

ClimateCO<sub>2</sub>de

# Climate Change and Sustainability Strategy



## Foreword

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Portfolio Holder for the Environment

I am pleased to say that there have been many improvements to the Council's environmental performance in recent years.

The Council's actions to date have been many and varied, yet have often been taken independently of one another. This Strategy brings together all the strands of the Council, looks at its achievements and sphere of influence and begins to co-ordinate its efforts to maximise their effects and those of our future actions.

According to the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA), as of 2005 Rochford District had the second lowest per capita CO<sub>2</sub> emissions in Essex – 5.6 Tonnes. However, there is more that can be done to reduce this figure and we have been given a target of 5.1 Tonnes to be achieved by 2011.

In January this year, the Council's Review Committee identified the need for the Council to take certain actions to combat climate change. This strategy is the first of those actions.

This Climate Change Strategy takes a long-term perspective, whilst also including targets and actions for the short and medium terms. The action plan – which we've called our **ClimateCO<sub>2</sub>de** - will be reviewed annually, whilst the strategy itself will be reviewed in five years time.

At Rochford District Council, we want to lead in the process of creating a sustainable community. We want to be compared favourably with the Beacon Councils announced in the 'Tackling Climate Change' category earlier this year and will work with the community, businesses and our public and private partners to make this happen.

The following pages contain our vision for how we can enhance our environment – both locally and further afield – helping to make Rochford District the place of choice in the County to live, work and visit.

Signed

*[Photo]*

**Electronic Signature**

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The latest refurbishment programme of public conveniences saw the fitting of waterless urinals and a reduction in annual water usage of 100 000 litres per urinal per year. Dual flush cisterns were also installed throughout the conveniences. Similar improvements to the toilets at the Council offices at Rochford alone have resulted in 1.4 million litres of water less being used per year. All Council offices now have these features.

Very little else has been undertaken by the Council – internally or externally – to address water usage, and this is something that we are committed to correcting.

**Areas to be addressed by the action plan:**

- Investigations in to the feasibility of installing rainwater harvesting at council-owned land and buildings and the broadening of the draft Energy and Water Strategy prior to adoption
- Work with our partners and housing associations to improve water management across the district
- Identify resources and officers to co-ordinate water efficiency promotions and offer incentives

***1982, November – The first wind turbine to be connected to the National Grid - generating 200 kilowatts - is commissioned in Carmarthen Bay, Wales***



## **Development Control**

The Council is in a position to control the type of development that is carried out across the district and therefore has a great say in how sustainable they can be. Evaluation of the location and design of buildings and associated factors (e.g. infrastructure) can help us mitigate and adapt to climate change problems and influence the long-term behaviour of residents and businesses.

The Government recognises this role and through the Planning Policy Statement on Planning and Climate Change (2007) sets out how it expects local authorities to consider the effects of climate change through its policies. It states that local authorities, through their Local Development Frameworks, should promote and encourage the construction of sustainable buildings and the employment of renewable and low carbon energy generation.

Further to this, the Building a Greener Future policy statement (2007) commits the Government to ensuring that all new domestic dwellings built from 2016 will be carbon-neutral. The timetable and requirements for this can be found in the Code for Sustainable Homes.

The Council is currently preparing its Local Development Framework (LDF), which will replace the Local Plan from 2009. The LDF is a portfolio of Local Development Documents which together will provide the spatial planning framework for the District up to 2021. The portfolio identifies and reviews issues facing the District and sets out policies to guide future development in the right direction.

At the time of writing, the Council is composing its Core Strategy – the overarching planning policy document within the LDF. The emerging Core Strategy therefore provides an ideal opportunity to address many of the issues that will help the area adapt to, as well as mitigate for, the effects of climate change. After all, the buildings erected now will be those which suffer the effects of more extreme weather events in the future, and will also have to be as resource efficient as possible at the time at which they are constructed.

With these issues in mind, the authors are looking at a number of options prior to consultation which will enhance the environmental performance of new developments, their surrounds and their use. For instance, some of the options considered include the fast-tracking of the implementation of the Code for Sustainable Homes, similar requirements for commercial developments (using the BRE Environmental Assessment Method) and an 'Uttlesford Rule' whereby cost-effective energy efficiency measures are required to the existing building as part of the permission for house extensions.

The authors are also seeking to direct development to areas accessible by a range of sustainable transport choices. The LDF will state how the council will work with partners to deliver sustainable transport infrastructure improvements, including through developer contributions, to ensure new areas are connected to services and facilities by alternatives to the private car. This in turn would have knock-on benefits to the existing communities.

It is well understood that developing land can cause water management issues in particular. As an example of how the surrounding areas to developments may benefit, sustainable drainage systems (SUDS) can be employed which may play several roles including surface run-off/storm water collection, flood risk management, irrigation water and provision of wetland habitats.

Given that the district is amongst the driest areas in the country and summers are forecast to become drier, where new developments are granted planning permission, appropriate, substantive sustainable water management techniques must be employed.

Allied to the Core Strategy is the Joint Area Action Plan which, in partnership with Southend Borough Council, will be a specific planning framework for development at and around London Southend Airport. Should the airport expand – an already thorny issue with respect to climate change – it will have to ensure that it and the surrounding development is done sustainably.

It is important to note here that both documents will have to caution against any worsening of air quality in its efforts to combat climate change and vice-versa.

Internally, any new Council buildings will be of carbon-neutral construction and employ all relevant techniques to ensure that they can be used in the most sustainable manner possible. Similarly, any extensions to or refurbishment of existing Council buildings will have to be carried out under similar lines to the 'Uttlesford Rule'.

Where this is not possible, for instance where buildings are listed, climate change issues will be considered on a case-by-case basis.

#### **Areas to be addressed by the action plan:**

- These will be dictated by the consultation responses to both the Core Strategy and Joint Area Action Plan

***1987, April – 'Our Common Future' ('the Brundtland Report') is published by the UN Worldwide Commission on Environment and Development. Sustainable Development is defined as 'development that meets the needs of people today without undermining those of tomorrow'***

## **Transport and Air Quality**

Use of private and public transport is one of the most significant contributing sources of CO<sub>2</sub>-equivalent gasses. Vehicle emissions are also a source of other pollutants for which the local authority is responsible for monitoring and reducing where ceiling levels are breached.

European and UK governmental targets and strategies are requiring and incentivising the research and development of 'cleaner' low-carbon vehicles and the marketplace is responding.

### **Transport**

The Council has a number of employees and councillors who travel to and from work by car and who are required to have a car to carry out their duties. Similarly, contractors working on behalf of the Council also require their own vehicles.

The Council has just joined the Essex-wide 'Travelbudi' scheme which will enable employees to reduce their mileage and therefore CO<sub>2</sub>, Nitrogen Oxides (NO<sub>x</sub>) and Particulate Matter (PM) emissions.

The Council will further encourage the wider use of public transport and lower emission and more fuel-efficient private (personal and business) vehicles by investigating methods of promotion and incentives for staff, residents and businesses. The council currently promotes cycle-use by its staff. Cycle racks and a shower are provided at the Council offices at Rochford

Essex County Council is the highways authority for the county, so aside from a small number of Highways Agency roads, determines the layout, repair and improvement of the district's roads.

The emerging Localism agenda is a scheme whereby Essex County Council will devolve the expenditure of finite resources to local authorities to spend on highways issues. The council sees that there may be opportunities for it to address both climate change and air quality issues through appropriate use of those resources.

### **Areas to be addressed by the action plan:**

- The co-ordinated promotion and incentivisation of more sustainable travel by staff and councillors
- Working with the relevant partners to establish and incentivise more sustainable travel by residents, visitors and business across the district
- Targeting expenditure of the Localism resources on climate change/air quality projects as they are identified
- Support for the implementation of the South Essex Rapid Transit Scheme (SERT)

## Air Quality

With regard to air quality, under the Environment Act 1995 the Council is obliged to periodically review the quality of the air within its district for certain prescribed pollutants. Of the seven pollutant types, two – nitrogen dioxide (NO<sub>2</sub>) and particulate matter (PM<sub>10</sub>) - have been found to exceed national objectives, each in a different location. Where an exceedance is found and there is 'relevant exposure' (as defined), the local authority must declare an Air Quality Management Area (AQMA) and compose an action plan to reduce pollutant levels.

At the time of writing, the Council has not declared an AQMA, however Defra has asked the Council to declare one in Rayleigh High Street for past exceedances. Should the Council be forced to go ahead with a declaration, the resulting action plan may give rise to conflict with climate change measures. For example, should one of the options considered be to redirect traffic, this may increase journey mileage and therefore fuel use and wear-and-tear on car parts.

Conversely, should the 'solution' be to install air conditioning, this may mitigate the effects of the pollutant, but use more resources as a result. Such conflicting considerations may arise in future planning applications as well.

### **Areas to be addressed by the action plan:**

- On those occasions where the council has to remedy or avoid air quality problems, it will commit to avoiding so far as possible the inclusion of actions which will contribute to the effects of climate change

***1990, May – The intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change predicts a 0.3°C average global temperature rise per decade under a 'business as usual' approach***

## **Procurement**

Many of the Council's services are provided by external organisations such as Sita (Waste and recycling), Connaught (Street scene, building maintenance), SunGard Vivista (ICT) and Virgin Active (Leisure) as well as smaller contracts with other organisations.

Other products and services are bought through partnership arrangements such as stationery and electricity. Examples of products and services bought independently include furniture, training, cleaning services, office waste collection and food and drink.

All of these products and services have an impact upon the environment and to varying degrees will contribute to the effects of climate change. In this light, the Council needs to review the implications of its procurement policy and review the life-cycle of the products it buys and the means by which the services provided in its name are carried out.

Where long-term contracts are in place, we need to work with those organisations to review their environmental credentials and bring about as great an improvement to their (our) performance as possible.

### **Areas to be addressed by the action plan:**

- Review the Council's Environment Policy (2000)
- Revise the Procurement Strategy in line with the Local Government Sustainable Procurement Strategy (2007) so that sustainability is an embedded consideration in every decision made and all future contracts maximise environmental performance
- Review long-term contracts to see what improvements can be made and come to formal/informal arrangements as appropriate
- Work at a corporate level to seek further partnerships which may enable products or services to be bought in more sustainably

***1992, June – The UN Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro was held, leading to the Climate Change Convention and later, the Kyoto Protocol***

## **Waste and Recycling**

The rising volume of waste generated, collected and disposed of is of increasing concern with regards to climate change and the wider environment. The Government's Waste Strategy for England 2007 identifies that Councils' aims must be to stall the growth of household waste and reduce the overall quantity of waste collected from residents, whilst also increasing the percentage of waste collected that is sent to be recycled.

Significant consideration must be given as to how we deal with the disposal of non-recyclable materials in the waste stream. In landfill biodegradable matter breaks down, releasing methane and other gasses which contribute to the worsening of the global climate.

In July 2008, the Council successfully introduced a revised household waste collection scheme which encourages an even greater amount of recycling than previously. We collect a wider variety of recyclable materials from the doorstep than before, including compostable materials, and early figures show that we are in line with the targets set out in NIs 191 and 192. Below are some of our reported statistics (all figures in tonnes):

<b>Waste Type / Date Collected (2008)</b>	<b>June</b>	<b>August</b>
<b><i>Mass Dry Recyclables Recycled</i></b>	354	837
<b><i>Mass Kitchen/Garden Waste Composted</i></b>	121	984
<b><i>Mass Waste Landfilled</i></b>	2323	725

In addition, the Council promotes waste minimisation and recycling to residents, schools and other organisations across the district through educational visits and art workshops. They are a source of advice on techniques, technologies and incentives. However, there is little contact with businesses and no work done regarding water.

Of course, we must also look at how we can achieve the same aims with our own waste as well as influence the actions of businesses – particularly with regard to waste minimisation which can have dual cost-saving benefits on top of being sustainable. Our procurement approach can help.

### **Areas to be addressed by the action plan:**

- Compose, resource and implement an integrated Waste Management Strategy for the Council which addresses both the internal and external waste issues within the district
- Clarify responsibility for and effectively co-ordinate internal waste/recycling collection and disposal operations from all Council buildings

***1996, March – The Renewable Energy Co. is the first UK company to market electricity solely generated from renewable sources***

## **Leisure, Green Spaces and Biodiversity**

These topics are just some of the areas where there may be both adverse impacts as well as opportunities. Drier, warmer summers will lead to increased peak demand for leisure products and services and use of green spaces. There may also be increased year-round demand for these due to milder winter conditions.

The year-round changes in weather conditions will also impact upon biodiversity and the resilience of natural habitats. The needs of green space users will also change.

As more leisure time becomes spent outdoors, the public's health may be adversely as well as beneficially affected. Longer exposure to the sun may give rise to more skin-related illness but potentially increased physical activity may improve the general fitness of the public. With partners, the Council will have to consider how best to promote the use of leisure facilities and open spaces and how to be safe when doing so. The Council will have to consider such things as how much shade is provided and where sun-care campaigns may be required.

Further safety concerns also involve how people use green spaces and what activities may pose risks to others e.g. fires.

However, the parks and woodlands at the Council's disposal provide opportunities to set examples and facilitate educational programmes. The council is currently investigating the feasibility of constructing a carbon-neutral reception and educational facility at Cherry Orchard Jubilee Park. It is hoped that the building can be completely constructed from local materials, mainly from the park, and be largely self-sufficient in respect of energy and food resources.

Tree planting has its obvious benefits in that trees absorb CO<sub>2</sub>, however this must be carried out in a manner that will prevent further depletion of soil moisture. This may affect the surrounding biodiversity and increase fire risk, but shallow rooted varieties may also be more vulnerable in strong winds. Similar issues are raised with regards to other types of vegetation that are already or intended to be planted and the council managing their water need and evapotranspiration.

The changing climatic conditions will give rise to higher rainfall during winter and longer dry periods in summer months. This in turn means that in summers we will see a rise in demand for water resources coupled with the falls in reservoir and river levels, whilst there is an increased chance of flash flooding.

At present, the council sells on logs and woodchips from its management operations, returning the income in to further management operations.

Areas of development will exacerbate the problem as the reduced permeability increases the likelihood of flooding. Collection and re-use of water is an increasingly important water-management technique – in green spaces and developments – to alleviate the risk of flooding and assist the supply of drinking water to where it is needed.

Overall, the quantity and quality of green space/green infrastructure will have an increasingly important role to play by reducing flood risk, sequestering carbon, enhancing biodiversity, providing cooling and shading and absorbing air pollutants.

**Areas to be addressed by the action plan:**

- Compose, resource and implement a long-term district-wide plan for the management of green spaces
- Sun-awareness campaigns run through our Leisure and Environmental Services teams involving our partners

***1997, December – The Kyoto Protocol is signed by 38 developed countries. It is a pledge to cut greenhouse gas emissions by an average of 5.2% below 1990 levels by 2012***



## **Business and Community**

The Council recognises that only through the combined efforts of itself, businesses and residents will CO<sub>2</sub> emissions from the district be substantially reduced. This theme relies heavily on co-ordinated educational and promotional activities to aid understanding of climate change and what can be done by us all to address it.

### **Business**

For businesses, becoming more sustainable can result in:

- increased efficiency
- reduced costs
- improved profile
- better staff recruitment/retention
- a head start against future legislative changes

Knowledge of the issues may also assist companies to spot opportunities in the marketplace to grow their business.

The Council recognises that different industries and individual businesses may already be at varying stages and have different resources in place to become more sustainable. The Council wants to provide all businesses with sound, accessible advice and incentives to behave in an environmentally responsible manner.

Next year, the Council will be re-writing its Economic Development Strategy and this will have a strong focus on sustainability.

One project being investigated at this time is an 'Eco-Enterprise Unit' for start-up businesses. This is a carbon-neutral building which new businesses can occupy for a limited time. Businesses would operate in a sustainable manner in a environment conducive to do so. This, coupled with a growth in similar, second-phase accommodation will help to embed sustainable actions within those businesses which can then be carried forward.

Previous work on the sustainability agenda has been sporadic, however the Council has been the proud sponsor of the Evening Echo newspaper's annual Essex Business Awards, sponsoring the Environmental Awareness category for the last few years. The award recognises three local companies in respect of their efforts to trade in a more environmentally responsible manner. It is important that the council in its role as a community and business leader and regulator endorses and promotes such behaviour.

## Community

Publicly demonstrating the Council's commitment to adapt to climate change and become more sustainable is central to encouraging residents to take ownership of the climate change issue and modify their behaviour accordingly.

The Council has relied upon the independent actions of the Recycling and Home Energy teams to improve the knowledge and ability of the community to address climate change. There has therefore been little co-ordinated publicity to aid the public in understanding issues raised by climate change and what they can do to help.

The Nottingham Declaration is a document whereby councils voluntarily, and publicly, pledge their commitment to address the effects of climate change. At the time of writing, more than 300 local authorities have signed up, yet Rochford District Council is one of only five Essex councils yet to do so. There is an opportunity to kick-start the public-relations and education campaign that is required to generate and maintain knowledge and enthusiasm about climate change mitigation and the council and its partners' achievements.

### **Areas to be addressed by the action plan:**

- Sign the Nottingham Declaration and develop a co-ordinated publicity campaign for the duration of this strategy in order to capture all members of the community and businesses
- Ensure that full use is made of all the various forms of communication available in order to ensure everyone has access to comprehensive information on climate change and related issues

***1999, October – The six billionth member of the global population is born in a Sarajevo hospital***

## **Emergency Planning and Business Continuity**

Although matters of corporate risk and public safety and well-being are influenced by a great many factors, it is only right that this strategy acknowledges that many of the climate change adaptation measures that have been and will be carried out interact with emergency response and business continuity plans.

Indeed, the Pitt Review into the 2007 floods is an example of the fluid nature of this area of work and the preparedness of local authorities and other agencies to deal with extreme weather events. The Environment Agency has recently begun work on the replacement Shoreline Management Plan for Essex, involving officers and councillors from the council. There are currently 1886 homes in coastal flood risk areas alone in Rochford district, so the threat of flooding is of particular concern.

In partnership with Essex County Council, the council is a Beacon Authority for Emergency Planning, underlining how we view our role as community protector. However, under the Civil Contingencies Act 2004 and NI188, the council will have to revisit how prepared it is for changing climatic conditions and what adaptations it can make with its partners and other organisations to further improve our prevention of and readiness for emergencies.

***2003, July – Development of 6 gigawatts of electricity generation from offshore wind is announced***

## **Further Matters**

In making plans and carrying out actions, the council will have to be mindful of the needs, priorities and plans of other organisations such as the Police, National Health Service (and similar) Fire Service, governmental agencies such as the Environment Agency and Maritime and Coastguard Agency, as well as other governmental organisations such as Defence Estates, local authorities, interest groups and our partner organisations. This is something that will be tested under the CAA performance framework.

In particular, Essex County Council has a climate change strategy which necessarily covers the Rochford district and the council will need to ensure that it liaises closely with Essex County Council wherever appropriate.

***2006, November – The Stern Review on the economics of climate change is published. It concludes that mitigation would cost less than 'business as usual'***

## Conclusions & Commitments

Extreme weather events are going to become more frequent and more severe and will have a significant cost both in terms of quality of life, environmental as well as financial. These effects will be felt both here in Rochford as well as abroad in areas of the world that can not adapt in the same way that we are able. The time to act is now.

The government have made it clear that local authorities have a leading role to play in achieving the CO<sub>2</sub> emission reduction targets and will be auditing their performance through the LAA and CAA performance frameworks. This is a challenge that the council embraces.

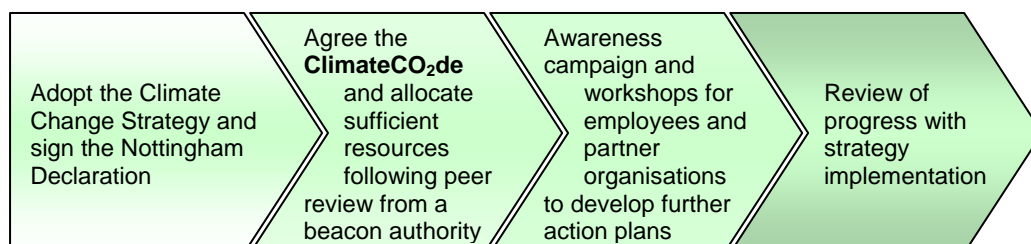
By publishing this strategy and accompanying **ClimateCO<sub>2</sub>de**, the council is demonstrating its commitment to addressing the urgent issue of climate change and the life-changing effects it will bring. Through employee and councillor ownership of this document, the council will be able to say that it is 'doing its bit' by 'practising what it preaches' and ensure that from this point on, climate change will be an embedded consideration in every decision it takes.

Through this strategy, the council is taking a long-term perspective of how it can adapt to and mitigate the effects of climate change. It is crucial that it is reviewed at least every five years in order to ensure that it accurately reflects council progress on both of these fronts, as well as the current pressures and opportunities.

Similarly, the **ClimateCO<sub>2</sub>de** action plan must be updated annually to ensure that the council continually achieves reductions in CO<sub>2</sub> emissions and embraces new techniques and technologies as they emerge. The **ClimateCO<sub>2</sub>de** needs to enable the council to get its own house in order and then lead by example in its position as a community leader alongside partner organisations.

Overall, this strategy aims to get every person and organisation within the district to use resources effectively, live and operate sustainably and make a positive contribution to the environment. This will only be achieved through effective partnership working because of the multi-faceted nature of climate change and the many ways in which it can be addressed.

## Next Steps



## Sources of Further Guidance

Beacon Council information and links

<http://beacons.idea.gov.uk/idk/core/page.do?pagelId=8038920>

Department for Business Enterprise and Regulatory Reform

<http://www.lowcarbonbuildings.org.uk/home/>  
<http://www.lowcarbonbuildingsphase2.org.uk/>

Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs

<http://www.defra.gov.uk/environment/climatechange/adapt/index.htm>

DirectGov website

<http://www.direct.gov.uk/en/Environmentandgreenerliving/index.htm>

Energy Saving Trust

<http://www.energysavingtrust.org.uk/>  
<http://www.energysavingtrust.org.uk/housingbuildings/localauthorities/NottinghamDeclaration/>

Essex County Council Carbon Reduction scheme

<http://www.cred-uk.org/essex/>

The Met Office

<http://www.metoffice.gov.uk/research/hadleycentre/index.html>

The Stern Review

<http://www.sternreview.org.uk>

Sustainable Development Commission

<http://www.sd-commission.org.uk/>

## NI188 - Planning to Adapt to Climate Change

### Level 0 - baseline

	Actions required	not achieved	in progress	achieved	timescale
a	identify lead officer to provide advice on potential impacts of climate change on authority's functions				
b	carry out audit of existing plans / relevant risk registers				
c	discuss partnership approach through LAA				
d	establish the process / actions required to meet higher levels				

### Level 1 - Public commitment and prioritised risk based assessment

	Actions required	not achieved	in progress	achieved	timescale
a	achieve Level 0				
b	publicly commit to identify and manage climate related risk, e.g Nottingham Declaration				
c	Heads of Department / Service are aware of climate vulnerabilities / opportunities				
d	A Local Climate Impacts Profile (LCLIP) or equivalent is ongoing				
e	Initial assessment produced using the UKCIP scenarios				
f	ensure climate based risk is considered in key documents				
g	evidence of partnership working / pooling of resources				
h	identify process / actions required to achieve Level 2				

### Level 2 - Comprehensive risk-based assessment and prioritised action in some areas

	Actions required	not achieved	in progress	achieved	timescale
a	Achieve Level 1				
b	Members and Service heads have a detailed understanding of risk in all vulnerable areas				
c	authority has undertaken a comprehensive risk-based assessment of vulnerabilities to weather and climate, now and future				
d	authority has identified priority risks for its services				
e	most effective adaptive responses have been identified				
f	work has started to incorporate adaptive responses into strategies, plans, partnerships and operations				
g	implementation of appropriate adaptive responses has begun in some priority areas				
h	community leadership - working with LSP to identify climate risks and opportunities that affect delivery of LSP objectives				
i	identify process / actions to achieve Level 3				

**Level 3 - Comprehensive action plan and prioritised action in all priority areas**

	Actions required	not achieved	in progress	achieved	timescale
a	Achieve Level 2				
b	Action plan developed and published, setting out how risks and opportunities will be managed				
c	Detailed understanding of risk and action taken to embed relevant adaptation response in strategies, plans, partnerships and operations				
d	Initial cost analysis undertaken and potential sources of funding identified for major vulnerabilities				
e	Pooling of skills, knowledge and resource across LSP				
f	Consulted with authorities responsible for CC management and others who can provide advice on good practice				
g	identify process / actions to achieve Level 4				

**Level 4 - Implementation, monitoring and continuous review**

	Actions required	not achieved	in progress	achieved	timescale
a	Achieve Level 3				
b	actively implementing actions set out in the adaptation action plan				
c	evidence that appropriate responses are being taken on the ground - action or management of risk				
d	Clear and robust continuous monitoring and review system in place				
e	Outputs from the review and monitoring process are ploughed back into the action plan and other relevant strategies				