

WMCA's next steps on climate change adaptation

Lead organisation:

Sustainability West Midlands

Project Manager: Alan Carr (Senior Sustainability Adviser)

Customers:



WM Sustainability Roadmap themes addressed:



Project Duration:

April – December 2022

The Project

Building on our [wider regional work](#) on climate change adaptation with the Environment Agency, the West Midlands Combined Authority (WMCA) commissioned SWM, supported by our members [Accelar](#) and our Associate [Mat Burhouse](#), to help commence their work on the subject, fitting in with their wider and well established [sustainability ambitions](#).

Aims

- To produce a high level summary of the climate change scenarios, likely impacts and prioritised risks across the WMCA area for policymakers.
- To establish the roles, responsibilities and opportunities for WMCA in helping the region adapt to climate change.
- To identify the next steps in evidence, data and mapping to enable a better understanding of climate impacts across the West Midlands.
- To provide an overview of financing options related to climate change adaptation.
- To develop a summary of the approaches to climate adaptation in other regions and UK cities.

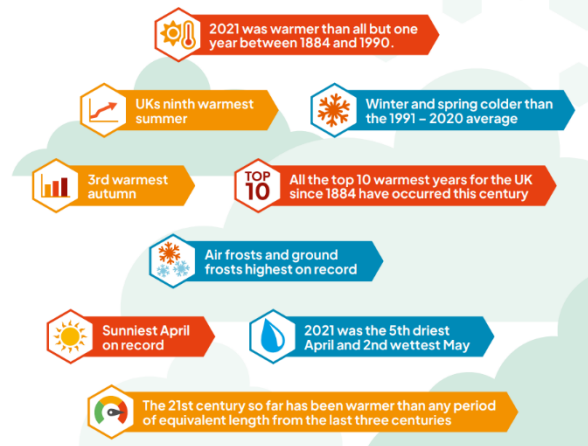
SWM's role

Through stakeholder engagement, frequent liaison with the WMCA Environment Team and our own experience and knowledge gained from the delivery of other related projects, we were

responsible for producing outputs that helped fulfil the aims outlined above. SWM project managed the work, overseeing and delivering outputs but also managing the work of the sub-contractors as identified.

Challenges

- Ensuring the summary of risks and impacts was not too doom-mongering was quite hard; the reality of climate change projections is a harsh one, and presenting this in an opportunistic and optimistic way is almost impossible. Striking a balance between not scaremongering but being clear on what the likely impacts will be required very specific uses of language and tone.
- While the audience for this work was primarily those who work for the WMCA or their seven constituent councils, i.e. policymakers, we recognised that many people from a range of organisations and backgrounds will find the aforementioned summary of interest. We had to consider this and be clear that producing a document that was accessible to all walks of life was very difficult.
- As with any piece of work on adaptation, moving from stated intention to practical action is a challenge. The work we have supported the WMCA with is very much a starting point, and the next step is responding to the actions that we have identified in their adaptation plan, i.e. the 'roles and responsibilities' piece. This can only be apparent via the effective use of resources and acquisition of funding, something that the WMCA is really keen to secure in the near future.



The Outputs

Through extensive engagement and research, the following outputs have been delivered:

- The [publication](#) of a Summary of Climate Change Impacts in the West Midlands Combined Authority Area.
- A report that details what additional datasets the WMCA could consider accessing in order to enhance the above summary and give greater clarity on the region's risks and impacts.
- A high-level adaptation plan for the WMCA's operations and services, outlining what they should consider to kick-start their adaptation activity.
- A range of adaptation financing options enabling them to align these to appropriate adaptation actions for future consideration.

	Best-Case Scenario (RCP 2.6)		Worst-Case Scenario (RCP 8.5)	
	Summer	Winter	Summer	Winter
Baseline 2050 2099 (Avg. temp.)	15.4°C 1.7°C warmer 2.3°C warmer	4°C 0.9°C warmer 1.2°C warmer	15.4°C 2.1°C warmer 6.5°C warmer	4°C 1.6°C warmer 4°C warmer
(Avg. precipitation)	171mm 17% drier 25% drier	195mm 4% wetter 7% wetter	171mm 23% drier 42% drier	195mm 7% wetter 24% wetter
	4% less cloud cover 10% less cloud cover	Little change	4% less cloud cover 21% less cloud cover	Little change
	7% more humid 9% more humid	8% more humid 8% more humid	9% more humid 26% more humid	11% more humid 31% more humid

- Case studies describing how other combined authorities and cities across the UK are addressing climate change adaptation issues, to learn from any good practice.

In the Future

We are keen to continue working with the WMCA, both individually and as part of our wider regional work on adaptation, to help support its work on adaptation. Unlike most traditional consultancies, we do not deliver a piece of work and then disappear forever, expecting the client to get on with it, especially when it comes to our local stakeholders. We will continue to engage with the WMCA on this agenda to help develop their forthcoming adaptation planning.

Accolades

This project has given the WMCA the opportunity to prioritise and accelerate our work on climate change adaptation, as well as raise awareness of its importance across the organisation. We are now able to embark on a structured plan of action that includes considering with greater confidence how climate risks affect the authority's projects and activities, and what we can do to address them.

Richard Rees, Senior Programme Manager - Environment, West Midlands Combined Authority.

Contact Details

For further information on the project or to work with us in one of a variety of ways, please [see our consultancy page](#) or contact the SWM team on enquiries@swm.org.uk.