

## Building resilience to climate change policy

This policy sets out Portsmouth City Council's (PCC) commitment to ensuring that the city is resilient to the changing climate and taking action where appropriate.

Portsmouth already has a commitment to reduce its CO<sub>2</sub> emissions by 30% by 2016/17 through our [carbon management programme](#); however, global emissions released so far have already committed us to a temperature rise of at least 2°C<sup>1</sup>. This temperature rise will mean more extreme weather events, which will undoubtedly lead to greater costs ([Headline Summary](#)). Portsmouth has no choice but to adapt to this temperature rise and the other weather changes that this will bring, and as a coastal city we are particularly vulnerable. Therefore as well as reducing our carbon emissions, we are committed to building resilience to the unavoidable changes in the climate that are already occurring. This will ensure that council services continue to be provided whatever the weather and that future costs will be avoided.

### This policy aims to:

1. Make sure that the city is resilient to the changing climate
2. Ensure that PCC can continue to deliver its services as the climate changes
3. Protect our vulnerable residents from the impacts of climate change and make sure they are not disproportionately affected
4. Ensure there is a co-ordinated approach to resilience work across the city

### This policy applies to:

- All staff employed by PCC
- All contractors who deliver services for the Council
- The influence that PCC has with partners, businesses and residents across the city

### Responsibilities:

- **Cabinet** has overall responsibility for making sure PCC builds resilience to climate change in the city.
- **Strategic Directors and managers** are responsible for ensuring that their services comply with this policy and that staff are adequately aware of this policy and associated guidance.
- **All staff** are responsible for reading the appropriate information on building resilience to climate change and understand what they can do to adapt and avoid future costs.

### As part of this policy, the Council has:

- Analysed the major risks for all council services – (see the [Guide for Services](#)).
- Identified climate change as a strategic risk to the Authority and embedded the climate change scenarios, including “sea level rise” and “warmer wetter winters,” into the Corporate Risk Register.
- Committed to ensuring the council’s “Shaping our Future” programme incorporates the key climate change risks and opportunities. Building resilience to climate change has huge potential to save money and ensure the council avoids future costs.
- Committed to adapting PCC’s existing buildings and infrastructure to ensure their resilience, applying for external funding where necessary.
- Committed to ensuring climate change and the wider sustainability agenda are considered at the very start of any new project, procurement or commissioning cycle to build in resilience and avoid unnecessary future costs.
- Committed to understand which vulnerable residents will be most affected by climate change and take action to ensure they are not disproportionately affected.

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<sup>1</sup> Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), 2007

- Committed to co-ordinate work with partners across the city in line with Portsmouth's [Climate Change Strategy](#).
- Committed to ensure that this work is an integral part of the council's performance framework, and will measure and report on our progress in realising these commitments.

**As part of this policy, PCC services should be:**

1. Embedding this policy into their capital spending, policies and plans.
2. Incorporating the outcomes of their service's climate change risk assessment in to their service-level risk registers and any major projects or procurements.
3. Using the Building Resilience to Climate Change guide to support them in points 1 & 2.
4. Identifying resilience opportunities such as vulnerable buildings in need of retrofitting, to ensure they are doing everything they can to avoid future costs.
5. Making sure staff are aware of the risks of extreme weather, and know how to deal with such situations as they arise.

**Taking this policy forward**

This policy will continue to evolve as we better understand the impacts of climate change on our service delivery, but it is important that the council as a whole take steps to build resilience. There are a number of actions that will be taken forward at a corporate level, but building resilience and ensuring the continuity of service delivery as the weather becomes more extreme is every services' responsibility.

*Corporate actions*

- Embed this policy into the council's corporate decision-making processes to ensure that climate change and the wider sustainability agenda are considered at the very start of any new project, procurement or commissioning cycle. This will be done through the development and adoption of a sustainability appraisal toolkit aimed at integrating resilience into business as usual and in the design and delivery of new services.
- Develop a set of indicators to monitor PCC's resilience to climate change. Services will be expected to provide the necessary information. For example, the number of schools closed in extreme weather events, water use, number of sites currently in flood zones
- Log extreme weather events, including impacts and costs.
- Provide analysis on who in the city is most vulnerable to the changing climate and identify what actions can be taken to build their resilience.
- Publish appropriate guidance to all so that the future costs of climate change can be avoided and residents and businesses to be more prepared for the effects of climate change.
- Incorporate climate change risks in to relevant policies and plans (such as the Portsmouth Plan) and service needs assessments where appropriate.

**Counting the costs**

There is clear evidence to suggest that the cost of doing nothing to build resilience to climate change e.g. waiting until a building floods and then paying to have it repaired, costs more in the long-term compared to putting resilience measures in place before the event happens. To reduce future costs we need to make the right decisions at the right time, by considering climate change risks at the start of any project and incorporating them as part of key plans.

There are also other costs associated with climate change that are less clear cut. For example, the cost of an increase in hospital admissions as a result of heat-related illnesses, or an increase in the use of mental health services as a result of widespread floods, which are more difficult to quantify. What is clear is that implementing resilience measures will vary in cost. For example:

- There will be major projects, for example coastal defences or retrofitting existing buildings and infrastructure that will require capital expenditure and most likely external funding.
- There will be situations such as making sure a new building is resilient where incorporating measures may increase the initial costs slightly but will avoid much higher future costs.
- There will also be elements of this work such as raising awareness with vulnerable residents on what they can do to mitigate the risks of a heatwave that require little resource.
- There will even be some elements such as designing a building to use natural ventilation as opposed to using standard air conditioning which will actually provide savings.

### What is resilience to climate change?

The term “resilience” is used by the Civil Contingencies Unit when assessing our response to particular emergencies, and making sure that robust business continuity plans are in place. Although there are close links between responses to emergencies and responses to climate change, civil contingencies focuses on the short-term and **climate change on the long-term.**

#### An example - your washing machine stops working one day and floods your kitchen

**Your emergency response** - would be to switch the machine off and mop up the water.

**Your contingency response** - would be to take out the appropriate insurance when you buy it, just in case this situation arises, and agreeing with a friend in advance that you use their washing machine if anything should happen to yours.

**Your resilience response** - would be to consider buying a new one if this scenario had happened before, particularly if the cost of buying a new one would actually be cheaper than the cost of paying to repair the old one, when you have paid out before to get it fixed for the same problem. When you buy a new one, you would take into account the problems you had with the first one, and buy a better model that was less likely to break down and flood your property.

**National policy context:** The UK Climate Change Risk Assessment is designed to improve the understanding of the changing climate, and the risks which deserve the most attention, now and in the future<sup>2</sup>. The Government is using the risk assessment and working with businesses, civil society and local government to develop the UK’s first National Adaptation Programme to maintain the resilience of the UK to climate change and changing weather<sup>3</sup>.

**Local policy context:** Portsmouth’s Sustainable Community Strategy 2008-2018 – the Vision for Portsmouth, identifies climate change as a priority for the future. We are taking this forward through the city’s multi-agency Climate Change Strategy priority, to “adapt to climate change”.

#### Top UK climate change risks:

1. The UK is already vulnerable to extreme weather
2. Flood risk is projected to increase significantly across the UK
3. There are health risks related to climate change which will place different burdens on the NHS, public health and social care services
4. Sensitive ecosystems are likely to come under increasing pressure
5. Potential climate risks in other parts of the world such as international supply chains and global health could have a significant indirect impact here.

There is now enough evidence to identify a range of possible outcomes that can inform adaptation policies and planning

<sup>2</sup> <http://www.defra.gov.uk/environment/climate/government/risk-assessment/#report>

<sup>3</sup> <http://engage.defra.gov.uk/nap/>

**Top Portsmouth climate change risks:**

1. Gridlock in the city and travel disruption
2. Service delivery disruption and closure of frontline services
3. A greater reliance on partners
4. Damage to infrastructure
5. Reduced health and wellbeing

**How will the climate change?**

We have a good idea of how the climate is going to change in Portsmouth from the UKCIP findings<sup>4</sup>. These changes in the climate will lead to more extreme weather events, which will undoubtedly lead to greater costs.

**Sea-level rise** - in the next 70 years, the sea level around Portsmouth could rise by 70 cm, but if carbon emissions carry on rising, sea level could rise by up to 1.9m.

**Unpredictable weather** - we are likely to see more storms, with more flash flooding events and high windspeeds experienced more frequently.

**Warmer, wetter winters** - by 2030 Portsmouth could get a 2°C rise, and by the 2080s, it could rise by 5°C. We could get a fifth more rainfall than now, and by the 2080s rainfall could be twice as much.

**Hotter, drier summers** - in the next 10 years the temperature could rise by 3°C, and in the next century it could rise by 7°C. By 2030 our summer rainfall could be 30% less and in 100 years the summer rainfall could be halved.

**What impact will this have on Portsmouth City Council?**

The changing climate will put greater pressure on the council to continue to deliver services. The city has already experienced a number of extreme weather events, which impacted on our service delivery and cost the authority money. During the snow and ice in 2010 roads were blocked off, schools were closed, and PCC's frontline services were affected. We are starting to better understand the impacts of those events but we don't yet fully understand the cost implications.

Although future impacts will likely be negative, there are a number of opportunities to reap from the changing climate. With warmer winters, maintaining thermal comfort will be less of a challenge, and could mean lower fuel bills and less residents living in fuel poverty. Warmer weather may also offer opportunities to encourage modal shifts in staff travel, which will help to reduce our overall carbon footprint.

<sup>4</sup> <http://www.ukcip.org.uk/ukcp09/>