



# The role of the community-voluntary sector in community resilience: an urban heatwaves case study

Climate Resilience Communities Conference  
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# Heatwaves

- 2003: 2,000 UK excess deaths and up to 70,000 in Europe.
- 2015: Hottest on record.
- Predictions of warmer climate, more frequent heatwaves
- Affects vulnerable people at 25°C
- Public health: dehydration, respiratory and cardiac problems
- Older, long term illness, disability, mental health; deprivation; isolation; infants; medications



# Objective

Examine the proposition that the *community-voluntary sector as a whole* (not just traditional responders, eg St John's Ambulance) can develop and help implement ideas for community resilience that will complement statutory approaches.



# Design

- January 2015 to June 2016
- Objectives
  - Local impact (action)
  - Strategic impact (research)
  - Independent evaluation
- Three action research case studies in London
  - Dalston, Hackney (with Age UK)
  - Ivybridge, Hounslow (with SWLEN)
  - Tooting, Wandsworth (with TTT)



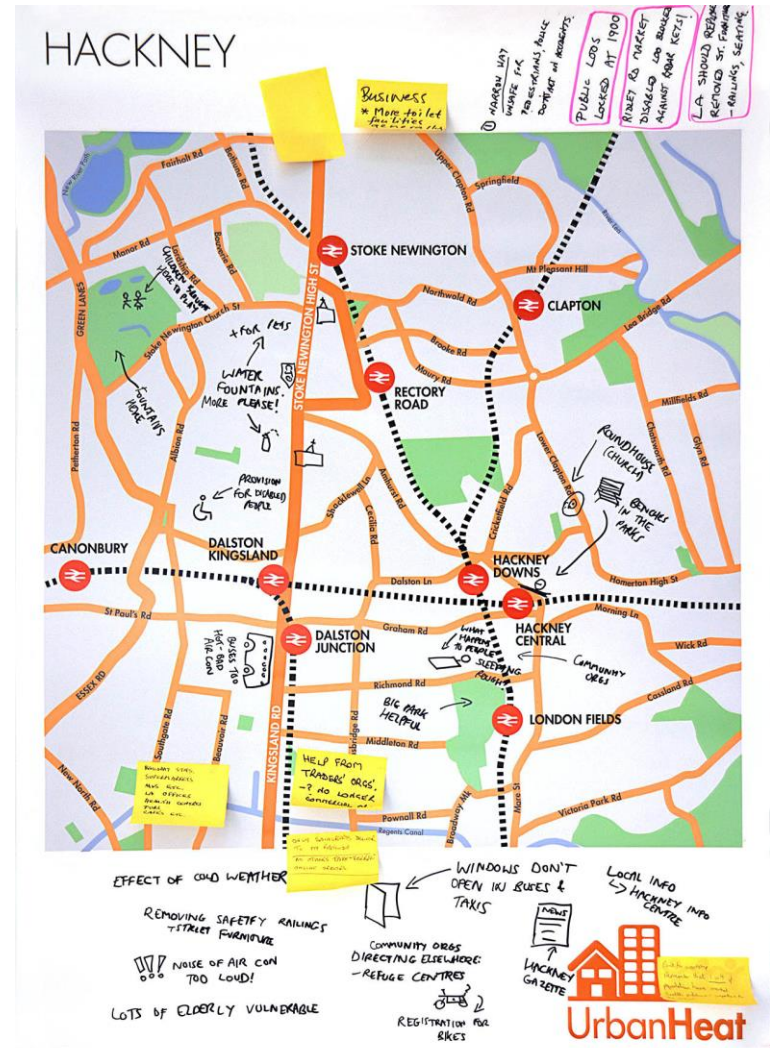
# Action

1. Institutional scoping and relationship building
2. Two community groups workshops
3. Interviews with vulnerable people
4. Third workshop with institutions
5. Further development in each case study



# Emerging outcomes

- A wide range of community groups were willing and able to meaningfully engage.
- Local and lay knowledge and experience very important.
- All three cases were incredibly productive in terms of generating ideas.



# Key ideas

1. Communications: community networks, hubs and groups can reach many people, including many that statutory bodies cannot easily reach.
2. Bridges: ongoing institutional arrangements (formal and informal) linking community groups and statutory bodies.
3. The role of the private sector, especially retailers in communications.

# Emerging outcomes

- Local statutory actors were willing to engage with the project and community groups, but varied.
- Competition for policy space and practical attention in context of budget reductions
  - Bundling and mainstreaming
  - Importance of statute, outcomes, indicators, guidelines in generating action





# Working together

- There was something very distinctive and productive about having community groups and statutory bodies in the room together.
- The intense preparatory work of the team supported this.
- Conversations were generally full of goodwill, and very constructive and productive.

*I've got quite a few ideas down already. I'd be more than happy to explore opportunities for the Hounslow Local Resilience Forum to work more closely with community groups or with a community resilience forum. I think it's a fantastic idea and I would be happy to support the development of this.*

Twam Palmer, Emergency Planning  
Manager, LB Hounslow.



# Beyond the workshops

- Working with case study partners on
  - Communications
  - Bridges
  - Private sector
- Working London and national policy actors
  - Trying to set up tests of comms materials
  - Embedding findings within policy



# Concluding comments

- The community-voluntary sector has much to offer (ideas, knowledge, capability)
- The sector is currently under-utilised
- Local action on this is challenging and time-consuming, and must be sensitive to local contexts
- That said, some standard things are universal and quite straightforward
  - Use community-voluntary sector hubs for local communications
  - Involve a range of groups in institutional forums



# Thank you!

