



CLASP

Climate Change
Local Area
Support
Programme

Adaptation Resource Pack

Step-by-step guidance for
Local Authorities with case studies
from around the North West of England.

Climate Change Adaptation Risk Assessment in Detail
Service Area: **Planning & Development**
Example: **Rossendale Borough Council**

www.clasp-nw.info

February 2011

Planning & Development Rossendale Borough Council

Background

In this CLASP Climate Change Adaptation support project a consultant worked with the local authority to prepare a risk assessment workshop for the key service area. This short document details the process, key lessons and outcomes for Rossendale's work on embedding climate change adaptation into the Planning process.

Timeframe

- July 2010 local authority's application to CLASP for support
- July first meeting with Principal Planning Officer to discuss background and what they hoped to get from the process
- Gathered up background documents
- September planned the workshop and invited audience
- October workshop held
- November action plan developed

Challenges Before Workshop & How They Were Tackled

| | |
|---|--|
| <p><i>How to make sure people came</i></p> | <p>The Planning team persuaded people to attend by highlighting the benefits to their departments of working with the Planning department on adaptation issues e.g. could save them work as Planning already holds a large amount of information and expertise which they can call on.</p> <p>Secured executive-level support for the workshop and encouraged corporate responsibility to attend. Used contacts from the corporate Green Team.</p> |
| <p><i>How to make the workshop relevant</i></p> | <p>The format agreed was to use four local case studies of potential development sites, and to work through the adaptation issues that would be relevant to each. To facilitate this, the Planning team brought copies of aerial photographs, site plans and flood risk maps for each site, to be given to each workshop group.</p> |



Planning & Development Rossendale Borough Council

Initial Questions Asked and Documents Reviewed

- *What is the aim of the process?* Rossendale were about to go to consultation on the Core Strategy and were planning to develop a Sustainable Energy and Design SPD. At the same time the council was receiving support from The Energy Saving Trust (EST) to develop a Climate Change Action Plan. The aim was to help provide guidance on how to incorporate climate change adaptation into the Planning documents and facilitate co-operation between departments to reduce climate risks.
- *Who does what?* The Green Team co-ordinates activity on climate change and sustainability across the council. We had a discussion about which factors would be important to persuade senior executives and Members to support work on adaptation.
- *How does Rossendale work with Lancashire County Council?* In a two-tier system there are two authorities involved in emergency planning, business continuity and climate change adaptation, although planning policy is the responsibility of the District Authority. Rossendale have been closely involved in the Lancashire Climate Change Adaptation Group.
- *What are the biggest risks from weather/climate?* The most likely risk was thought to be from an increase in flooding. Although only 2.4% of the borough is in flood risk areas, these are mainly the populated valley floor areas. The borough suffered a serious flood in 1964 and has recently seen flooding in smaller areas. A further risk of degradation of large areas of peat bog and the resultant loss of biodiversity was also considered likely. For future development, overheating in buildings might also be a problem.
- *What plans are in place now?* The Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA) had just been completed as part of the evidence for planning policy. The Core Strategy contains policies which specifically address climate change adaptation (Policy 1: “*General Development Locations and Principles*”, Policy 17: “*Rossendale’s Green Infrastructure*”, Policy 19: “*Climate Change and Low and Zero-Carbon Sources of Energy*” and Policy 24 “*Planning Application Requirements*”). The Flood and Water Management Act will also place new responsibilities on Local Authorities.



Planning & Development Rossendale Borough Council

Flood and Water Management Act 2010

This new Act gives unitary and county councils the lead role in managing the risk of all local floods, specific responsibility for managing surface water flooding, and a duty to develop flood management plans in consultation with other authorities.

It gives the Environment Agency overall responsibility for managing all flood risk in England.

It encourages the uptake of Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems (SUDS) and removes the automatic right to connect to sewers. It provides for unitary and county councils to adopt SUDS for new developments and redevelopments. It is anticipated that these measures will be fully implemented in April 2012.

The Act also introduces an improved risk based approach to reservoir safety.

<http://www.defra.gov.uk/environment/flooding/policy/fwmb/>

The Workshop Design

The major risks facing new developments had been identified by the Planning officers prior to the workshop based on evidence from the Strategic Flood Risk Assessment which showed areas at risk from flooding, so the purpose of the workshop was to identify the best ways to deal with these risks.

The workshop was designed to cover three issues;

- Increase understanding of climate change risks and the adaptation process relevant to Planning & Development
- Discuss the issues likely to be faced by addressing climate change adaptation in planning policies and development in Rossendale
- Agree a plan to ensure adaptation is incorporated into planning decisions

Invitees were mainly senior officers, who could subsequently brief their respective departments on the findings of the workshop. 12 people attended, from the following Council departments:

- Forward (Strategic) Planning
- Development Management
- Building Control
- Drainage Engineering
- Property Management
- Housing and Public Health
- Emergency Planning



Planning & Development Rossendale Borough Council

It was useful to have a Drainage Engineer, Development Control Officers and the Planning Policy Officers discussing the issue of flooding together, so that each could gain an understanding of the practical issues faced by the others in having to develop and implement policies.

The workshop was held in a relatively small venue (meeting room), and was laid out quite informally with a round table arrangement to facilitate discussion. The room was too hot and difficult to ventilate, but that helped to raise issues of heat adaptation!

For more on the practicalities of running the workshop and conducting risk assessment see the **Accelerator Pack – Embedding Climate Change Adaptation into LA Processes**.

Some of the Key Implementation Issues Discussed

1. The existing policy is sufficient to deal with proposed development in flood risk areas as the Environment Agency can require flood risk assessments or recommend refusal.
2. Building design standards are not sufficiently detailed to ensure that adaptation measures are taken into account, and there is no local design guidance. It is also difficult to monitor compliance with latest Building Regulation requirements when Building Control is carried out by an external organisation.
3. There is insufficient detailed knowledge of the current infrastructure and how it copes/would cope with heavier rainfall.
4. Whether it would be possible to finance off-site adaptation projects in at-risk areas through the use of commuted sums (such as the Community Infrastructure Levy).
5. The council does not yet have a plan to deliver projects in Open Space or for Flood Attenuation, which could be used as evidence for the requirement for commuted sums.
6. Lack of space for SUDS may be a problem due to the area's topography and the many small infill developments. Responsibility for ongoing maintenance and liability for SUDS needs to be agreed.
7. Projects financed by the council need to be seen to be working to higher standards and incorporating SUDS.
8. There is insufficient knowledge of the costs of adaptation measures and what financial benefits these improvements might provide in the longer term.
9. Local builders and developers need to understand the reasons and requirements for adaptation. It would be helpful to have more discussion about adaptation issues with developers at the pre-application stage.



Planning & Development Rossendale Borough Council

- 10 There is a danger that in an area that is not affluent, additional conditions will threaten the economic viability of the scheme, so the area could lose developments to other boroughs. Where there is a conflict between jobs and the environment, jobs win.

Developing the Action Plan

Following the workshop the Planning team developed a plan to address the majority of issues identified, parts of which are now being addressed by the Council's 'Green Team' – a cross-departmental working group which meets every six weeks to facilitate progress on environmental and climate change projects. This includes the following points:

1. Agree whether to prioritise work on Land Allocations or Design Guidance, and develop a project plan for production of these documents.
2. Develop a matrix of standard guidance for different types of development and situations in which it will be required, setting out minimum and desired standards.
3. Work with the key infrastructure providers for water supply and drainage to develop a plan to assess the current systems and identify improvements. Investigate the practical issues of responsibility for maintenance of SUDS and liability for open water.
4. Develop a programme of projects to use commuted sums for flood attenuation and adaptation work in open spaces. Develop a formula to calculate the sums to be paid and demonstrate where it will be spent.
5. Investigate what information is available on the costs and benefits of different adaptation measures, including non-climate change benefits such as increasing business value.
6. Provide or promote training for Members, developers, planning agents, private building control businesses and the business community, to help them understand the issues, options and costs involved. This is critical to getting any policy successfully adopted.
7. Push for adaptation and other sustainability issues to be fully taken into account in new council-funded developments.

Further Adaptation Work for Rossendale Borough Council

The workshop covered only part of the climate change adaptation process. The council still needs to ensure that climate change risks have been taken into account in Emergency Planning and Business Continuity for all departments, as well as identifying any further practices or policies that might reduce the risk of weather-related emergencies happening. The Planning Department holds a lot of information, for example on flood risks that might affect other council services, and will need to be involved in supporting other departments through this process.



Planning & Development Rossendale Borough Council

Contacts:

Adrian Smith, Principal Planning Officer, Forward Planning
Rossendale Borough Council
Email: adriansmith@rossendalebc.gov.uk
Tel: 01706 252419

James Dalgleish, Technician, Forward Planning
Rossendale Borough Council
Email: jamesdalgleish@rossendalebc.gov.uk
Tel: 01706 252586

Gill Fenna, Quantum Strategy & Technology
Email: gill.fenna@quantumst.co.uk
Tel: 0161 924 2388

Useful resources:

CABE Sustainable Places gives expert advice on planning, designing and managing a sustainable place
www.cabe.org.uk/sustainable-places

The **RTPI's Climate Change Compendium** includes case studies and local policies and strategies as well as national, regional and city strategies and guidance on climate change adaptation
www.rtpi.org.uk/item/2993&ap=1

Climate Change Adaptation by Design is a planners and developers design guide
www.tcpa.org.uk/pages/climate-change-adaptation-by-design.html

The **Planning Advisory Service** report – Using supplementary planning documents to address climate change locally
www.pas.gov.uk/pas/core/page.do?pagelId=552515



Planning & Development Rossendale Borough Council

For more information on what to do to manage climate change adaptation please see the accompanying documents produced for the CLASP Climate Change Adaptation Support Project.



Why bother to do Climate Change Adaptation without NI 188?



Getting Started on Climate Change Adaptation



Accelerator Pack – Embedding Climate Change Adaptation into LA Processes

Climate Change Adaptation Risk Assessment for:



Planning & Development Rossendale Borough Council



Highways & Transport Cheshire West and Chester Council



Business Continuity Pendle Borough Council



Capital Assets Wigan Council



Emergency Services Liverpool City Council