CLIMATE CHANGE

What’s the issue?
Climate Change is the greatest threat currently faced by humans. Climate change will affect the frequency and intensity of extreme weather events such as flooding, storms and heat waves. The warmest years since records began have all been in the period since 2000, and 2016 was the warmest in the UK.

Current scientific evidence published by the United Nations Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change [54] show that the climate impacts we are experiencing are a result of only a 1°C Celsius rise in global temperatures and global climate agreements are aiming for an increase of no more than a 2°C Celsius increase.

There is therefore a need to undertake climate adaptation activity to prepare for the inevitable consequences of climate change. The emerging approach to adaptation is expressed in the National Adaptation Programme [55]. This contains a chapter on adaptation for health and well-being services.

What’s our situation?
The City of Hull has experienced several extreme weather events over the last ten years that have put increased pressure on public health services. The floods in 2007 affected significant parts of the City with some families not being able to return to their homes for up to two years. The tidal surge in December 2013 closed the A63 and the snow and ice winters in 2010 and 2011 affected roads with some impassable for weeks and increased the number of people suffering falls. Hull has yet to experience a heat wave which is likely to become more of an issue as we move through the century.

Recent work in 2014 by Joseph Rowntree Foundation and University of Manchester [56] has shown that residents that are already vulnerable due to age, long term life limiting illnesses and poverty are least able to be resilient to the impacts of climate change and are more adversely affected than the average resident.

The impacts of climate change will disproportionately affect the most vulnerable and therefore put increased pressure on public health and health services in Hull.

For more detailed information, see the JSNA Toolkit: Housing, Environment and Social Care report.

What are the strategic needs?
There is a need to better understand the extent of climate risk to public health and the wider health services in the City. The development of effective climate adaptation to services and facilities would ensure that they are more resilient to extreme weather events and therefore reduce the emergency impact on public health services.

The cost of extreme weather events to public health services is not well understood and there is a need to better understand the financial impacts so that this can support timely and effective climate adaptation investment.

In January 2013, Hull City Council signed up to Investors in the Environment, an environmental management system operated by Yorkshire Energy Partnership [45]. Hull City Council have committed to attaining the highest level ‘Green’. Further information is given in the JSNA section on the environment (www.hullpublichealth.org/jsna2017.html#c10).
References


