

## Chapter 6: Local Government

6.1 The impacts of climate change and severe weather conditions will vary from location to location and are thus often most effectively managed at a local level. As the ASC points out, local authorities are key partners in delivering many aspects of the National Adaptation Programme. They are responsible for a significant number of risks and areas relating to climate change including flood management, civil contingencies and planning. As such and as the ASC points out, many of the Recommendations in previous chapters of the ASC's assessment are also relevant to local authorities.

6.2 The government's approach to local government should be considered in the context of the Localism Act 2011 and the Cities and Local Government Devolution Act 2016 which gives local government functions, freedoms and flexibilities as well as responsibilities and governance. They support the move towards giving local councils more power to decide how to spend public money in their areas so they can meet local people's needs. At the same time, the government is helping to make sure Council Tax payers get value for money by making councils more transparent and accountable.

### Response to Recommendations

#### Recommendation 25: Ensuring access to guidance and tools

##### Recommendation

The government should set out in the next NAP how it will ensure local authorities have access to the technical expertise, guidance, and practical tools they need following the closure of the Environment Agency's Climate Ready Support Service, Climate UK, and Climate Local. There is potential for professional bodies such as the Royal Town Planning Institute and the Chartered Institution of Water and Environmental Management to take a greater role in providing information, training and advice.

**Owner:** Defra/DCLG

**Timing:** 2018

6.3 We note the ASC's concerns regarding the need to maintain momentum and to assess the level of progress being made.

6.4 Currently government engages on adaptation with councils, including the availability of tools and guidance, via different forums, or groups. These include the Local Adaptation Advisory Panel, the Core Cities group and the Local Government Association. This will continue with the development of the second NAP. The government wants to work with these groups, in particular Core Cities, to understand issues around access to advice,

guidance and tools (strategic and operational), any gaps in this knowledge base, and how it is hosted and disseminated.

6.5 Online tools and best practice for councils are available through the sites of delivery agents, such as Climate UK/London Climate Change Partnership, to enable councils to improve and develop their ability to adapt to climate change. For instance, there is a template business case available for councils.<sup>2</sup>

6.6 The Royal Town Planning Institute (RTPI) provides information, training and best practice on climate change targeted at professional planners. This includes an online training module on climate change which is open to all through its Learn portal. In 2018 it will launch a new climate change programme, providing practical advice and support to planning professionals, and others, on mitigation and adaptation. This Better Planning programme demonstrates how planning can be part of the solution to major social, economic and environmental challenges. The Chartered Institution of Water and Environmental Management also has expertise at its disposal to develop appropriate best practice and training packages on adaptation for councils.

## Recommendation 26: Reporting under the Adaptation Reporting Power

### Recommendation

To stimulate activity and improve monitoring and evaluation, local authorities should be included within the scope of the third round of reporting under the Adaptation Reporting Power. Defra should identify the most efficient and effective means for local authorities to report on the action they are taking and the progress being made to prepare communities for climate change.

**Owner:** Defra

**Timing:** 2018

6.7 Following a public consultation, local councils were considered outside the scope of the second round of adaptation reporting as part of the Adaptation Reporting Power.

6.8 The government's approach to adaptation reporting in the third round, including which parties will be invited to participate and how they will report will be subject to consultation. However, we will be mindful of the need to minimise burdens to local councils in the context of their current responsibilities for addressing climate risks.

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.local.gov.uk/sites/default/files/documents/climate-ready-councils-bu-351.pdf>

### Recommendation 27: Sub-national approaches to climate change adaptation

#### Recommendation

The next NAP should develop stronger sub-national approaches to climate change adaptation that promote business and infrastructure resilience, healthy communities, and investment in natural capital. For example, there is the opportunity to build on current arrangements and work with London and the core city regions, the metro mayors, and the Local Enterprise and Local Nature Partnerships.

**Owner:** Defra

**Timing:** 2018

6.9 In consideration of the risks set out in the 2017 CCRA the government will assess the need for sub-national approaches and how they might be taken forward, drawing on existing support materials and resources. We are engaging with Core Cities, the Greater London Authority and London Councils/the London Environment Directors Network to consider developing sub-national approaches which are necessary due to the local spatial scale of climate impacts, managing resources, and local priorities.

### Recommendation 28: Effectiveness of the land use planning system

#### Recommendation

The government should review the effectiveness of the land-use planning system in achieving reductions in greenhouse gas emissions from buildings and transport, and enhancing the resilience of communities and the built environment to the impacts of climate change. The review should consider both strategic and local land-use allocation, and building and infrastructure design.

**Owner:** DCLG

**Timing:** 2019

6.10 The government agrees that the planning system has an important role to play in meeting the challenge of climate change. However, it does not agree that it is necessary to carry out a specific review of this nature. Planning policy and legislation already sets a clear expectation that local planning authorities will take account of climate change and seek to mitigate and adapt to its impacts.

6.11 There is a statutory requirement under section 19(1A) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 for local planning authorities to include policies in their local plan designed to contribute to the mitigation of, and adaptation to, climate change.

6.12 In addition, the National Planning Policy Framework sets out how, through both local plan-making and decision taking, planning authorities should support the transition to a low carbon future in a changing climate and minimise vulnerability to the impacts of climate change. These are considerations when a local plan is examined and before it can be adopted. Once adopted, the local plan provides the primary basis (subject to other material planning considerations) for planning decisions in the local authority's area.

6.13 We have already reviewed national planning policy more broadly and earlier this year, the previous government consulted through its housing white paper, 'Fixing Our Broken Housing Market'. This included proposals to strengthen the existing policy by providing increased clarity on the role of local planning authorities in considering climate change factors in plan-making and supporting measures for the future resilience of communities and infrastructure. We are considering how the proposals in the white paper for amending national planning policy should be taken forward in the light of the responses to this consultation and aim to revise the National Planning Policy Framework by spring 2018.