

Committee(s): Health and Wellbeing Board - for discussion	Dated: 24.11.2023
Subject: Climate & health - opportunities for collaboration	Public
Which outcomes in the City Corporation's Corporate Plan does this proposal aim to impact directly?	2, 3, 11, 12
Does this proposal require extra revenue and/or capital spending?	N
Report of: Dr Sandra Husbands, Director of Public Health	For discussion
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Summary

This report summarises a more detailed presentation (Appendix 1) which sets out:

- why climate change is an important public health issue, and the health co-benefits of mitigation and adaptation strategies
- an overview of the Corporation's Climate Action Strategy
- an overview of work being led under the North East London Health and Care Partnership Green Plan
- opportunities for (further) local collaboration to achieve shared aims.

Recommendation(s)

Members are asked to:

- note the report
- advise on areas for (further) collaboration to maximise the collective impact of local action on climate change to protect and improve population health (and reduce health inequalities) in the City of London.

Main Report

Background

1. Climate change has been described as the biggest public health crisis of our generation. We are already seeing evidence of this with unprecedented heatwaves, droughts, wildfires, floods and pollution of UK coastal waters from storm overflows. While it is difficult to reliably measure the specific health impacts of climate change, we do know that the effects are wide-ranging and (without positive remedial action) will have the greatest impact on already vulnerable residents and communities, and create additional pressure on health and care services.

2. Taking carefully planned action on climate change has many potential benefits for population health, over and above protecting people from harm.

Current Position

3. The presentation appended to this overview paper provides more detail on the impacts of climate change on population health - both the *direct* effects of weather events (such as flood damage and heat stress) and *indirect* effects mediated by natural systems (such as allergens and increased water/air pollution) and social systems (such as food supply, mental stress, health and care facilities).
4. These health impacts include harms to the respiratory, cardiovascular and respiratory systems; increases in skin cancer; adverse pregnancy outcomes; and wide-ranging implications for mental health. Those most at risk are the people and places that are less able to adapt, with the impacts most concentrated among economically and socially marginalised groups.
5. There is much we can do to reduce the negative health effects of climate change. Action is needed at international, national, regional and local level. Local action is being progressed through the City of London Corporation's Climate Action Strategy and the NHS North East London Integrated Care System (ICS) Green Plan.

Proposals

6. While the risks to population health of climate change are far-reaching, there are significant opportunities for climate action to benefit human health, via evidenced, coordinated and equitable strategies across multiple sectors/partners.
7. The Corporation's Climate Action Strategy sets out how the organisation will achieve 'net zero' and build climate resilience in its buildings, public spaces and infrastructure. At the same time, NHS North East London Integrated Care System (ICS) Green Plan seeks to create a greener NHS by reducing its carbon footprint by 80%. There are common objectives contained within these plans and both have potential to have a significant positive impact on protecting the public's health from the worst effects of climate change, and to create positive health co-benefits more generally.
8. Organisations represented on the Health and Wellbeing Board have significant power to protect and improve population health through their individual green/climate action plans. Through closer collaboration, there is an opportunity to maximise the collective impact of our local climate action to protect and improve population health (and reduce health inequalities) in the Square Mile. The Health and Wellbeing Board is in a unique position to influence partnership action to achieve this.

Corporate & Strategic Implications

Strategic implications

Climate action contributes to a number of the Corporations aims and priorities:

- contribute to a flourishing society - alleviate fuel poverty, protect health and wellbeing

- support a thriving economy - promote a world class financial centre, mitigate future costs, efficient job creation
- shape outstanding environments - improve air quality, conserve and enhance open spaces and biodiversity.

Financial implications

None

Resource implications

None

Legal implications

None

Risk implications

Risk to reputation if collaboration with the Integrated Care System is inhibited.

Risk to life if climate change is allowed to happen without system transformation, adaptation and mitigated.

Equalities implications

The presentation in Appendix I highlights the fact that the impacts of climate change are not experienced equally, with already disadvantaged and vulnerable communities (including those with protected characteristics) bearing the greatest impact, thus further exacerbating inequalities. In developing and implementing local climate action plans, the concept of 'climate justice' is key to ensure that everyone has the ability to prepare for, respond to and recover from the impacts of climate change.

Climate implications

The primary focus of this report is collaborative action to achieve health and climate co-benefits and achieve climate justice.

Security implications

Climate change brings with it a risk to energy security and increases food scarcity.

Conclusion

9. Climate change has far-reaching implications for the public's health and, without strong remedial action, will lead to a significant widening of pre-existing health inequalities.
10. There are untapped opportunities for local collaboration to protect the public's health from the worst effects of climate change, and for action on climate change to create positive health co-benefits for local people. Members of the Health and Wellbeing Board are well-placed to participate in and influence stronger partnership working to leverage these opportunities.

Appendices

- Appendix 1 – Climate action and health: opportunities for collaboration (presentation to the Health and Wellbeing Board)

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