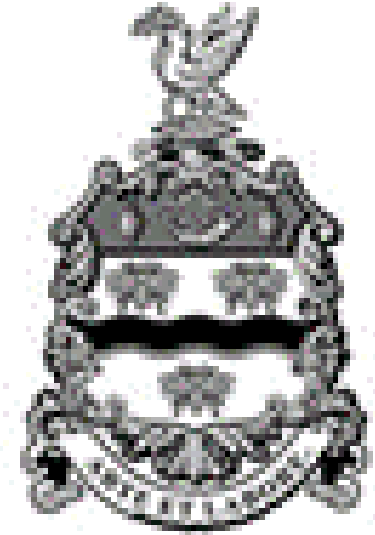


Climate & Health Needs Assessment

2022



BLACKBURN
with
DARWEN
BOROUGH COUNCIL

Purpose and Scope

- Understand and communicate the health vulnerabilities and needs the borough has in the face of a changing climate
- The Council's Climate Emergency Action Plan (2019) has been used to frame the needs assessment
- Almost all actions related to climate change will also have some relation to health, this needs assessment will focus on needs and vulnerabilities that are directly related to population health in the main, and the council's public health activities.

ACTION SUMMARY

Blackburn with Darwen Borough Council will:

Sound Decisions	Account for emissions in decision making
	Revise procurement policies and procedures to ensure environmental impact is considered as part of all major procurements.
Resilient & Attractive Borough	Align Council policy with our climate emergency objectives
	Review and update our plan to adapt to the changing climate to ensure a resilient borough
	Take what steps we can to facilitate improvement of homes in the borough to reduce emissions and tackle fuel poverty.
	Exploit the opportunities arising from the move to a low carbon economy
Lean & Clean	Invest in clean energy and efficiency measures throughout the Council estate and support renewable energy generation in the borough
	Reduce the household waste generated in the borough, increase recycling and maximise the benefit from residual waste
Travelling Lightly	Reduce emissions from transport and increase active travel
Capture more carbon Basis for change	Work with landowners to plant more trees and protect and enhance natural carbon stores
	Work with residents and partners to raise awareness of and to take action to tackle climate change
	Identify a Climate Emergency Champion and provide regular reports on action plan progress to Council and residents
	Actively lobby the Government to provide the additional powers and resources needed to meet the 2030 target

	Key Findings	Recommendations
<p>Sound Decisions</p>	<p>Whilst climate friendly strategic direction exists at a corporate level within the council's corporate plan, three of the 10 public health strategic documents reviewed referenced any link to climate. Therefore, opportunities for greater policy links between public health and the council's climate emergency action plan exist. The council's recently updated social values policy and procurement strategy emphasises carbon emission considerations. Other local authorities in England have integrated carbon and environment considerations into council wide decision making which can provide learning for our organisation.</p>	<p>All public health strategic documents should give consistent consideration to the climate and ecological emergency.</p>
		<p>Public health commissioners should ensure familiarity with the new social values policy and procurement strategy for future public health procurements, and consider how it will be effectively implemented and monitored for the variety of commissioning that public health undertakes.</p>
		<p>The council workforce should be developed to understand the links between climate change and health and options for policy action to realise co-benefits for both climate and health.</p>
		<p>The local authority should consider developing an environment and climate decision making tool in partnership with those who would use it, and should balance thorough consideration with practicalities of use.</p>
		<p>Whilst health and environment priorities exist within the council's corporate plan, an explicit and reinforced Environment <i>and</i> Health in All Policies stance council wide should be reinforced in all decision making.</p>

**Resilient
and
Attractive
Borough**

Extreme events such as heatwaves, flooding and wildfires will likely increase in the future threatening the health of people in Blackburn with Darwen. The borough already sees higher than average rates of illnesses that are particularly susceptible e.g. high rates of cardiovascular disease and diabetes susceptible to heatwaves. High levels of deprivation make the borough more vulnerable, particularly to flooding. Consideration must be made to the effect of water, food and fuel insecurity now and in the future.

Public health should work with the planning department to consider climate mitigation and adaption measures including in terms of housing energy efficiency, overheating and flooding within new developments.

Continue to support vulnerable residents via healthy homes initiatives including advice, support and grants to increase the energy efficiency of homes to realise co-benefits to environment and health

Support residents to take up flood insurance

	Investigate and foster possibilities for grass roots community cooperative projects with co-benefits socially and environmentally, such as community renewable energy projects
	Focus resources on health protection of the elderly and vulnerable from the temperature effects of climate change including from heat and cold
	Develop key public health messages for the public during heatwaves and ensure to communicate heatwave alerts across the integrated care system in line with the Heatwave Plan for England
	Work with organisations including the Environment Agency to promote co-benefits of flood defences including net biodiversity gain and options for social prescribing
	Strengthen and support emergency planning and preparedness structures both locally and through the local resilience forum.
	Plan for effective communications including in community languages in response to extreme events including flooding as per the Local Flood Risk Management Strategy
	Plan for drought e.g. supporting the vulnerable if provision of bottled water required

	Consider pro-active recommendations to the health sector including care homes in terms of indoor temperatures and ways to mitigate extreme heat
	Support the integrated care system to plan for future climate risks and increase resilience
	Exploit opportunities to promote wellbeing and outdoor activity with warmer weather including active travel, ensure that access to infrastructure and green space considers inequalities within the borough
	Where flooding cannot be prevented, explore ways to support the mental health of those affected
	Educate the public about wildfire risk and behaviours to reduce risk
	Educate the public about UV protection
	Plan to support residents in times of increasing food prices, alongside recommendations for healthy and sustainable diet supporting work of the Blackburn with Darwen Food Resilience Reliance

Lean and Clean

Blackburn with Darwen has four air quality management areas and air quality in the borough is expected to improve over time due to improvements in vehicle emissions. However, there is no safe level of air pollution and it is unclear how air quality will react over time with climate change. We have above average levels of lung disease, cardiovascular disease and premature births which are conditions linked to poor air quality.

Continue to monitor air quality in the borough

Continue work towards reducing levels of harmful pollutants, actions should be coordinated and evidence based. Actions which have co-benefits for air quality, physical and mental health and the climate include interventions to increase walking and cycling and reduce car use.

Travelling Lightly	<p>Vehicle miles in the borough were steadily increasing before the pandemic and we have relatively low rates of walking and cycling compared to the rest of the North West. One in four residents said they would always walk, cycle or take public transport rather than drive short distances. Residents believe improved public transport could reduce car use.</p>	<p>Encourage an increase in use of walking and cycling for transport, including improving the capability, opportunity and motivation for people to choose to walk or cycle.</p>
		<p>Improve sustainable public transport links</p>
Capturing More Carbon	<p>The borough has above average provision of open space in many domains, however, this is not spread evenly through the borough. Some neighbourhoods such as Blackburn East which are more built up have less access to green space.</p>	<p>Continue to consider quantity, quality and inequalities in green space provision throughout the borough</p>
		<p>Consider nature based social prescribing opportunities within the capturing carbon domain e.g. tree planting programmes</p>
Basis for Change	<p>The majority of residents in Blackburn with Darwen are very concerned or fairly concerned about climate change.</p>	<p>Progress plans for a Blackburn with Darwen citizens jury on climate change to allow residents to guide the council's plans towards a more sustainable borough</p>