



**APSE - Emerging from the Pandemic: Where
to now for action on Climate Change in
Northern Ireland?**

*“Building Resilience: The Impact of COVID-19 on the
Environment in NI ”*

Stephen Jones, Climate NI

Valuing Nature

Nearly half (47%) the population of Northern Ireland are spending more of their free time outdoors now, than they did this time last year and 51% expect to do more after lockdown.

The Impact of Nature

89% of respondents reporting that the time they spent outdoors during lockdown making them feel calm, relaxed, refreshed, and revitalised; 84% felt physically healthier/fitter; 79% felt closer to nature.

Unequal participation

The research shows that of those people who have been enjoying access to the outdoors every day (63%), participation is lowest in the most deprived areas of Northern Ireland (41%).



Environment in NI

What changes has the pandemic made to the Natural world and our interaction with it?



- “Official figures show an overall **reduction in traffic flows of up to 65%** compared with the pre-lockdown normal”

- BBC News, 7th May 2020

- “More than **1,700 deaths in the UK have been avoided** in the past month due to better air quality caused by the coronavirus lockdown, according to a Europe-wide study.”

- Belfast Telegraph, 30th April 2020

- “...a dramatic **drop in harmful nitrogen dioxide** in the air across Belfast since the Covid-19 lockdown measures were put in place. Analysis by the University of York shows that levels of the gas...are down by 30 per cent.
...Emerging data is also showing that rates of death from Covid-19 are higher for people living in the most polluted areas.”

- Irish News, 1st May 2020

- Anecdotal evidence about changes to biodiversity and wildlife. Certainly we are taking the time to appreciate it more.

The Decision-making Environment in NI

- Value of the Natural Environment
- Changes in Transport, working pattern and consumption
- Organisations can move at pace when required

Green Recovery

Active Travel, Public-Private Financing of Energy and Green Jobs

“Let’s take the opportunity to re-imagine our society and make the change for a happier, healthier future for all citizens.”

Building Resilience

Equally vital that we work to build on resilience as part of the recovery

Passive Stability versus
Active Stability



This works best when we address not just weather events, but the underlying vulnerabilities and inequalities of our society, as well as the value of nature.

What are we building on?

- Community Resilience, partnership, volunteering
- Uncertainty in longer supply chains
- Attention drawn to existing social inequalities
- Cascading Impacts and Climate Projections

Local Government Association:

- Building on co-operation and risk management roles of central and local government
- Building on public appreciation of scientific expertise
- Building on united response to key actions, not focused on the boundaries and barriers instead of solutions themselves



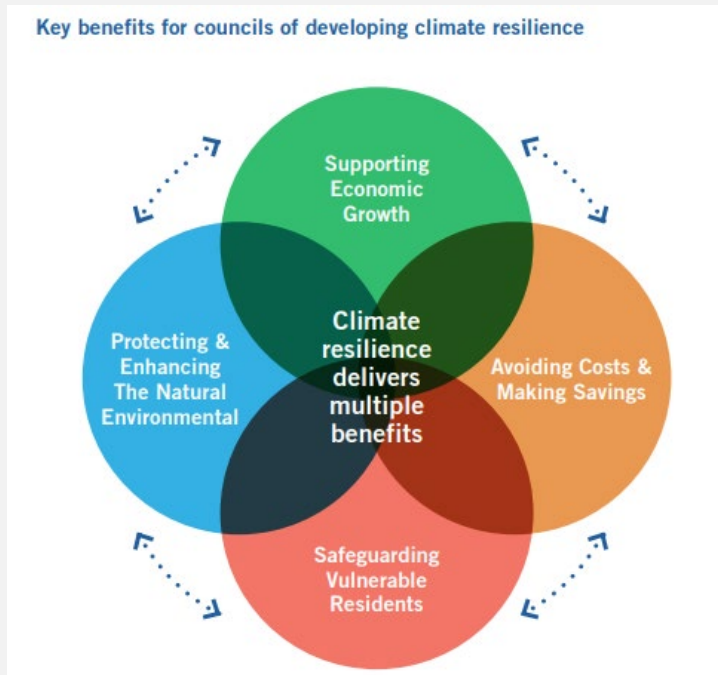
Barriers to Response:

Furlough, Remote Working, Interruption to Decision-making, Resource Constraints

Building on the resilience already shown by people and organisations must be as efficient as possible

1st Climate Change Adaptation Local Council Plan in Northern Ireland 2020

(councils across the UK have plans in place for many years. ROI first plans drafted in all councils 2019)



Plans should address: all service areas, be embedded in organisational policies and risk registers, deliver training for staff



Councils are directly affected by **severe weather events**, often frontline of immediate response, and will increasingly be affected by gradual changes in our climate

Climate justice— often the most vulnerable who are impacted the most.

Co-benefits from Climate Action

Next step in DCSDC: **Cross-border plan**



Risk

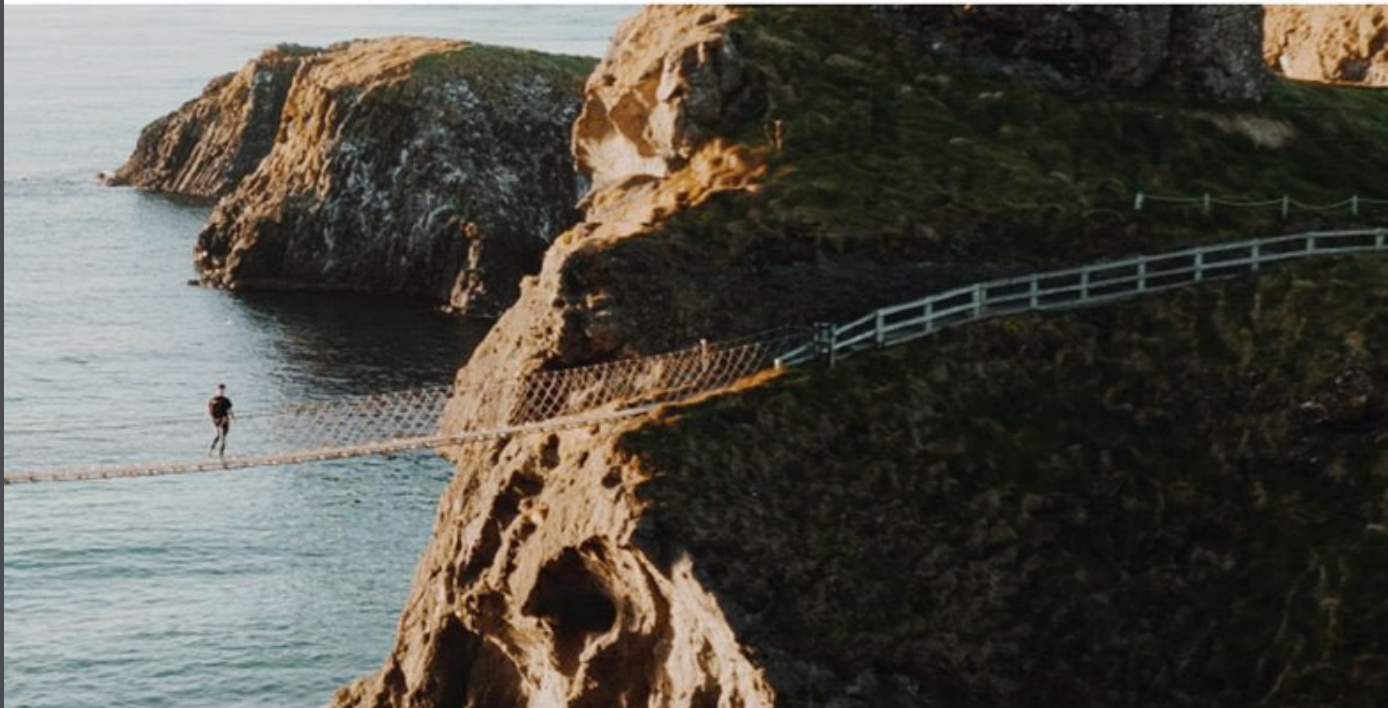


Opportunities

Climate Adaptation Planning Tool

NIAdapts Planning Toolkit

[Introduction](#) > [The Toolkit](#) > [Get Started](#) > [Progress so far](#)



The tool will enable you to explore:



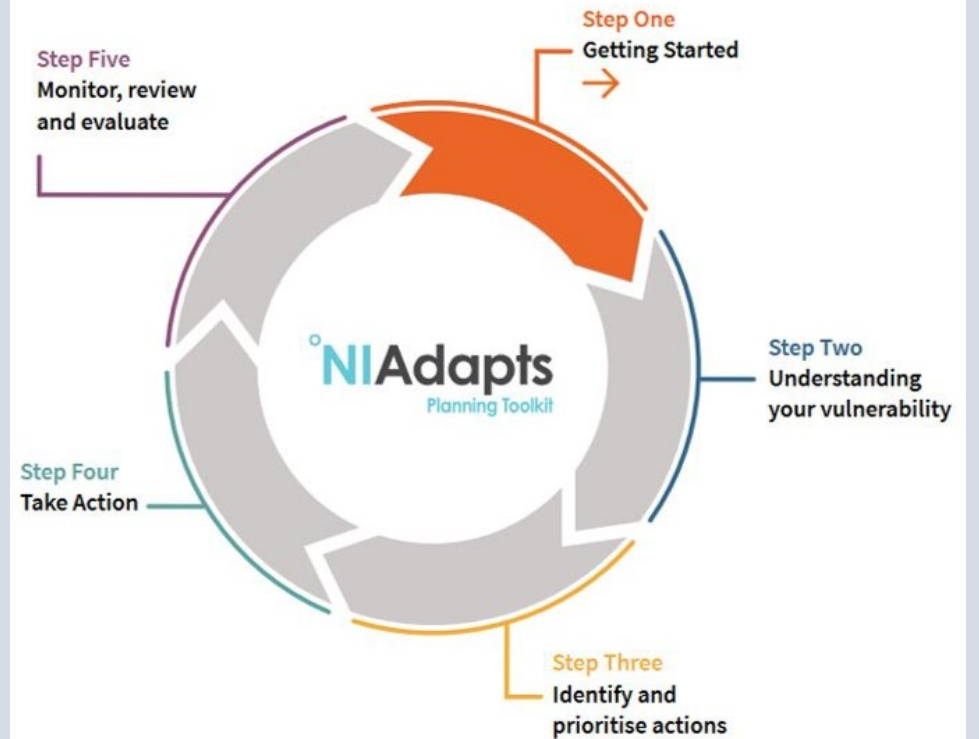
Climate challenges already facing your organisation



Vulnerability to future changes in the climate



Data and policies necessary to better understand and address climate risks





Thank-you.

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