



Oxfordshire

SUMMARY

KEYWORDS

Risk assessment, Property services, LCLIP, vulnerability, buildings, estate, costs.

NAME OF AUTHORITY

Oxfordshire County Council

SERVICE AREA

Property services

BUILDING CAPACITY/TAKING ACTION

Building capacity

SUMMARY

Property Services (PS) set up a Climate Change Adaptation Group (CCAG) with representation from each team and decided to assess the impact of weather and climate on their areas of operation. Specifically, they considered the risks to County's property stock taking account of the services provided from buildings and the building users. The focus was on current risks and impacts playing out in the short to medium term. The team went on to consider adaptive responses and produced an Action Plan which is being implemented.

Alongside other impacts of weather events, summertime overheating was identified as a common occurrence in many buildings (particularly schools). The Council is evaluating the extent of this problem across their buildings estate, identifying the range of contributing factors (weather, construction types, building materials and other issues, services being provided and user behaviour). The aim is to develop a mechanism/toolkit to assess a building and the services delivered.

DESCRIPTION

DRIVERS

- Oxfordshire CC's local climate impacts profile highlighted several instances of school closure/damage as a result of weather. LCLIP findings highlighted the impacts and financial costs of weather events on assets and infrastructure. An assessment of current and medium term vulnerability for the property stock, building uses, investment programmes was considered an appropriate next step.

METHODS

- Based on the risk methodology adopted across the authority, the CCAG team identified key weather variables and considered their impact on PS interests/categories – buildings, land, services and users. Risk scores were assigned to impacts to produce a list of priority areas. Adaptation responses/measures were outlined with an initial review of cost/benefits.
- A pilot survey on temperatures inside a primary school also took place. Data was collected over the summer terms in 2008 and 2009.

OUTCOMES

- To follow up with further research on the performance of different types of buildings across the Council's stock (taking account of construction type, building use, location).
- Potential for participation in the Adaptation and Resilience to a Changing Climate (ARCC) research programme.
- Potential link to DCSF funded work on school buildings and climate change.

KEY PLAYERS

- Support from Head of Property Services
- Team participation from across the service
- Regular reports to Property Services Management Team
- Wider engagement in delivery of Action Plan has been more difficult to achieve

ANALYSIS

STRENGTHS

- An initial assessment was completed, useful awareness raising occurred, significant issues for future of Property Services and for the County Council's estate were identified.
- It was a process that could be replicated elsewhere (in other service areas and in other LAs).
- Process helped to identify next steps.

- Opportunities to include contractors (architects/building comps/facilities management) to be realised.

CONSTRAINTS

- Loss of momentum – time constraints on relevant staff mean that implementation of Action Plan items has been difficult to achieve.
- Self-censorship – where issues identified or adaptation responses appear financially prohibitive.

KEY MESSAGES

- Good initial risk assessment, demonstrates the range of issues for LA Property Services (whole life approach, procurement, contracts, building performance, construction type, raising awareness in the building sector – contractors/architects and associated professions and trades).
- Significant next steps identified.
- Building infrastructure a key area for adaptation planning within local authorities. An approach that can be replicated in other service areas or other LA property services.

FURTHER INFORMATION

CONTACT NAME AND DETAILS

- Darrell Marchand, Resources Property Group, Environment and Economy Directorate, Oxfordshire County Council, darrell.marchand@oxfordshire.gov.uk

REFERENCES, WEB LINKS

- ARCC newsletter http://www.ukcip-arcc.org.uk/images/stories/Newsletters/ACN_news_Feb10.pdf
- LCLIP http://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/wps/portal/publicsite/councilservices?WCM_GLOBAL_CONTEXT=http://apps.oxfordshire.gov.uk/wps/wcm/connect/occ/Internet/Council+services/Environment+and+planning/Climate+change/What+is+climate+change/ENV+-+EP+-+FF+-+Local+climate+impacts+profile