

**Cambridge City Council  
Equalities Panel, 7 December 2015**

**Item 2 - Climate Change Strategy**

**1.0 Background**

- 1.1 Cambridge City Council is committed to supporting international efforts to mitigate climate change and taking steps to support residents and businesses to respond to the anticipated effects of climate change.
- 1.2 To demonstrate this commitment, the Council published a draft new Climate Change Strategy on 12 October 2015. The strategy sets out the action that the Council will take over the next five years. The draft Strategy is available on the Council's website: <https://www.cambridge.gov.uk/consultations/have-your-say-about-our-climate-change-strategy-for-2016-to-2021>
- 1.3 Public consultation is being carried out on the new Climate Change Strategy from 13 October 2015 to 12 January 2016. As part of this process, Council officers are seeking the views of members of the Joint Equalities Group and the Equalities Panel on the strategy. The Panel and JEG are asked to advise particularly on how the strategy could support vulnerable residents to respond to the effects of climate change.
- 1.4 Much has been achieved through the Council's current Climate Change Strategy, which covers the period from April 2012 to March 2016. Key achievements have included investing over £4.3 million on improving the energy efficiency of Council homes, and using planning policies to secure high sustainability standards in new homes built in the city. For example, many of the new homes being constructed on the southern fringe of the Cambridge will meet the standards set in Level 4 of the Code for Sustainable Homes, and the University of Cambridge's North West Cambridge site will be constructed to Code Level 5.
- 1.4 The new draft Climate Change Strategy has 5 objectives, and identifies 46 actions that Council services will take to deliver them. The first four objectives focus on reducing greenhouse gas emissions from Cambridge in future, but the activity proposed

under objective 5 will support residents and business to respond to the effects of climate change. The key objectives are:

1. Reducing emissions from the City Council estate and operations
2. Reducing energy consumption and emissions from homes and businesses in Cambridge and tackling fuel poverty, by promoting energy efficiency measures, sustainable construction and renewable energy sources
3. Reducing emissions from transport by promoting sustainable transport and reducing car travel and traffic congestion
4. Reducing consumption of resources, increasing recycling and reducing waste
5. Supporting Council services, residents and businesses to adapt to the impacts of climate change

## **2.0 Impacts of climate change on equalities groups**

2.1 The strategy identifies a number of likely impacts of climate change on Cambridge. The three main risks are listed below, but the Table in Appendix 1 provides a longer list of potential impacts to the city:

- Increases in average temperatures, including increased risk of summer heatwaves
- Higher average winter rainfall and an associated increased risk of flooding
- Lower average rainfall in summer, with increased risk of water shortages and drought

2.2 The extent to which different residents are able to respond to these changes to the local climate will vary considerably. Recent research by the Joseph Rowntree Foundation<sup>1</sup> found that the extent to which individuals are able to cope with the impacts of climate change is influenced by the interaction between personal factors (e.g. health, age), social factors (e.g. income, neighbourhood cohesion, isolation), and environmental factors (e.g. building quality, green space).

2.3 The Climate Change Strategy and the EqIA for the Strategy identify a number of risks for particular equalities groups, including:

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<sup>1</sup> Joseph Rowntree Foundation, 2014, Climate Change and Social Justice: an Evidence Review

- Older people are more likely to be vulnerable to the impacts of climate change, such as heat waves and extreme weather events, due to a combination of age, health issues and greater social isolation. National research shows that over half (51%) of all people aged 75 and over live alone,<sup>2</sup> while two fifths of all older people say the television is their main company.<sup>3</sup>
- People with disabilities and long-term health conditions may be more likely to be vulnerable to the impacts of climate change, such as heat waves and extreme weather events, due to a combination of health issues and lower average incomes. For example: disabled people are four times more likely to be out of work than non-disabled people, and disabled people in work are currently paid 10% less on average than people without disabilities
- Recent research by the Joseph Rowntree Foundation<sup>4</sup> found that poverty can increase the vulnerability of individuals and communities to climate impacts.

### 3.0 Addressing the impacts on equalities groups

3.1 The strategy includes a number of actions which will have a positive impact on equalities groups, including older people, people with disabilities and people on low incomes, and help them to respond to climate change risks. For example:

- Providing advice for residents on how to reduce health risks during heat waves, including via the Council's website and the Cambridge Matters residents magazine. Promotion of advice will be linked to specific climate events (e.g.heat wave guidance to be published in spring ahead of possible heatwave events).
- Working with partner organisations in the Cambridgeshire Resilience Forum to ensure that plans are in place to respond to climate change risks (including issuing alerts in the event of severe weather, increased temperatures and flooding) and that these are regularly tested and reviewed

<sup>2</sup> Office for National Statistics (ONS), 2010, via Campaign to End Loneliness <http://www.campaigntoendloneliness.org/loneliness-research/>

<sup>3</sup> Age UK, 2014, via Campaign to End Loneliness <http://www.campaigntoendloneliness.org/loneliness-research/>

<sup>4</sup> Joseph Rowntree Foundation, 2014, Climate Change and Social Justice: an Evidence Review

- Improving the energy efficiency of Council homes and supporting residents to improve the energy efficiency of their property through the Action on Energy scheme, which will help support residents who are in poverty or on low incomes to reduce their energy consumption and reduce costs associated with more extreme weather.
- Implementing the City Council's Fuel and Water Poverty Action Plan, including: Piloting water meters in a selection of 1 or 2 bedroom council owned properties; developing a water conservation information leaflet for inclusion in welcome packs for tenants moving into council-owned properties and at City Homes offices; drop in sessions to distribute water and energy saving measures and provide information on energy efficiency measures to residents; and targeted promotion to private landlords on the benefits of installing energy and water savings measures.

#### **4.0 Exercise for the Equalities Panel**

- 4.1 Members of the Panel are asked to discuss how the predicted local impacts of climate change in Cambridge will affect different equalities groups. At the meeting, members of the Panel will be asked to form small groups and consider the following questions:
1. How will the local impacts of climate change identified at 2.1 and in Appendix 1 affect the 9 different equalities groups? Have we missed any risks for equalities groups?
  2. Are there any additional actions that should be taken by the Council or partners to address these risks and help build residents resilience to climate change impacts?
- 4.2 Members of the Panel will be asked to note the key points from their discussion in a blank Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) form which will be provided at the meeting. The responses will be used by officers to complete a more comprehensive EqIA for the Climate Change Strategy, and the key points will be presented to the Council's Strategy and Resources Committee on 21 March 2016 as part of the wider consultation feedback. A revised version of the Strategy will be presented for approval at this meeting, which will address the key issues raised through the consultation where possible.