



Local Government Climate Action Network (LGCAN)

Workshop 1 Briefing Paper

This workshop is the first step to developing a cohesive strategy to prepare for the impacts of climate change in your council. 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*.'

The aims of the workshop are to:

1. **Understand the challenge of climate change and how it impacts NI**
2. **Initiate the Climate Adaptation Plan Working Group, and**
3. **Utilise staff knowledge to understand council vulnerability to past and future climate impacts.**

After this workshop you should have:

- An understanding of how your council service areas have already been affected by climate change,
- An understanding of how climate change may impact your council services in future,
- A list of work which is already underway to help your council become more resilient to the impacts of climate change, and
- A list of data which could help you better understand and plan for the impacts of climate change.

What methodology are we following?

Derry City and Strabane District Council (DCSDC) has recently undertaken an adaptation planning exercise and developed the first local government Climate Adaptation Plan (2020-2025) in Northern Ireland. Funded by the CLIMATE Interreg VB project, Climate NI supported DCSDC in the development of this plan.

Councils across the UK and Ireland are tackling climate adaptation as an urgent challenge. Every council in the Republic of Ireland has already developed a climate adaptation plan.



What is a climate adaptation plan?

We hope that this workshop will begin your council on the road to developing their own climate adaptation plan. When complete, this plan will serve as a first strategy which captures the main climate risks across the whole organisation and include an action plan agreed to by each service which can co-ordinate action over the coming years.

For example, in Derry City and Strabane District council floods cost regional government some £12 million. The council itself estimates impacts at:

- Circa £350,000 on capital repair costs to Council assets and facilities
- Circa £36,000 on emergency response costs
- Plus significant staff time spent on response and follow up support with the communities



Figures like these are important to understand as councils begin to view climate change through the lens of financial risk, and not simply an environmental problem.

Why should we do this?

Even if we stop all emissions tomorrow, we have locked-in change to the climate system. Climate adaptation is not just an environmental issue, it is about the responsibility we all share to prepare our society for a changing world. The World Economic Forum 2019 Global Risks Report, stated that ‘spending on disaster recovery is almost nine times higher than on prevention’.

Closer to home, ‘New Decade, New Approach’ recognised the “need for a coordinated and strategic approach to the challenge of climate change,” and action at a local councils level is vital to achieving this.

As part of the NI Climate Change Adaptation Programme 2019, SOLACE supported that councils should “embed the adaptation planning cycle across local council planning with the aim of encouraging councils to complete a minimum of Step 1 (getting started) by 2021 and Step 4 (understanding vulnerability, and taking action) by 2024”. Completion of Workshop 1 will go beyond Step 1 and put the council well on track to complete their first climate adaptation plan.

Constituents and elected members are also increasingly concerned with the ethical and financial impacts of climate change. Council staff can show that they are beginning to work across service areas to deliver a coordinated response.

What can we do?

1. The first Step is to support the Lead Adaptation Contact for your council by attending Workshop 1 and encouraging others to do so. If every service plays a role then the quality and impact of the plan will be much greater, and the resource required to develop it will be much smaller.
2. Give some thought to how extreme weather or climate issues may have affected your service in the past prior to the meeting.

3. Ask how you can be of assistance in pulling together the information required to develop the risk register at the next stage.



Step Two

Understanding your
vulnerability