

Applying Climate Just in Staffordshire

Staffordshire County Council and partners



Flooding in Rolleston on Dove, Staffordshire in 2012. Image courtesy of [Rolleston on Dove village website](#)

1. SUMMARY

Staffordshire County Council has used Climate Just to identify communities with climate disadvantage and to inform its approach to community resilience in response, in partnership with a range of local organisations.

2. CONTEXT

Staffordshire County Council has had a strategic commitment to climate change adaptation since 2011 when it adopted an adaptation plan and undertook some wide-ranging risk assessments to identify how the changing climate would be likely to affect the council's services and communities. It has been pro-active in supporting partnership action to help build resilience amongst local businesses and communities. The Council has made some of its adaptation resources public, including the results of its risk assessments and local climate impact profiles and also supplies (on request) county-wide maps of particular climate hazards, including flooding, wildfires and high winds. '[A Plan for All Seasons](#)' has also been developed to provide a guide to staying safe from extreme weather events throughout the course of the year.

3. ACTIVITIES

The County Council participated in a Climate Just preview event in Birmingham in early 2015 and a training workshop a year later. The officer working on climate change recognized the tool's potential to inform a project designed to improve community resilience in Staffordshire that started in 2012. Climate Just was used to help identify communities with the highest levels of climate disadvantage – the map tool helped identify places that show up with high levels of disadvantage from flooding and/or overheating, particularly where there are concentrations of elderly people or people on low income.

This approach helped identify nine locations across the county with similarly high disadvantage scores. After cross checking with the Council's own data and talking to partners, Rolleston on Dove was selected for a pilot resilience project. Rolleston on Dove has had several flooding incidents in recent years and the Council's Flood Risk Management team had prioritized working in the village since the June 2012 floods. The Climate Just tool highlighted the importance of climate change adaptation in an area already identified as having a high local flood risk.

A workshop was held here in April 2016 in conjunction with the local Parish Council, Borough Council, Fire and Rescue Service, Police, Civil Contingencies Unit and Flood Risk Management team. This was designed for interested local people to discuss the implications of extreme weather on the village, the potential local impacts and the possible responses, to help form the basis of a local community resilience plan. The maps produced by the Climate Just tool were found to be a useful means of communication with the borough and parish council concerned and helped to demonstrate why action was needed (although more granular data would have improved the maps).

The workshop highlighted the wide range of impacts climate change may have on the community, and that many of these impacts were possible to address by residents themselves. The workshop findings were written up and circulated to the stakeholders, along with a bespoke map showing different risks, inviting further contributions from the National Flood Forum, Western Power Distribution, Severn Trent Water, Highways, and Virgin Care. This approach has generated some good interest and engagement from local people and partner organisations.

4. NEXT STEPS

The Council is now considering how best to provide resilience information to communities and residents across the whole of Staffordshire to encourage people to prepare for extreme weather and other emergency events, using the findings from the Rolleston workshop as a guide to the types of impacts communities face. This is likely to be in the form of an online toolkit that incorporates climate related risks and responses along with other community risks and will be jointly produced by the Council's Sustainability Team and the Civil Contingencies Unit. Climate Just will help to identify some priority local areas where the toolkit can be promoted and used, following a pilot in Rolleston on Dove.

5. USING THE TOOL

The Sustainability Team Manager at Staffordshire County Council has been the main user of Climate Just and has found it a useful tool in its mapping capabilities, in the written content on vulnerable groups and in its signposting to external resources like the BIOPICC tool (Durham University project on the implications of climate change on the infrastructure for older people). The main use of the site has been to produce maps both using the built-in map tool and to export data to produce bespoke maps in an external GIS programme that can incorporate other local datasets. A few technical difficulties were experienced at the time (with a web browser being slow to load and guidance being too technical) although the training workshop in January 2016 helped overcome these. Although the County Council already had its own climate change risk assessments and hazard maps, it didn't have easily accessible social vulnerability data and found that Climate Just provided this in a convenient form that can be easily visualized in a mapped format – this was identified as the key benefit.

6. CONTACT

Rachel Melvin, Team Manager (Sustainability & Waste Strategy), Staffordshire County Council

rachel.melvin@staffordshire.gov.uk