

## Case Study

# East Airdrie Link Road

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Part of a series of case studies and pilot reports, this document sets out the process of completing the Capital Investment Health Impact Assessment (CHIA) for the East Airdrie Link Road project in North Lanarkshire Council. It includes details on the process of completing the CHIA, as well as the impacts identified and outcomes from the CHIA workshop.

The CHIA, developed by Glasgow City Region and Public Health Scotland, through the Health Foundation's Economies for Healthier Lives programme, is a toolkit to be used in the development and delivery of capital infrastructure projects that ensures that decisions made at every level – from design, to build and operate – focus on reducing health inequalities.

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**Lead organisation:** North Lanarkshire Council

**Date the CHIA screening workshop was undertaken:** 25 February 2025

## 1 Background Information

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The East Airdrie Link Road (EALR) is a key project within North Lanarkshire Council's City Deal Infrastructure Programme funded by Glasgow City Region City Deal and North Lanarkshire Council.

EALR will connect from the M8 at Newhouse to the A73 south of Cumbernauld at Riggend. It will also provide the primary road access for the proposed Monklands Replacement Hospital at Wester Moffat.

EALR aims to improve connectivity between residential areas, areas of employment and facilitate economic benefits, thus seeking to address socio economic inequalities and improve health outcomes in North Lanarkshire and the wider Glasgow City Region.

The CHIA/ HIA screening workshop was undertaken by the project team as part of the piloting and testing of the Capital Investment Health Impact Assessment (CHIA) toolkit.

The aim of the screening workshop was to test the CHIA approach and identify potential impacts of the EALR proposed route and approach, positive and negative.

## 2 Overview: a brief overview of the process followed in undertaking the CHIA

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The project team hosted a screening workshop to help identify key impacts from the proposal. The impacts identified will feed into the Environmental Impact Assessment, Equality Impact Assessment and Transport Assessment for the proposal. The project's consultants, Atkins Realis, were present at the screening workshop.

## 3 Positive and Negative Impacts Identified

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The key positive and negative impacts identified during the CHIA workshop are outlined below:

- Potential differential traffic impact, meaning that balance of benefits and risks is still unclear and will vary for different people:
  - some areas along existing A73 are likely to have less traffic.
  - some other areas along/close to new road are likely to have increased traffic.
  - the new road can potentially lead to 'induced demand' with higher overall levels of traffic affecting the surrounding area.
- Traffic modelling and impacts will be assessed and considered as part of the Environmental Impact Assessment.
- Potential impacts of increased or reduced motorised traffic include air pollution, carbon emissions, noise, road injuries and physical inactivity. Those most susceptible include older or younger people and people with existing ill health. It should be noted that the EALR, due to its scale and strategic nature and availability of land, is proposed outwith the existing urban areas. Environmental impacts will be assessed and considered as part of the Environmental Impact Assessment.
- Potential for loss of greenspace and woodland areas, impacting biodiversity but also potentially leading to reduced physical activity or social disconnect, particularly impacting members of local walking groups. Environmental impacts will be assessed and considered as part of the Environmental Impact Assessment.
- Potential benefits in relation to unlocking housing development in the area addressing current housing challenges. However, this could carry a risk of additional reliance on private vehicle use/ access if no adequate public transport is available. This will be Local Development Plan (LDP) led.

- Potential challenges in relation to safety, including:
  - construction safety.
  - design of bridges to prevent suicide.
  - safety of the road – engineering design to reduce risk of collisions, consider personal safety issues e.g. for lone female drivers in event of breakdown.

Safety aspects of the EALR will be considered as part of the DMRB (Design Manual for Roads and Bridges) process including road safety audits.

## 4 Recommended Actions

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The main recommendations resulting from the CHIA screening workshop include:

- Design stage – informing the decision making around proposed route for the new road, including active travel provision, mental health issues and green space distribution.
- Build stage – informing the process around safety, noise and air pollution prevention, and construction jobs.
- Operate stage – informing future consideration and discussions about sustainable transport provision.

## 5 What worked well?

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Areas of the CHIA process or outcomes which worked well, were very straightforward, positive, or had good results include:

- Public Health Scotland facilitating the workshop.
- Undertaking the CHIA at the Outline Business Case stage meant there was still scope to influence decision making, including design and procurement processes.
- Consultants working on Environmental Impact Assessment attending the screening workshop and participating in discussion.
- A wide range of stakeholders attending the session and participating in the discussion.
- NHS Lanarkshire participation and input.

## 6 What challenges were experienced?

Aspects of the CHIA process which didn't work as well as expected or which created barriers to achieving the desired outcome include:

- Limited time for the checklist discussion due to a stakeholder briefing in advance of the discussion.
- Some impacts identified were more relevant to the new hospital design and access than the new road directly.

## 7 Key Learning

The following key learning was identified as helpful to support other teams aiming to undertake the CHIA process and experience:

- Potentially an overview of public health challenges and priorities for the local area, particularly if it was detailed or granular enough to cover local communities around the proposed new road.
- The need for support through the CHIA for large scale investment schemes.
- The need for wide range of stakeholders to be included in CHIA.

## 8 Outcomes and Impact

The main output was a set of recommendations included in the workshop report. These will be fed into Equality Impact Assessment, Environmental Impact Assessment and wider outline business case extension. Some of the key recommendations more relevant to the operation stage of the new road or to other stakeholders will be communicated to them as part of ongoing engagement.