



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.

**Why bother to do Climate Change
Adaptation without NI 188?**



www.clasp-nw.info

February 2011

This pack is designed to help Local Authorities to tackle climate change adaptation. Some have already made good progress and are ready to work on risk assessment of service areas so should start reading the **Accelerator Pack – Embedding Climate Change Adaptation into LA Processes**. Other Local Authorities have just started work on adaptation and should read **Getting Started on Climate Change Adaptation** first. This short document makes the case for continuing work on climate change adaptation for Local Authorities despite the fact that the National Indicator set has been dropped.

Why Bother to do Climate Change Adaptation without NI 188?

The National Indicator on climate change adaptation NI188, provided a useful focus to:

- Assess a Local Authority’s preparedness for dealing with a weather-related emergency
- Consider actions that increase resilience, reducing the potential for the weather to cause an emergency.

The indicator has been removed, but the task of planning and embedding climate change adaptation in local areas has not.

The Climate Change Act 2008 not only set up emissions limits for the UK, but also established a Climate Change Adaptation Sub-Committee to advise the Committee for Climate Change on climate risks in the UK. This committee is currently carrying out a UK-wide Climate Change Risk Assessment. Defra’s Director of Climate Change Adaptation, Robin Mortimer, wrote to LA Chief Executives in November 2010 to explain that although the indicator has ended, local authorities still have an essential role to play in taking forward adaptation:

“... further consideration of adaptation is needed on delivering land use planning, providing local infrastructure, implementing building control, managing green space and coordinating emergency planning. These are areas where, without additional timely action, it may be too late effectively to manage the local impacts from a more challenging future climate.”

If you have to make a case in your Local Authority for why you should continue to tackle climate risks, or climate change adaptation, the information below should help you.

Why Bother to do Climate Change Adaptation without NI 188?

Duty to Respond to Weather-Related Emergencies

Local Authorities have a statutory duty to respond to emergencies under the Civil Contingencies Act. Together with their LSP partners, Authorities are expected to have an understanding of potential weather risks, their capacity to cope and a well thought out plan of action.

The Civil Contingencies Act sets out the statutory roles and responsibilities for those involved in emergency preparedness at a local level.

Category 1 organisations are those at the core of the response to most emergencies (e.g. emergency services, Local Authorities, NHS bodies). Category 1 responders are subject to the full set of civil protection duties. They are required to:

- Assess the risk of emergencies occurring and use this to inform contingency planning
- Put in place emergency plans
- Put in place Business Continuity Management arrangements
- Put in place arrangements to make information available to the public about civil protection matters and maintain arrangements to warn, inform and advise the public in the event of an emergency
- Share information with other local responders to enhance co-ordination
- Co-operate with other local responders to enhance co-ordination and efficiency
- Provide advice and assistance to businesses and voluntary organisations about business continuity management (Local Authorities only).

Category 2 organisations (e.g. Health and Safety Executive, transport and utility companies). These "co-operating bodies" are less likely to be involved in the heart of planning work but will be heavily involved in incidents that affect their sector. Category 2 responders have a lesser set of duties - co-operating and sharing relevant information with other Category 1 and 2 responders.

See: <http://www.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/ukresilience/preparedness/ccact.aspx>

So the loss of NI188 should not affect your emergency and business continuity planning, but may remove one of the mechanisms to scrutinise these procedures and make sure they are fit for purpose.

Work on NI188 has frequently shown up a number of gaps in Emergency and Business Continuity Plans, particularly:

- The ability to continue to provide services in a prolonged crisis
- The need to plan for the severe social, economic, health and mental health impacts on a community during a long-term recovery phase.

For information on how to embed climate change adaptation into Local Authority processes including **Emergency Planning** and **Business Continuity** see the other documents in this series.

Why Bother to do Climate Change Adaptation without NI 188?

Increasing Our Resilience

Through NI188 many Local Authorities and their partners have looked at how resilient their own operations are to climate change, and the impacts of weather. In this process key decisions have to be taken to assess the operational and financial implications of taking early preventative action against the cost of dealing with the aftermath of weather events.

Although the removal of NI188 takes away the process of checking our resilience, there are still many other drivers to help ensure adaptation is incorporated into long term planning. For example:

- The Flood and Water Management Act gives Local Authorities the lead role in reducing the risk of surface water flooding.
- Planning policy guidance on climate change and flood risk, together with the requirement for a Strategic Flood Risk Assessment as evidence for the Local Development Framework should ensure that new developments are located and built in such a way as to minimise flood risk to that development and not adversely affect other areas.
- Changes to the Building Regulations should ensure new developments are more resilient to future weather patterns.
- NHS Plans for heatwaves and extreme cold include communicating ways to reduce the risk of health problems from extreme weather. The transfer of public health responsibilities to Local Authorities gives an opportunity to look at the health impacts of climate change.
- Biodiversity Action Plans should incorporate the long term effects of climate change into habitat management plans.

But there will still be some important gaps that would have been addressed by the NI188 process, for example:

- Modifications to existing buildings to make them less susceptible to over-heating.
- Use of higher design specifications e.g. for building refurbishment or road surfaces to increase resilience to weather damage.
- Changes to maintenance regimes for roads, bridges, drainage, buildings and other capital assets to identify and manage changes in weather-related damage.
- Development of green infrastructure planning.
- Changes to maintenance of parks, trees and other green spaces to deal with different growing seasons and plant resilience.
- Helping communities and businesses become more resilient to climate change.

In some cases, there may be a sound business case for taking preventative action, where the cost of increasing resilience is less than the cost of dealing with a resulting emergency. In the 2007 floods, for example, Local Authorities bore costs of over £200 million, less than half of which was recoverable through insurance or national grants.



Why Bother to do Climate Change Adaptation without NI 188?

What to prioritise in climate change adaptation at the moment

At a time of shrinking local government budgets there is a very strong possibility that climate change work will fall down the agenda, but also that work carried out so far, and expertise gained, will be lost. It is perfectly valid that some climate change adaptation responses can be postponed until the current budget crisis is over and some financial recovery begins, which may not be for some years. But it is crucial that recommendations for future work are saved in such a way that they are not forgotten. It is also very important that some activities do continue.

A thorough and detailed risk assessment is one critical element in working out which actions should be prioritised, so it is essential that this is completed. The other important area for continuing work is in decisions that will have very long term implications such as investment in new developments and infrastructure.

Essential Actions To Do Now

1. Ensure that climate change is formally registered as a risk to the organisation, to service delivery and to the community on the Corporate and Community Risk Registers. Document the supporting narrative and make sure that Service Heads have a record of their own risks.
2. Ensure that statutory responsibilities for Civil Contingencies continue to be managed and take into account any data on increased risk emerging from both national climate change risk assessments and local flood risk management work.
3. Ensure that planning policy on climate change is properly implemented in local planning decisions.
4. Ensure that flood risk assessments and surface water management plans are completed and acted on.
5. Ensure that climate change is included as a criteria in decisions on capital assets.

Actions You May Park Until Later

1. Investment to mitigate a non-urgent risk.
2. Changes to operating procedures to deal with possible future risks (unless there is a clear cost saving).
3. Investment in or changes to services likely to close or significantly change.

Where recommendations for action need to be “parked” it is essential that these are well documented and that documentation is retained in the relevant service area.



Why Bother to do Climate Change Adaptation without NI 188?

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