

Applying Climate Just in Hull

Hull City Council



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1. SUMMARY

Hull City Council has been using Climate Just to help engage particular groups of staff and external bodies and inform them about different climate impacts and the risks to socially vulnerable groups. Since suffering extensive flooding incidents in 2007 and again in 2013, the risks from surface water, river and coastal flooding are all too apparent and the City Council has had a strategic commitment to climate change adaptation since 2010. The Council's Environment and Climate Change Strategy Advisor has worked with colleagues in Housing, Adult Social Care and Public Health and used Climate Just to influence strategic plans and particular projects.

2. CONTEXT

Hull was badly affected by surface water flooding in June 2007 following exceptionally heavy rainfall which overwhelmed the city's drainage systems and affected some 8,600 households and most schools¹. The Council went on to adopt an [Environment and Climate Change strategy](#) in 2010 which included a commitment to a risk based assessment of climate impacts on service areas and business sectors. In the period since then assessments have been undertaken with Housing, Transport, Waste Management, Parks and Open Spaces. There is an ongoing assessment with the Museums Service as part of a wider Museums Partnership Project. The early reviews are due to be refreshed over the next two years to take account of the impact of the assessments and changes in Service activity and demand.

In December 2013, Hull was affected by tidal flooding following the largest tidal surge down the East Coast for 60 years which caused the River Humber to overtop some of the city's flood defences, affecting some 260 properties and businesses².

These two major flood events only six years apart, highlight the city's vulnerability to flooding from different sources and demonstrate exposure to a hazard that is expected to increase over time as a result of climate change. The City Council's corporate response to these events includes the strategic commitment to adaptation, which should enable a case for action to be made by any of the Council's services whose clients or operations are likely to be affected.

¹ Coulthard, T.J., Frostick, L., Hardcastle, H., Jones, K., Rogers, D., Scott, M. & Bankoff, G. (2007) [The 2007 floods in Hull. Final report by the Independent Review Body](#), Hull City Council

² [Flood Investigation Report, City Centre Tidal Surge Flood Event December 2013](#), Hull City Council

3. ACTIVITIES

i. When did the City Council first engage with the Climate Just project?

Hull City Council has been involved with the Climate Just project from the outset, following a meeting in 2012 convened by the Climate UK network in Yorkshire to discuss the findings of the original research work carried out by the University of Manchester for the Joseph Rowntree Foundation³. The meeting location was chosen by JRF because of the high levels of flood disadvantage in the Yorkshire and Humber region. Hull City Council was subsequently provided with some maps to aid internal communications, prior to the website and map tool being made publicly available.

ii. Who has led the use of Climate Just?

The Council's Environment and Climate Change Strategy Advisor has led the use of the Climate Just tool and comments *"We already had all the data on flooding, etc. but it added the knowledge on the heatwave data and the fact that it was overlapping social data with that was very useful"*.

iii. Which council departments have been engaged and how?

The Environment and Climate Change Strategy Advisor has used Climate Just to produce maps of climate disadvantage for the management team of **Public Health** and notes that *"It was key to have some information at hand before we approached them to explain why they are vulnerable and what we can do to help them"*. The use of data visualisations of social vulnerability was key to gaining their interest and helping them understand how different vulnerable groups were likely to experience the impacts of severe weather events. He adds *"We have done some assessments with local Extra Care providers to increase their understanding and awareness around heatwaves"*. Climate Just data was also found to be particularly helpful for people working in **Housing** *"we didn't know and didn't have data of where the clusters of vulnerable people were (overlaid with heat incidence mapping) and their level of resilience to climate change and ability to recover"*.

A presentation to the Public Health Team Management Team in November 2016 helped stimulate some discussion about what needs to be looked at by the team and how some of their own health science data can be used. They also talked about how social vulnerability can become part of the impact assessment process and also as a way of looking at the wider public health agenda.

iv. Which strategies have been influenced?

In 2015, the City Council undertook some joint work with the Zero Carbon Hub on overheating which has informed a new **Affordable Warmth strategy** due in 2017. Although the main focus is on ensuring affordable warmth during the cold winter months, the concept of 'affordable comfort' has also been introduced to capture the issue of affordable cooling in hot summer weather even though heatwave risk in Hull is relatively low at the present time. It is acknowledged to be an increasing risk over time however in the 2016 **Joint Strategic Needs Assessment** for Hull which notes that adaptation will be required to manage future risks, not just present ones and that climate impacts will affect socially vulnerable groups disproportionately and place additional pressures on health and social care services.

³ Lindley, S., O'Neill, J., Kandeh, J., Lawson, N., Christian, R. And O'Neill, M. (2011) [Climate change, justice and vulnerability](#), Joseph Rowntree Foundation, York.

v. How has Climate Just been applied in practice?

Climate Just maps were used in 2015 as part of a stakeholder workshop activity when the City Council was involved in the development of a new **£80m 'extra care' housing scheme** designed for people with care needs (including working age people with disabilities, mental health needs and dementia, and older people). This development of 316 apartments will be spread over three sites and designed to be adaptable to accommodate residents' changing needs over time.

The Extra Care Schemes were led by the Council through a multidisciplinary team including specialist external consultants. The maps were used as part of the climate adaptation risk assessment with the lead provider. They helped to raise awareness of the distribution of the client group across the City and inform the wider community benefit that the new schemes could provide from an adaptation and extreme weather event response.

The assessment was also used to support operational arrangements for the lead provider to ensure they are aware of the impact of extreme weather events on their ability to meet the needs of their client group. The Climate Just maps were important in developing the thinking of the provider in producing an adaptation risk assessment and action plan for the developments' operations and future improvements.

4. SUCCESSES

A recent success has been that the 2016 Joint Strategic Needs Assessment makes explicit reference to Climate Just and uses the evidence to emphasise the need for adaptation to tackle future hazards as well as current ones (Hull City Council, 2016). "Hull has yet to experience a heat wave, which is likely to become more of an issue as we move through the century". The JSNA also states: "Recent work in 2014 by Joseph Rowntree Foundation and University of Manchester [48] 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." (p17)

Having a specific reference in a statutory plan provides a mandate for appropriate teams to include responses in their future work programmes to help turn commitments into actions.

5. CHALLENGES

Ongoing budget pressures and staffing reductions have meant that the City Council's front line services necessarily have had to focus on meeting immediate customer requirements. Therefore choosing the right time to engage with services is critical so that the use of Climate Just information becomes complementary to current priorities and focus.

6. FUTURE PLANS

During 2017 and 2018 the first services to undertake climate adaptation assessments will be reviewed to take account of the findings of the Climate Change Risk Assessment 2017 and progress on the action plans. The Climate Just maps will be used to provide context to the reviews and as a basis for future vulnerability assessments.

7. CONTACT

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