

# EMBEDDING CLIMATE CHANGE ADAPTATION ON THE RISK REGISTER



## Case Study: Stirling Council

Stirling Council has included "Failure to comply with the adaptation requirement of the Climate Change (Scotland) Act 2009" on its Corporate Risk Register. This case study looks at the steps the Council took to include the risk and the benefits of the approach.

### How will the climate change in East Scotland?

UK Climate Projections 2009 data for East Scotland suggests that, under a medium emissions scenario, by the 2050s the region may see:

- An increase in summer mean temperatures of around 2.3°C, and of winter temperatures of around 1.7°C;
- A 10% increase in winter mean precipitation and a 13% decrease in summer mean precipitation.



Source: <http://ukclimateprojections.metoffice.gov.uk>

**Adaptation  
Scotland**  
supporting climate change resilience

### What steps were taken to add climate change to the risk register?

Local authorities in Scotland have a duty under the Climate Change (Scotland) Act 2009 (s 44) to reduce carbon emissions, adapt to climate change and endeavour to act sustainably. This was the starting point for discussion between the Sustainability Officer and Resilience and Risk Manager in Stirling Council to formulate a risk around climate change adaptation. Follow-up conversations were held with the Head of Governance and Resources and the Head of Environment Services who were separately responsible for presenting the Strategic Risk Register to the Council Management Team, and for having the new climate change risk within their directorate.

The next step was to develop a Climate Change Adaptation Strategy that built

climate change adaptation into the standard protocol of treatment actions on the risk, controls, and using the strategy action plan as a series of further actions. This was supported by the Council Management Team, and subsequently reported to the Audit Committee.

### Who was involved?

Including a new risk on the risk register is a formal process. The Resilience and Risk Manager and the Sustainability Officer in Stirling Council led the process, with approval and support for the new risk being signed off from their managers, the Head of Governance and Resources and Head of Environment Services. The Council Management Team were responsible for ratifying the risk in the Strategic risk register, and this is reported to the Audit Committee.





## Recommendations

1. Buy-in within the organisation is crucial. Adaptation is a 'hard sell' in the current economic climate and it is therefore essential that those who can take matters forward are engaged.
2. An adaptation task group is a good way to consider what the organisation is already doing and to raise awareness. The task group also looked at what others have done/are doing. Much of the work already being done to adjust services is climate change adaptation but not considered as such. Identifying where climate is having an impact can be used to 'rebadge' current initiatives so the task seems less onerous and the starting point is not zero.
3. Consider adaptation as part of other projects and not as a separate enterprise.

## What has changed as a result of this project?

Climate change adaptation is now considered corporately as a strategic risk. This ensures that policies, plans and procedures are developed to have a positive climate change adaptation impact and enable progress with future adaptation measures. Risk is reported in all committee reports and scrutinised by Council Management Team and Audit Committee.

Links to other strategic risks are identified and adaptation is considered as a specific component of a wider sustainability risk.

Adapting to climate change includes planning to reduce the risks while identifying and capturing opportunities. Using a robust risk management framework to consider risks and opportunities provides a systematic approach throughout the organisation.

## What are the benefits?

The Council Management Team's scrutiny of the risk register gives climate change adaptation a profile which it would not otherwise achieve. Progress is monitored by the Resilience and Risk section, which is part of Corporate Operations.

The impact of failure to adapt is quantified and rated and our adaptation strategy acts as a control on the risk. The strategy implementation action plan is considered as a series of treatment actions to further mediate the risk and progress on implementation of actions managed via strategic risk management structure. This ensures that actions are assigned target dates for completion and responsible officers are identified. This helps embedding adaptation and ensures that progress is effectively monitored and managed.

## Next steps

Work is now underway to get buy-in and input from potential partners in business and industry. We are also working more with the community to ensure that adaptation is considered as part of the wider community engagement strategy.

### Further information

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## Adaptation support

The Adaptation Learning Exchange (ALE) is a programme to support organisations with adaptation planning, enabling them to address common adaptation challenges and explore opportunities. For more about the ALE, visit our website or contact [sophie@sniffer.org.uk](mailto:sophie@sniffer.org.uk)

[www.adaptationscotland.org.uk](http://www.adaptationscotland.org.uk)

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