

ADAPTING TO THE IMPACTS OF CLIMATE CHANGE AND EXTREME WEATHER EVENTS BUSINESS BRIEFING – SHROPSHIRE

Introduction

Over the last few years the UK has been impacted by a number of extreme weather events such as flooding, heat waves and heavy snowfall. Climate scientists predict that these severe weather events will continue and become more frequent in the future.

The West Midlands and Shropshire has experienced its own share of these extreme events, many of which have had a major impact on the local business community. In Shropshire, flooding due to heavy rainfall has been the biggest problem, with snowfall and wind damage having the next most significant effect.



Businesses directly impacted by the floods in 2007 took an average of 26 weeks to return to normal operating capacity. Some small businesses can take up to two years to recover from a flood - and some do not survive.

What are the future climate projections for Shropshire?

Climate change models suggest that a number of changes could take place across Shropshire including warmer summer temperatures, lower summer rainfall, higher winter rainfall and more short duration extreme weather events such as storms and floods¹.

How might businesses in Shropshire be affected?

Experience in the West Midlands has shown that extreme weather could have some serious consequences for your business operations, not just for your premises and staff, but also by disrupting your suppliers, distributors or customers.

Examples of potential impact include:

- Markets – demand for products and services will change with some markets shrinking, some growing and markets for new products and services developing
- Suppliers, logistics and delivery – disruptions to supply chains, transport and utilities
- Products, processes, stock and raw materials – impacts on climate sensitive processes such as farming and food production
- Finance – additional costs incurred through increased insurance premiums, raw material supplies and the cost of investing in adaptation measures
- People – impacts of extreme temperature variations on the working environment
- Premises – potential impact and damage to building fabric

¹ Local Climate Impacts Profile for Shropshire, Shropshire Council 2009.

How should you respond?

Preparing for a changing climate and extreme weather events makes good business sense. Businesses need to think about the potential impact that climate change and severe weather events can have on their business and develop robust business continuity plans.

As a starting point ask yourself the following questions:

- Over the last 5 years has your business been affected by an extreme weather event (e.g. flooding, snow, storms, heat wave)?
- How prepared do you think your business is to deal with an extreme weather event?
- To what extent has your business considered the potential impact of extreme weather events and have you taken action (e.g. developed a business continuity plan)?

RICOH Local Case Study: RICOH UK Products, Telford

Ricoh UK Products Limited (RPL) is a subsidiary of Ricoh Japan, the world's leading manufacturer of office automation equipment.

Established in 1984, the company manufactures photocopiers and consumables utilising its 2050 Plan and People Planet Profit (3-P's) sustainability principles. These pillars of sustainability exemplify employee engagement, environmental impact reduction / resource conservation, and cost reduction/ revenue generation, which are fundamental to business continuity.

As a global business with global supply chains, the company has recognised the potential impact that climate change and extreme weather events can have on their business, particularly to their supply chains.

As part of their wider programme to contribute to a sustainable society the company have introduced their Comet Circle Life Cycle methodology which focuses on the entire lifecycle of their products, with its major focus on resource efficiency through remanufacturing. This approach has significantly reduced the consumption of raw materials used by the company, therefore reducing their vulnerability to the depletion of natural resources and scarcity caused by climate impacts. The company has also reduced their environmental impact by over 30% by adopting this remanufacturing (resource conservation) approach.

Key Learning Points:

- Climate change and severe weather events could potentially have a significant impact on your supply chains and the availability and cost of raw materials.
- Businesses need to consider how they would continue to supply their customers if their supply chain was severely affected by an extreme weather event.

Businesses of all sizes need to consider the potential impacts that extreme weather events can have on their supply chains. Reviewing your suppliers and the potential risk areas can help you to reduce the impact of these events on your business so that you can continue to trade.

Where can I go for help?

The good news is there are a number of resources available to help businesses to prepare for the potential impacts of climate change and extreme weather events including:

Local Resources:

[Weathering the Storm – Saving and Making Money in a Changing Climate](#)

[A Practical Guide for Small Businesses in the West Midlands](#)

This guide has been produced for small and medium sized businesses (SMEs) in the West Midlands. It will help you to understand how you could be affected by weather, including extreme events, and how you can improve your chances of a quick recovery. The guide also sets out business opportunities from responding to a changing climate, and provides useful tools and contact information.

[Shropshire Local Climate Impacts Profile](#)

The Local Climate Impacts Profile enables organisations to better understand the impact and consequences weather can have on service provision and strategic performance. It utilises media archives for historical weather events building a picture of how weather can affect an organisation and matches it with projected scenarios.

National Resources:

[BITC Business Resilience Health Check tool](#) - helps businesses to become more resilient to interruptions that they may face, identifies areas where business operations could be impacted by climate change, and offers advice on how businesses can adapt and prepare for these changes.

[Business Link Crisis Management and Business Continuity Planning](#)

This Business Link guide helps businesses to identify risks, make preparations and test how your business is likely to cope in a disaster.

[Environment Agency Flood Map](#) - Visit the Environment Agency Flood Map to check whether your premises are at risk of flooding from rivers or the sea.

Be prepared for flooding.
Call **0845 988 1188** or visit
www.environment-agency.gov.uk/floodline

[UKCIP - BACLIAT: Business Areas Climate Assessment Tool](#)

BACLIAT is a good starting point for exploring the implications of climate change for your particular business or sector. It comprises a simple check list for assessing the potential impacts of climate change.

[The Met Office](#)

This is the UK's national weather service, with forecasts available from its website. Forecasts are for anything from the next few hours to the coming season.

