

Policy and Resources Committee Report

POLICY and RESOURCES COMMITTEE

November 13th 2023

PART I

Adaptation and Resilience Risk Register Policy and Resources Committee (ADSPH)

1. Summary

- 1.1 To demonstrate that Three Rivers District Council acknowledge that climate adaptation is a crucial part of the climate and ecological emergency, and acting accordingly to ensure it is resilient and adaptable to the risks associated with the impacts of climate change.

2 Details

- 2.1 **Climate mitigation vs adaptation:** these concepts are two sides of the same 'Climate change coin. Mitigation is about reducing emissions to reduce further climate change. Adaptation is about surviving and thriving in the changing climate.
- 2.2 **Obligations and UK context:** There is a statutory obligation (Climate Change Act 2008) on councils to prepare for and minimise the longer-term impacts of climate change. This is reinforced by expectations for community resilience and business continuity by residents and businesses.
- 2.3 All risk registers for Hertfordshire local authorities are being collated by December 31st 2023 to produce a county risk assessment to determine a co-ordinated county wide approach.
- 2.4 In January 2022 the UK government published its third [Climate Change Risk Assessment \(CCRA\)](#). It is based on the Independent Assessment of UK Climate Risk, the statutory advice provided by the Climate Change Committee, commissioned by the UK government and devolved administrations. The CCRA considers sixty-one UK-wide climate risks and opportunities cutting across multiple sectors of the economy.
- 2.5 [The National Adaptation Programme \(NAP3\)](#) July 2023 is the government's strategy to address the main risks and opportunities identified in the CCRA for England and is produced every five years. The latest programme NAP3 provides a comprehensive and forward-looking plan for the UK in adapting to the risks and opportunities of climate change. It sets out what government and others will be doing over the next five years to boost resilience and protect people, homes, businesses against climate change from risks such as flooding, drought, and heatwaves. Local government has responsibility for ensuring that the delivery of services locally is resilient to the impacts of the changing climate.
- 2.6 Local authorities have an important role to play in the implementation of the NAP through, for example, delivery of health and social care services, maintaining transport infrastructure, planning and development of local plans and strategies, flood management, raising awareness and promoting action.
- 2.7 The [UK Climate Projections 2018 \(UKCP18\)](#) indicate that the predicted changes in climate variables (precipitation, temperature, wind and storms) for Hertfordshire, for the 2030s, 2050s and 2080s are:

- wetter winters and drier summers with greater potential for extreme rainfall events.
- warmer winters and hotter summers with greater potential for heatwaves.
- increase in humidity.
- reduction in snow fall during winter.
- potential for more intense storms.

➤ **These projections will cause impacts across the county, which include:**

- demand for/pressure on services
- disruption in access to assets and services
- risk of heat related illness.
- disruption to IT and communications
- increased cost for repair and maintenance

- 2.8 The impacts from extreme weather in the UK and Europe over the last year highlight the urgency of adapting to climate change. The record-breaking temperatures seen in summer 2022 brought unprecedented numbers of heat-related deaths, wildfire incidents and significant infrastructure disruption.
- 2.9 Climate impacts are predicted to continue for the rest of the century even if mitigation targets are achieved, due to the long lifespan of some greenhouse gases and the time lag between what we do and when we feel it.
- 2.10 In the Climate Emergency and Sustainability Strategy Consultation summer 2023 54.1% of residents answered that the council should create communities, services, infrastructure and environments that are climate resilient.
- 2.11 It is vital that whilst we mitigate climate change to reduce future impacts, we also need to adapt and provide resilience to climate change impacts to minimise damage and take advantage of limited opportunities.
- 2.12 Impacts of climate change bring risks that we cannot necessarily change, but being aware of them and addressing them proactively provides a better chance of adapting successfully. This is of such importance an overall risk should be recorded in the strategic risk register.
- 2.13 To provide resilience to council services against the impacts of climate change an operational resilience risk register is required, with the mitigations requiring action added to service plans.
- 2.14 The Hertfordshire Climate Change and Sustainability Partnership (HCCSP) is establishing a framework for a cross-county resilience risk register which will form part of a regional and national framework. They require each local authority to submit their risk register by December 2023.
- 2.15 Appendix A shows Three Rivers resilience risk register which all departments have contributed to. The Risk Register is a live document and will be amended continuously in response to changes in climate impacts, legislation, and new solutions to issues.

3 Options and Reasons for Recommendations

- 3.1 Three Rivers District Council need to acknowledge that climate adaptation is a crucial part of the climate emergency, and by agreeing this risk register we will ensure that we are adapting to the risks associated with the impacts of extreme weather.

4 Policy/Budget Reference and Implications

- 4.1 Actions can be accommodated within existing resource, budgets, and policy.
- 4.2 All relevant committee reports, and procurement require completion of the Climate and Sustainability Impact Assessments which will embed consideration of adaptation and resilience into the direction of future policy.

5 Financial Implications

- 5.1 Where required external funding, including Community Infrastructure Levy, will be sought for individual projects or actions which will be approved through the Council's budget setting and financial management processes.

6 Legal Implications

- 6.1 There is a statutory obligation (Climate Change Act 2008) on councils to prepare for and minimise the longer-term impacts of climate change. This is reinforced by expectations for community resilience and business continuity by residents and businesses.

7 Equal Opportunities Implications

A Short Equality Impact and Outcome Assessment has been completed and can be found at Appendix C.

8 Staffing Implications

Resilience actions will be embedded into service plans, and there is no expectation that additional staff will be required.

9 Environmental Implications

The Climate and Sustainability Impact Assessment at Appendix B has been undertaken by considering the types of actions / projects that are contained within the additional mitigations.

| Climate and Sustainability Impact Assessment Summary | |
|---|------------|
| Homes, buildings, infrastructure, equipment, and energy | 3.00 |
| Travel | 0.00 |
| Goods and Consumption | 3.33 |
| Ecology | 3.33 |
| Adaptation | 4.00 |
| Engagement and Influence | 4 |
| Total Overall Average Score | 3.7 |

The strong assessment at 3.7 out of a total of 4 reflects the positive actions the register will inspire in helping services and the district prepare for the extreme weather impacts of climate change. Individual infrastructure projects as they come forward will require their own assessments.

10 Community Safety Implications

The register addresses flooding, wildfires, drought and overheating and our work with the Community Safety Partnership and the actions contained within the register will help to protect communities from these impacts.

11 Public Health implications

The risk register should contribute to a prevention of deterioration of health and well-being issues arising from the consequences of climate change such as overheating skin cancers, decline in productivity, and respiratory illnesses, in addition to supporting the reduction of health inequalities.

12 Customer Services Centre Implications

- 12.1 Enhanced resilience measures should reduce the impacts of extreme weather thus reducing the need for residents to contact on the customer service centre for help.

13 Communications and Website Implications

Communication plans will be used to raise awareness and change behaviour to

reduce the impacts of extreme weather. Both digital and physical media will be used to ensure messaging is accessible across the whole district.

14 Risk and Health & Safety Implications

- 14.1 The Council has agreed its risk management strategy which can be found on the website at <http://www.threerivers.gov.uk>. In addition, the risks of the proposals in the report have also been assessed against the Council's duties under Health and Safety legislation relating to employees, visitors and persons affected by our operations. The risk management implications of this report are detailed below.
- 14.2 The subject of this report is covered by the Community Partnerships, Environmental Protection, Regulatory Services, Property Services, Economic and Sustainable Development, and Leisure service plans. Any risks resulting from this report will be included in the risk register and, if necessary, managed within these plans.

| Nature of Risk | Consequence | Suggested Control Measures | Response (tolerate, treat, terminate, transfer) | Risk Rating (combination of likelihood and impact) |
|---|---|--|--|---|
| The Council fails to adapt its services to the embedded impacts of climate change which are leading to more extreme heat and cold, flooding | Services may be impacted and face significant cost to restore, residents and businesses may suffer leading to ultimate financial losses, and environmental damage could be costly both in terms of loss of habitat but also cost. | An adaptation risk register of Council services must be prepared, and arising actions incorporated into service plans. | Treat | 6 |

The above risks are scored using the matrix below. The Council has determined its aversion to risk and is prepared to tolerate risks where the combination of impact and likelihood scores 6 or less.

| | | | | |
|---|-----------------|--------------------|------------------------|------------------------|
| Very Likely ----- Likelihood ----- ▼ Remote | Low 4 | High 8 | Very High 12 | Very High 16 |
| | Low 3 | Medium 6 | High 9 | Very High 12 |
| | Low 2 | Low 4 | Medium 6 | High 8 |
| | Low 1 | Low 2 | Low 3 | Low 4 |
| Impact ----- Low -----> Unacceptable | | | | |

| | |
|--|---|
| Impact Score 4 (Catastrophic) 3 (Critical) 2 (Significant) 1 (Marginal) | Likelihood Score 4 (Very Likely (≥80%)) 3 (Likely (21-79%)) 2 (Unlikely (6-20%)) (Remote (≤5%)) |
|--|---|

15 Recommendation

15.1 That Members:

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- i) Approve the Adaptation and Resilience Risk Register and recommend to Council on 12th December 2023 for adoption.
- ii) Note that the actions arising from the register will form part of service plans.
- iii) The finance and budgetary risk register should add a direct reference to the

adaptation and resilience risk register

16 Data Quality

Data sources

| | | |
|----------|-------------------|----------|
| 1 | Poor | |
| 2 | Sufficient | X |
| 3 | High | |

17 Background Papers

None

18 APPENDICES / ATTACHMENTS

Appendix A: Adaptation and Resilience Risk Register

Appendix B: Climate and Sustainability Impact Assessment Summary

Appendix C: Adaptation and Resilience Risk Register Short Equality and Outcome Impact Assessment

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