

Climate Change Action Planning in Wigan

1. SUMMARY

This case study demonstrates some of the issues that need to be taken into account in 'how' to deliver climate change action planning for vulnerable communities. These particularly relate to the importance of local context when interpreting datasets, especially those from national sources, and the need to bring together various departments within the Council, and other stakeholders, particularly those that do not traditionally lead on climate change issues. Lessons from the project helped with the development of the Climate Just portal.

The case study is of relevance to local authorities and other local stakeholders interested in ensuring their service provision meets the needs of and contributes to the resilience of local communities in the UK. The project was commissioned by Wigan Council, supported by funding from the CLASP North West small projects fund, to consider how council service provision may need to change to improve the resilience of vulnerable communities. It was carried out by JBA in collaboration with the University of Manchester.

2. ACTIVITIES

Data from the ClimateJust portal was collated and used to provide an initial overview of those communities most at risk of climate change. The maps and individual indicators within them were discussed with stakeholders at a workshop in July 2014 and are now being supplemented with more local data to ensure that the finer local context is taken into account. Once the assessment has been further tailored to the local context, the most vulnerable communities will be identified and current service provision for these communities reviewed to identify if any changes could be made that would improve their resilience.

Tables of key indicators identifying those communities that are most vulnerable to climate change (according to the vulnerability assessment) were presented at the workshop and maps provided showing the distribution of the communities and the indicators. Maps were supplemented with additional information from the Environment Agency's National Receptors Database showing the location of critical community infrastructure (e.g. schools, hospitals, care homes etc.) (Figure 1 over page).

Partners: The following departments within Wigan Council have been involved to date: Housing Services, Public Health, Infrastructure Maintenance, Civil Contingencies, Environmental Planning and Traffic Group. External stakeholders involved have been Wigan and Leigh Housing, Wigan Leisure and Culture Trust, the Environment Agency, AGMA, Red Rose Forest and CLASP.

The client contact within Wigan Council is based in the planning department and has been instrumental in encouraging support from various other services. This was initially via an email, followed up by consultations with a number of key stakeholders undertaken by JBA, and then further emails from the client contact to encourage attendance at a workshop delivered in early July. Public health representatives have been particularly keen to get involved and remain involved throughout the process. Further consultations are proposed with key stakeholders in September/October followed by a webinar to discuss and agree suggested actions.

Timescale: The project commenced in April 2014 and should be completed by the end of October 2014.

Funding: Wigan has a Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan with an overall vision that '*Wigan Borough is prepared for and able to adapt to the changes that will happen*'. This project is taking place to ensure that Council services are helping to improve the resilience of Wigan's most vulnerable communities to climate change and to identify any areas where services should be changed to better facilitate increased resilience. This project is receiving funding of £10,000 from the North West CLASP programme.

3. OUTCOMES

The work is still ongoing, but a key outcome of the process so far has been the sharing of ideas and learning from the workshop in July; many attendees stated that they rarely get an opportunity to meet together and it helped understand each other’s agendas. This should enable joint approaches to capitalise upon opportunities and overcome challenges.

The stakeholders present welcomed the vulnerability assessment framework and considered this provided 'food for thought' in terms of the different aspects of climate vulnerability.

The work helped to emphasise the need for further refinements with local data to enable an action plan to be devised. The next stage will involve reviewing service provision for the vulnerable communities identified and work with stakeholders to identify potential changes to provision required to improve community resilience.

The work will contribute towards Wigan Council’s community initiative ‘The Deal’ (which aims to encourage self-reliance amongst the communities of Wigan) by encouraging communities to take action to improve resilience to extreme weather. The information provided to the Council from this project will also inform the development of strategic objectives identified in the Council’s Core Strategy, by incorporating adaptation to climate change across a range of policy objectives, e.g. Objective CC 1 – To help mitigate the borough’s greenhouse gas emissions and adapt to the impacts of climate change. It will also contribute towards Wigan Council achieving the awareness raising and increased resilience objectives of the National Adaptation Programme¹ (NAP).

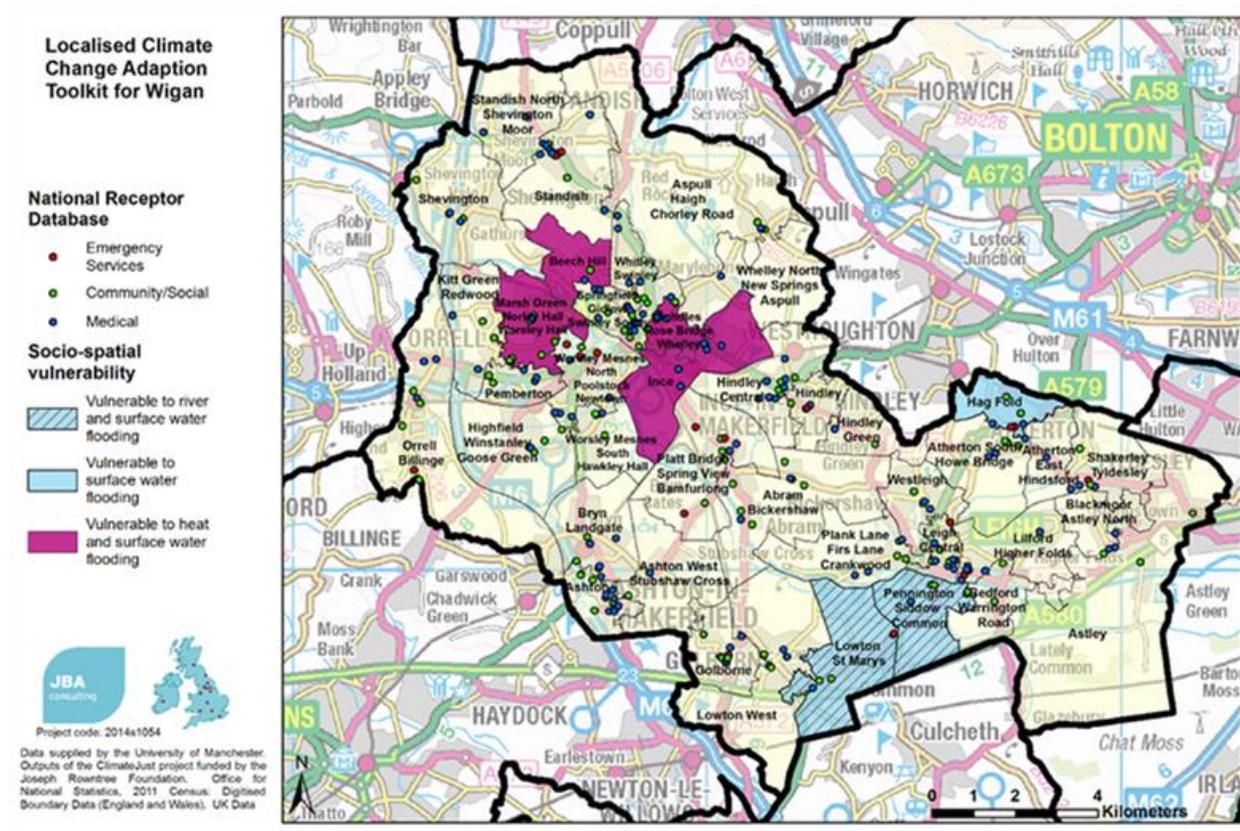


Figure 1: Socio-spatial vulnerability to flood and heat risks and critical community infrastructure

¹ Defra (July 2013) The National Adaptation Programme: Making the country resilient to a changing climate

4. BARRIERS

Initially there was a lack of willingness to get involved by some stakeholders as it was considered that this project was not of great relevance to them. This highlights exactly why this project is so important, as climate change is the responsibility of everyone, not just those in a specific department or role and should be built into all risk assessments for every department and organization. The client contact, Wigan Council's Planning Policy Manager has been of key importance in encouraging support from a range of departments and other local organisations.

Local stakeholders found some of the data difficult to interpret and were concerned that the use of national datasets and comparison with national averages (rather than comparator places such as Wakefield or Barnsley) had led to the identification of vulnerable communities that did not always relate to local knowledge and experience. Examples of local analysis are therefore being added to this website to support local stakeholders and instructions on how to recalculate the data at the local level are [available here](#).

It was felt that analysis solely based on the Climate Just data could not build in important work being undertaken locally and across Greater Manchester to improve local resilience to climate change. This feedback has been used in the Climate Just user guide which emphasizes the value of supplementing data from local resources.

5. GUIDING PRINCIPLES

- ✓ Do involve representatives from a wide range of council departments and external stakeholders from local organisations with a key role in service provision to communities.
- ✓ Do use the ClimateJust resources to get an overview of the issues for a local area, to aid participation and engagement and to help identify and structure local data resources.
- ✓ Do supplement the national vulnerability assessment with local data sources or use it as a framework to be populated by local data rather than relying on national datasets.
- ✓ Do ensure the work is used as a basis for considering responses building on wider local contextual knowledge and experience.
- ✓ Don't let a lack of response from key stakeholders deter efforts to get them engaged – those who think they are not the right person to be involved are probably those who need to be there most

6. CONTACT

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