

## SA4: Developing an adaptation action plan

This stage converts the information gathered earlier into proposals for practical actions. The steps involved in drawing up a Climate Change Action Plan will vary slightly according to the strategic choices made at the outset of the process on whether to produce:

- An integrated mitigation and adaptation strategy, or to concentrate on one or the other.
- A community-wide action plan, or to focus on the council's own estate and services.

However, the basic approach to developing a practical Climate Change Action Plan will have some common elements regardless of the scope of coverage for the plan, namely to:

- Consolidate information and proposals from previous stages.
- Consider how these fit with any relevant authority-level policy contexts (including commitments under the Scotland Climate Change Declaration).
- Prioritise proposals and choose which to implement.
- Develop an implementation strategy and timetable.
- Develop means of monitoring the performance of plan.
- Undertake consultation process.
- Revise the plan in the light of consultation responses.

Whatever its scope, it is important that the form and content of the Plan should be appropriate for its intended function and audience. For instance, the general public are unlikely to respond well to many pages of detailed technical material that may be extremely useful for internal policy purposes. It is likely that any wide-ranging Action Plan will have to exist in a variety of forms appropriate for particular stakeholders to achieve its aims.

### **Reviewing potential options in authority-wide policy context**

The output from Stage 3 should be a prioritised list of actions for each service considered. The next step in drawing up an action plan is to bring together this disparate information and to establish priorities within the overall policy context of the authority (and relevant partnerships if preparing a community wide plan). You will need to consider:

- What are the highest priorities for mitigation and adaptation identified at the sectoral stages?
- How do these priorities relate to each other – are there any conflicts or synergies?
- How do they relate to other policy objectives – are there any conflicts or synergies?

The concepts introduced in SA3 under Identifying Adaptation Options are also particularly useful for considering priorities at this broader level:

- **'No regret' options** will deliver benefits that exceed their costs, whatever the extent of climate change.
- **Win-win options** are ones that contribute to desired outcomes (be they environmental, social or economic), and also improve your ability to adapt to climate risks.
- Avoid actions that will make it more difficult to cope with climate risks
- Avoid making decisions that will make it more difficult to manage climate risks in the future. These are called adaptation constraining decisions. One obvious example is inappropriate development in a flood risk area.

You should look for positive synergies wherever possible, e.g. planting of more trees to produce shade, or the use of groundcover plants to reduce soil water loss may both contribute to biodiversity and enhance the visual appearance of urban spaces.

It is important to consider actions in a broad context, e.g. the most obvious response to the need to maintain internal comfort of buildings, and reduce vulnerability during heat waves, is to install air-conditioning, but this

clearly conflicts with the need to mitigate emissions. Alternative passive cooling measures should be considered where possible. The publication *Beating the Heat* provides some advice on this. The output from this section should be a prioritised list of options for implementation in the action plan.

### **Producing the Climate Change Action Plan**

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

- How the options should be implemented.
- What resources will be required?
- Over what timescale the actions should be implemented.
- How the performance of the plan will be monitored.

Many of these issues will probably have been explicitly, or implicitly, considered at earlier stages in the process. For instance, most service sector specific measures identified will probably be implemented within the individual sectors themselves, whereas cross-sector measures will require a broader approach. One of the fundamental questions to be considered is:

- Whether the climate impacts and responses identified can, and should, be mainstreamed in normal procedures.
- Whether they need specific, exceptional responses.

This is likely to vary between options, and between authorities. In the shorter term it is probable that some exceptional measures (such as preparing a Climate Change Action Plan!) will be necessary to get climate change issues onto local agendas. In the longer term it will probably be desirable to mainstream approaches as much as possible.

When deciding how to implement an action plan, it may be helpful to consider potential responses in the two broad categories introduced at Stage 3: Building Adaptive Capacity and Delivering Actual Adaptation. It is probable that all plans will involve elements of capacity building through training, changes to policies, guidelines, regulations, etc. but may not all require actual adaptation actions in the duration of the initial plan. It will be unusual to deliver adaptation actions without first building some degree of adaptive capacity, if only in terms of undertaking the research necessary to justify the proposed action. In many cases there will be a logical sequence from building capacity to delivering actions. However, you should be cautious about proposing adaptation actions without adequate prior capacity building. An important aspect of building capacity at the strategic level is to decide when next to review any sectors that the earlier scoping stages suggested required no actions at present. Any broad-ranging climate adaptation strategy should contain a schedule for reviewing the scoping of any sectors requiring no action in the current plan.

### **Consultation**

Ideally, all relevant stakeholders should be involved throughout the development of the Action Plan. However, if this is not possible, then all relevant stakeholders should at least have an opportunity to comment on the Draft Action Plan.

The process and range of consultees is likely to vary according to the scope of the plan. For a service-specific plan, it may be sufficient to circulate to the relevant officers for comments. For more wide-ranging plans there should be a formal consultation period. In some cases, there may be a statutory requirement for consultation, for instance, in relation to local plans. In all cases, efforts should be made to engage all relevant stakeholders in the process. Remember that consultation can have an important function in gaining buy-in and a sense of ownership amongst stakeholders as well as providing feedback on the contents of the plan. This can be very important to the successful implementation of any plan.

Once the consultation period is over you should revise the plan in the light of consultation responses and proceed to the implementation stage.

Output: a practical action plan for the range of activities being considered including:

- Implementation plan at appropriate detail.
- Allocation of resources.
- Clear assignment of responsibilities.
- A timetable for implementation (including targets and benchmarks where appropriate).
- Proposals for monitoring performance (this is considered in stage 5).

The plan should be pitched at the correct level for its intended audience.

#### **Checklist**

- Have you prepared a broad strategy for adaptation with regard to your services?
- 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?

**The final output of this Stage should be a Climate Change Action Plan/Strategy that sets out what actions you intend to undertake to adapt your local authority services to Climate Change. The draft plan should also have been sent out for consultation among relevant stakeholders.**

