

Public health

Improvements in public health will be delivered as co-benefits of many of the actions listed above including more active travel and more green space. It is vital that the Plan includes public health as a key component across its different action themes.¹ But there are some specific health issues which councils should also consider including in their plans:

☐ **Climate anxiety²**

- ☐ Support Eco-anxiety therapy such as the Climate Cafe's set up by the Climate Psychology Alliance.

☐ **Air pollution**

- ☐ To reduce air pollution through transport management see transport section.
- ☐ Refuse to grant permits to air polluting organisations such as businesses that work with burning fuel, metals, chemicals or waste.
- ☐ Organisations who are burning substances must have chimneys that are tall enough to prevent smoke, grit, dust, gases or fume emissions from causing a pollution problem. Require organisations to apply for chimney approval if their boiler's fuel consumption exceeds either 45.4 kilograms of solid fuel an hour or 366.4 kilowatts of liquid gas fuel.³
- ☐ If the air quality falls below national standards, your local council must declare an Air Quality Management Area and make plans for pollution improvements.

☐ **Consider climate impact of end of life**

- ☐ Encourage the most environmentally friendly forms of burial and cremation:
 - ☐ Natural and green burials in woodlands, cemeteries, memorial grounds and on private land.⁴
- ☐ Investigate alternative ways to fuel cremations that emit less carbon than gas.

☐ **Pandemics and epidemics**

- ☐ Creating 20 minute neighbourhoods can help to reduce the spread of viruses as communities are about to isolate if they have everything they need within a short distance from their homes.

☐ **Invasive species**

- ☐ A warming climate could mean species such as mosquitoes will be able to live in the UK and bring diseases such as malaria, that have not existed here before. Councils should make residents aware of these risks through communications campaigns.

¹ Dundee's plan has a focus on public health and many of their actions include ways to increase public health as part of addressing the climate emergency:

<https://www.dundee.gov.uk/sites/default/files/publications/climateactionplan.pdf>

² The Climate Psychology Alliance has lots of information about Eco-anxiety

<https://www.climatepsychologyalliance.org/>

³

<https://www.bhibcouncils.co.uk/uncategorised/the-5-types-of-pollution-and-how-your-council-can-help-reduce-them/>

⁴ <https://www.coop.co.uk/funeralcare/advice/eco-friendly-funerals>

- ❑ Work with the UK Government to make sure medical professionals are trained to deal with new diseases and health risks brought about by invasive species.

Adaptation

Heat and extreme weather

- ❑ Send out early heat wave warnings communicating heat wave risks and suggesting actions people can take to protect themselves from heat-stroke and other heat related illnesses.
- ❑ Install air-conditioning powered by renewable energy in the homes of the most vulnerable, including the elderly and chronically ill.
- ❑ Improve facilities people can use to cool down such as building water fountains, swimming pools and spray pads.
- ❑ Promote the use of council swimming pools, paddling pools and splash pads during hosepipe bans in conjunction with local water companies.⁵
- ❑ Updating building codes and landscaping laws can increase energy efficiency. It also improves the ability of buildings to provide protection against extreme heat events. For example, green roofs (roofs with plant cover) and strategically located shade trees can reduce indoor temperatures and improve buildings' energy efficiency.⁶
- ❑ Plant urban forests, including street trees and wooded areas as this can mitigate urban heat islands, reducing local air temperatures by up to 5°C.
- ❑ Environmental Health Officers to educate owners of food premises of the increased risk of food poisoning in the face of rising temperatures.⁷

⁵ Page 18 - <https://www.cambridge.gov.uk/media/5996/climate-change-adaptation-plan.pdf>

⁶ https://www.cdc.gov/climateandhealth/pubs/extreme-heat-final_508.pdf

⁷ Page 23 - <https://data.climateemergency.uk/media/data/plans/blackburn-with-darwen-borough-council-16dbecc.pdf>