NIAdapts
Planning Toolkit

3

Step Three

Identify and Prioritise Actions

Structuring Your Plan- Draft Vision, Aims and Themes

Now that you have begun to develop your climate risk register, the next step is to use this information to identify a vision and aims, themes and outcomes for adaptation. This in turn facilitates the identification and assessment of appropriate adaptation actions.

1. **Vision and Aims:** The overarching picture of what success would mean for your organisation or region.

2. **Themes:** The overarching pillars of work to be addressed by the plan, each with attached metrics of success (outcomes).

Adaptation is a long-term strategic challenge that you will need to align with your organisation's core aims and objectives. You should develop a vision, aims and themes which allow you to strategically plan an effective adaptation response. As you advance adaptation work over time there may be a need to further develop this high-level structure to suit the emerging policy landscape.

Vision and Aims

The vision and aims are an important statement of intent for engagement and awareness raising. Provide a clear climate adapted vision for your organisation, which can be a focus considered as part of all the actions undertaken in council. Communicate the ultimate ambition for why you want to work together the plan for climate change. For the aims, be ambitious and consider exactly what it is you want to change as a result of developing your first adaptation plan.

Derry City and Strabane District Council Vision and Aims:

"Derry City & Strabane District Council is prepared for and resilient to the effects of climate change, creating a safe and sustainable region for all"

1. Increase capacity to respond to climate change ensuring resilience of our services, people, operations, assets and estate to the impacts of climate change.

Climate
Northern Ireland

LGCAN
Local Government
Climate Action Network

2. Raise awareness of the impacts of climate change across the City & District to deliver effective adaptation.

3. Lead by example and work collaboratively to ensure resilience and deliver climate adaptation.

Belfast City Council Draft Vision and Aims:

"Belfast City Council will embed climate adaptation planning in line with its corporate plan, and show leadership in preparing for climate impacts while contributing to city-wide resilience"

- To prioritise bold actions which achieve the best outcomes on adaptation and climate change; empowering staff and elected members to make long-term climate leadership the 'business-as-usual' approach to finance and decision-making.

- Communicate and collaborate clearly and effectively on climate adaptation needs and limits both within Belfast City Council, NI and beyond, including influencing central government policy.

- Build educational and financial capacity, which adapts to emerging science and practically changes how Belfast City Council operates, maintains and develops assets, designs plans and policies, implements services and monitors adaptation progress in partnership with key partners across the City.

If you have more time, it might be worth considering visions by theme or sector too. Take a look at the extensive vision document created by [Edinburgh Adapts](#).

Themes

- Consider how your governance is structured – departments, communication.
- What existing services, processes and practices do you need to link in to the themes in order to meet the vision?
- It is worth considering themes by both departments/workstreams and in terms of structural barriers such as communication and data gaps.

For example, in the Derry City and Strabane District Council Plan, themes were split into two parts:

Cross-Cutting Themes:
- Delivery and Collaboration
- Communication and Awareness
- Knowledge and Information

Functional Themes:
- Policy & People
- Assets & Capital Development
- Operations & Services
- Green Infrastructure
- Heritage and Culture
- Planning & Building Control

How to develop your themes:

Each theme should have:

1. An aim
2. A set of outcmes which meet the aim (your actions will be developed to address these outcomes)
3. At least 2 or 3 measurable goals and indicators for what success means, based on the outcomes.

When developing your themes:

- What are the priorities which need to be addressed under each theme? Use the risk register as your starting point here.
- Consider structural issues such as procurement and regulation as well as practical projects.
- What is the history of engagement on climate change issues, is there a knowledge base to work from? How do you gather information to make decisions towards a given theme and the vision?
- Be ambitious, but realistic. Are you aiming to eliminate or simply reduce risk, or perhaps laying the groundwork in order to inform decisions which cannot currently be made?
- Assess and highlight how your themes contribute to or enhance other corporate responsibilities and priorities, such as tackling inequalities and achieving economic or environmental benefits.

Useful Links:

- **Mayo County Council Adaptation Plan, p77**
- **Adaptation Scotland: Scotland Adapts: A Capability Framework for a Climate Ready Public Sector**

Additional Considerations: Global and UK Policy Alignment

Before finalising your draft Vision, Aims and Themes, you must consider how this high-level structure will enable you to report on your progress on a range of global and national goals.

Policies and Programmes:

Four policies and programmes in particular are extremely important to consider in terms of how your plan fits into and reports against a wider strategic context:

1. Climate Change Act (Northern Ireland)
2. UN Sustainable Development Goals
3. UK Climate Change Risk Assessment
4. Northern Ireland Climate Change Adaptation Programme

You should also consider information gathered as part of your scoping work in Step 1.

1. UN Sustainable Development Goals:

Goal 1 – No Poverty

Goal 3 – Good Health & Wellbeing

Goal 6 – Clean Water & Sanitation

Goal 9 – Industry Innovation & Infrastructure

Goal 10 – Reduced Inequalities

Goal 11 – Sustainable Cities & Communities

Goal 13 – Climate Action

Goal 14 – Life below Water

Goal 15 – Life on Land

Goal 17 – Partnerships

2. UK Climate Change Risk Assessment

The UK Climate Change Risk Assessment (CCRA) is produced by the Committee on Climate Change (CCC), a government advisory body set up under the Climate Change Act 2008. This is a five-yearly assessment of the major risks and opportunities from climate change to the UK economy. It sets out the key risk for the next five years, and scores these by urgency. In 2021 the CCC published the third Independent UK Climate Change Risk Assessment (CCRA3) which sets out the risks to the UK's people, infrastructure, natural environment and businesses. The results of the CCC's assessment can be found on UKClimateRisk.org, including:

- Technical Reports

- National Summaries

- Sector Briefings

- Research and Supporting Analysis

Climate Northern Ireland wrote the CCRA3 Summary for Northern Ireland. For Northern Ireland, 61 climate risks and opportunities were assessed, more action is needed now to address 31 of them, further investigation is urgently needed for 19, sustaining current adaptation action is only deemed appropriate for five of the risks or opportunities and six have been classified as watching brief.

3. Northern Ireland Climate Change Adaptation Programme - Priority Areas & Objectives

Key Priority Areas	Outcome Objectives (i.e. Visions - which are statements of the improvement which NI is seeking to address effects of Climate Change)
NC Natural Capital, including Terrestrial/Coastal/Marine/ Freshwater ecosystems, soils and biodiversity	- **NC1:** We will have species, habitats and water bodies that are resilient to the impacts of climate change.
	- **NC2:** We have coastal communities, habitats, landforms and infrastructure that are resilient to impacts of climate change.
	- **NC3:** We have soils and woodland that are resilient to the impacts of climate change.
IF Infrastructure Services	- **IF1:** We have Transport & Network Services that are resilient to the impacts of Flooding & extreme weather.
P People & Built Environment.	- **P1:** We have people, homes, buildings and communities that are resilient to the impacts of flooding & extremes of weather.
B Disruption to Businesses & Supply Chains.	- **B1:** We have businesses that can adapt to impacts of Climate Change & extreme weather.
I Food Security/ Global Food Production.	- **I1:** We have a food system that is resilient to impacts of climate change.

Next Steps

Now with your risk register draft completed, and the draft high-level structure of your plan developed, it is time to define the actions which will practically be achieved in order to move your organisation towards becoming more resilient and all the advantages of clear and proactive decision-making.