

Meeting: Environment, Economy, Housing and Transport Board

Date: 24 January 2023



Adapting to climate change, local government and the third National Adaptation Programme

Purpose of report

For information

Summary

The Government is now developing its third National Adaptation Plan (NAP3) for 2024 – 29 to respond to the updated Climate Change Risk Assessment, which presents 61 key risk areas. The new NAP3 will set out the actions the Government is, and will be, taking to address the risks and opportunities posed by a changing climate. The LGA is engaging with Government to promote the wide range of critical place-leadership roles for councils in adapting communities, and has begun a project with Local Partnerships to further explore what councils need from the NAP3 and beyond to play their full role. The LGA is also working with Defra and Local Partnerships to capture, understand and present the evidence from councils on how to maximise their role in climate adaptation.

At this meeting we will be joined by a Deputy Direct at Defra leading progress on NAP3 to discuss the work and how local government can work with central government on delivery.

Recommendation/s

That the Board discuss and provide steer for the LGA project and the wider collaboration between local and central government on climate change adaptation following a presentation from Deputy Director for Adaptation, Defra.

Contact details

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Adapting to climate change, local government and the third National Adaptation Programme



Background

1. The third Climate Change Risk Assessment published by the UK Government in January 2022 identifies sixty-one climate risks cutting across multiple sectors of our society. It identifies a wide range of potential costly impacts of climate change including on health and productivity, affecting many of our households, businesses and public services. The latest Climate Change Committee report found that the gap between the level of risk we face and the level of adaptation underway has widened. Adaptation action has failed to keep pace with the worsening reality of climate risk.
2. As place leaders delivering a wide range of services, local government is central to the effort of mitigating and adapting to climate change through its own activities, and through leadership and support to local businesses, partners, and people. Councils have an interest in every identified risk and are directly impacted on by a significant number of these risks – on heat, flooding, drought and so on. They can leverage their influence as community leaders and conveners, with responsibilities across housing, planning, transport, infrastructure, environment, environmental health, public health, welfare, emergency response, community safety and more.
3. Currently, Government is developing its third National Adaptation Plan to respond to the updated Climate Change Risk Assessment. The new NAP will set out the actions the Government is, and will be, taking to address the risks and opportunities posed by a changing climate. It will be published next Summer and aim to mark a step change in the adaptation effort.
4. A range of Government departments will lead on responding to different risks, engaging with multiple actors in councils and the private and voluntary sectors. It is important all Departments and policy-makers fully consider the role of local authorities, and engage with them to shape a policy, delivery and investment framework that enables place-based action on adaptation.
5. The LGA is working with Local Partnerships and Defra to undertake a project to engage councils to investigate, capture, understand and present what local government needs from the update to the National Adaptation Programme. It will also consider and make recommendations on how the wider policy, regulatory and funding environment across Government can best enable councils to lead place based climate adaptation.
6. Local Partnerships have considerable experience working with councils, the LGA and government on climate change adaptation, including developing the [climate change adaptation toolkit](#). The project is due to complete February / March 2023 and officers will continue to work with Defra officials throughout the project to ensure project findings feed into the development of the NAP3 in a timely manner.

Implications for Wales

7. Environment and climate change adaptation are devolved functions and therefore there are no implications for Welsh local authorities

Financial Implications

8. There are no new financial implications for the LGA

Equalities implications

9. Climate risks impact all communities, but it is often those socially vulnerable that feel the impacts more greatlyⁱ.
10. The LGA will continue to consider EDI in its environment programme and particularly in relation to climate change adaptation where impacts can be greater for some communities

Next steps

11. That the board note this item and provide comments on specific issues and officers will ensure they are taken forward in the work programme

ⁱ <https://www.climatejust.org.uk/socially-vulnerable-groups-sensitive-climate-impacts>