

Belfast

CLIMATE ACTION

Council's Climate Adaptation Report

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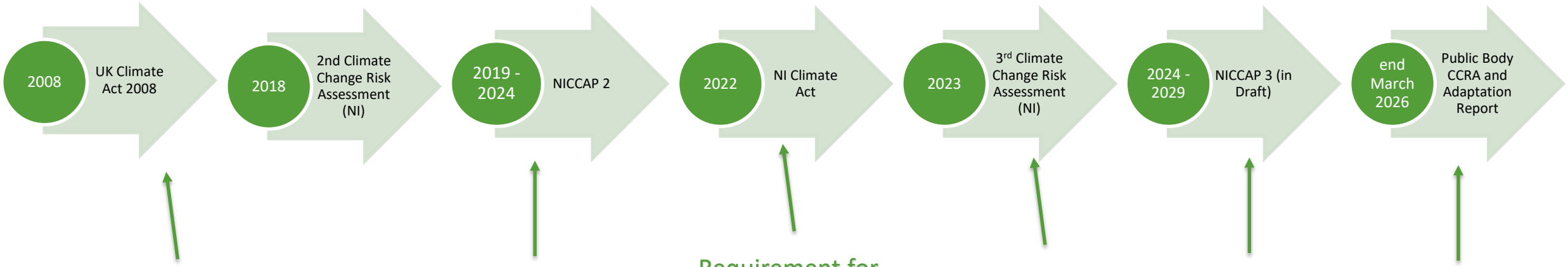
Climate Team

www.belfastcity.gov.uk/climate-change

Climate Change Adaptation
Requirements



Requirement for NI to publish risk assessment and adaptation programme

2 actions

Requirement for Council to publish climate impact and adaptation actions (5 years)

61 climate risks (22 urgent)

16 actions (11 new)

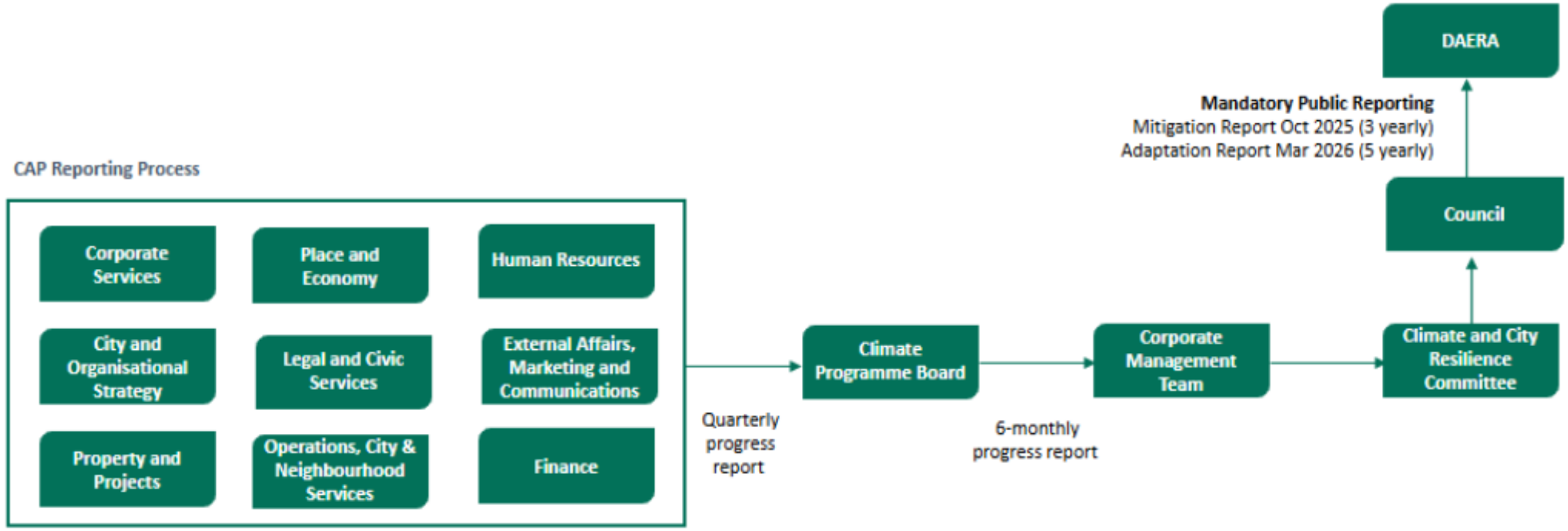
32 risks or opportunities 34 actions

Section 2 – Governance

The council already has a robust internal governance framework to oversee its climate programme with the Climate Programme Board providing scrutiny for the overall programme of work

The Climate Programme Board will provide oversight of the delivery and updating of the Climate Action Plan ensuring that the actions are delivered in line with agreed timelines, challenges to its delivery are identified and mitigated and that CAP targets are being met. Heads of Departments will be responsible for securing resources for the implementation of their respective actions and for reporting progress via the Climate Data Platform with regular updates to the Climate Programme Board.

The Climate Programme Board will review progress on a quarterly basis with six-monthly progress reports provided to the Corporate Management Team and the Climate and City Resilience Committee. An annual report will be prepared by the Climate Team by August each year ahead of the submission dates for mandatory public body reporting in October 2025 (Mitigation Report) and March 2026 (Adaptation Report) respectively. The Climate Team will monitor and review progress through the Climate Data Platform and provide advisory support to departments where required.



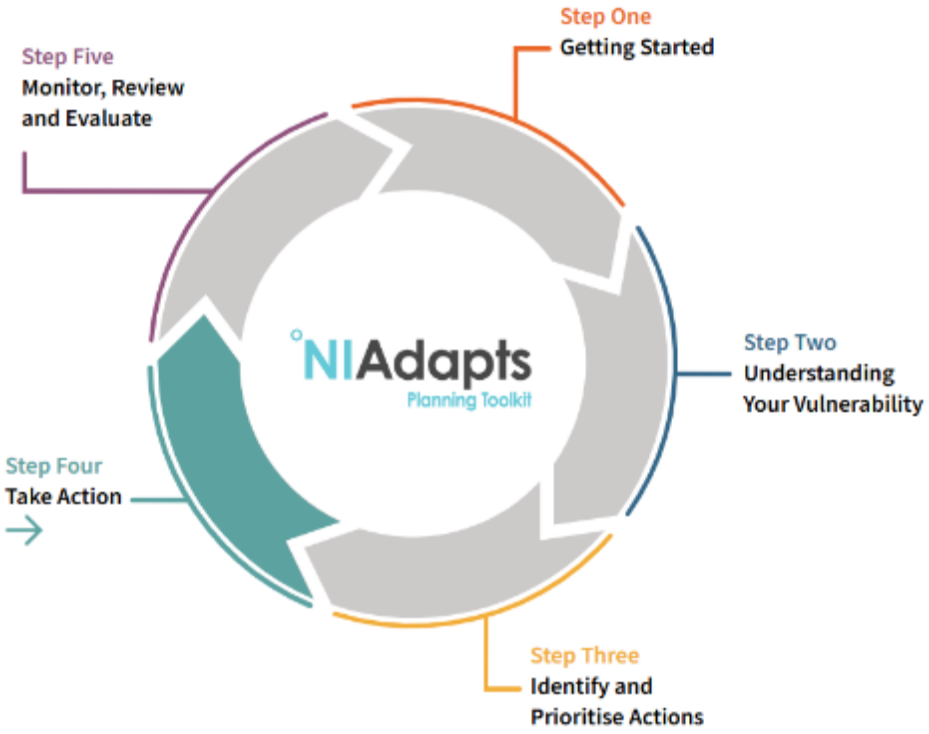
Section 3 - Climate Impact Assessment

- List/table of organisations functions, assets, services etc. covered by CIA
- Methodology use to identify climate risks and opportunities
- Title of risk/opportunity
- Current potential impact which the organisation may face
- How it may change in future
- Timeframe for action
- Priority of risk/opportunity
- Who responsible for managing the risk
- Information Gaps

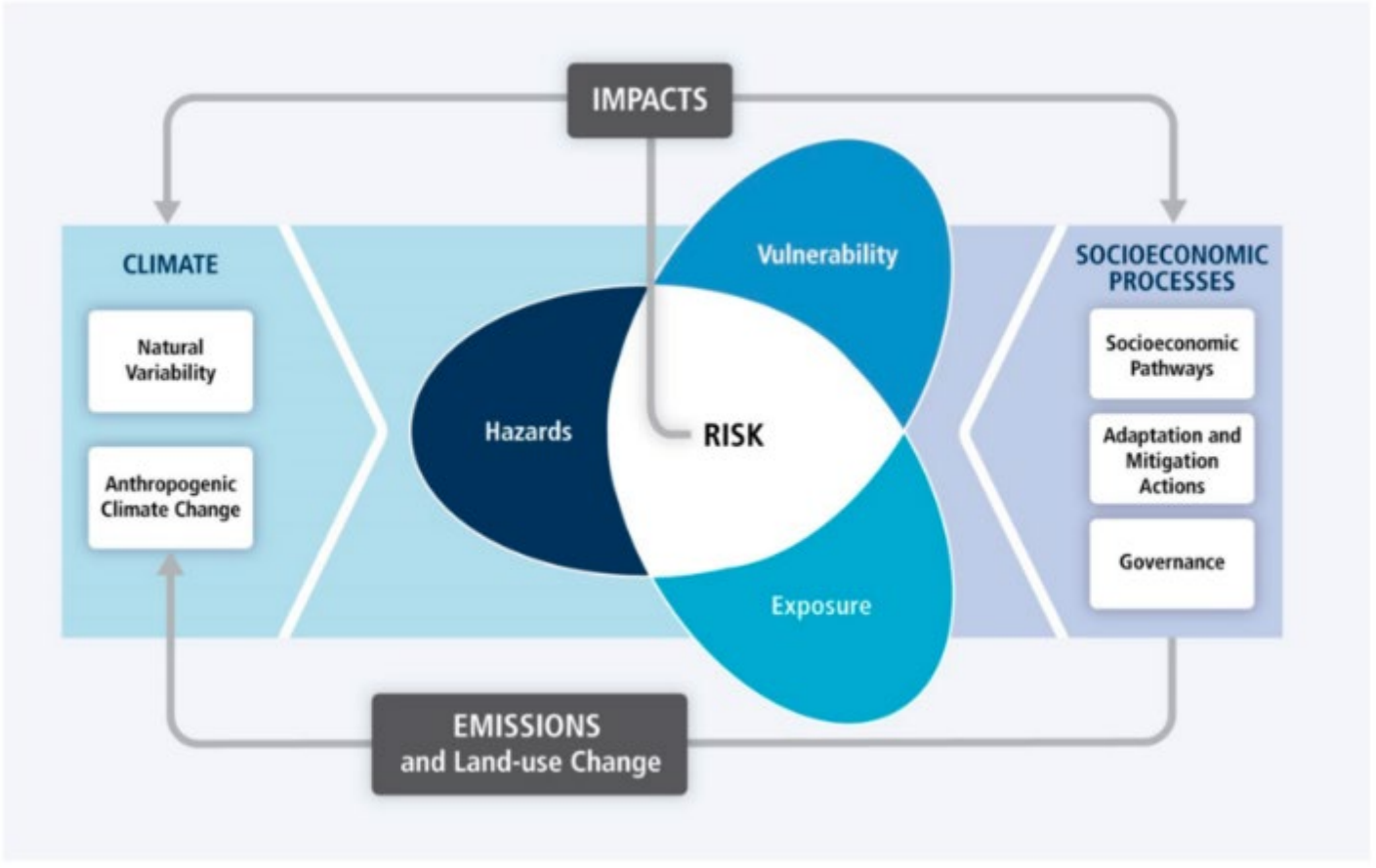
Section 3 - Climate Impact Assessment

Methodology

NI Adapts used for BCC Risk Register 2022



IPCC Fifth Assessment Report for BCC CCRA 2023



Section 3 - Climate Impact Assessment

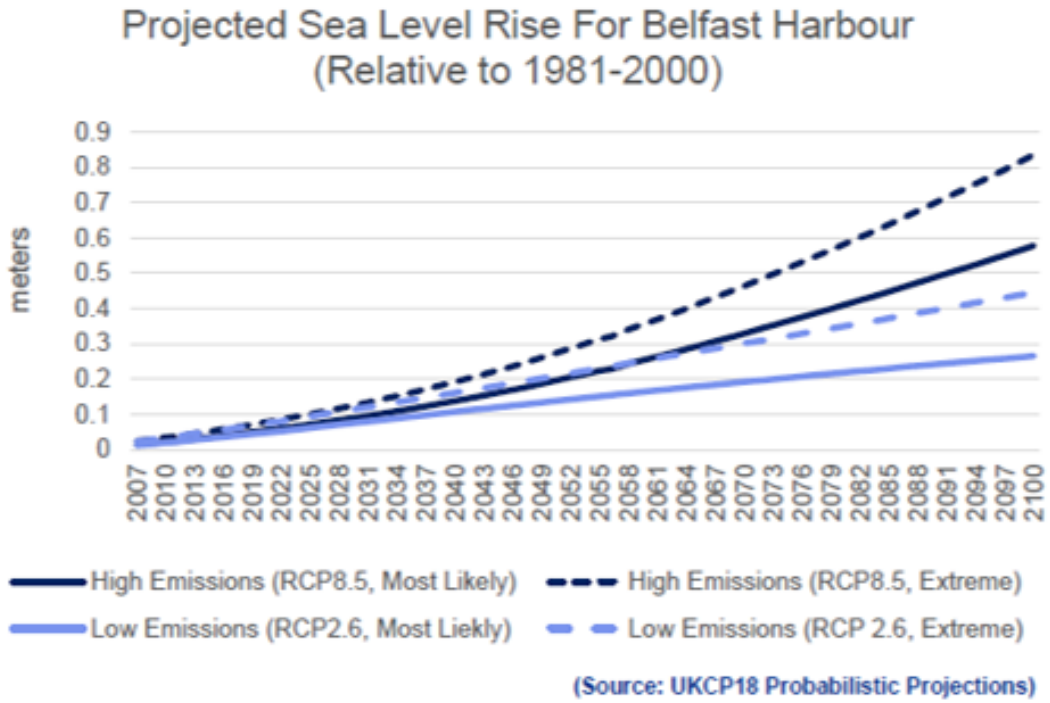
Predicted Changes

A greater chance of hotter drier summers and warmer wetter winters with more extreme weather and rising sea levels.

By 2070, winters are projected to be up to 3.9°C warmer while summers could be up to 4.9°C hotter

By 2070, winters are projected to be up to 25% wetter while summers are projected to be 38% drier

By 2100, sea levels are projected to rise by up to 94cms



(Source: UKCP18 Probabilistic Projections)

Climate Impact Assessment

Risk Scoring Methodology (NI Adapts, 2022)

Impact	5 – High	Property destroyed or not safe for use/Fatality or multiple injuries; Financial loss >£500,000; Failure of key objectives; National media coverage;	Medium 5	High 10	Critical 15	Critical 20	Critical 25
	4 – Medium/High	Serious damage to property/ Serious injury; Financial loss £100,000 to £500,000; Failure of key service; NI Media coverage;	Low 4	Medium 8	High 12	Critical 16	Critical 20
	3 – Medium	Moderate damage requiring repair/ Injury requiring medical treatment; Financial loss £10,000 to £100,000; Medium impact on achievement of objectives; Significant localised press coverage;	Low 3	Medium 6	Medium 9	High 12	Critical 15
	2 – Low/Medium	Minor damage/injury; Financial loss £1,000 to £10,000; Minor impact on achievement of objectives; Some Localised press coverage;	Very Low 2	Low 4	Medium 6	Medium 8	High 10
	1 – Low	No damage/injury; Financial loss< £1,000; No impact on achievement of objectives; Minimal damage to reputation	Very Low 1	Very Low 2	Low 3	Low 4	Medium 5
Belfast City Council Risk Matrix			May occur only in exceptional circumstances	Might conceivably occur at some time	Could occur at some time	Will probably occur in most circumstances	Is expected to occur in most circumstances
			1 Low	2 Low – Medium	3 – Medium	4 Medium – High	5 High
			Likelihood				

Climate Risks/Opportunities

Pluvial, Fluvial and Tidal Flooding – Projected Change: Wetter winters, and despite overall trend towards drier summers, a greater risk of localised, intense, summer flooding when it does rain heavily.

Risk/Opportunity	Department	Current or Predicted	Inherent Risk			Current Policies and Procedures	Predicted Change in Future?
			Likelihood	Impact	Risk Score		
(F1) Increasing frequency and intensity of precipitation resulting in greater flood risk, affecting operations and new and existing Council assets, leading to financial costs, losses, increased insurance costs and additional resource, including third party contractors.	City and Neighbourhood Services Place & Economy Prooperty & Projects Corporate Communications	Current and Predicted	4	4	16	BCC Emergency Plan, Departmental and Service policies and operational procedures, relevant multi agency plans.	Increase
(F2) Increasing frequency of flood events disrupting transport, energy, water, and communication infrastructure and local communities, demanding huge resource from council staff and finance costs.	City and Neighbourhood Services, Property & Projects Corporate Communications	Current and Predicted	4	5	20	BCC Emergency Plan, Departmental and Service policies and operational procedures, relevant multi agency plans.	Increase
(F3) Increased precipitation and sea level rise leading to flood risk and reduced viability of regeneration projects.	Property & Projects Place & Economy Corporate Communications	Current and Predicted	4	5	20	BCC Emergency Plan, Departmental and Service policies and operational procedures, relevant multi agency plans.	Increase

Climate Risks/Opportunities

Pluvial, Fluvial and Tidal Flooding - Projected Change: Wetter winters, and despite overall trend towards drier summers, a greater risk of localised, intense, summer flooding when it does rain heavily.

Risk or Opportunity	Department	Current or Predicted	Inherent Risk			Current Policies and Procedures	Predicted Change in Future?
			Likelihood	Impact	Risk Score		
(F4) Increased precipitation and sea level rise leading to flood risk for festivals and events, requiring funding and advice services.	Place & Economy City & Neighbourhood Services Corporate Communications	Current and Predicted	3	3	9	Bespoke event plans, BCC Emergency Plan, Events policy and procedures, relevant multi agency plans.	Increase
(F5) Increased precipitation impacting heritage assets and resulting in disruption, costs and loss of assets in severe cases.	Place & Economy Property & Projects City & Neighbourhood Services Corporate Communciations	Predicted	3	4	12	BCC Emergency Plan, Facilities management, relevant multi agency plans.	Increase
(F6) Increased precipitation and frequency of flood events affecting landscapes and leading to contaminated waterways from waste runoff, and degraded natural assets, biodiversity and increased spread of invasive species requiring council response.	City and Neighbourhood Services Place & Economy Property & Property Programmes Corporate Communications	Current and Predicted	4	5	20	Local Biodiversity Plan, Tree Strategy, BCC Biodiversity Implementation Plan	Increase

Climate Risks/Opportunities

Pluvial, Fluvial and Tidal Flooding – Projected Change: Wetter winters, and despite overall trend towards drier summers, a greater risk of localised, intense, summer flooding when it does rain heavily.

Risk or Opportunity	Department	Current or Predicted	Inherent Risk			Current Policies and Procedures	Predicted Change in Future?
			Likelihood	Impact	Risk Score		
(F7) Increased precipitation and sea level rise leading to flood risk for commercial and business infrastructure, in particular for the city centre, Duncrue and port areas of Belfast, leading to disruption, costs for staff and assets, reputational risk and insurance increases.	City and Neighbourhood Services Property & Projects Place & Economy Corporate Communications	Current and Predicted	4	5	20	BCC Emergency Plan, relevant multi-agency plans, site specific plans.	Increase
(F8) Increased precipitation and sea-level rise resulting in flooding, affecting wellbeing and economic development of communities requiring council support and action.	Place & Economy City & Neighbourhood Services Corporate Communications	Current and Predicted	4	4	16	BCC Emergency Plan, relevant multi-agency coordination	Increase
(F9) Increased precipitation leading to landslides and rockfalls affecting council estate, requiring emergency response and asset/property closure	Property & Projects City & Neighbourhood Services Corporate Communications	Predicted	4	4	16	Localised risk – but major	Increase
(F10) Increased precipitation affecting integrity and operation of water bodies in BCC estate, requiring capital works and repair costs	Property & Projects Corporate Communications	Predicted	4	4	16	Current SuDS work and reservoirs assessments underway	Increase
(F11) Increased precipitation leading to greater safety risk for council staff, including waste operatives	City & Neighbourhood Services Human Resources	Predicted	4	3	12	Existing risk assessment, health and safety processes	Increase

Climate Risks/Opportunities

Extreme Heat - Projected Change: Hotter, drier summers and warmer winters. Mean annual temperature increase of up to 4 Celsius by 2100 based on current emissions pathway.

Risk or Opportunity	Department	Current or Predicted?	Inherent Risk			Current Policies and Procedures	Predicted Change in the Future
			Likelihood	Impact	Risk Score		
(HIT1) Increasing frequency of high temperatures leading to staff discomfort or illness, resulting in increased cooling costs, lower productivity, days off, changing shift patterns, home working and PPE.	City and Neighbourhood Services Civic Services, Facilities management, HR, Communications, Planning , Building Control	Predicted	4	2	8	Health and Safety policies and procedures	Increase
(HIT2) Increasing frequency of high temperatures creating greater water demand and increased drought risk impacting on water supply and quality, animal food supply, green infrastructure, landscapes, gorse fire, leisure and local communities, requiring council response.	City and Neighbourhood Services, Emergency Planning, Physical Programmes, City Regeneration & Development, Planning, Building Control	Current and Predicted	4	3	12	BCC Emergency Plan, operational plans and procedures, relevant multi-agency plans	Increase
(HIT3) Increasing frequency of high temperatures and urban heat island effect impacting on vulnerable people and ageing population, requiring Council response and future proofing of planning and building control	City and Neighbourhood Services, Emergency Planning, City Regeneration & Development, Planning, Building Control	Current and Predicted	4	4	16	BCC Emergency Plan, operational plans and procedures, relevant multi agency plans.	Increase

Climate Risks/Opportunities

Extreme Heat - Projected Change: Hotter, drier summers and warmer winters. Mean annual temperature increase of up to 4 Celsius by 2100 based on current emissions pathway.

Risk or Opportunity	Department	Current or Predicted?	Inherent Risk			Current Policies and Procedures	Predicted Change in the Future
			Likelihood	Impact	Risk Score		
(HIT4) Extreme heat exacerbating direct and indirect air quality problems leading to public health issues, affecting council reputation and requiring council response.	City and Neighbourhood Services	Predicted	4	4	16	Air Quality Action Plan	Increase
(HIT5) Changes in growing season leading to disruption and requiring new planting varieties and increased monitoring for pests/invasive species.	City and Neighbourhood Services, Physical Programmes, Planning	Current and Predicted	4	3	12	LDP, Biodiversity Plan, Procurement	Increase
(HIT6) Increasingly frequent spells of hot weather leading to greater use of public amenity and outdoor leisure facilities, impacting on resource planning, green infrastructure and heritage	City and Neighbourhood Services, Physical Programmes, City Regeneration & Development	Current and Predicted	4	2	8	Operational plans and procedures	Increase
(HIT7) Increasingly frequent spells of hot weather leading to increased waste, rate of waste decay/increased pests and disease and odour complaints.	City and Neighbourhood Services, Emergency Planning	Current and Predicted	4	3	12	Belfast Emergency Plan, Waste operational plans and procedures	Increase
(HIT8) Increase in visitor numbers at festivals and events due to increasingly frequent warm weather, requiring council resource due to increased waste, traffic and potential anti-scoial behaviour	Events, City and Neighbourhood Services, Waste, Fleet, Communications, HR	Current and Predicted	4	2	8	Events plans, Events policy	Increase

Climate Risks/Opportunities

Storms – Projected Change: Increased frequency and intensity of extreme weather events.

Risk or Opportunity	Relevant Internal Departments/Service	Current or Predicted	Inherent Risk			Current Policies and Procedures	Predicted Change in the Future
			Likelihood	Impact	Risk Score		
(S1) Increased frequency and intensity of storms resulting in damage to council built assets, heritage and estates leading to financial costs, losses, increased insurance costs and additional resource requirements, including third party contractors.	City & Neighbourhood Services Property & Projects Place & Economy	Current and Predicted	4	5	20	BCC Emergency plan and Operational procedures, Health and Safety and relevant multi-agency plans.	Increase
(S2) Increased frequency and intensity of storms resulting in disruption to service delivery and emergency response access	City & Neighbourhood Services Property & Projects Corporate Communications	Current and Predicted	4	4	16	BCC Emergency plan and Operational procedures, Health and Safety and relevant multi-agency plans.	Increase
(S3) Increasing frequency and intensity of storms disrupting transport, energy, water and communication infrastructure and local communities requiring Council response and support	City & Neighbourhood Services	Current and Predicted	4	5	20	Emergency plans and Operational procedures, Health and Safety relevant multi-agency plans.	Increase
(S4) Increased frequency and intensity of storms resulting in damage to natural assets, including tree falls and landslips, leading to damage, disruption and costs, and requiring council response.	City & Neighbourhood Services Property & Projects Corporate Communications	Current and Predicted	4	5	20	Emergency plans and Operational procedures, Health and Safety relevant multi agency plans.	Increase
(S5) Increased frequency and intensity of storms leading to greater safety risk for council staff, including waste operatives.	City and Neighbourhood Services – Waste/Parks		4	4	16	Existing procedures, risk assessments, health and safety processes	Increase

Climate Risks/Opportunities

Intense Cold – Projected Change: Despite overall trends towards increasing temperatures, intense cold events will still happen, meaning we need to prepare for greater range of extremes.

Risk or Opportunity	Department	Current or Predicted	Inherent Risk			Current Policies and Procedures	Predicted Change in Future?
			Likelihood	Impact	Risk Score		
(C1) Intense Cold resulting in damage to Council property, natural and built assets leading to financial costs, losses, increased insurance costs and additional resource requirements for Belfast City Council, including third party contractors.	City & Neighbourhood Services Property & Projects Place & Economy	Current and Predicted	3	4	12	Operational policies and procedures, planning and design of some assets may help mitigate some impacts	Decrease
(C2) Intense Cold resulting in disruption to Belfast City Council service delivery and emergency response access, increasing in severity with duration of event.	City & Neighbourhood Services Property & Projects Human Resources Corporate Communications	Current and Predicted	3	4	12	Emergency Plan, existing policy and procedures	Decrease
(C3) Intense Cold disrupting transport, energy, water, and communication infrastructure and local communities requiring Council response and support	City & Neighbourhood Services Property & Projects Human Resources	Current and Predicted	3	4	12	Affordable Warmth Scheme, Emergency Plan, Operational policies and procedures	Decrease
(C4) Intense Cold leading to greater safety risk for council staff, including waste operatives.	City & Neighbourhood Services Human Resources Corporate Communications	Current and Predicted	3	4	12	Risk assessments, health and safety procedures and processes, staff training	Decrease

Climate Risks/Opportunities

Global and City Factors

Risk or Opportunity	Department	Current or Predicted?	Inherent Risk			Current Policies and Procedures	Predicted Change in Future?
			Likelihood	Impact	Risk Score		
(CC1) Climate change impacts on weather leading to rising levels of climate migration to Belfast, with BCC expected to lead relevant actions.	City & Neighbourhood Services City & Organisational Strategy	Predicted	3	3	9	Migration plans	Increase
(CC2) Climate change impacts on weather impacting on supply chains, including food, requiring significant council response and incurring and range of direct and indirect costs throughout the city.	City & Neighbourhood Services Place & Economy City & Organisational Strategy Corporate Communications	Current and Predicted	3	4	12	Operational policies and procedures	Increase
(CC3) Criticism of emergency, operations or policy response to Climate Change in BCC, requiring collaborative Council PR and Communications response	City & Neighbourhood Services Corporate Communications	Predicted	3	4	12	Corporate Communications	Increase
(CC4) Failure of strategic decision-making and policy development around Climate, and not linking up major projects e.g. Living With Water with LDP, Competing interest of limited available land	City & Neighbourhood Services Legal & Civic Services Property & Projects Place & Economy Corporate Communications	Current and Predicted	3	4	12	Corporate Plan, BCC Climate Plan, Corporate Risks	Increase

Section 4 - Actions

CAP Actions – Tools for Transition (6)

1. Develop a sustainable/ low carbon procurement policy and supplier guidance documents to support a transition to an inclusive, net zero and resilient future (1.12)
2. Establish an internal Council governance structure that supports sustainable food – potentially reporting to the Climate Programme Board (1.13)
3. Develop a sustainable food policy for the Council that addresses waste, sourcing, packaging, emissions measurement and an events protocol. (1.14)
4. As part of the development of a sustainable/ low carbon procurement policy and supplier guidance documents, include sustainable food requirements such as Veg City, Soil Association's bronze catering mark and the Cool Food Pledge into food provided within Council's estate (1.15)
5. Explore the potential and feasibility of increasing the no. of climate friendly meals sold within the Council estate (1.3)
6. Develop and launch an accessible climate data platform to track progress on delivering climate adaptation and mitigation actions (1.7)

Section 4 - Actions

CAP Actions – Adaptation to Extreme Weather (7)

1. Initiate a series of building-level Climate Risk Assessments for buildings identified at most risk from extreme weather events (2.1)
2. Integrate climate risk scores identified in the CCRA into the BCC Asset Management system and utilise to identify areas for more detailed Climate Risk Assessments on priority sites/buildings and new developments (2.12)
3. Raise awareness of NbS as a resilience measure (2.4)
4. Develop plan to identify, assess, develop and maintain and enhance existing NbS for climate resilience (2.5)
5. Invest in projects that aim to increase resilience and mainstream nature-based solutions (2.16)
6. Apply SUDs policy and guidance (SUDS Manual C753) as standard practice in the Capital Programme (2.3)
7. Start to deliver the Tree Establishment Strategy and continue the One Million Trees Programme (2.19)

Section 4 - Actions

New Actions in 2026

1. Nature in Towns and Cities
2. Bloomberg Alleyways Programme
3. Development of City Climate Adaptation Strategy and Action Plan (Pathways 2 Resilience)

NICCAP 2 Actions

1. In bringing forward their Local Development Plans, Councils will take account of climate change adaptation considerations as indicated in the Strategic Planning Policy Statement.
2. Embed adaptation planning cycle across local council planning.

NI Climate Change Adaptation Programme 3 2024-29 – Thematic Areas

Belfast CLIMATE ACTION

Section 4 - Actions

NICCAP 3 Actions

1. Preparation of a Climate Change Risk Assessment, Action Plan and Investment Framework for Belfast City Council
2. Belfast Community Planning Our Planet Board
3. UPSURGE project resting nature-based solutions
4. Sustainable Food Programme
5. Belfast Tree Strategy (formerly Preparation of an iTree Eco Report for Belfast)
6. Develop a baseline of Climate Impacts on Finance
7. Climate Adaptation Planning By 2025
8. Corporate Risk and Adaptation Climate change adaptation will be embedded in each council corporate plan
9. Work with sustainable food places partnerships/communities to develop community-owned food partnerships by 2029.
10. Undertake work on how adaptation relates to community planning by 2026.
11. Regional Community Resilience Group (RCRG) will have widened its remit to consider the promotion and development of societal resilience.
12. Regional Community Resilience Group will continue to work with communities impacted by flooding
13. Councils will ensure that any sustainability/net zero procurement screening includes climate adaptation
14. Councils will ensure local development plans demonstrate how climate adaptation considerations will be embedded in all approval decisions
15. Local Development Plans will specify that developments are designed using the most up-to-date floodplain definitions
16. Green and Blue Infrastructure targets are set by councils

Section 5 – Case Studies

Case Study 1 – Belfast Tree Strategy – CNS

NICCAP 3, BA, CP, CAP)

Case Study 2 – Local Development Plan – P&E

(NICCAP 3, BA, CP)

Case Study 3 – Nature in Towns and Cities & Alleyways– CNS

(NICCAP 3)

Case Study 4 – Belfast Sustainable Food Programme – C&OS

(NICCAP 3, BA, CP, CAP)

Case Study 5 – UPSURGE – C&OS

(NICCAP 3, BA, CP)

NOTE – 3,000 character limit

Belfast Tree Strategy

The Belfast Tree Strategy was adopted in October 2023 with the purpose of managing and improving the tree-scape in the city, to provide a resilient and diverse urban forest, with the aim of managing and improving the city's tree-scape over a ten year period, focussing on protecting, enhancing, and expanding the Council's woodlands, hedges, and trees, connecting people to nature, and ensuring that they continue to be a major asset to everyone who lives in, works in, and visits Belfast city.

The Belfast Tree Strategy objectives will deliver 37 key actions by 2033 across 3 categories, Trees and Urban Forest Structure, Community framework and Sustainable Resource Management Approach. Since the launch these actions have been achieved: Tree Establishment Strategy – a 'Tree Canopy' map was created which highlights areas with the least trees across the city. Canopy cover across Belfast averages 18.6%, as measured by Google satellite data (range 20.8% in urban and suburban areas- 15.0% in rural areas).

The map enables Council to accurately identify where new trees should be planted and direct resources to increase canopy cover in areas devoid of trees and will improve health and wellbeing and renature the city where its most needed. The Strategy aligns directly with the Woodland Trusts 'Tree Equity work, providing a coordinated and evidence-driven approach to delivering 'the right tree in the right place' approach. In 2024/25 the Council and its partners such as the Belfast Hills Partnership planted 23,397 new trees and in the current tree planting season 2026, we have planted 13,922 new trees and hope to plant 871 linear metres of hedging using native tree species. There are challenges of creating new tree/woodland planting in the future due to the lack of available and suitable planting sites outside of Council's own estate. Any large scale tree planting can only be achieved with partnership working with other large government and private landowners. Tree Cities of the World accreditation – One of the Key Actions of the Belfast Tree Strategy was to work towards achieving international reputation in urban and community forestry and being acknowledged as being a 'Tree City of the World'. The Strategy was pivotal to achieving such accreditation, and the Council was delighted to be acknowledged as a 'Tree City of the World' in 2024, 2025 (new application has been submitted for 2026). Belfast is the only local authority in Ireland who holds this accreditation and is one of 210 recognised cities across the world such as Australia, Brazil, Canada, France, India, Italy, Spain, and the United States. Community Framework – The Council is establishing a volunteer network of community tree volunteer groups, to enable volunteers to plant, maintain trees, and offering them an opportunity to learn new horticultural & Arboricultural skills they can use within their own communities.

Local Development Plan

The Belfast Local Development Plan (LDP) is the city's spatial plan up to 2035. It comprises two parts. The first part, the Plan Strategy (PS), was adopted in May 2023 and includes strategic and operational policies that seek to achieve the overall objective of sustainable development. These policies are in effect and provide the primary basis for the council's decision-making as a planning authority.

The Local Policies Plan (LPP), which is the second part of the LDP, is currently under preparation. The LPP will provide a spatial planning framework to support the PS, including in meeting its core objectives to meet economic and social needs in the city and to protect and improve the environment. It will contain the local policies, including site specific proposals, designations and land use zonings, required to deliver the council's vision, objectives and strategic policies, as set out in the PS. The LDP sets out a growth strategy for the city that supports 46,000 additional jobs and accommodates 31,600 additional homes by 2035. Within this context, the PS sets out key strategic policies, which include: improving health & wellbeing and community cohesion; positive placemaking; environmental resilience; greater connectivity; and an enhanced green & blue infrastructure network.

The overall thrust of the Belfast LDP is to facilitate sustainable development at appropriate locations, including by discouraging the reliance of individual car use and encouraging journeys by public transport and active travel. The LDP key principle of compact urban form that encourages higher housing densities at sustainable locations was largely founded on the idea of reducing the need to travel and to help support mass transit options. The issue of climate change, both mitigation and adaptation, is addressed throughout the LDP PS. This includes matters such as: Better integration between transport and land use planning; Increased urban densities; Reuse of brownfield land and repurposing existing buildings; Energy efficiency and green design; Avoiding flood risk areas; Sustainable drainage systems; Green & Blue Infrastructure; Active/sustainable travel;and Protection of trees and more new planting.

There are many policies in the adopted PS that seek to mitigate and adapt to the climate emergency across a wide range of policy areas, including those listed above. These include strategic and operational policies relating to housing, design, environmental protection and natural heritage policy areas. As regards 'climate change' specifically, Strategic Policy SP6 - Environmental resilience states: "The council will support development where it helps to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and is adaptable in a changing climate to build environmental resilience."

More information available here -https://www.belfastcity.gov.uk/Planning-and-building-control/Planning/Local-development-plan-(1)

Nature Towns and Cities & Alleyways

This project aims to develop a shared, city-wide vision to facilitate informed decision making to create a nature-rich, resilient and thriving city. By building on existing and emerging projects and workstreams, such as the NI Greenspace vision, the NI Landscape Partnership Habitat Network Mapping and Belfast 2024, the aim is to bring all of these elements together by building partnerships, new ways of working and produce a suite of spatially mapped case study projects as a blueprint for nature-inspired plans and practices for urban settlements.

There are two key pillars, i.)improving existing green and blue spaces and ii.) greening the grey, with a particular focus on alleyways, peace-walls and active travel routes. These two pillars will be supported by data gathering, exploration around new funding models and an extensive people engagement programme to support all aspects of the project. Much of the project will involve working with local communities to enable more collaborative working with statutory authorities and the environmental sector. Subsequently, findings could be utilised to secure funding for capital works. The project will comprise of four key elements:

Evidence Base –We will strengthen the evidence base through evaluating existing datasets, identify gaps and shortfalls and map all existing and proposed nature and climate projects. We will also commission a piece of work on Biodiversity Net Gain readiness and biodiversity that has adapted to live in our towns and cities and increase awareness and appreciation of these urban habitats for nature and climate resilience.

Enhancing existing Parks and Open Spaces - Across existing green and blue spaces, we will explore pathways towards alternative management practices moving from a horticultural focus to a nature and climate emphasis, by focussing on incorporating biodiversity enhancement proposals into ongoing redesign and investment programs including the Pitches Strategy and playground refurbishment.

Greening the Grey - Within the built environment, we will explore opportunities to green the grey, with a particular focus on the areas of need under the Belfast EJI and it's unique network of alleyways and peace walls, as well as the emerging active travel routes, by implementing the use of Nature-based Solutions (NbSs), such as Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems (SuDs), to design proposals, to better connect nature and people. We will create a guidance document outlining best practice and make recommendations for opportunities across Belfast.

Organisational Sustainability –Throughout the NTC bid engagement process community representatives identified sustainability and funding security as a key constraint for project development and delivery. We want to evaluate corporate investment opportunities and bolster the sustainability of volunteer input.

Belfast Sustainable Food Partnership

Adaptation & Mandatory Public Body Reporting

Belfast's food system spans production, supply, access, and waste. It holds immense potential to drive positive change for public health, environmental sustainability, and social justice. Too many people lack access to adequate, nutritious, and culturally appropriate food, while others face mounting costs and fragile supply chains.

Sustainability and food is a key ambition of the Belfast Resilience Strategy (2020) and a core element of the Belfast Agenda. By mid 2022, 16% of NI adults experienced food insecurity. Global supply chain volatility, Brexit, and climate change compound these pressures. NI's draft Climate Change Adaptation Plan calls for food security action.

About the Partnership

Established in 2023, the Belfast Sustainable Food Partnership brings together over 23 organisations to deliver cross-sectoral, coordinated action. Belfast holds the Bronze Sustainable Food Places Award and is actively working towards Silver. The partnership's strategy, The Belfast Way (2025–2027), was co-developed with communities through 40+ events engaging over 200 people.

Six Working Groups

Community Growing, Food Access, Sustainable Food Economy, Transforming Procurement, Food for the Planet, Food Waste

Key Achievements

St George's Market welcomed over one million visitors in 2024–25. The One Million Trees programme planted 91,313 trees including agroforestry projects. The UPSURGE project (EU Horizon 2020) established a community garden at a former industrial site. The Corporate Plan 2025–2028 commits to circular economy approaches to food waste.

Key Lessons

Belfast faces climate-related food security risks. There is strong appetite from grassroots organisations for joined-up food systems transformation. Food policy must align with housing, health, poverty, and climate frameworks. People with lived experience must be central to strategy development. Cross-learning through the Sustainable Food Places network accelerates progress.

UPSURGE

UPSURGE (2021-2026) is an EU Regenerative Lighthouse project focused on testing nature-based solutions (NBS) to share learning and good practice on pollution alleviation, citizen health and climate resilience. Five cities: Belfast, Breda, Budapest, Maribor and Katowice, are demonstrating different kinds of NBS to tackle a range of socio-environmental challenges. A multi-disciplinary team at QUB's School of Natural and Built Environment are supporting all cities to co-design, construct and deploy NBS on real sites. In Belfast, Belfast City Council's Climate Team are implementing agroecology solutions including a research garden and community garden. QUB researchers are exploring the impact of NBS on the urban heat island effect, lessons on the co-creation of urban NBS, the risks of soil pollution on urban farming, and opportunities of soil carbon sequestration. Potential impacts include policy change, journal papers, public awareness, and a new NBS implementation advice service led by the consortium.

Section 6 – Data Validation and Authorisation

- Validation process and source of validation

- Council Approval Process
  - Climate Programme Board
  - CMT
  - Climate & City Resilience Committee

Belfast CLIMATE ACTION

www.belfastcity.gov.uk/climate-change