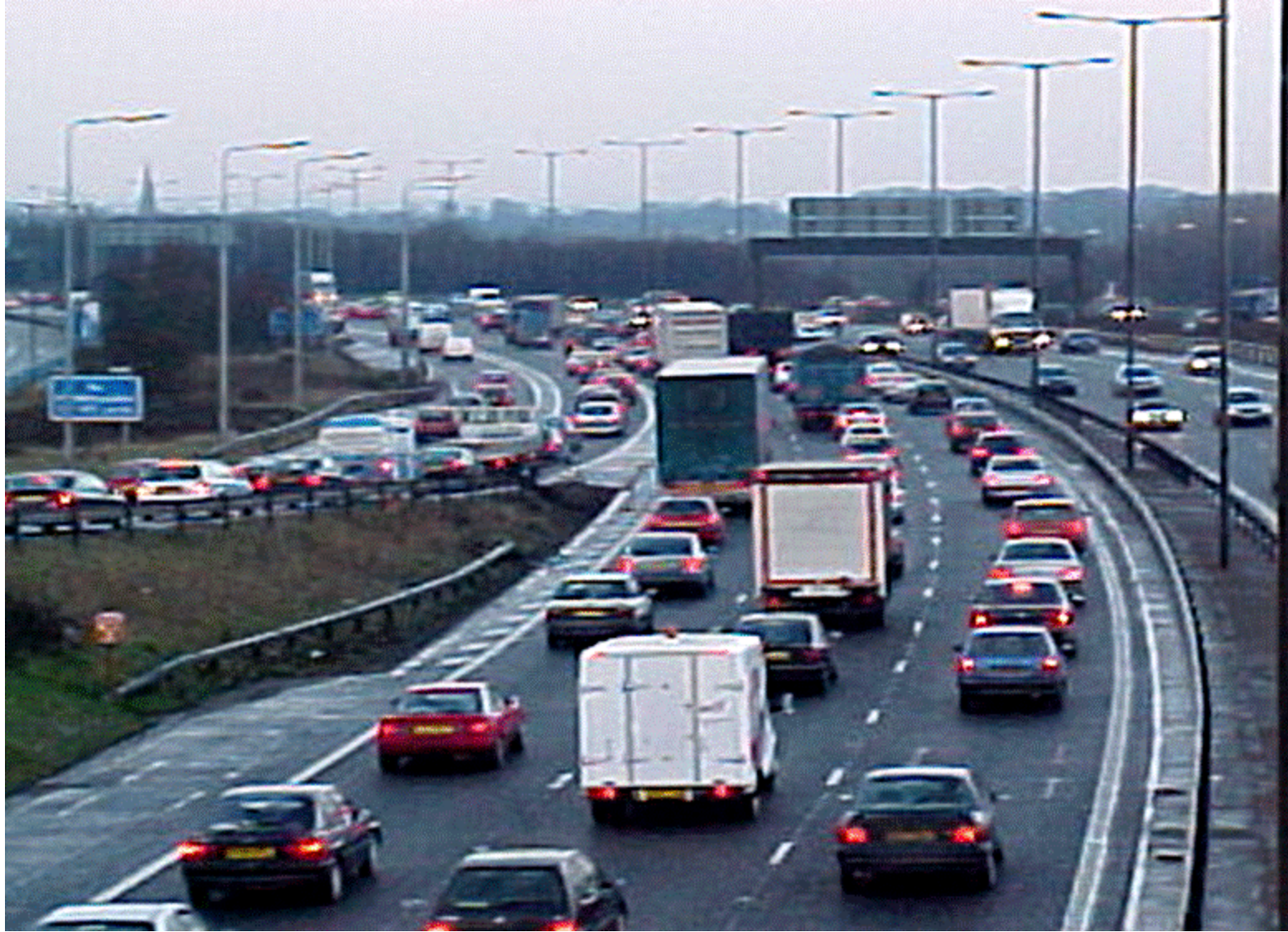
Welsh Assembly Government and planning





Waste





Transport (New road applications



Minerals (Opencast mining)

Local Development Plans

- HIA is a 'focus for community & stakeholder involvement'
- it stimulates and supports partnership working within and between the public, private and voluntary sectors
- it increases confidence in the planning process
- coincides with: *The Local Development Plan (LDP) Manual* (WAG, 2006)

Source: Draft Ministerial Advice (DMIPPS):
2006

An Example of a Participative HIA

*Housing, Health and Well being in
Llangeinor, Garw Valley: A Health Impact
Assessment*

Why it was done

- Local council wanted a systematic way of ensuring that the health of local people was taken into account in their decision-making
- Opportunity for the Welsh Assembly Government to test the usefulness of the process at a local government level
- Opportunity to involve local people as key stakeholders in the process

Profile of Village

- One of the 100 most deprived wards in Wales
- High economic inactivity
- Low income
- Child poverty
- Poor health (including high rates of limiting long term illness and incapacity)

How it was done

- Steering group of stakeholders, including local people, to plan and oversee the assessment
- Appraisal
 - Local health, welfare and socio-economic data
 - Literature review (links between housing and health)
 - Interviews with professional and lay stakeholders
 - Community meeting
- Report to Local Authority (Cabinet) and Welsh Assembly Government

Potential Impacts and Determinants

- **The physical environment**
 - Housing conditions
 - Housing design
 - Neighbourhood layout and design
 - Neighbourhood redevelopment
 - Noise
 - Access to shops
- **Lifestyle and family circumstances**
 - Income and employment
 - Risk taking activities
 - Recreation, exercise and leisure
 - Role and Structure of families
- **The social environment**
 - Sense of community
 - Community involvement
 - Social support
- **Public services**
 - Primary school
 - Childcare
 - Primary health care
 - Local council

Noise: Thin walls

In the evening I can hear [my neighbour] going into the kitchen and putting the kettle on. I can hear her actually running the tap...In the night she can hear me flush my toilet and I can hear her flush hers...I got home late in the weekend and I hadn't washed all my daughter's uniform. I thought I can't put it on now because they'd hear it in both flats...I have to show consideration so once it gets to a certain hour, unless it's a real emergency I don't wash. It's stupid because you should be able to do what you want to do when you want to.

Noise: youth disturbance and bad design

It was terrible, and what they used to (when they used to go up from school age) they used to sleep through the day - didn't they? – and as you were going to bed that's when they'd start round the house until about 5 o'clock in the morning.

Local resident

Family support and housing

- I don't want to move from this village, especially because I've got involved in the community. My family live in this village, my family have always lived in this village. But not only that, if I had to be somewhere or had to go somewhere...I mean they are care-providers for my child and I've only ever used one baby-sitter in her entire life. You know, it is family first (local resident)
- There are still a lot of extended families in the village and I think that's very important for young mothers who are single parents to have their family around. And I think that it's important that people are kept in their community. I don't think it is going to benefit the community if people are moved out or particularly benefit the families themselves. The children say 'Oh I'm so and so's cousin and so and so's cousin', and there's quite a lot of family and I think a lot of them get a lot of support from that (local health worker)

Impact of engagement with local people

- Facilitated a dialogue between residents and council officers
- Local views embedded in the evidence used to make a decision
- Provided a foundation for other community based regeneration activity in the village
- Local people set up a tenants and residents association.
- Resident spoke at International HIA conference on her experience of the process

Current Difficulties/Tensions/risks

- No easy way in for HIA in existing planning processes – timing, language, vested interests in commissioning
- No clear demarcation of roles and responsibilities in planning and health systems
- Limited understanding of HIA as more than risk assessment
- Ideas of acceptable evidence contested
- Often associated with a protest against a development

Re-defining health impact assessment

‘Health impact assessment is a process through which evidence (of different kinds), interests, values and meanings are brought into dialogue between relevant stakeholders (politicians, professionals and citizens) in order imaginatively to understand and anticipate the effects of change on health and health inequalities in a given population’

Elliott E Harrop E and Williams GH (2010) ‘Contesting the science: public health knowledge and action in controversial land developments’ Bennett P, Calman K, Curtis S, and Smith D (eds) *Risk Communication in Public Health, 2nd edition*. Oxford: Oxford University



Wales Health Impact Assessment Support Unit (WHIASU)

www.whiasu.wales.nhs.uk