

Adapting to Climate Change (NI 188) update

1. Introduction

Adapting to climate change means adapting the way we do things - in all areas of our lives - to respond to the changing circumstances. It means not only protecting against negative impacts, but also making us better able to take advantage of any benefits.

Climate change will have significant impacts on communities and how services are delivered. The likelihood and magnitude of these impacts will vary according to localities and the individual.

It is important that we are prepared for any potential impacts that arise and for councils and its partners this is about becoming "climate ready". It's about firstly developing an understanding about how climate change is likely to affect our area and ability to deliver our services and then ensure that we take appropriate actions to prepare for the impacts of climate change.

2. NI188 – Planning to adapt to Climate Change

A process indicator that measures how well local authorities and its partners are adapting - most work so far has been structured around the specific requirements of the indicator and involve the following activities associated with each level.

Understanding the potential risks associated with climate change (level 1)

- research into predicted climate change/weather patterns
- monitoring impacts of weather on localities/services
- Research to identify vulnerabilities etc.

Assessing the level/severity of the risk/opportunity (level 2)

- Undertaking a formal risk assessment to identify 'priority risks'

Taking action to adapt to climate change where necessary (Levels 3 & 4)

- Local authorities have developed and published an adaptation action plan and are monitoring it. The plan should include actions which build adaptive capacity (BAC) such as research and further monitoring as well as delivering actual adaptation (DAA) which might include practical activities such as increasing drain capacity or changing the specification of tarmac to withstand greater temperature extremes.

To achieve the LAA target we have to demonstrate that the majority of councils in the LAA are working towards a particular level. Lancashire County Council and the **(majority)**¹ of District councils are currently working towards level 3 and are starting to prepare **'individual'**² **adaptation action plans**. These plans will set out how each council intends to respond to the extreme weather and climate change threats and opportunities that they have identified previously during the risk assessment stage.

¹ Overall success for the LAA target is determined by the MAJORITY of councils achieving a particular level of the indicator – currently the majority are working towards level 3 (Pendle reported level 1 this year but is hoping to catch up and go for 3 this year, only Lancaster, Ribble Valley and Fylde are working to lower levels)

² Each council is doing their own adaptation action plan covering their own services and functions. This was the preferred approach of the councils on the adaptation working group. It is hoped that LCC will try and explore how we might pull together a Lancashire wide plan later this year/early 2011.

Working together through the LAA adaptation group has enabled a shared approach to identifying and studying weather incidents and ongoing monitoring of events. (LCLIP work) also the LCC development of the adaptation website ('adaptation wizard for Lancashire') has supported all councils and council services in understanding the process of adaptation better by providing information on impacts, responses and risk assessments.

3. Key messages for this group:

Councils are already doing a lot to ensure their services/functions are resilient to climate change and already work with relevant partners to ensure this happens (individual plans will identify these existing actions and where partners are already involved) although we intend the plan to highlight where more might be done – proposed actions.

Q: Have partners thought about the risk/opportunities that they face – do they lack information or can they provide information about issues?

The lead authority in the LAA is required to encourage all relevant partners to consider the risks associated with climate change and how it might affect their functions and services so they can take action or develop an adaptation action plan.

Q: How can we help? We are able to share information with partners on potential threats and opportunities – (through our website) and welcome anyone wanting to contribute information to us about current/potential vulnerabilities – is there more we can do?

Q: Are any partners doing any studies on risks/opportunities/vulnerabilities' to extreme weather/climate change?

The first part of the adaptation process is gathering information about potential risks/opportunities – we would like to know more – if people have information or are monitoring issues already we would like to know more.