

UK Climate Change Risk Assessment (CCRA): Notes from Government workshop **29 September 2020**

Introduction

This document summarises the discussions that took place during breakout sessions convened at an online workshop run by SWM, the Committee on Climate Change and partners. It is part of one of seven research projects commissioned by the Committee on Climate Change (CCC) to inform the development of the third UK Climate Change Risk Assessment (CCRA3) Evidence Report, due for publication in 2021. The project focuses on how [improvements to the accessibility](#) of the CCRA3 Evidence Report can be made by building on the good work already carried out for CCRA2 through better use of communications, providing engagement opportunities and reframing of outputs.

This workshop aimed to bring together individuals from Government departments from across the UK who will be required to understand the key messages and risks that CCRA3 will show. We are developing a series of factsheets for different sectors and wanted Government officials' input into what they would like these to convey. The factsheet themes are:

- Agriculture and Food
- Land use, land use change and forestry (i.e. Impacts on decarbonisation/sequestration)

- Marine environment
- Terrestrial biodiversity

- Flooding and coastal change
- Water

- Health and social care
- Housing

- Energy
- Telecoms
- Transport

- Business, including supply chains and trade

- Young people

This workshop focused on all factsheets except for Young People. The breakout sessions during which the attendees from Government discussed their views on what they would like to see in the factsheets were grouped according to the spacing of the bullet points above.

The questions that we asked delegates to consider in the breakout sessions were as follows:

1. What are the key policies and priorities that we need to be aware of in the sector that could influence the content of the factsheet?
2. Will these factsheets be used by Government departments to influence future policies or priorities, or will they be used to communicate the risks to other audience(s) in the sector? In either case, what are the key points that you will need the factsheet to include to enable you to do this effectively?
3. How technical should the language used in the factsheets be?

Breakout discussion notes; sector specific points

Agriculture and Food and

Land use, land use change and forestry (i.e. Impacts on decarbonisation/sequestration)

- Tricky to include policies as they vary between the four nations; the picture is messy and complicated and potentially lengthy and fast moving. The detail of these would more comfortably fit in the National Summaries and be better accessed via hyperlinks in the factsheets.
- Better and easier to include would be general policy areas affected, policy opportunities and direction of travel:
 - New agricultural policy being developed because of Brexit to replace EU CAP (UK wide)
 - Better land use (agriculture and forestry)
 - Food security
 - Woodland creation (e.g. plan to plant 18 million trees in NI)
 - Agriculture a big sector in NI, using 70% of land area; therefore, it would also be good to include the benefits of taking action if there's room)
- Very useful to know how risks are changing (particularly for civil servants who regularly change roles and ask the question), so happy to see this reflected in the template, but also an opportunity to do this graphically e.g. via arrows would help in reducing text.
- Tricky to strike the right balance between being too wordy and over simplistic, but edit down as much as possible and use graphics where there is an opportunity to do so and do not lengthen unnecessarily, keeping it user friendly.

Marine environment

- Scotland Marine Spatial Plan includes core policies (currently in draft).
- [UK Marine Strategy](#) and links to [OSPAR](#), which is integrating climate risk into its indicators. This strategy is currently being renewed.
- [MCCIP Report Cards 2020](#) cover the key topics that need to be considered for Marine and Coast.

Terrestrial biodiversity

- [Edinburgh Declaration](#) on post-2020 global biodiversity framework.
- [UN Biodiversity Conference](#) (COP 15) in May 2021; worth identifying links to climate risk.
- [Scottish Biodiversity Strategy](#); the CCRA has been used to inform this.
- Invasive species risks very different in Scotland than rest of UK, so a breakdown of Scottish specific points is important.

Flooding and coastal change

- [MCCIP Report Cards 2020](#) cover the key topics that need to be considered for Marine and Coast.
- A graphic to show the increased risk to sea level rise and coastal erosion between CCRA2 and 3 would help to show what the key points that need accelerating are.
- There is a greater understanding and awareness of the terminology and risks around flooding, as more flooding because of climate change is occurring already. Therefore, we want to deliver as much information as possible.
- We need to ensure we are looking forward and planning for the future.
- NI updated its flood mapping last year (2019) to fulfil its Flood Directive requirements; although the current mapping is based on UKCP09, the desire is to update it in future using UKCP18 information. Overall, NI is seeking to embed climate change flood mapping in planning decisions as a priority. NI has quite strong policy around planning in flood risk areas.

- We should be looking to communicate the risks to everyone. Those managing the risks, the ones making the decisions and the vulnerable communities. Therefore, the factsheet language should be as accessible as possible.
- The way we all work together to address the risks and communicate with the range of interested parties is crucial. The consistency in the approach taken across the administrations in addressing key issues/approaches shows that we all need to work together on issues such as surface water and Property Level Resilience and to apply a catchment-based approach which manages flood risk through a range of measures such as NFM etc.
- Another audience that would benefit from the fact sheets would be the resilience community, groups like RCRG (Regional Community Resilience Group) in NI and the communities that are at risk with which the RCRG liaises. Through RCRG, Govt in NI is in direct contact with these at risk communities.
- We should use other communication channels from other groups focusing on flooding to spread information about the factsheet.
- The message needs to be spread that flooding is something that will impact on every other area of society. This point should be included to get everyone's attention.
- Need to consider the increase to flood risk: e.g. in NI there are about 45,000 properties presently at risk; this could increase by [39% by the end of the century](#) due to climate change.
- Within the Floods Directive planning processes, NI Water is looking at Belfast, along with other risk areas, to develop detailed Drainage Area Plans to address surface water problems. Also, the [Living With Water Programme](#) includes looking at options for water storage in risk areas, to alleviate flooding and provide water quality and environmental benefits.
- Surface water risks also must be considered alongside fluvial.
- In Scotland, there is currently in a shift towards Natural Flood management, climate resilience, climate adaptation and looking at green and blue infrastructure. These are things that we would want emphasised in the factsheets. Scotland is also investing £12 million more in climate adaptation and spending an additional £150 million on flood management schemes.
- A [Baseline Study and Gap Analysis of Coastal Erosion Risk Management in NI](#) has recently been completed. DAERA are now proposing to capture better baseline mapping data for a coastal swathe of NI.
- There should be a strong link between this factsheet and the water one.

Water

- Work is being done on National Water Sources and we are trying to get to a point where water companies are working more collaboratively on planning to increase joined up thinking.
- The [National Water Framework](#) is currently England only, but English Govt is working closely with the Welsh Government already.
- Wales is behind England on this work and is currently working to deliver messages of risk. We have introduced new mapping and climate change will be a massive feature of the Welsh strategy.
- Should be a strong link between this factsheet and the flooding and coastal one.

Health and social care

- Challenging how to frame the factsheet and whether it focuses on the health impacts of climate change or resilience and risks to the system. It could be possible to have two separate sheets, one focusing on the health and care systems and health impacts, and another looking at structural determinants and the interventions needed. The audiences for these would be different.
- Really keen to see focus on broader determinants as well as health and social care delivery. Need to identify risks to delivery to get traction with people who matter. More immediate risks (Covid, etc.) always take precedence and its often harder to consider climate risks.

- All sectors have implications for health and inequality and it could be considered a cross-cutting theme. Everything impacts on health and wellbeing of communities.
- Health Boards and Directors of Public Health are considered as a key audience, as are local government across sectors. Therefore, simple language that people can engage with is important.
- Reference to the [Wellbeing and Future Generations Act](#) in Wales should be made; it requires everything to have regard to climate change.
- Needs to consider psychological impacts of extreme weather too.
- PHE is looking at place of death during heat events; this highlights the greatest increase in excess mortality in care homes but even more so in domestic housing.
- Care home overheating very relevant in Scotland; cannot be seen as being just a southern issue.

Housing

- Interconnections between housing and other sectors/dimensions is important to consider, e.g. climate resilient housing and issues related to flooding, overheating, wildfires/air quality, gardens and the links to health, biodiversity and whole housing system.
- Water efficiency gets less attention than energy efficiency.
- Lots of energy efficiency interventions are making more problems with ventilation. There is a need to consider overheating, air quality and ventilation which also closely link to health impacts.
- Difficulty securing buildings and content insurance.
- A key policy in Scotland is [Housing to 2040](#); the vision is still being articulated and a route map is being developed. These housing related dimensions need to feature.
- Need to ensure issues around housing do not become too siloed in one factsheet.
- Most of the current housing stock will still be around in future and there is a danger with the way retrofit is approached that could leave parts of the sector in a situation where they'll have to do loads more work if not all issues climate risk are considered.
- Do not lose the fact that 20% of housing is traditional or historic building stock in Scotland; there needs to be regard for this as there are impacts with aspects such as ventilation, for example. In Scotland, 75-80% of building stock for 2050/80 is already constructed. Likewise, in Wales a third of buildings are of traditional construction.
- Further research is also required to identify who is most at risk and in what type of property they live in.
- In NI, the factsheet will be used by government depts. It will also be used by those involved in retrofit, e.g. LAs, consultants and those involved in design and construction.
- The factsheets will also be circulated to public service boards in Wales; therefore, they need to be approachable for a wide audience.
- Simple language is required as we receive many enquiries from people who are not involved in climate change aspects.

Telecoms

- Another aspect that gets forgotten is increasing working from home and implications for ICT infrastructure; it would be useful to highlight different interconnections at a high level.

Energy

- Energy Strategy for Northern Ireland (new strategy under development – consultation March 2021, final strategy Nov 2021).
- Each English LEP has an energy strategy in place which prioritise local energy development.
- Factsheets are likely to be used as a tool to highlight key messages to industry and make them aware of challenges/gaps, and not used so much for internal decision-making/policy.

- As a result of using the factsheets to communicate to industry, the use of plain English is more important to ensure it is accessible and useful to those groups.

Transport

- [National Transport Strategy for Scotland](#)
- [Northern Ireland Transport Decarbonisation Plans](#) should be taken into consideration.
- The factsheets will primarily be a tool for informing policy makers and decision makers within Transport Scotland and across government to get other branches of government to consider what more they can do on adaptation. But there is also a want to use it to engage with key stakeholders, especially Councils but also industry reps.
- For policy and decision makers, the use of technical language is fine and in general there is less concern about the amount of text but use of infographics where possible would be good. The level of detail given on key risks/opportunities is about right and those who need more detail can go to the technical chapters.

Business, including supply chains and trade

- Given the global nature of business and supply chains, the factsheet must reflect the broader context of climate change but also Covid-19 and Brexit; a triple whammy! However, there is a danger of over complicating the factsheets if we try to address everything.
- Flooding not really coming through as a topic of interest to businesses, but more businesses are thinking about sustainable use of water/water deficiency/scarcity e.g. requirements for boreholes. Helping businesses understand risks in terms of costs (e.g. water will be scarcer and therefore more expensive) will help motivate action.
- Key elements coming up for businesses in Scotland include peatlands, both in terms of business (i.e. whiskey production) and restoration and CCS.
- Key messages for Government are likely to be quite different to those of relevance for businesses themselves. Perhaps this factsheet needs more thinking in terms of key audience?
- Note some factsheet audiences (e.g. NI Water) deal with both domestic issues and businesses so would be feeding the same messages to different end users.
- There is a need to tap into business drivers using appropriate language if we are going to drive action; non-technical language is preferred.
- Actions page is currently very targeted at government. Should this include links to more info/areas of the CCRA of relevance to business to help them know where to go next?

Breakout discussion notes; non-sector specific points

Policy and priority considerations

- We need to consider how policy is affecting the risk. The impact climate risk has on policy goals, for example biodiversity targets may be harder to reach due to the impact of climate risks. We need to increase impact while recognising difficulty.
- The purpose of the CCRA is to help put together the NAP; what do people do to address the risk? This is then used to communicate to senior ministers and decision makers and is why we need more action outlining what we need to do; it is important to be accessible and made easy to understand by senior people.
- [Climate Ready Scotland: climate change adaptation](#) programme needs to be considered, but overall, it is an outcomes-based approach and less risk focused; the CCRA fills a gap in Scottish adaptation strategy.
- 'Actions' can help those working to develop adaptation plans and more generally help to develop new policy.

Geographical nuances

- We need visuals to demonstrate the differences throughout the UK for both internal and external use, e.g. there is no specific team working on Climate Change in NI integrated across policy areas and having more tailored messages will help to push the message up to stakeholders.
- Factsheets should reflect the different levels of risk across the Devolved Administrations, e.g. particular risks that are especially pertinent to each DA. Factsheets could perhaps include small flags next to each risk showing which DA it is a particular risk for.
- Somewhere in the template there needs to be a box allowing for key policies to be recorded that have been agreed that will impact on future risk such as the Government Policy Statement, National Strategy in England, Welsh national strategy etc.
- Distinction between urban vs rural in terms of policy landscape as well as differences in resilience challenges is important to reflect.

Audience and language

- Factsheets are used to support engagement across other sectors of government who may be less familiar with the risks, as well as to engage more widely. So, they will be of use as a communication tool both within government and with external stakeholders. Therefore, accessibility of language is important and technical terms may need to be simplified.
- Consensus view is that the factsheets will be used within Government, across different policy areas and in the sector with stakeholders to communicate to a wider audience.
- Fine to use the 'language of the sector' as this is the primary audience, but avoid overly technical language (CCRA speak) as some people within Government will not be familiar with it.
- However, we should avoid high level statements because this is a technical process and high level messages are already out there. Now is the time to delve into the specifics.
- Risk and adaptation are so broad that cross cutting engagement both within Govt and with external stakeholders is vital; the factsheets should, therefore, reflect that these will be used externally and their language/content should reflect that wider context.
- Do we need a more technical 4-5 page factsheet and a less technical one-pager that just provides very basic headlines, depending on the audience?
- There needs to be consideration of the headings, e.g. 'more action required' and what this means. Do we need to show if things have got worse or same as before for each risk?
- Is there the possibility to have draft factsheets re-checked with a non-technical audience especially those from businesses/wider stakeholders, as was done during the initial set of stakeholder interviews?
- Factsheets need to be specific to get traction for specific audiences. It might be good to show the links between different factsheets graphically rather than in text.
- The factsheets are most likely to be used to brief those in more senior positions, rather than the other way round, therefore the language should reflect this.

Design and appearance

- There are some simple things that can be done to ensure the factsheets are as accessible as possible, such as use of graphics and explaining the urgency scores.
- Case studies might draw attention to particular risks at the expense of others, as well as add to the length, so may be better in other outputs.
- Regarding the colours, the traffic light system is a bit misleading e.g. green for 'maintain a watching brief' does not necessarily mean everything is okay and action does not need to happen.
- However, others stated that they liked the use of colour as it acts as a 'temperature reading' of the risks.

- Is there an opportunity for more stats/infographics in bottom section?
- There were several positive comments around the infographics at the top and bottom of the double-spread in the middle, and the ease with which you can quickly find a risk you're interested in at the top and track that quickly to the relevant section of the text below.
- We thought there could be a more obvious link to the national summaries and technical chapters for those that want it, perhaps via the background box at the end of the last page.
- Initial observation is that they are still very text heavy and the risks are very descriptive. I like the format and template, but concerned about the amount of text and we need to ensure it is user friendly for the end user.
- Consistency in appearance should not override other factors; what matters is consistency in how well they are understood. If that means a different content/look for different factsheets, fine.
- The format of the template might be the same but the space for the entries needed may vary e.g. if the number of risk are different or there is less or more to say on one particular aspect; needs considering how this will work.
- Can very readily and easily spread the message using the factsheets. They are a very good tool and could easily be included in a PowerPoint slide.