

EA4: Developing an adaptation action plan

The objective of this stage is to convert the information gathered earlier into proposals for practical actions. The basic steps involved in drawing up a Climate Change Action Plan are similar to those described in the Services thread with some differences of emphasis. Noting the importance of the form and content of any plan being appropriate for its intended aims and audience, it is probable that plans for managing local authority estate will have to be drawn up in a number of forms, e.g.

- Local authority strategy for managing its estate.
- More detailed plans and guidelines for managing aspects of the estate.
- Summary of LA strategy and examples of more detailed plans, for inclusion in broader climate action plans.

The last of these can be a useful component in authority and community-wide action plans, demonstrating the local authority's community leadership role and commitment to climate change adaptation.

The stages for developing a local authority climate change strategy and detailed action plan could include:

- Consolidate information and proposals from previous stages
- Identify the key issues raised and their significance in the context of broader local authority strategies
- Prioritise issues and develop a climate change adaptation strategy for your local authority estate
- Consider the projected timescales for any significant impacts, and the timescales for implementing any potential adaptation responses (most of which are likely to be changes to management systems)
- Choose which to implement and develop an implementation plan and timetable
- Develop means of monitoring the performance of the plan
- Undertake consultation process*
- Revise the plan in the light of consultation responses

* Providing the relevant officers and any external stakeholders have been adequately involved in developing the strategy and plans for managing the local authority estate, there is unlikely to be the need for a more formal consultation on the internal strategy or plans. Obviously, any aspects included in broader community-wide action plans will be subject to whatever consultation processes are selected for these.

Reviewing potential options in authority-wide context

The output from Stage 3 should be a list of suggestions for changes to management processes to ensure that they have the capacity to respond to the impacts of climate change. These should be reviewed to identify key climate change issues for the local authority in order to develop an effective strategy for responding at the corporate level. Remember to consider climate risks in relation to other risks confronting the authority to ensure that any proposed responses are reasonable and proportional in relation to the overall role and other strategies of the authority. It will be particularly important to consider potential synergies and conflicts with the authority's mitigation proposals.

The output from this section should be a broad strategy for building the capacity to manage responses to climate change effectively at the corporate level, including a timetable for implementation and review, and clear lines of responsibility for delivering the strategy.

Producing Climate Change Action Plans

Once the broad strategic approach has been decided, the impacts and responses identified in Stages 2 and 3 can be prioritised and converted into more detailed action plans. Exactly how these plans are drawn up is likely to vary between authorities according to the organisational structures for managing their corporate estate. Whilst local authority responses to other climate impacts may require consideration of whether it will be more effective to treat the issue as a special case, or to try to embed approaches in mainstream processes, in the case of adapting your own estate, embedding considerations of climate change into the mainstream managerial processes of the authority is a critical aspect of building adaptive capacity.

The next phase of the process is to take the prioritised list of options and convert it into practical action plans. This will involve deciding:

- How the options should be implemented (on the basis of the agreed corporate strategy).
- What resources will be required?
- Over what timescale the actions should be implemented.
- How the performance of the plan will be monitored.

Most of these issues will probably have been explicitly, or implicitly, considered at earlier stages in the process.

As repeatedly stressed, the key issue is how climate adaptation considerations are to be embedded in the mainstream processes of the council, so most of the implementation will be in terms of Building Adaptive Capacity within the appropriate units for handling the various proposed responses. This will probably involve elements of training, and changes to procedures, guidelines, etc. There may be scope for Delivering Actual Adaptation in the local authority's buildings and grounds, and some other corporate functions, such as vehicle fleets. It will be particularly important that climate change is considered in relation to any proposed new developments or refurbishment programmes that have design lives longer than a decade. All corporate adaptation plans should contain schedules for monitoring progress and reviewing their scope at regular intervals.

Output: One, or more, detailed action plans for building adaptive capacity in the local authority's corporate management processes.

Consultation

Strategies and plans for adapting the authority's own estate to climate changes do not normally require formal consultation procedures. Relevant officers, members and external stakeholders, such as suppliers, should be involved throughout the process of developing the strategy and plans, and should have an opportunity to comment on final drafts where possible.

As mentioned in the introduction to this stage, summarising plans for managing its own estate can be useful in demonstrating a local authority's community leadership role and commitment to climate change adaptation. Such broader plans should be subject to public consultation.

CHECKLIST

- Have you prepared a broad strategy for adaptation with regard to your corporate management?
- Does this strategy include a timetable for action and allocate responsibility for the completion of tasks?
- Have you developed Action Plan(s) to take forward and deliver the adaptation responses that are required?
- Where appropriate, have you consulted on the Strategy or Action Plan?