

Climate Change Adaptation/Resilience

Purpose of Report

To provide an update on the UK Climate Change Risk Assessment and National Adaptation Programme and the supporting role of the LGA.

Summary

The global climate is changing and will continue to change over the coming century. Whilst typically being seen as an 'environmental' issue, climate change will have an impact on many different areas including economy and transport. For example: increased damage to property and important transport infrastructure caused by flooding; increased loss of productivity due to workplace heating; reduced water availability impacting on businesses; rising energy demand for cooling of buildings (including information and communications technology infrastructure).

The UK Climate Change Risk Assessment (CCRA) is an independent research project, funded by the Government that analyses the main risks and opportunities to the UK arising from climate change up to 2100. After publication at the end of January 2012, the Government (Defra) will develop a National Adaptation Programme, which will set out policies and actions to help address the risks in a number of areas (including coverage of economy and transport). They will be supported by the Environment Agency in their new role as the Government's delivery body in England for climate change adaptation/resilience, helping key sectors (including local government) build resilience to changes in our climate. To support delivery the Environment Agency has funded a secondee to the LGA between January 2012 - April 2013. The LGA will play a key role in agreeing actions for these work programmes and ensuring that local government needs are fully represented.

Recommendation

Members to note the report.

Contact officer: Jo Allchurch
Position: Adviser
Phone no: 07900 931 045
E-mail: jo.allchurch@local.gov.uk

Climate Resilience: Update on the UK Climate Change Risk Assessment and National Adaptation Programme

Background

1. The global climate is changing and will continue to change over the coming century. Even if we manage to limit greenhouse gas emissions, we are still locked into a certain amount of warming. Whilst typically being seen as an 'environmental' issue, climate change will have an impact on many different areas including economy and transport.
2. The UK Climate Change Risk Assessment (CCRA) is an independent research project, funded by UK Government and Devolved Governments that analyses the main risks and opportunities to the UK arising from climate change up to 2100.
3. It provides the underpinning evidence to inform discussions on adaptation/resilience action needed in such areas as infrastructure, health, environment and business and will be updated every five years.
4. Some key findings show why we must act now to prepare ourselves and our businesses for the future impact of climate change. The research reveals that without action (some policies already in place, some needing further review) we could see:
 - 4.1 a significant increase across England of **damage** to properties and important infrastructure such as roads and railways, **due to flooding** from rivers and the sea.
 - 4.2 increases in the average annual **cost to businesses of disruption** due to flooding, as well as projected increases in losses of productivity due to workplace overheating
 - 4.3 **reduced water availability**, particularly during the summer, leading to more frequent water restrictions. The gap between demand and supply will potentially widen, impacting homes, businesses, schools and hospitals
 - 4.4 **rising energy demand for cooling**, particularly in the south of the UK, due to higher summer temperatures. Currently, cooling of buildings (including air conditioning, refrigeration and cooling of information and communications technology infrastructure) accounts for around 4% of total UK electricity use and demand for cooling is already increasing.
 - 4.5 **More melting and rutting of road surfaces due to warmer summers**. This may be a particular problem on local roads, as

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these meet lower surface specifications than motorways and trunk roads. The heatwave of 2003, for instance, led to a significant repair bill for local authorities.

5. Detailed results from the CCRA will be available when the reports are laid in Parliament in January 2012. Once published they will be available on the Defra website: www.defra.gov.uk.
6. After the CCRA is published, Defra will develop a National Adaptation Programme, which will set out policies and actions to help address the risks. This will be developed with involvement from all relevant stakeholders, including local government and the LGA.
7. Given the importance of local adaptation action, Defra has commissioned the nine Climate Change Partnerships across England to examine the CCRA from a local perspective to support this dialogue. A key part of this debate will be informed by the 'call for views' which allows organisations and individuals to tell Defra what action is already underway to address risks, the most urgent areas for action, key barriers to addressing them and possible opportunities that a changing climate may bring. **This exercise will last until April 2012 and the LGA will be encouraging and supporting local authorities to respond where appropriate.**

Update on Environment Agency Climate Adaptation/Resilience Delivery Role

8. The Environment Agency has taken on a new role as the Government's delivery body in England for climate change adaptation/resilience, helping key sectors (including local government) build resilience to the impacts expected from climate change.
9. The programme will consist of two parts: a web-based information service which will give access to the latest climate science; and tailored support to help key sectors build resilience to climate change.
10. The tailored support programme will be in place by April 2012 and will focus on six themes: business and services, infrastructure and built environment, health and wellbeing, natural environment, forestry and farming and local government (which is a cross-cutting theme covering many of the other themes).
11. The LGA is working closely with the Environment Agency to agree actions for the work programme. To support delivery the Environment Agency has funded a secondee to the LGA's Policy and Development programme team from January 2012-April 2013.
12. LGA officers will keep Board members up to date with relevant LGA work on adaptation and resilience measures through future board updates.