Health: The Design, Planning and Politics of How and Where We Live

• **Paper / Proposal Title:**

Shaping Decision: Influencing Health Behaviour through Spatial Planning

• **Format:**

Presentation (in-person)

• **Author(s) Name:**

Dr Daniel Masterson

Meghan Linscott

Dr Christopher Gidlow

Judy Kurth

• **University or Company Affiliation:**

Staffordshire University

• **Abstract (300 words):**

The joint genesis and synergy between public health and planning has long been discussed, yet challenges in ingraining health into planning policy and development management remain. To explore barriers to embedding health considerations into spatial planning, eight semi-structured interviews were conducted with planning officers. Transcripts were analysed separately by the first two authors using inductive thematic analysis. Identified themes included *robust policy, communication, capacity, timing* and *aspiration.* There was consensus among planning officers that developing robust planning policy is crucial but is not sufficient when it stands alone without the capacity

to apply in practice. Interdepartmental and interdisciplinary communication challenges prevented the benefits of health considerations being conveyed in planning policy, practice and decision-making. Participants felt that a lack of capacity and expertise in relation to healthy urban planning prevented health considerations being applied in large-scale applications. When healthy urban planning policies were followed, there was consensus that the timing of such considerations reduced the likelihood of recommendations being followed. From a planning perspective, the consensus was to provide capacity early on in the Development Management process in order to negotiate health considerations with minimal cost implications. To achieve such an outcome, there needs to be aspiration by management and political will by decision makers to prioritise health. This study establishes a need and offers guidance on conveying a modern definition of health, establish how planning can influence the wider determinants of health and health behaviour, and understanding the issues that planners face in prioritising health.

• Author(s) Biography (200 words each):

Dr Daniel Masterson is a registered health psychologist and consultant in healthy urban planning. Daniel works with local authorities and developers to ensure health is an early consideration in planning decisions and advises on how to embed health into planning policy. With a background within Health Psychology and Social Psychology, Daniel has worked on a diverse range of projects addressing behavior change, public health, exercise and physical activity, the impact of the natural environment on health and healthy urban planning.

Meghan Linscott is a health psychologist in training at Staffordshire University and is currently working across Public Health and Planning within Stoke-on-Trent City Council. Working with both planning policy and public health, Meghan is supporting the development of the Joint Local Plan and advising on planning applications. Meghan also has research interest in app-based interventions, working within disadvantaged communities and eating disorders.

Dr Christopher Gidlow is an Associate Professor at Staffordshire University with expertise in physical activity, health and environmental determinants. Christopher's research interests cover a number of areas including primary care-based physical activity promotion, environmental determinants of health and activity, NHS Health Checks and the role of natural environments in health.

Judy Kurth is the Director for the Centre for Health and Development and has expertise in public health improvement, strategic management and heath inequalities. Judy is an experienced strategic manager with roles which have spanned local government and NHS over the past 25 years. As a Public Health Improvement practitioner and commissioner, specific areas of interest include: health inequalities, assets based working

and community development, social determinants of heath, public mental health, age-friendly communities and health literacy.