HEALTH AND WELLBEING BOARD PAPER
FORMAL PUBLIC MEETING

Report of: **Greg Fell, Director of Public Health, Sheffield City Council**

Date: 30th March 2023

Item 13: Climate Change and Health

Author of Report: Victoria Penman, 0114 4743324

Summary:

This report shares the learnings from the event held under the aegis of the Health and Wellbeing Board and Sheffield City Partnership Board in November 2023 bringing representatives of organisations in the city to consider how they might work together to respond to climate change and build a sustainable future for Sheffield. It considers the implications for public health and for health inequalities of action and inaction, provides information on the next steps which came out of the event and asks the Health and Wellbeing Board to consider how it might respond appropriately.

Questions for the Health and Wellbeing Board:

- How might the Board and all its constituent member organisations best exercise their system leadership role to maximise the reduction of health and wellbeing inequalities through an appropriate immediate and ongoing response to the climate emergency. This might include actions such as:
    - Including response to the climate emergency, both in terms of the health and wellbeing potential of reducing emissions and in terms of climate adaptation in the new Health and Wellbeing Strategy.
    - Proactively being a collective and trusted voice in favour of some of the more challenging change that is needed (particularly around vehicle journey reduction)

1

- o Considering all board decisions and discussions through a climate lens so that climate is built into decision-making
- o Investing resource to increase the capacity for local climate action, particularly where this also has health benefits
- o Collaborating with other board or sector members to increase the potential for impact in reducing emissions in areas where the health and care sector have significant impact, for example in reducing clinical waste or reducing car journeys.

Recommendations for the Health and Wellbeing Board:

- The Health and Wellbeing Board is recommended to endorse the report of the event held on 15th November 2022 and the next steps, particularly by encouraging constituent members to engage with the developing routemaps to contribute actions that will support the city's decarbonisation.
- The Health and Wellbeing Board is recommended to consider how it can give ongoing time and resource to preparing for the transition to both a net zero society and increasing climate change impacts.
- The Board its constituent members are asked to play an active role in the development of the forthcoming adaptation and resilience assessment and the development of a plan.

Background Papers:

- *Report of the event of November 15th 2022 (appended)*

Which of the ambitions in the Health & Wellbeing Strategy does this help to deliver?

We will close the gap in healthy life expectancy in Sheffield by improving the health and wellbeing of the poorest and most vulnerable the fastest.

Who has contributed to this paper?

The attendees of the event on November 15th have indirectly contributed to this paper.

REPORT TITLE – *Climate Change and Health*

1.0 SUMMARY

1.1 This report shares the learnings from the event held under the aegis of the Health and Wellbeing Board and Sheffield City Partnership Board in November 2023 bringing representatives of organisations in the city to consider how they might work together to tackle climate change and build a sustainable future for Sheffield. It considers the implications for public health and for health inequalities of action and inaction, provides information on the next steps which came out of the event and asks the Health and Wellbeing Board to consider how it might respond appropriately.

2.0 HOW DOES THIS IMPACT ON HEALTH INEQUALITIES IN SHEFFIELD?

2.1 The long term impacts of the climate emergency will be felt most by people who are already vulnerable to health inequalities. People living in poverty are more likely to be living in poorly insulated, fuel poor homes and in areas where it is less safe to leave windows open to reduce heat, which are more prone to flooding and which have poorer blue and green infrastructure to mitigate extreme heat. The very old, very young and those with some pre-existing health conditions are more likely to be negatively affected by extreme heat conditions. People of ethnic minority heritage with relatives and friends living in less temperate regions are more likely to be impacted by increased crises in countries which are impacted more severely than the UK, and the mental distress and financial burden that this can bring.

2.2 The impact of the interventions and actions that are needed to reduce the city's carbon emissions are more complex in their impact on health inequalities. Impacts will depend to a significant extent on the approach taken to their design, delivery and geography. The majority of interventions should improve health inequalities ultimately, but without significant investment and intervention which targets those at greatest risk of health inequalities, there is a risk that some interventions could temporarily increase health inequalities. Those who are least vulnerable are often in a better position to self-fund improvements (such as insulation and less polluting electric vehicles). They may also be in a better position to change behaviours such as changing diet or traveling more actively (many of Sheffield's most deprived communities are either far from the city centre or located on steep hills, and those with health needs in particular may find active travel more challenging, as will those less able to afford electric bicycles). At the same time, many disabled people do not drive, older and younger people are less likely to drive and those on low incomes are less likely to drive, and making the city easier to travel around by car and active travel should immediately benefit those many of these people.

2.3 Whilst the response might most obviously be to target interventions on those most vulnerable to health inequalities, the most affluent have the highest carbon emissions

by an order of many magnitudes. In order to effectively reduce emissions, it is necessary to focus significant effort on interventions that reduce their emissions. There will be a need to balance potential short term increases in inequalities with potential long term impacts if emissions do not reduce, and to act to minimise any inequalities as far as possible.

3.1. Introduction

3.1.1. On 15th November, representatives of organisations from across the city came together to discuss what the climate emergency meant for them, and to think about how they and other organisations across the city could contribute to reducing the city's emissions, and what was needed to support this. The event was held under the aegis of the Sheffield City Partnership Board and the Sheffield Health and Wellbeing Board, and organised by the Sheffield City Council Sustainability and Climate Change Team, with facilitation support throughout the event by a range of Sheffield City Partnership partner organisations.

3.1.2. The event was very well attended, including a good level of attendance from organisations represented on the Health and Wellbeing Board. There was a clear message from the room that attendees wanted faster, deeper and more joined up climate action from the council and across the city. The breadth of organisations, from a wide range of sectors and backgrounds spoke to the widespread recognition of the need to scale up action.

3.1.3. The attached report of the day provides a summary of the event, key learning points, and next steps, including Greg Fell's presentation which highlighted:

- that climate change is the biggest public health emergency that we face, and that it is intrinsically linked with the biodiversity emergency
- locally we have a role to act, but that lack of national and international action to address fossil fuel subsidies, and manipulation by the fossil fuel industry is the biggest failing.
- A health-centred response to the coexisting climate, energy, and cost-of-living crises provides an opportunity to deliver a healthy, low-carbon future. Transitioning to clean energy and improved energy efficiency can avert the most catastrophic climate change impacts, while also improving energy security, supporting economic recovery, preventing the 1·2 million annual deaths resulting from exposure to fossil fuel-derived ambient $PM_{2·5}$ (indicator 3.3), and improving health outcomes by promoting active forms of travel for greener cities. The associated reduction in the burden of disease will in turn reduce the strain on overwhelmed healthcare providers, and enable better care.
- Increasing adaptation to climate change has the potential to simultaneously improve the capacity of health systems to manage both future infectious disease outbreaks and other health emergencies. Population exposure to heatwaves increased by 57% on average in 2010–19 compared with 2000–09, and by more than 250% in some regions, putting older people, young children, people with underlying chronic health

4

conditions, and people who do not have adequate access to health care at high risk of heat-related morbidity and mortality.

3.1.4. Learnings and next steps are summarised briefly below, and discussion points are provided to aid consideration of how the Health and Wellbeing Board and broader city should respond to maximise health and wellbeing now and in the future.

Learning points

- Attendees shared that trust, coordinated activity and a shared vision was important to people.
- Joined up working and communication is important for progress. There was a perception that this needed to be stronger. There is a lot happening already in the city, but we don't share it enough.
- Many organisations (and individuals) are starting on their journey, but don't always know how best to proceed.
- Achieving transformational change needs to be inspiring, hopeful and joyful.
- Achieving scale requires greater collaboration – including ambitious funding bids to government.
- Many organisations are starting on their journey but don't know how best to proceed, other organisations are moving at much greater pace; everyone is stretched.
- Thematic sessions provided learnings about a wide range of assets, strengths, challenges and opportunities.

3.1. Summary of discussion at health tables

3.1.1. The potential for the health sector to impact on climate change, as well as for to be impacted by climate change, is very significant. Assets included:

- The number of employees
- Work currently happening through individual practices and collective action
- Hospital grounds
- The potential for churches to provide both warm and cool spaces – historic churches are often considered as a challenge to insulate, but are often cool in summer
- The green space available in the cities, including parks, rivers and churchyards
- Sheffield Business Together and University of Sheffield's work on green barriers and the potential to expand to more schools
- Existing data, and the potential to improve this to support prioritisation of climate work

3.1.2. Challenges and opportunities included:

- The number of patient journeys made by car
- Poor public transport links to the Northern General Hospital
- Potential for 15 minute neighbourhoods for health
- The impact of cold homes on health
- Potential for climate and well-being focused community programmes and for procurement to play a role in tackling climate change

5

3.1.3. The health groups considered the potential for bringing together plans from organisations across the city to create a "plan of plans" and how community organisations could be a lynchpin for health and well-being and climate action.

3.2. Next steps

3.2.1. The report notes that action that is required to address the climate emergency is vast and all organisations are encouraged to action the commitments that they made at the end of the session, and to consider what more their organisation can do. Within current constraints, the immediate next steps coming out of the event are:

1) The Sustainability and Climate Change Team are working towards developing an online engagement platform and, further in the future, a new microsite. The engagement platform will initially provide a route for research and consultation, and it is hoped that it will also give an opportunity to showcase some exemplar organisations and projects across Sheffield.

2) In the meantime, the Sustainability and Climate Change Team will send regular newsletters to update people and partners about what is happening and opportunities to be involved. The first is planned to be shared during March.

3) Conversations will take place with organisations that have expressed an interest in being involved in communication. Other organisations are welcome to make contact.

4) The Council will invite relevant organisations to be involved in and consulted on the development of decarbonisation plans.

5) The Council will convene thematic project groups as capacity allows. Whilst there are aspirations to form standing networks, limited resources currently prevents this. A map will be developed to understand existing networks, and organisations wishing to form networks, are very much encouraged to self-organise. Work will take place to explore how more thematic collaboration might be resourced, and attendees who have suggestions or are in a position to support are encouraged to make contact.

6) Finding a "team name" or to shape branding is proving challenging. The collaborative activity to identify branding did not result in a clear choice with some concern raised that the initial suggestions (which were taken from the most popular in a survey, and suggestions from respondents to the survey, no ideas being provided during the registration period) were too "jargony".

7) A number of feedback forms and commitments referenced that attendees had welcomed the opportunities to make contacts and that they planned to have follow up conversations with others in their groups. There have been several reports of this happening since the event and of work starting as a result.

8) Where specific commitments or projects link into future work, the Sustainability and Climate Change Team will incorporate the findings of the event.

3.2.2. In addition to these next steps, specifically in relation to engagement and collaboration, it is of note that the Sustainability and Climate Change Team is currently working on decarbonisation routemaps covering the Council's decarbonisation and "How we travel". Partners represented on the SCPB, as well as others, will be invited to contribute actions, as well as to consider how we can work better together. We would like future routemaps to be more collaborative, and

there is also potential for other orgs to be lead future routemaps where they have capacity.

3.3. Update on climate action activity

3.3.1. The event demonstrated that there is a huge amount of activity already happening across the city. Examples of some of the activity taking place which will support our efforts to address climate change includes:

- A wide variety of active travel interventions across the city are being delivered. Recent announcements include a decision on a Dutch style roundabout at Neepsend and Kelham and the new cycle parking hub to open during the spring in the city centre.
- Sustainability and Climate Change team officers are working with organisations in the city, including with Sheffield Renewables to identify pilot schools to install community owned renewable energy and with Eon to explore opportunities for decarbonising heat, including the potential for extending the heat network for industrial and domestic connections, and the viability of waste heat opportunities from local heat sources Identified through the Heat Network Zoning Pilot Programme e.g. steel industry, other manufacturers, waste water, data centres, and green hydrogen plants.
- The South Yorkshire Sustainability Support Consortium brings together the various organisations in South Yorkshire offering funded advice and support to businesses on sustainability. The Consortium has held 3 successful events so far, engaging with businesses on their needs and covering topics including carbon measurement, getting buy in, sustainable procurement, social value and more. Registrations have 'sold out' at all events which have all been well attended on the day with around 70 delegates each time. The consortium is planning its next event in May and it also now discussing its role in the wider governance of small business support on sustainability in the region, including how the partners can work together to maximise impact and best combine the output of research institutions and business facing support intermediaries.
- A Skills Strategy is being developed which will include green skills as a key element, and Learn Sheffield, further and higher education providers are all working in this area, whilst this year's South Yorkshire Schools Climate Conference, organised by SCESY has brought together many schools in the county.
- The Sustainability and Climate Change Team is part of a peer learning programme with the Yorkshire and Humber Climate Commission focused on climate adaptation and resilience. The team will be putting forward a bid for funding internally to commission a climate risk assessment.
- The Public Health Intelligence Team has worked with ClimateJust at Manchester University to incorporate data on climate vulnerability on Local Insight.

4. WHAT NEEDS TO HAPPEN TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE IN THIS AREA

Decarbonising Sheffield

4.1. Ultimately, the fossil fuel industry (including vehicle manufacturers and aviation) and meat industry need to reform, and this would be likely to require more stringent legislation and reform of fuel subsidies. Locally, there are a number of potential levers that might address this:

4.2. Divestment is a consideration, but needs to be considered carefully, although investing patient capital in local renewable generation or green economy could be options.

4.3. Board members with the potential to control advertising or to accept or decline sponsorship wield some influence over consumer behaviour.

4.4. Lobbying government where this is an option open to members.

4.5. However, the years of delay since scientists (and the fossil fuel industry) first learnt of the impact of fossil fuels on the climate means that individuals and organisations *will* also need to change much faster than is currently happening. Further to this, a recent Lancet paper[1] found that the health benefits of a pathway to net zero that requires faster and more ambitious change, in particular behaviour change, has greater impact on mortality. It found that the actions with greatest impact on mortality were to:

- increase home energy efficiency - Of all the actions in the report, this is the greatest contribution climate policy can make to improving health (over 800,000 life-years gained by 2050).
- Change eating habits - Reducing the amount of red meat eaten and swapping it for plant-based foods is the next most effective action for reducing mortality (over 400,000 life-years gained by 2050).
- Create healthier travel options -policies that encourage more people to walk or cycle for travel instead of driving could save up to 280,000 life-years by 2050.

4.6. The cost of the action required to decarbonise Sheffield runs to the many billions of pounds. Whilst the long term financial benefits (including to the health care system) are expected to outweigh the costs significantly, without further funding from government, and likely the private sector, it will be impossible to achieve decarbonisation at pace.

Adapting to climate change

4.7. As the climate changes, health and wellbeing impacts from extreme weather events are likely to provide increasing challenges. These will depend on the path that we take, as illustrated below in the recent International Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) Synthesis Report of the 6th Assessment Report[2].
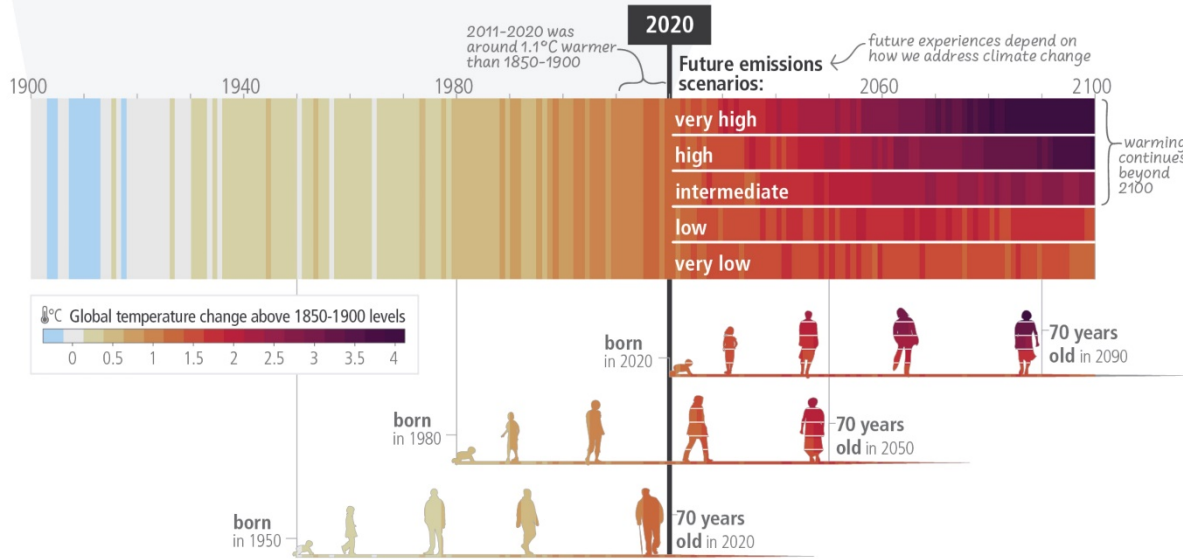
---

[1] Impact on mortality of pathways to net zero greenhouse gas emissions in England and Wales: a multisectoral modelling study - The Lancet Planetary Health
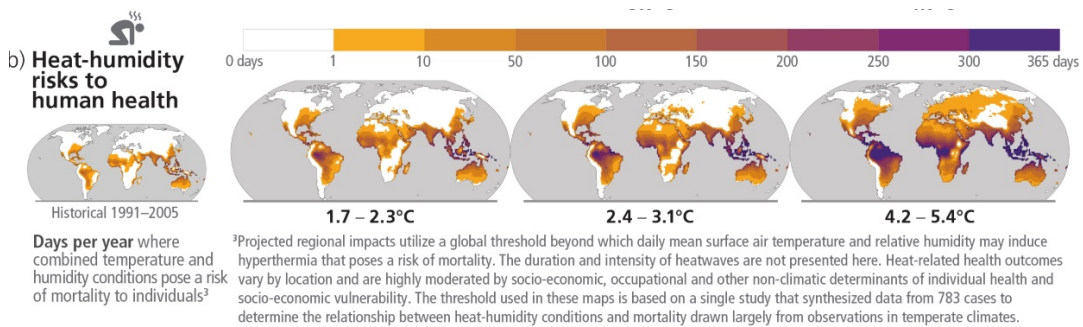[2] IPCC_AR6_SYR_SPM.pdf

c) The extent to which current and future generations will experience a hotter and different world depends on choices now and in the near-term

4.8. Whilst the health and wellbeing impacts for the UK are not as significant as elsewhere, they will still be significant.

b) Heat-humidity risks to human health

Historical 1991–2005

Days per year where combined temperature and humidity conditions pose a risk of mortality to individuals[3]

[3]Projected regional impacts utilize a global threshold beyond which daily mean surface air temperature and relative humidity may induce hyperthermia that poses a risk of mortality. The duration and intensity of heatwaves are not presented here. Heat-related health outcomes vary by location and are highly moderated by socio-economic, occupational and other non-climatic determinants of individual health and socio-economic vulnerability. The threshold used in these maps is based on a single study that synthesized data from 783 cases to determine the relationship between heat-humidity conditions and mortality drawn largely from observations in temperate climates.

4.9. Sheffield has not to date carried out a climate risk assessment or developed an adaptation and resilience plan. These will be important next steps.

5. QUESTIONS FOR THE BOARD

5.1. How might the Board and all its constituent member organisations best exercise their system leadership role to maximise the reduction of health and wellbeing inequalities through an appropriate immediate and ongoing response to the climate emergency. This might include actions such as:

- Including response to the climate emergency, both in terms of the health and wellbeing potential of reducing emissions and in terms of climate adaptation in the new Health and Wellbeing Strategy.
- Proactively being a collective and trusted voice in favour of some of the more challenging change that is needed (particularly around vehicle journey reduction)
- Considering all board decisions and discussions through a climate lens so that climate is built into decision-making;
- Investing resource to increase the capacity for local climate action, particularly where this also has health benefits;

9

- Collaborating with other board or sector members to increase the potential for impact in reducing emissions in areas where the health and care sector have significant impact, for example in reducing clinical waste or reducing car journeys.

6. RECOMMENDATIONS

- The Health and Wellbeing Board is recommended to endorse the report of the event held on 15th November 2022 and act on the next steps, particularly by encouraging constituent members to engage with the developing routemaps to contribute actions that will support the city's decarbonisation;
- The Health and Wellbeing Board is recommended to consider how it can give ongoing time and resource to preparing for the transition to both a net zero society and increasing climate change impacts;
- The Board its constituent members are asked to play an active role in the development of the forthcoming adaptation and resilience assessment and the development of a plan.