

Divisions Affected -

COUNTY COUNCIL

16 APRIL 2024

Annual Report of Director of Public Health

Report by Corporate Director: Public Health and Community Safety

RECOMMENDATION

- 1. The full Council is RECOMMENDED to note the Director of Public Health Annual Report and to take every opportunity to support actions and initiatives that will progress related work.**

Executive Summary

2. Directors of Public Health have a statutory duty to publish an annual report on a subject of their choice that they feel demonstrates the state of health within their community. The purpose of this item is to share the report for 23/24.
3. In summary, this Director of Public Health Annual Report shines the spotlight on the impact of climate change on health and the health and wellbeing benefits of positive climate action. It recognises that climate change is one of the most significant threats to our population at a local level as well as globally.

Director of Public Health Annual Report Overview

4. Directors of Public Health have a statutory duty to publish an annual report on a subject of their choice that demonstrates the state of health within their community. The purpose of this item is to share this report with full Council.
4. Health is the untold story in the climate emergency. This is concerning given that the adverse impacts of our deteriorating climate on the health and wellbeing of our residents are immediate. Equally, immediate and positive health benefits for individuals, families and communities can be delivered through climate action. Climate action means better health across the life course – whether we are talking about newborn babies, children, teenagers, working age adults or older people. It will also benefit the building blocks of health: providing homes which can be heated and cooled affordably, infrastructure for people to walk and cycle to keep communities active, connected, and healthy, and green spaces to boost mental health and store carbon.

5. Despite progress to reduce fossil fuel use and polluting greenhouse gas emissions, climate change is happening now in Oxfordshire, posing a real and current threat to health and wellbeing. We are all experiencing the effects of the climate emergency with increased frequency and severity of adverse weather events. Since 2007, there have been 18 severe flood events, 10 named storms, 8 severe cold snaps, 4 major heatwaves and 3 periods of drought. These events are having direct and harmful impacts on our health and wellbeing and will continue to lead to premature deaths and preventable suffering unless necessary climate action is taken.
6. This report has been developed and refined by an interdisciplinary steering group, with collaboration between colleagues in public health, data intelligence, climate action, emergency planning and food policy. It seeks to help reframe the debate: to look through the lens of the positive co-benefits of climate action and enable residents to see the individual benefits to their health and wellbeing. It celebrates the great work we have already done, but we urgently need to do more, and it recommends actions for all of us. We cannot do this alone; everyone and every organisation has an important role to play. The report encourages individuals to make positive behaviour changes and system partners to prioritise actions that are good for wellbeing and the climate. It aims to bring our partners in Oxfordshire together under one key ambition to make Oxfordshire a healthier place for all of us.

Corporate Policies and Priorities

8. This report supports the current Oxfordshire County Council Strategic Plan for working in partnership to make Oxfordshire a greener, fairer and healthier county. Particularly the priorities which aim to improve the health and wellbeing of residents, tackle the climate emergency and reduce inequalities. Recommendations for system actions also support delivery of priorities to invest in an inclusive, integrated and sustainable transport network and to preserve and improve access to nature and green spaces as well as working with local businesses for environmental economic and social benefit.

Financial Implications

6. There are no financial implications arising from this report. The Officer resource required to develop this work has required and will continue to require contribution from colleagues in the public health, data intelligence, climate action, emergency planning and policy teams; there are no additional costs associated with this support.

Comments checked by:

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Legal Implications

8. The Health and Social Care Act 2012, sets out a requirement for all Directors of Public Health to produce an annual independent report on the health of their local population and the county council is required to publish it under the National Health Service Act 2006. This report will enable the Director of Public Health and the County Council to comply with these statutory duties.

Comments checked by:

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Equality & Inclusion Implications

9. From the outset, health and social inequalities, and barriers to inclusion across Oxfordshire have been considered in the planning and delivery of this year's DPHAR report. This follows on from work undertaken through the 2019/2020 DPHAR on inequalities in health outcomes across the county "Some are more equal than others: hidden inequalities in a prospering Oxfordshire".

Sustainability Implications

10. This paper relates to climate and sustainability directly, as it focuses on the intersection between climate and health. This work has been undertaken in collaboration with the climate action team at Oxfordshire County Council.

Consultations and Communications

11. 'The key messages and insights from this annual report have been presented for discussion to a number of stakeholders including: Portfolio Holders for public health and climate action; County Council Strategic Leadership Team; Climate Action Programme Board; County Council Informal Cabinet; Public Health Whole Team Meeting; Future Oxfordshire Partnership Environmental Advisory Group; the Districts Chief Executives Meeting; Oxfordshire's Health & Wellbeing Board; Full Members briefing, prior to the launch of the report at Full Council on 16 April 2024.

Throughout the development of the draft report, clear and concise language has been used which avoids jargon. The communications team have been involved from the outset to ensure the Annual Report is accessible and widely available to the general public when it is launched in April 2024. The draft

report builds on the Health and Wellbeing Board public consultation with respect to climate and health.

Annex: Director of Public Health Annual Report

Anzaf Azhar, Corporate Director of Public Health and Community Safety

March 2024

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