

# Synthesis report: Adaptation Learning Exchange Workshop 1

Wednesday 25<sup>th</sup> June, 2014  
Dovecot Studios, Edinburgh

August 2014

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This report was prepared as part of Sniffer's work delivering the Adaptation Scotland programme.

Sniffer is a charity delivering knowledge-based solutions to resilience and sustainability issues. We create and use breakthrough ideas and collaborative approaches across sectors, to make Scotland a more resilient place to live, work and play. Through innovative partnership approaches we share good practice, synthesise and translate evidence, commission new studies and target communications, guidance and training.

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## 1 Purpose

This report provides a synthesis of the first Adaptation Learning Exchange (ALE) workshop held on Wednesday 25<sup>th</sup> June 2014 at Dovecot Studios, Edinburgh. During the workshop there were four presentation and discussion sessions:

- an introduction to climate change adaptation;
- transformation and leadership;
- communicating adaptation; and
- map your challenges and find your allies.

A summary of each session is provided in this report, along with next steps for participants and the ALE.

The overarching theme of the workshop was “communicating adaptation and building the business case”. As this was the first occasion that all participants met collectively, the workshop was designed to enable participants to understand more about each other’s goals, challenges and successes – and to make connections. The workshop was also designed to inform the content and format further workshops and activities in the ALE.

The workshop was attended by representatives from each of the 10 participating organisations:

- Transport Scotland
- Scottish Water
- NHS National Services Scotland
- Aberdeen City Council
- Dumfries and Galloway Council
- East Lothian Council
- West Lothian Council
- Stirling Council
- Clackmannanshire Council
- Scottish Borders Council

An early achievement for all participants is that they have gained senior management buy-in to participate in the Adaptation Learning Exchange. A full list of participants is provided in Annex 1.

The Adaptation Learning Exchange is a peer-to-peer mentoring programme that is running from June-December 2014. Two representatives from 10 different Scottish public bodies were chosen to take part based on their individual and organisation’s commitment to progress climate change adaptation planning. The ALE brings together participants to develop shared solutions to key adaptation planning challenges. Adaptation Scotland is also providing mentors to support each organisation on a one-to-one basis.

## 2 Workshop themes and summary of discussion

### 2.1 Climate change adaptation – an introduction

Adaptation Scotland delivered an ‘introduction to climate change adaptation’ presentation with an overview of the changes that are occurring in Scotland’s climate and examples of how these changes are impacting people, the economy and the natural environment.

The presentation provided a key briefing for participants with little or no prior knowledge of climate change adaptation, and challenged those with more experience to consider how they communicate and introduce climate change adaptation to colleagues.

**Download the “introduction to adaptation” presentation [here](#)**

## 2.2 Transformation and leadership – presentation and discussion

Adaptation Scotland gave a short scene-setting presentation outlining key messages relating to transformation and leadership. Key points:

- Global climate change is one of the most significant challenges of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. It is widely accepted that the impacts of climate change, along with technological and demographic changes, will profoundly influence how we live and work in the future.
- Increasing resilience to the impacts of climate change requires a shift away from short term thinking and decision making based on our experiences of current weather and climate. Climate is already changing significantly. This means that we need to plan and take action with future climate in mind.
- A shift towards longer term thinking will require a marked change in decision making processes supported by strong leadership.
- There are many examples of positive changes brought about by small groups of committed individuals who have challenged the status quo and refused to be stopped by opposition. We can draw inspiration from these examples and be confident that transformational change in the context of climate resilience is possible and that it is beginning to occur.

Download the transformation and leadership presentation [here](#)

The presentation was followed by a discussion session with Duncan Booker, Sustainable Glasgow Manager, and Victoria Barby, Project Director for Scotland’s 2020 Climate Group. Duncan and Victoria reflected on their experiences of leadership and bringing about transformational change. A following broader discussion allowed participants to question what they had heard and to bring in their own experiences, challenges and successes.

## 2.3 Communicating adaptation – discussion

During this session, participants were asked to reflect on their experiences of communicating adaptation with others. In small groups, participants shared examples of good and bad experiences, and discussed tactics for engaging different audiences. The diversity of expertise at the workshop – from risk management and business continuity planning to climate change and sustainability strategy – enabled participants to begin to look in more detail at techniques to communicate adaptation to a range of stakeholders. The overarching key messages were “*understand people’s values, find out what motivates them and use this to demonstrate how adaptation can help them*” and “*piggy-back on existing opportunities and planned maintenance to incorporate adaptation-related actions*”.

### Key messages from group discussions (2.1, 2.2 and 2.3)

- *Identify who you need to engage and what you want this engagement to achieve.* It won’t always be your corporate management team that you need buy-in from; colleagues involved in day-to-day operations can also make changes.
- *Find out what motivates the people you want to engage.* How can adaptation solve their problems and help them to meet their objectives? Is there an opportunity to publish a positive news story or deliver health and wellbeing benefits, for example? Demonstrating the wider benefits of adaptation – and how it aligns with other political agendas – can help to gain buy-in. Try to incorporate resilience and adaptation into existing activities too.

- *Try to gain cross-party political support* to help implement changes over the long term, beyond the short-term political and budgetary cycles.
- *Use specific, local evidence to illustrate the need for resilience and adaptation.* Identify recent impacts, consequences and responses. How were services inside and outside the organisation affected?
- *Avoid jargon and use your organisation's language;* for example, try to quantify cost savings in terms of new jobs and avoided downtime. Compare the cost of long-term, proactive adaptation responses and repeated, reactive emergency responses.
- *Do not be afraid of bad news.* Adaptation is about managing risks and we cannot prevent all negative consequences. A key part of adaptation is to manage customer and community expectations and help them to build their own resilience.

## 2.4 Map your challenges and find your allies

Participants were asked to reflect on the progress they have made in their organisations. For each of the steps in Adaptation Scotland's "[Five steps to managing your climate risks](#)" participants were asked:

- What have you done?
- What are you trying to do?
- What's stopping you?

The information collated was then displayed for other participants to read, and to facilitate early conversations about how they could work together collaboratively.

### Step 1: Defining the challenge

#### ***What have you done?***

##### *Planning and strategy*

Several local authorities have completed a Local Climate Impacts Profile (LCLIP), with one going on to complete an adaptation strategy. Others have approached adaptation initially through existing avenues such as business continuity, flood risk, local development, community and sustainable development planning. It was noted that the Scottish Cities Alliance has commissioned a Mini Stern Review for Scotland's seven cities. There is a need to explore how adaptation and mitigation can be reflected in Single Outcome Agreements. A small number of councils have written mitigation and adaptation into their Community Plans.

##### *Leadership*

Participants have all demonstrated leadership through their successful applications to join the Adaptation Learning Exchange. Specific examples of how participants are demonstrating leadership include engaging in EU Cities Adapt, writing papers to their corporate management team, establishing working groups and raising awareness with service managers.

##### *Risk*

A small number of participants have established climate adaptation as a corporate risk, and are exploring how to develop an integrated approach to risk management. However, participants

identified a need to be able to quantify the consequences of severe weather and climate impacts and the cost of adaptation responses – preferably in the organisation’s currency (e.g. teachers’ jobs).

#### *Community*

A number of participants have already engaged with their communities on adaptation, for example, through a Climate Change Park friends’ group and providing advice on flooding support direct to communities.

#### ***What are you going to do?***

Participants have ambitions to develop adaptation strategies and action plans; integrate adaptation with new policies and those under review; align climate change and community planning partnerships; and look at ways to embed adaptation with business continuity, emergency and strategic planning, and risk management. One participant stated that they would make sure the climate impacts on assets are no worse in the 2040s than they are today.

#### ***What’s stopping you?***

The key challenges relate to lack of resources, competing priorities, the need for better partnership working, the lack of a defined business case, short-termism, and lack of political leadership. Small steps by organisations need to be matched with joined-up messages from the Scottish Government. For example, guidance on Single Outcome Agreements - which informs Community Plans - currently overlooks climate change.

### **Step 2: Assess climate threats and opportunities**

#### **What have you done?**

Participants reported a range of early actions, including completing a Local Climate Impacts Profile (LCLIP), having conversations with emergency planners, risk managers and communities, and integrating guidance on adaptation into training and business case templates.

#### **What are you trying to do?**

The main activity that participants are trying to do is engage with other departments and services to raise awareness and prompt them to think about opportunities to respond, and to instil adaptation in the organisational culture. A key challenge for many participants is finding ways to make adaptation understandable and accessible for staff and customers.

#### **What’s stopping you?**

Challenges included lack of ownership of adaptation, conflicting priorities, lack of (or perceived lack of) resources and lack of evidence (data and examples) to illustrate the consequences of climate change.

### **Step 3: Assess climate risks and identify actions**

#### **What have you done?**

Only one participant noted having completed a climate change risk assessment. Most participants are having early conversations with their risk managers/risk fora, and a small number have established climate change/failure to adapt as a risk on their corporate risk registers.

#### **What are you trying to do?**

Participants noted that they would like a consistent approach to risk assessment which could be applied across their organisations to help identify interdependencies. Others noted that they will be using Adaptation Scotland’s “Five steps to managing your climate risks”.

**What's stopping you?**

Some organisations do not have well defined risk assessment processes, whilst re-structuring can cause delays and limit progress. Others are unsure of which approach to follow. A climate risk task group has been created amongst ALE participants to make progress in this area.

**Step 4: Report and implement****What have you done?**

There was little reported action. One organisation has developed an adaptation plan to capture adaptation actions that are needed or being undertaken. Another participant reported that they submit a regular report to committee but that this only reaches one council area.

**What are you trying to do?**

Participants reported a range of activities. There was a keen interest in engaging fully with other services and using existing business plan processes where possible to help embed climate risks. Other participants reported the need to establish a system to record impacts from severe weather events on service delivery to communities. In considering how to assess climate risks to existing programmes and strategies, one participant identified the need to better utilise Strategic Environmental Assessment and to identify alternative assessment methods.

**What's stopping you?**

A range of challenges were identified which are limiting progress. These include:

- complexity of adaptation and poor understanding among services and the requirement to fit within the wider 'legacy' context of business;
- competing priorities, no resources;
- lack of processes within council;
- priorities are set by Single Outcome Agreements;
- short-term, fleeting interest;
- lack of fit for purpose structures and processes; and
- high expectations – we need to communicate what can we do and what we can't do.

**Step 5: Monitoring and review****What have you done?**

Very little action was reported. One participant reported that they have started working on metrics to monitor their adaptation progress.

**What are you trying to do?**

A range of actions were identified, suggesting the need for further work regarding monitoring and review. Actions included:

- the opportunity to report to corporate management teams via the corporate performance dashboard;
- use an automated, formal reporting system to leverage more resources for adaptation;
- establish internal processes for continuous improvement and reporting to enable auditable governance around adaptation plan action delivery;
- build baseline measures and SMART targets into the action plan; and
- seek corporate management team mandate.

**What's stopping you?**

- Creating metrics is very hard
- Lack of data for baseline
- Need to complete plan first before we know what we are monitoring



- Who to review – staff not remitted to participate
- Uncertainty over who and where to report
- Lack of continuity

### 3 Next steps

#### Actions to take away

Participants were asked to write down one action to take away; many identified more than one. The collection of individual actions is listed below, categorised by theme. During the second workshop participants will feed back to the group on their progress towards delivering their actions.

#### *Communication and awareness*

- Develop a climate change communication strategy working with key people.
- Engage in unsolicited communication with at least one hard-to-reach group or individual.
- Slide showing local severe weather impacts and costs for a session with elected members.
- Arrange a meeting with Land Services Manager to further explore adaptation and actions that can be incorporated into their operations.
- Email Chief Executive who is now beginning to understand the agenda and ask how he would approach my job.
- Discuss embedding adaptation in training and CPD for the Institution of Civil Engineers.

#### *Governance*

- Identify clear ownership for climate change strategic risk.
- Discuss with CEO to gain further support to embed adaptation in preparation for elected members presentation and workshop(s).
- Join the council's climate change group.
- Make a list of people in the council that will be involved in or responsible for adaptation planning in preparation for undertaking a risk assessment.

#### *Methods*

- Discuss climate change risk assessment approach for the council.
- Work in collaboration with ALE participants on a common risk assessment methodology.
- Appoint a consultant to develop methodology for assessing climate resilience.
- Ensure we capture the 'whole cost' of an incident within incident reviews and debriefs.

#### *Strategy*

- Draft sustainable development impact assessment and ensure climate change is included.
- Ensure adaptation plan development aligns with Mini Stern review.
- Refine existing adaptation plan.

#### *Collaboration*

- Visit the online collaboration group and collaborate.
- Share Community Risk Register on Glasscubes.
- Find out about the regional resilience partnerships.

## **Feedback**

Participants were asked to identify topics and challenges that they would like to explore further through ALE.

*With regards communications, participants wish to...*

- agree definition of terms;
- understand consequences and build ownership of actions;
- identify responses to challenging questions and obstacles;
- understand how to gain buy in from people who are only interested in the bottom line; and
- communicate with the wider workforce so they relate the need for resilience and adaptation to their jobs.

*With regards resources and risk management, participants wish to...*

- identify core competencies and training tools for staff;
- engender greater leadership and ownership of the issues;
- explore target setting to ensure CEOs are accountable;
- understand how to prioritise climate risks and use climate risk management to inform decision making;
- find out how other organisations embed climate risk management;
- identify a methodology to quantify social and financial costs of severe weather;
- explore how tools such as Strategic Environmental Assessment can be used to embed adaptation; and
- access real world examples from the rest of the UK and internationally.

In response to this feedback, we have created two task groups on communications and risk management. We will also create a bank of adaptation case studies which will be published on the Adaptation Scotland website.

## **Working collaboratively**

A collaborative website has been set up on Glasscubes to allow the group to share documents and discuss matters in between workshops.

## **Forthcoming events**

- Climate risk task group: Tuesday 26<sup>th</sup> August 2014
- Communications task group: *to be confirmed*
- Second workshop: Friday 12<sup>th</sup> September 2014
- Third workshop: Monday 27<sup>th</sup> October 2014
- Celebration event: Early December 2014
- Final analysis and report: 18<sup>th</sup> December 2014

## Annex 1: Participants

Organisation	Name	Job title
Aberdeen City Council	Alison Leslie	Sustainable Development Officer
Aberdeen City Council	Neil Buck	Performance and Risk Manager
Clackmannanshire Council	Andy Macpherson	Development Officer, Sustainability
Clackmannanshire Council	Gordon Roger	Planner
Dumfries and Galloway Council	Ann Johnstone	Sustainable Development Assistant
Dumfries and Galloway Council	Ross Gibson	Engineer - Flood Risk Management
East Lothian Council	Amber Moss	Sustainable Development Officer
East Lothian Council	Sandy Baptie	Emergency Planning and Risk Manager
NHS National Services Scotland	Markus Hiemann	Sustainability Manager
NHS National Services Scotland	Kevin McMahon	Resilience Officer
Scottish Borders Council	Louise Cox	Environmental Strategy Co-ordinator
Scottish Water	Miranda Jacques-Turner	Technical Lead: Sustainability & Climate Change
Scottish Water	Douglas Johns	Technical Team Lead – Water Strategy
Stirling Council	Angela Heaney	Sustainable Development Co-ordinator
Stirling Council	David Bright	Resilience & Risk Manager
Transport Scotland	Stephen Thomson	Head of Environment & Sustainability
Transport Scotland	Graham Edmond	Head of Network Maintenance
West Lothian Council	Caitlin Hamlett	Climate Change Policy Officer
West Lothian Council	Caroline Burton	Project Officer (Risk Management)
Sniffer/Adaptation Scotland	Anna Beswick	Programme Manager
Sniffer/Adaptation Scotland	Michelagh O'Neill	Project Coordinator
Sniffer/Adaptation Scotland	Karen Miller	Project Coordinator
Edinburgh University/ Adaptation Scotland	Joseph Hagg	Science Officer
Edinburgh University	Elspeth Dundas	Environmental and Ecological Sciences Student

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**Adaptation  
Scotland**  
supporting climate change resilience

Adaptation Scotland provides advice and support to help organisations, businesses and communities in Scotland prepare for, and build resilience to, the impacts of climate change.

**Adaptation Scotland**

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