

You've declared a Climate Emergency... what next?

Guidance for local authorities





Congratulations! By declaring a Climate Emergency* you've acknowledged that your Council needs to act on the causes and impacts of climate change. This is a major leap forward; political commitment is often the hardest part.

*Haven't declared yet? Check this website to see why you should: <https://climateemergency.uk/>

You've declared a Climate Emergency... now what?

Don't panic! There is a clear urgency to act, but steady, considered action is better than rushing into a piecemeal approach. Less haste, more speed!

We want to see the momentum continue, and we understand how overwhelming it can feel to take the next steps. But we're also optimistic. This short guide is intended to help break down the challenge, based on our experience of helping local authorities around the world to develop and deliver effective climate action plans.

Nine key steps to effective climate action planning and implementation



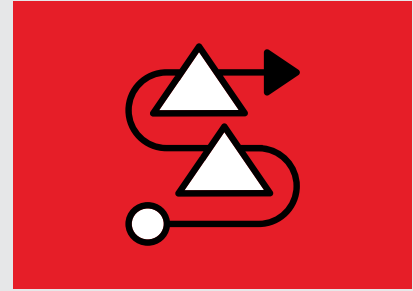
Own

Find a senior owner to co-ordinate climate action across different departments and functions.



Understand

Assess the key contributing causes and local impacts of climate change to inform focus areas.



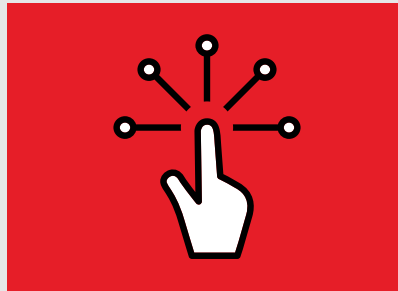
Plan

Agree targets, set milestones, identify what needs to be done, by when, to meet the target.



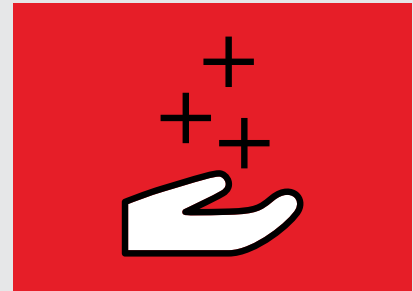
Collaborate

You can't do this alone! Engagement with a wide variety of organisations, individuals, businesses and government will be necessary.



Prioritise

What action can you take that will have the biggest impact? What has to be done to adapt to unavoidable risks? What existing actions can be modified to help achieve your aims?



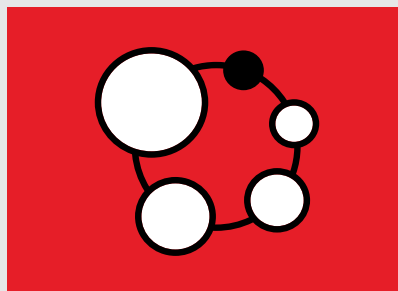
Budget

Cost your actions and prepare your business case.



Invest

Secure investment and procure partners.



Implement

Set out a detailed implementation programme and stick to it.



Monitor

Don't skip this step! Obtain good quality data on results and performance, use and share this learning to drive continued progress.

Introduction

The first half of 2019 has seen unprecedented recognition of the Climate Emergency, with mass climate protests, school strikes, warnings from the Bank of England, and new advice from the Committee on Climate Change urging the Government to set a new target to deliver net zero greenhouse gases by 2050. We need to begin now, and act fast, to deliver on this level of ambition.

But emissions continue to rise. Globally, our current trajectory is moving us rapidly towards more than 20C of warming, which for the UK will bring hotter, drier summers and milder, wetter winters with an increase in the frequency and intensity of extreme weather events.¹ Sea level rise,² biodiversity impacts and loss of agricultural productivity are also expected. The consequences of these changes are already being felt. Over recent years, severe floods have caused major damage to property and businesses across the country.

Extreme summers like 2018 are now a 10-25% probability – and could become 50% likelihood by mid-century¹ – having impacts on resource availability, workplace productivity, health and wellbeing, and learning in schools.

By declaring a Climate Emergency, you have joined 65+ other local authorities³ – big and small – across the UK, who are setting ambitious targets. But what now?

50%

likelihood of extreme summers by 2050¹

65+

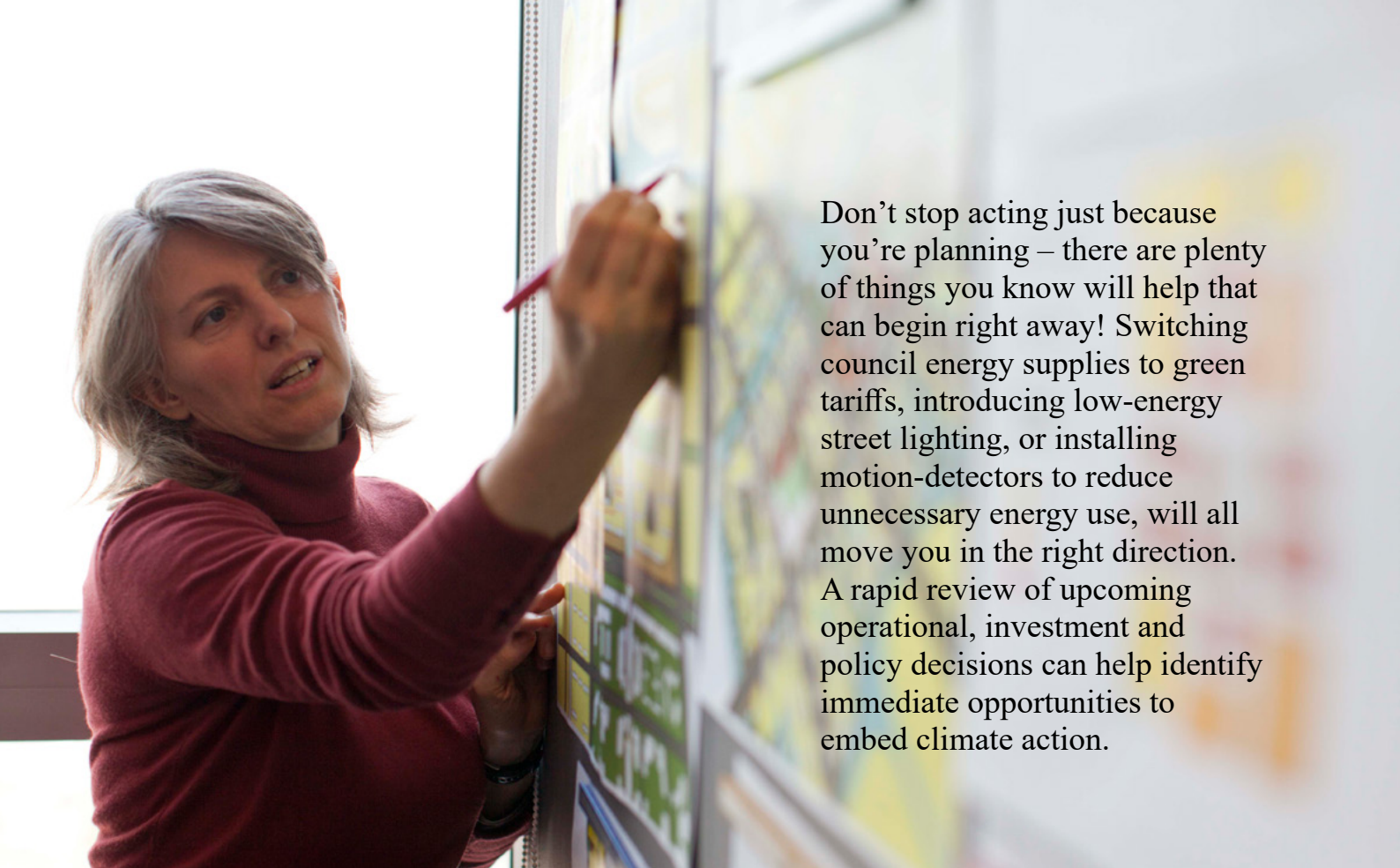
local authorities have declared a climate emergency⁴

1 MET Office, UKCP18 Headline Findings: <https://www.metoffice.gov.uk/binaries/content/assets/metofficegovuk/pdf/research/ukcp/ukcp18-headline-findings.pdf>

2 MET Office, UKCP18 Marine Climate Change: <https://www.metoffice.gov.uk/binaries/content/assets/metofficegovuk/pdf/research/ukcp/ukcp18-infographic-headline-findings-marine.pdf>

3 <https://climateemergency.uk/>

4 As of 5th June 2019, source: climateemergency.uk



Don't stop acting just because you're planning – there are plenty of things you know will help that can begin right away! Switching council energy supplies to green tariffs, introducing low-energy street lighting, or installing motion-detectors to reduce unnecessary energy use, will all move you in the right direction. A rapid review of upcoming operational, investment and policy decisions can help identify immediate opportunities to embed climate action.



Own

Find a senior owner to co-ordinate climate action across different departments and functions.

Climate change cuts across all council departments and functions, and everyone has a part to play, whatever their role and remit. But for effective, cross-departmental action, identify an 'owner' with the seniority and influence to implement change. Be it an individual or small core team of people – whose focus is to plan and facilitate action across the organisation, monitor progress and hold people to account, challenging business as usual approaches and helping to find beneficial solutions.

Within a local authority, there may be a councillor with a responsibility for Climate, Environment or Sustainability, but they will need the support of a senior officer.

From our experience, a good leader will:

- Be established and respected, with an attitude that fosters positive engagement.
- Have strong existing relationships (or the ability to build them quickly) across the council and community.
- Be able to lead by example (personal commitments and authenticity are important in building credibility).
- Be well resourced, supported by a dedicated team of practitioners and subject matter experts.
- Be sufficiently empowered to take decisions and escalate issues to the Council executive.

In 2016, the transport sector had the highest share of emissions in 49% of UK local authority areas. The industrial and commercial sector had the highest share in 28%, and the domestic sector had the highest share in 23% of authorities.

Local Authority Carbon Dioxide Emissions Estimates 2016, Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy. https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/719182/Local_Authority_CO2_Emissions_Statistical_Release_2016.pdf

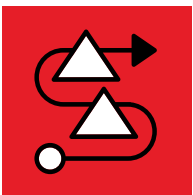


Understand

Assess the key contributing causes and local impacts of climate change to inform focus areas.

You will need a thorough understanding of the key sources of GHG emissions in your jurisdiction, to identify where and how to focus emissions reductions measures. But don't forget about the unavoidable impacts of climate change too. A balanced response to the Climate Emergency will also need you to consider the likely impacts of climate change in your area, and how to prepare or adapt. Across mitigation and adaptation, an evidence-based approach will help you to uncover all challenges, identify synergies and opportunities, and leverage the scale of change that will be required.

- Emissions data at local authority level is published annually by the Department of Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy. This shows you at a high level where the majority of emissions in your area are coming from. You can do a bespoke inventory of your local emissions to allow a more tailored approach.
- Has anybody done a climate risk assessment for your area? Water and energy utilities, the Environment Agency, infrastructure operators and businesses have all considered elements of climate risk. You can bring these together through desk research and stakeholder engagement, or develop your own comprehensive assessment using available data. There is a wide range of tools and aids available to help identify climate risks and ways to build local resilience.



Plan

Agree targets, set milestones, identify what needs to be done, by when, to meet the target.

Once you have identified primary focus areas for emissions reduction and adaptation, develop a plan of action that sets out what needs to happen, when it should happen by, who will need to make it happen, and how. You'll need to estimate the impact of your actions on your emissions and risk profiles, so that you can see how far each action takes you towards achieving your goals. Consider how actions might be programmed to build on each other over time.

- Set up the plan to enable the scale of implementation required. Beyond what is within your direct operational control or policy and communications influence, begin to think about the opportunity pipeline that will engage third party investors.
- Take account of growth and change - think about how new development and regeneration provides an opportunity to catalyse decarbonisation in the local area.
- You don't have to have a single plan dedicated to climate change. We know that Councils have many existing plans, and you may choose to integrate climate change into each of those rather than create another document.
- This plan should be alive – don't spend three years trying to come up with the perfect plan or you'll be diverting important time and energy that could be better used for implementation. A simple plan based on available evidence is your perfect starting point.
- You should already be considering how you'll monitor progress and performance. What information will help you make better decisions next time, or communicate the business case more effectively to potential funders? Think about what you will set as your measures of success (KPIs).

In developing London's 1.5°C climate action plan, over 100 separate stakeholders were identified and engaged. They all held some level of power or influence over climate action in London.

Arup supported the Greater London Authority in the delivery of their 1.5oC plan, supported by C40 Cities, 2018. (<https://www.london.gov.uk/what-we-do/environment/climate-change/climate-action-plan>)



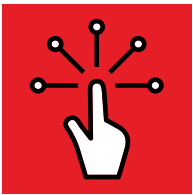
Collaborate

You can't do this alone! Engagement with a wide variety of organisations, individuals, businesses and government will be necessary.

Successful climate action involves a wide variety of stakeholders – communities, businesses and other government bodies. You will not have the power to directly deliver all necessary actions, but you can promote change through indirect action, influence and encouragement. Consider what proportion of your emissions are within others' control or imported from elsewhere through your supply chains, and how can you stimulate behaviour change to reduce consumption? You can use your ability to convene people to help facilitate collective, large-scale action.

– It is helpful to record where you have control or influence to deliver your action plan and, where there are gaps, who can fill them, and what new partnerships or conversations need to be started. Identify your existing allies and how they can be most effective in catalysing action.

- For collaboration to work, everybody has to see the benefit. Most climate actions deliver other co-benefits (eg. improve air quality, promote healthy lifestyles). Try to identify these benefits early to drive more effective collaboration.
- Write an engagement plan to help develop these key relationships and build new ones. Be clear about who has the power to act in what capacity, and what the Council's role is to influence decisions on climate action.
- Be inclusive. Climate action should not conflict with other community interests. Consider ways to involve the community – this could include simple surveys, outreach and open sessions, gamification or a citizen's assembly/jury to generate input and interest in important issues.



Prioritise

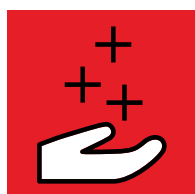
What action can you take that will have the biggest impact? What has to be done to adapt to unavoidable risks? What existing actions can be modified to help achieve your aims?

Be ambitious, but recognise that spreading your effort and resources too thinly across too many actions at the start also has risks. Consider what actions offer the greatest impact for emissions reduction and adaptation, and which will bring co-benefits like job creation, health or environmental improvements, economic growth, etc. All of these aspects can help you to prioritise, and ensure that climate action is aligned with other local needs.

- Ensure that benefits are fairly distributed among all community groups and neighbourhoods, and will support inclusivity.
- Focus efforts on removing any barriers to action, so that the most beneficial actions can be delivered seamlessly.
- Are there any quick wins? Is there an existing plan of action, such as scheduled improvement works to Council-owned buildings or vehicles, which could be uplifted or modified to have a more significant impact on emissions reductions or climate resilience?

Our research with C40 Cities Climate Leadership Group estimated that the bike lane network in the SOMA neighbourhood of San Francisco displaced **165,000** car trips in 2016 alone, together with over **420,000** bus rides and nearly **3,000** taxi rides. This modal shift would have offset around **500** tonnes of CO₂ together with **44kg** of particulate matter (PM₁₀ and PM₂₅), bringing local air quality benefits.

Arup supported the Greater London Authority in the delivery of their 1.5oC plan, supported by C40 Cities, 2018. (<https://www.london.gov.uk/what-we-do/environment/climate-change/climate-action-plan>).



Invest

Secure investment and procure partners.

Estimate the costs and benefits of each action to help develop a pipeline of projects and create a sustained programme of action.

- Consider whether there will be a payback from investment; if so by when, and whether the initial outlay can be recouped through cost reductions or new revenue streams. Prepare business cases that demonstrate the necessary return to secure funding. This might include identifying if there is any gap funding required to construct an investible business case.
- Quantify and monetise wider benefits of climate actions to present a clear, holistic cost-benefit comparison. Health, wellbeing, economic and ecosystem benefits can often be realised through climate action. Be creative in making this case, internally and externally. Our research into the co-benefits of climate action showed significant improvements in disease prevention and life expectancy when active modes of travel are enabled and promoted in urban areas; how much money could interventions like this save the NHS over the next 50 years?
- Stay up to date with technological advances and be prepared to trial new and innovative solutions, but don't wait for a silver bullet: we can make huge progress with the technologies we have today, we just need to be bold and prepared to invest.

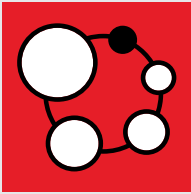


Budget

Cost your actions and prepare your business case.

Use the business cases you have prepared to explore effective funding and innovative financing options to secure investment for delivery.

- Review city budget and planned investments to determine where climate action can be delivered through internally funded programmes, and where external funding will be most necessary or transformative.
- Not all actions will require new investment from local government – for example holding developers to stringent on-site emissions targets in new developments takes strong leadership, policies, good communication and well supported staff, but leverages private capital expenditure rather than local government funds. Likewise, updating performance requirements in contracts for public transport, waste management and other services needn't come at significant additional cost.
- Consider ways of increasing economies of scale and improving the chances of success – for example collating a portfolio of investment opportunities across organisations with similar needs. Develop the opportunity pipeline where third party investment is required.
- Where there are investment gaps, lobby national government and get others involved to push for the necessary financial support.



Implement

Set out a detailed implementation programme and stick to it.

The most important part!

Failure at this stage is often due to lack of resources, funding, support and leadership, so ensure these are in place. You'll need to engage technical teams and specialists from across the Council early on in scoping projects, preparing feasibility studies, programming work and drawing up tenders for external contractors or consultants. The difference from normal business is the climate angle – your climate leader or delegates will need to ensure opportunities for climate action are fully incorporated into project plans and designs.

- Where multiple benefits can be achieved from a single project or programme, ensure there is multidisciplinary input to project teams. Link up actions that are mutually supportive or dependent and make sure the plans for delivery are joined up.
- Where possible try to set up long-term programmes – too often, initiatives are short-lived and just as they begin to build momentum and become established, the programme comes to an end. Consistent, sustained action with increasing ambition is key to providing economic certainty for the market, but programmes should remain flexible to ramp up or adapt to better methods where these possibilities arise.



Monitor

Don't skip this step! Obtain good quality data on results and performance, use and share this learning to drive continued progress.

Monitoring is important to know you are meeting your goals and to drive continued progress. It allows evaluation of delivery, communication of performance and helps build evidence for further investment and more ambitious goals. It should feed into the continuous review of your plan and keep you on track to meet the targets and milestones you have set.

- Develop metrics and key performance indicators that help evaluate a range of identified impacts beyond the primary goals of emissions reduction and resilience. You can update your emissions and risk assessments to take account of actions delivered, and to re-baseline for future work.

- What local indicators are already gathered regularly that may support a specific monitoring plan? Consider innovative ways of gathering the data you need, such as crowd-sourcing and automation. Develop a platform for data collection.
- Ensure that any potential negative impacts are also monitored to allow risks to be effectively managed.
- Provide regular updates to stakeholders – transparency helps build trust and also allows support to be targeted where it is needed most.

Keeping these nine steps in mind as you develop your response to the climate emergency will help ensure that actions are effective, targeted and scalable. Delivering this response is a daunting task, but embrace the opportunity and make a start. Face the facts and be open about the challenge. Find your allies and identify a few high-impact interventions to set you on course. Revisiting the steps regularly will help you work out the rest as you go.

We are passionate about this, and we're here to help.



Sarah Bowden

Associate Director, Arup

“ I believe that taking action on the biodiversity and climate crisis is everybody’s responsibility. As an individual you can make changes to your own lifestyle and choices and also effect change through your profession, but as a resident you can campaign for, and work together with your representatives, to bring about wider action that can have a much larger positive impact. Together with like-minded residents we are doing just that in the Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead.”



Chris Pountney

Associate, Arup

“ The impacts of climate change will hit future generations hardest. Recently, I was invited to speak to 300 Primary School children about climate change, focussing on how they could make a difference. It was national non-fiction day and they responded by writing about their climate concerns to their local MP. It left me challenged! We need to encourage this kind of enthusiasm, empowering all ages to speak up and act for a climate-safe future.”



You are not alone!

Arup: www.arup.com

GCOM: Global Covenant of Mayors: www.globalcovenantofmayors.org

WWF One Planet City Challenge: wwf.panda.org/our_work/projects/one_planet_cities/one_planet_city_challenge

European Sustainable Cities Platform: www.sustainablecities.eu

ICLEI: Local Governments for Sustainability: www.iclei.org

UK100: www.uk100.org

Resources and links:

C40 Climate Action Planning Framework: resourcecentre.c40.org/climate-action-planning-framework-home

Climate Risk Assessment Framework and Taxonomy: <https://www.globalcovenantofmayors.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/01/CRAFT-2-page-brochure.pdf>

City Resilience Index: www.cityresilienceindex.org

C40 Cities: www.c40.org

100 Resilient Cities: www.100resilientcities.org

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ARUP

Dedicated to sustainable development, Arup is a collective of designers, consultants and experts working globally. Founded to be humane and excellent, we collaborate with our clients and partners using imagination, technology, and rigour to shape a better world.

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