



## Street Cleansing

### How will street cleansing be impacted by climate change?

Our climate is changing. We each need to understand our role in addressing this challenge and work together to increase the resilience of our organisations and society. Cutting carbon emissions is vital as we must reduce the severity of climate change. However, it is equally important to begin preparing for the increase in extreme weather which we are already experiencing, and which is projected to increase substantially in intensity and frequency in the coming decades. We call this act of preparation 'Climate Adaptation.'

Local councils will play a pivotal role in the implementation of any measures, and so require a collaborative approach from different service areas in order to address the impacts of climate change. Every service has something to offer to increase resilience for the council and communities it represents, from overall strategies to daily decisions and management.

This brief is not designed to provide a comprehensive overview, but rather to initiate discussion on the role of street cleansing in addressing climate change impacts as part of a wider suite of documents for other services.

### What are the climate risks posed to street cleansing?

Street care and cleansing services keep publicly owned streets and open spaces free from waste and safe for the public. Our dependency and interaction with the built environment, makes street cleansing amongst one of the most visible services local councils deliver. Climate change is likely to create short and longer-term implications for effective delivery of these services. These may include:

- Disruption to street cleansing schedules can result in a negative reputation of the area.
- Health and safety, or productivity issues for staff (indoor and outdoor) as result of changing environment and extreme weather events.
- Reduced capacity to cope with large volumes of waste, litter and foliage:
  - when services are hindered from extreme weather events
  - generated by flood events, which will also need to be treated as hazardous waste
  - waste, litter and foliage dispersed by high winds and storms.

- Increased costs to provide additional street cleansing services after an extreme weather event (i.e. tree fall management).
- Increased costs associated with maintaining increased grass, shrubs, and trees growth in pedestrian areas.
- Increased cost and time for staff training to be able to cope with extreme weather conditions safely.
- Changes in demand for equipment.

## What actions could you take?

Undertaking adaptation planning and action offers councils the opportunity to save on costs, maintain the quality of the service, and manage the efficient use of resources. You could take action by getting involved with your council's adaptation planning process, which should outline short to long-term impacts, implications and recommended actions for street cleansing, including:

- Adapting street maintenance and cleansing schedules to meet demands of increasing vegetation growth and to avoid the hottest time of the day.
- Ensuring emergency recovery plans address a full range of weather events.
- Collaboration with the public to communicate and manage expectations around waste during periods of potential disruption.
- Reviewing staff training and working hours to allow staff to deal with extreme weather conditions safely.
- Reviewing current equipment such as PPE to ensure suitability for extreme weather conditions.
- Liaising with statutory agencies and companies who directly or indirectly affect street cleansing. For example: Department for Infrastructure for drainage and skip supply companies for waste.