

## Case Study



# Identifying Adaptation Options

Adapting to climate change at local and regional level can take a variety of different shapes and forms, with many activities possibly building on and engaging with activities, practices, networks, and stakeholders that authorities have already developed. Often adaptation is understood as a cycle, which involves a number of steps to develop, implement, monitor, and evaluate adaptation options. Whilst the naming of these steps may differ between different adaptation support tools, they broadly tend to encompass the following:

- Getting started – Preparing the ground for adaptation
- Climate change risks and vulnerabilities
- Identifying adaptation options
- Implementing, monitoring, and evaluating adaptation options

The Met Office launched the Local Authority Climate Service (LACS) in 2024, which aims to support actors progress on adaptation. This case study highlights how the LACS is already being used in practice for the third step in the cycle – Identifying adaptation options.

## Adaptation Options

This step focuses on identifying and developing your adaptation options. This can include a number of activities such as for example:

- Types of adaptation strategy
- Identifying and evaluating different adaptation options
- Developing an implementation plan
- Delivering and implementing adaptation actions

Whilst the LACS tool has not yet been used to identify adaptation options, implement or deliver them, there are some cases of it being integrated into relevant adaptation strategies or action plans. Insights from speaking to local authorities suggests that once an understanding of priority risks has been established (See Step 3 of the Toolkit), it is not uncommon for local authorities to develop overarching plans or strategies and to build the senior level and political buy-in and support for these. These are then expected to be followed up with more granular thematic or service level focused adaptation options.

## Climate Action Plan

Leeds City Council sets out its vision for the city in its Best City Ambition which includes Zero Carbon as one of its three pillars, alongside Inclusive Growth and Health and Wellbeing. The council reports to the Carbon Disclosure Project and are keen to retain their previously achieved A grade. As part of their work on preparing for the disclosure, they have realised that there is substantial focus on councils having a climate action plan or an actual strategy document, which is focused on adaptation.

The plan is in draft format at the moment, and it has been presented at a couple of internal, climate-focused meetings to get feedback and input. The aim is to have it finalised by the end of spring 2025 and then published on the corporate website and be available to the public. This action plan will set out the rationale for why action on adaptation is needed now. The plan will be based on existing evidence and actions that are already underway as well as signposting to the alignment with national guidelines.

The aim is to use the LACS data and graphics in the action plan as a justification for why action is needed and has already started. They expect they will use data on projected temperature rises as well as precipitation rate. However, they will take a strong storytelling focus in the action plan which will aim to set the data from the LACS within a wider narrative that will make it easier to link hazards with impacts and place these in the context of experience and evidence from across the city. This approach will hopefully mean that the climate information in the action plan will also be more relatable to members of the public.

*“The precipitation rate as well is one particular interest for us because the change in the precipitation rate throughout Leeds, especially over the last 12 to 18 months, and in the impact of the surface water flooding, the intensity of rainfall and obviously the storms that we’ve had, I think that’s a particular one that we’ve probably not included as much before.*

*I think that’s a particular one that I will be including because everyone knows about heat wave and the temperatures, but obviously to have that data about the precipitation and the causes, what that leads to I think is an important one. Just because of what we’ve seen across Leeds as a whole.”*

**Leeds City Council**

## Defra pilot: Adaptation Reporting Power

In 2024, North Tyneside Council participated in the Defra Fourth Adaptation Reporting Power 12-month pilot scheme for Local Authorities and published a Climate Adaptation Strategy and Action plan in late 2024 which Defra has provided feedback on already. This is the first iteration of a Climate Adaptation Strategy and Action plan and sets out six key themes and ten priority actions up to 2030 which are considered key for improving resilience.

The section in the report ‘Scenarios for future climate change for the North East’ directly links to the LACS report for the particular LA and reproduces a couple of key figures such as a table with the projected changes for temperature and precipitation as well as a figure detailing projected sea level rise.

		0.6°C GWL Baseline 1981 - 2000	1.0°C GWL Recent Past 2001 - 2020	1.5°C GWL Paris Agreement	2.0°C GWL Guidance: Prepare	4.0°C GWL Guidance: Assess risks
	TEMPERATURE	°C	°C	°C change	°C change	°C change
	Summer Maximum Temperature	26.1 25.8 to 26.3	27.7 26.8 to 28.3	+1.8 +0.7 to +2.6	+2.5 +1.6 to +3.6	+5.5 +4.3 to +6.8
	Summer Average Temperature	14.6 14.6 to 14.6	15.5 15.2 to 15.9	+1.2 +0.8 to +1.7	+1.8 +1.2 to +2.2	+3.8 +3.2 to +4.3
	Winter Average Temperature	4.3 4.3 to 4.4	5.0 4.7 to 5.6	+1.0 +0.6 to +1.3	+1.3 +0.6 to +1.3	+2.7 +1.8 to +3.1
	Winter Minimum Temperature	-6.6 -6.8 to -6.4	-5.1 -6.3 to -4.3	+2.3 +1.7 to +3.4	+3.2 +1.7 to +4.3	+5.0 +4.2 to +6.2
	Annual Average Temperature	9.2 9.2 to 9.2	9.9 9.8 to -10.1	+1.0 +0.8 to +31.2	+1.6 +1.1 to +1.7	+3.1 +2.7 to +3.4
	PRECIPITATION	mm/day	mm/day	% change	% change	% change
	Summer Precipitation Rate	1.7 1.69 to 1.71	1.72 1.59 to 1.92	+6 -1.4 to +15	+2 -8 to +11	-16 -25 to 0
	Winter Precipitation Rate	1.56 1.55 to 1.57	1.55 1.47 to 1.76	+2 -8 to +7	0 -14 to +17	+7 -7 to +21

Figure 1 Page in the North Tyneside Draft Climate Adaptation Strategy and Action Plan that directly refers to and reproduces LACS data for the LA

“And then the LACS tool just came out at the perfect time for us because it’s our role to look and assess everything that’s going on in the fast-paced and developing adaptation space; and that includes keeping track of the associated government policy.

There is so much to consider in enabling us to construct an informed pathway (...) The LACS tool provided baseline detail of potential impacts all there in one place”

**North Tyneside Council**

Alongside the development of the strategy, the council have also engaged with five services in more detail to understand and assess their service specific risks including highways, adult social care, planning, environmental services, and fleet services. The information from the engagement with these services fed into the process of completing the risk template that Defra had provided.

As North Tyneside Council was part of the Defra pilot, they were able to join a number of webinars from the Met Office and able to point their key services to related information early on in the risk assessment process. Most of the information used to inform the conversations and thoughts around the risk assessment were focused on the headline messages though instead of any deep dives into specifics of the LACS data.

*“Keeping the message as simple as possible is a beneficial way to engage with people in talking about climate adaptation. For example, the scientific modelling shows us that it’s going to get wetter, or it’s going to get warmer by X degrees over a period of time and this helps to interpret and inform the ‘lay-man on the street.’*

*The associated detail which underpins the LACS tool is very important, but we don’t want to blind people with science. Those who do want more detail, we can signpost it to them”*

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Now it is published, the council aims to build on the strategy and undertake a borough wide consultation and engagement programme which will include: regional policy makers, local government officers, other public sector organisations, NGOs, infrastructure providers, businesses, charities, community groups, young people, residents and housing tenants. The outline for this engagement has already been drafted and the aim is to use the LACS tool as an ‘interpretation tool for the man on the street’ when the council will undertake its additional engagement activities. The outline and the content have been agreed through conversations with the engagement team, director-level, and the cabinet member for the climate emergency. Mayoral elections will take place in May 2025, and it is expected that the engagement and consultation programme will commence in autumn 2025.

## Regional Audit Committee

In February 2024, climate adaptation and risk management has also been presented to the Audit Committee Chairs for the North East region's local authorities. The Audit Committee's role is to support the authorities with their internal and external audits, risk management, areas of governance and financial reporting. Increasingly, climate change impacts are becoming a risk. The aim of taking the climate adaptation agenda to the Audit Committee Chairs group was to ensure that the bottom-up work on adaptation within each local authority could benefit from input from the respective Audit Committees. The presentation included references to the information in the LACS to showcase the data and highlight that it can form the basis for decision-making on adaptation measures.

*"The LACS data can be utilised as the basis for making decisions and influencing significant policies which we've all got to work our way through. It informs the process at a corporate level as well as within operational activities and as such can inform where we possibly need to look at changing service delivery going forward.*

*Whilst there's great ambition to progress local plans, there's been very little translation of complex climate modelling data to support the development of adaptation actions to date; the LACS tool provides this."*

**North Tyneside Council**

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