

Committee Name: Climate environment emergency executive panel

Committee Date: 22/03/2022

Report Title: Update on Climate Risks to Norwich City Council

Portfolio: Councillor Hampton, Cabinet member for climate change and digital inclusion

Report from: Head of Strategy, Engagement and Culture

Wards: All Wards

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Purpose

To provide an update on work being done to identify climate risk to Norwich City Council and seek the committee's views to inform ongoing work.

Recommendation:

To provide thoughts and feedback on the risks identified

Policy Framework

The Council has three corporate priorities, which are:

- People living well
- Great neighbourhoods, housing and environment
- Inclusive economy

This report meets the Great neighbourhoods, housing and environment corporate priority

This report addresses 'Ensure our services mitigate against any adverse effects of climate change and are efficient to reduce carbon emissions' strategic action in the Corporate Plan

Report Details

1. Work has been ongoing across the council to identify risks posed to service areas from climate change, and where necessary, escalate these risks to the appropriate risk registers.
2. These have been identified using the latest UK climate impact projections, which identify that Norwich will likely have warmer, drier summers and warmer, wetter winters.
3. We have also used national government publications, such as the Climate Change Risk Assessment for England, and the Independent Assessment of UK Climate Risk to inform overall risk identification before further analysis was performed on our individual directorates.
4. We consider the main risks to be from surface water flooding and increased heatwaves. This then presents risk to properties in the city from flooding, and community health during periods of increased heat.
5. This work has been reflected in the Q3 Combined Assurance Quarterly Report, which was approved by Cabinet on the 23 February.
6. The risks identified for Community Services are:
 - Disruption to events and community spaces, in particular from, high winds/storms impacting the Norman Centre/Riverside Leisure Centre/The Halls and planned events and festivals.
 - Surface water flooding on community spaces, such as the Norman Centre, potentially leading to damage to the buildings and temporary closure of spaces (and loss of income)
 - Risks to community health, with a particular focus on inequality as those affected by inequality are more likely to suffer disproportionately more from the adverse effects of climate change.
 - Disadvantaged groups are likely to have an increased exposure to the adverse effects of climate change. This increased exposure is likely to lead to increased susceptibility to damages caused by climate change. Disadvantaged groups are less likely to have the relative ability to cope with and recover from damages they suffer.
7. The risks identified for Corporate and Commercial Services are:
 - Potential disruption to election delivery. Due to building concerns polling stations becoming unavailable to the democratic services team, or conditions may become uncomfortable for polling station staff.
 - Loss of staff productivity to heat, due to increases in frequency and intensity of heat waves.
 - Risk in failure to properly resource climate change mitigation.
8. The risks identified for Development and City Services are:

- Increased maintenance of open spaces as pre-existing landscaping is no longer suitable due to increased temperatures and increased demand for water
 - Increase in demand for emergency services, and the need for emergency response from the council when presented with extreme events such as flooding and winter storms
 - Increase in demand for regulatory services, for example in relation to food safety (if heatwaves increase)
9. There are also cross-cutting risks from structural risks to buildings (from increased heat, subsidence, potential flooding and storm damage) and consequent risk to delivery of services delivered via those buildings.
 10. It is also the case that for a number of identified risks, such as climate change impact on existing stock (e.g. thermal comfort) mitigation is already in place (for example our strategic asset management plan commits to meeting MEES (minimum energy efficiency) standards, which requires all domestic rented properties to be at least a EPC E, guaranteeing a basic level of energy efficiency and thermal comfort. Therefore these risks, although present to us, may not necessarily be reflected in risk registers.
 11. Work is currently underway to finalise risk scoring and action plans. Risks will be escalated where necessary to service level, directorate level, and, if necessary, corporate level, based on their scoring using the council risk register template. Work will be complete by Quarter 4 reporting.
 12. Risks are scored based on the likelihood of a risk occurring and the impact if it does occur (risk level = likelihood x impact).
 13. In line with the council's risk management policy and strategy each risk will be managed at the lowest appropriate level of management. However, if it is considered that a risk identified at one management level cannot be effectively managed at that level, the risk will be escalated up the management chain until it reaches the level at which it can be effectively dealt with. All risks scoring above the risk appetite (score above 15) will be considered for inclusion on the Corporate Risk Register.
 14. This work will therefore allow climate risks to inform the overall work of the directorates and bring a greater level of climate awareness to the risk registers. Any risks included on service registers will be reviewed quarterly as part of the risk management process.
 15. In addition, and as set out in the October 2021 report to Cabinet, the council has recently undertaken a comprehensive assessment of its response to climate change and the environmental emergency, with the intention to identify actions already taken, where further actions are required, assess the costs and benefits of new proposals and develop a clear plan for future work across the agenda. This work is, therefore, closely linked into the risk work described above, and the outcome of this work will be shared over the coming months.

Consultation

16. As this work is focused on our own risk registers external consultation has not been needed

17. Consultation with relevant officers has been carried out

Implications

18. The implications are presented in the detail of the risk register

Financial and Resources

19. Work to assess any financial impacts arising from these risks will be undertaken within service areas and managed through normal budgetary processes

Legal

20. No legal considerations

Reasons for the decision/recommendation

21. To recognise ongoing work

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