

9th March 2020

Dear Ms D Dickson,

The NORTHERN IRELAND CLIMATE CHANGE ADAPTATION
PROGRAMME (NICCAP2) 2019-2024

Climate Northern Ireland (NI) is a cross-sectoral partnership, funded by the Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs (DAERA). It brings together members from the private, academic, voluntary and government sectors to encourage and support preparation for the impacts of climate change.

I am contacting you to encourage your planning team to actively consider and plan for the risks posed to your local council area from climate change. I would also like to introduce the work of Climate NI and the information and support available through our networks and online resources.

The Northern Ireland Climate Change Adaptation Programme (NICCAP2) 2019-24 was published on 20th September 2019 and is available to view at <https://www.daera-ni.gov.uk/sites/default/files/publications/daera/Northern%20Ireland%20Climate%20Change%20Adaptation%20Programme%202019-2024%20Final-Laid.PDF>. This is the second such programme for Northern Ireland and is required by the UK Climate Change Act 2008. The NICCAP2 sets out how central government, civil society and local government plan to address the risks and opportunities from climate change over the next five years. The specific chapter on the role of civil society and local government was prepared by Climate NI in partnership with businesses, academics, NGOs and local council representatives (including Northern Ireland Local Government Association and Sustainable NI).

During the development of NICCAP2, Climate NI worked closely with councils to gather information about their current preparedness for climate change. It is clear that local councils already recognise many of the climate change risks posed to their services, and are taking vital climate action. Examples of this work include Local Development Plans (LDPs) and Biodiversity Action Plans. However, this exercise also identified a need for the development of a strategic approach to climate change ‘adaptation planning’ which considers risks posed to council service provisions, assets and their wider communities.

NICCAP2 outlines one specific action for those providing the ‘planning function’ within local councils over the next five years. This is to reflect the valuable work being undertaken by local government to help shape future development and growth, as well as providing a local planning policy framework for decision-making. The action included in NICCAP 2019-24 regarding LDPs is as follows:

‘In bringing forward their LDPs, councils will take account of climate change adaptation considerations as indicated in the strategic planning policy statement.’

To support the bringing forward of local planning policies, we encourage planning teams within councils to:

- Take account of the important role of LDPs and planning decisions in preparing our built environment and our communities for the impacts of climate change, as stated within the Strategic Planning Policy Statement (SPPS) for Northern Ireland,
- Join the climate change adaptation working group in your local council to develop an adaptation plan which will address the climate risks facing your region, (Your local council adaptation lead is Declan Donnelly. A NI adaptation planning tool designed to guide this work will be available on the Climate NI website in April 2020, and
- Keep up to date with climate news, resources, events and projects across Northern Ireland and internationally by signing up for the Climate NI E-bulletin at <https://www.climatenorthernireland.org/subscribe>, and by following us on twitter @ClimateNI.

If you would like any further information on how our climate is changing and how this will impact your work and communities, please do get in touch.

Kind regards

Ciaran Fox

Climate NI Chair