

# Adapting Malvern Hills and Wychavon to Climate Change

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## Lead organisation

Sustainability West Midlands

Project Delivery team: Alan Carr (Climate Change Adaptation Lead), Morgan Roberts (Project Officer), Louis March-Smith (Project and Data Officer)

## Customers



## WM Sustainability Roadmap themes addressed



## Project Duration

September 2025 – February 2026

## The Project

Recognising our [unparalleled experience](#), Malvern and Wychavon District Councils commissioned SWM to co-create a climate change risk assessment and adaptation plan for the area.

## Aims

- To analyse UK Climate Change Projections to gain a clearer picture of how the area's climate may change over the course of this century.
- To develop a climate change risk assessment and adaptation plan which details how the area's people, built and natural environment, businesses and infrastructure need to respond to projected climate changes.
- To engage with many stakeholders across the districts to upskill them on climate change adaptation, listen to real-life stories of how climate change has affected them and co-create the actions that need to be taken forward.

## The Outputs

- A concise climate change adaptation plan for Malvern Hills district.

- A concise climate change adaptation plan for Wychavon district.
- A detailed evidence report for both districts.

By way of stakeholder engagement, we:

- Undertook an initial stakeholder mapping exercise
- Ran a webinar that introduced adaptation and the project
- Ran two workshops with Councillors from both districts
- Undertook 1-2-1 interviews with key stakeholders who are most likely to play a role in delivering the action plan
- Ran an online survey for other stakeholders to complete
- Convened a workshop for parish and town councils to learn more about issues happening on the ground in communities
- Ran a follow up survey with the parish and town councils
- Undertook a thorough consultation process giving all stakeholders an opportunity to feedback on a draft plan.



Upton on Sever in flood, 2020 © Malvern Hills and Wychavon Councils

## Challenges

- Malvern and Wychavon Councils share some services but not others; this sometimes made engagement more difficult as we sometimes needed to duplicate our efforts to ensure we were extracting views from across the whole area.
- The uncertainties surrounding Local Government Reorganisation (LGR) can result in 'selling' the purpose of producing the adaptation plan now trickier. Our argument in favour of this was that climate change does not respect boundaries or how long LGR takes to come into force. Moreover, LGR could be an opportunity to ensure climate adaptation is embedded into the thinking and strategic direction of the new council from the start.



Crown Meadow near Evesham in drought, © Malvern Hills and Wychavon Councils

- This adaptation plan is very much a starting point, and the next step is responding to the actions that have been identified in their adaptation plan. We understand how tricky this can be in the absence of consistent and mandatory policies and reporting leading to a flow of resources.

## In the Future

We are keen to continue working with Malvern and Wychavon Councils to help support their 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 Councils on this agenda to help develop their forthcoming adaptation planning.

## Testimonial

*"The council recognised the importance of climate adaptation and the vital role local authorities play in driving this agenda forward. However, we lacked the internal expertise and capacity to progress this work effectively. That's where SWM made a real difference. Their knowledge and experience gave us a clear understanding of the climate risks facing our districts and resulted in a practical, well-structured action plan to guide and prioritise our response. This was underpinned by a robust evidence base and extensive stakeholder engagement. SWM's professionalism and strong project management ensured the work was delivered smoothly and on schedule. They were a pleasure to work with, and I would happily recommend them to any organisation seeking support on their adaptation journey."*

Matt Barker, Carbon Reduction Manager, Malvern Hills and Wychavon District Councils.

## Contact Details

To find out how we can support you with your adaptation activity, please visit our [adaptation consultancy pages](#) or contact [enquiries@swm.org.uk](mailto:enquiries@swm.org.uk).