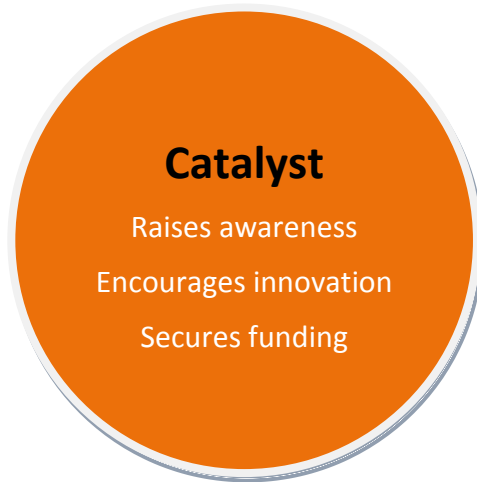


Local Government Climate Change



Competencies and skills

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INTRODUCTION

With growing pressure on councils to help deliver the government's climate change programmes, councils' climate change responsibilities have expanded rapidly over recent years. There is huge diversity in how these responsibilities are managed. Some local authorities have one or more posts with "climate change" in the title, in other cases these functions are spread across several posts or form just part of one post.

How these functions are managed is a local issue, but whatever the local arrangements, climate change staff have found themselves assuming new roles and needing to master an ever expanding range of skills. To help these staff, their managers and employers, the Improvement and Development Agency (IdeA) has prepared this draft competencies framework.

This framework may be especially valuable for local government climate change functions, as these occupations are currently poorly defined compared to many local government professions which have well established professional qualifications and bodies.

The framework covers councils' roles to:-

- Make their local community and services more resilient to extreme weather - **adaptation**
- Reduce greenhouse gas emissions from their own operations, services and the community - **mitigation**

It describes the *core* competencies that local authority staff need to support the council's role as a community leader and to drive and co-ordinate the council's own activities on climate change. Many of these competencies might typically be located in a climate change, sustainable development or environmental policy team. Others might lie with senior management. If contained within one post, this would probably be the council's climate change officer.

It should be noted that this framework does *not* describe:-

- Any one post. These competencies may be spread across several posts including those of senior managers.
- Climate change competencies for other *specialist* council staff, e.g. competencies for land use and transport planners, energy managers, housing or waste staff

It presents:-

1. **Values and drivers** – *what needs to be achieved*
2. **Activities** – *how values and drivers are achieved*
3. **Characteristics** – *desirable competencies / skills, knowledge and behaviour*

A framework that is designed to last - for all councils and all parts of the UK

This framework is intended to be easily updated as values and drivers change. It has therefore been designed, as far as possible, to be:-

- Independent of ever changing government legislation, policy and guidance
- Applicable to all types of council
- Adaptable to all parts of the UK
- Adaptable to the changing values, business needs and strategic direction of a council

It therefore presents the core competencies separately from the current drivers. The latter (for Councils in England) are listed in an appendix which can be updated as the drivers change. The appendix may also be adapted for the devolved administrations.

THE USES AND BENEFITS OF COMPETENCIES FRAMEWORK

Competencies frameworks can be used in many different ways. A council might use this framework for:-

- Recruitment (preparing job descriptions & person specifications, evaluating candidates)
- Staff appraisals
- Identifying the skill gaps and training needs of staff

National or regional organisations that support local authorities might use the framework to:-

- Identify the most common skill shortages nationally or for their region
- Encourage providers (of resources or training) to help fill these gaps

Benefits of a competencies framework

Practitioners:

- Adds credibility and recognition to practitioners' role.
- Highlights skill gaps and helps make the case for training and development.
- Improves transfer and career opportunities (by standardising competencies across organisations and demonstrating generic competencies that are common to other posts)
- Helps to avoid overloading with tasks that could / should be implemented by others.

Managers: More effective staff as result of improvements in:

- Recruitment processes (defining jobs and attracting and identifying suitable candidates)
- Staff appraisal
- Identifying staff training and development needs
- Staff retention (by supporting staff development and enhancing career opportunities)
- Responding to poor performance – highlighting weaknesses and opportunities to improve

Employers:

- Links organisational and personal objectives and ensure that employees are clear about how they are expected to perform. This can help to motivate individuals and raise standards
- Makes appraisal and recruitments systems fairer and more transparent
- Helps to make the organisation more cohesive by establishing links between different professions that share similar competencies
- Assists with workforce planning
- Helps to target scarce training and development resources more effectively and encourage individuals to take more responsibility for their own development

Training and resource providers: Helps providers to:

- Identify gaps in provision and develop appropriate resources and short and long courses
- Market existing resources and training that are relevant to climate change practitioners

ADAPTING THE FRAMEWORK TO LOCAL CIRCUMSTANCES

This competency framework is a *generic* framework that may apply to a number of jobs or roles within a local authority (LA). Councils will need to consider how they wish to allocate these competencies across posts.

Larger councils may choose to spread these competencies across several posts. For example they might have jobs that specialise in mitigation, adaptation, data analysis, and / or community involvement. In small councils, the majority of these competencies may be assigned to just one post or may form part of a wider role such as “sustainability officer” or “environmental policy officer.” Senior managers may also take responsibility for some of the competencies, for example high level advice to the Council Executive and Local Strategic Partnership.

The framework will also need to be adapted to reflect local priorities and circumstances. For example, one council may give priority to adapting selected services that are recognised as being especially vulnerable to severe weather, while another may wish to focus on developing a low carbon economy.

District and county councils will also need to identify the drivers that apply to their circumstances and how this impacts on the competencies that are needed in their authority. All of the drivers apply to unitary councils and London Boroughs.

The process of defining jobs and identifying competencies that are relevant to that job is called *job profiling*. The outcome of job profiling often contributes to the job description (JD) and person specification (PS). The list of activities in table 1 is most likely to contribute to the JD, while the skills and behaviours described in table 1 could inform the PS.

Job profiling normally includes the following steps:-

1. Establish the purpose of the job being profiled – *what contribution does it make to the council’s priorities?*
2. Identify the key activities of the job
3. Identify the characteristics – competencies / skills, behaviour and knowledge required - *which may cover just some of those listed in this framework and others not listed here*

HELP TO IMPROVE COMPETENCIES IN FUTURE

The IDeA is considering developing a self-audit tool for local government climate change staff. The tool will help staff to identify gaps in their skills and knowledge. It will also provide links to sources of information and training.

THE DRAFT COMPETENCIES FRAMEWORK

This draft framework comprises:-

1. **Values and drivers** – *what needs to be achieved*
2. **Activities** – *how values and drivers are achieved*
3. **Characteristics** – *desirable competencies / skills, knowledge and behaviour*

1. VALUES AND DRIVERS – WHAT NEEDS TO BE ACHIEVED

Values

In its work to address climate change the council will:-

- Act as a community leader to help the local community prepare for the impacts of climate change (*adaptation*) and reduce greenhouse gas emissions (*mitigation*).
- Lead by example and ensure that its own operations and services are resilient to the impacts of climate change and minimise greenhouse gas emissions
- Strive for high quality provision that is good value for money and continuously improving.
- Involve local partners and the community in decisions and implementation.
- Deliver measures that reduce greenhouse gas emissions and prepare for climate change while also supporting sustainable development, social inclusion, equality, diversity and other local priorities.

Drivers

The key drivers for local authority action on climate change are:-

1. Local priorities and conditions
2. Government policies, programmes and guidance on climate change and sustainable development
3. Local government performance measures
4. UK climate change legislation
5. International and EU climate change agreements and commitments

Appendix 1 provides more information on the current drivers for English local authorities. It also summarises local authorities' views on future new drivers and existing drivers that are expected to grow in importance over the next few years.

2. ACTIVITIES AND COMPETENCIES – HOW VALUES AND DRIVERS ARE ACHIEVED

Table 1 describes activities that climate change officers may be expected to undertake. These have been sub-divided into seven key roles. The competencies / skills, knowledge and behaviour needed to fulfil each role are also listed. Table 2 looks in more detail at the knowledge that climate change officers need to do their job successfully.

It should be emphasised that it is very unlikely that any one person currently fulfilling these roles will have the full range of qualities described in these tables. Rather, the intention of this framework is that practitioners can use these tables to identify their skill gaps and where possible seek opportunities for improvement.

ROLE	ACTIVITY	COMPETENCY / SKILL	BEHAVIOUR / DEMONSTRATES
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Has knowledge of tools and techniques for:- <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ inter-departmental & partnership working ○ community and stakeholder consultations ○ community action on CC
Expert adviser	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advise the Executive, in particular CC portfolio holders, on the council's obligations on CC, current local practice and opportunities for improvement • Advise council staff and partners on how their activities influence CC adaptation and mitigation and what action they can take to contribute to local CC priorities • Support CC related scrutiny reviews by providing and interpreting evidence and other information 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identifying, sifting, adapting and encapsulating resources • Advising councillors and staff 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Actively seeks out resources and keeps up to date with new advice • Understands how information and advice applies to local circumstances and adapts as necessary • Takes the initiative to communicate new information and advice to relevant councillors and staff and responds to requests for advice • Has knowledge of:- <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ broad CC science and evidence ○ where to obtain information about local CC issues and good practice
Catalyst	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Raise community and business awareness of CC adaptation & mitigation and measures that they can take • Respond to new drivers by initiating new / pilot projects, making the case for new departmental responsibilities and / or staff, and handing over new projects to specialist staff • Identify opportunities for the council or partners to obtain CC related support or funding and assist specialist staff to prepare & submit applications 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Awareness raising • Innovation • Finding practical solutions • Securing project funding 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Responds quickly and decisively to new drivers and situations • Seeks out new ways of doing things and encourages innovation • Seeks practical solutions • Uses teamworking to submit well argued funding applications for CC projects • Hands over new initiatives to specialist staff at an appropriate point • Has knowledge of:- <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ tools and techniques for communicating CC ○ organisations that offer CC support and funding for councils, partners, communities
Analyst	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collect and interpret evidence of current adaptation and mitigation priorities and practices 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Research and analysis • Risk assessment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gathers, analyses and interprets information & data, including calculations and modelling.

ROLE	ACTIVITY	COMPETENCY / SKILL	BEHAVIOUR / DEMONSTRATES
	<p>across the council and local area</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Co-ordinate CC adaptation risk assessments • Identify and evaluate options for achieving local CC priorities • Collect evidence and report on the local area's and the council's CC performance as required by the authority, government and inspectors 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Options appraisal • Drawing out conclusions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Manipulates and interprets data, including using spreadsheets and specialist software • Draws out and presents conclusions in a clear and accessible manner for a variety of audiences • Has knowledge of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Options appraisal techniques ○ Risk assessment techniques ○ CC performance reporting requirements ○ Information technology
Implementer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Manage and deliver council and partnership CC programmes • Establish and support consortiums to deliver CC related revenue and capital projects • Develop innovative funding mechanisms for CC initiatives • Monitor implementation of CC policies and plans by council departments and partners • Identify implementation failures and work with council departments and partners to resolve these 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Project management • Contract management • Manages budgets 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Manages complex council-wide and partnership projects • Manages procurement and contracts • Manages budgets • Secures innovative financing for major projects
Communicator	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Represent the council on regional and local partnerships • Present information on CC action and performance to Elected Members, council staff, strategic partners and local community • Publicise the council's / partnership's CC policies, plans and activities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Presentation skills • Publicity skills 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Designs and delivers presentations to a wide range of audiences • Designs and facilitates workshops and conferences for a wide range of audiences • Drafts publicity materials, works with the media, designs and runs promotional events
All roles	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Competencies that cut across all roles and activities</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Multi-tasking • Setting own priorities, objectives and deadlines and working on own initiative • Working under pressure and meeting deadlines 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Manages own workload • Asks for help to prioritise work and achieve deadlines where necessary

TABLE 2: Knowledge – what needs to be known

The Council's structures, functions, powers and processes

1. The council's statutory powers, its functions and its role as a community leader
2. Democratic structures within the council and the role of Executive and scrutiny
3. Executive members and senior managers of the council and their responsibilities
4. The council's budgetary, performance management and procurement processes

Local priorities and conditions

5. The Sustainable Community Strategy
6. The council's corporate aims
7. The council's policies and practices on sustainable development, social inclusion, equality and diversity
8. Local social, economic and environmental conditions and their relevance to the design of climate change programmes

Climate change science and evidence

9. Broad understanding of:-
 - o The science of climate change
 - o The evidence for man-made climate change
 - o Debates about the accuracy of climate change data and its implications
 - o The UK Climate Projections and how they apply to the local area

International, national and regional climate change drivers and their local relevance

10. Current and anticipated national and international climate change drivers and how these apply to the local area (See appendix 1)
11. The (statutory) powers that the council has to tackle climate change
12. Local government performance measures and how these apply to climate change (See appendix 1)
13. The climate change obligations and activities of regional bodies

Tools, techniques and best practice

14. Climate change performance:-
 - o Guidance on performance improvement
 - o Reporting processes including data gathering and processing
15. Techniques / best practice advice on developing and implementing council and partnership policies and action plans including:-
 - o Undertaking climate change risk assessments
 - o Evaluating the effectiveness of alternative options, including their value for money and their implications for sustainable development, social inclusion, equality and diversity
 - o Undertaking community and stakeholder consultations

- Drafting policies and action plans
- Implementing action plans
- Monitoring and reviewing action plans

Where to obtain support

16. Which organisations offer support for councils on climate change and the kinds of support available

Information sources

17. Where to find information about:-

- Current climate change drivers and their relevance to the local area
- Upcoming issues and drivers for local climate change and their implications for the local area
- Climate change evidence and science
- How local services and operations affect climate change adaptation and mitigation
- Options for improving climate change performance, including:-
 - What has been tried by other councils and partners
 - The effectiveness and value for money of options and technologies (such as low carbon technologies and feed-in tariffs)
 - Their implications for sustainable development, social inclusion, equality and diversity
- Best practice advice on awareness raising campaigns (communicating climate change) and community involvement in climate change initiatives
- Carbon trading
- Funding for climate change initiatives and best practice advice on submitting funding bids
- Innovative financing for major projects
- Establishing multi-disciplinary consortiums to deliver climate change related projects

APPENDIX 1: CLIMATE CHANGE DRIVERS FOR ENGLISH LOCAL AUTHORITIES

CURRENT DRIVERS

Local Priorities and Conditions

Local priorities

Local authority action on climate change must support local priorities especially:-

- The Sustainable Community Strategy
- The council's corporate aims
- The expectations of local people and businesses about local government's role in climate change

Local priorities are likely to cover issues such as:-

- Value for money and efficiency savings
- Economic recovery and low carbon economies
- Stronger and safer communities
- Children and young people
- Adult health and well-being
- Tackling social exclusion and promoting equality

Local conditions

Climate change programmes must also take into account relevant social, economic and environmental conditions, such as housing conditions and trends in local economic sectors.

Government policies, programmes and guidance

Community leadership and sustainable development

- *Creating strong, safe and prosperous communities* - the government's 2008 guidance to local authorities placed a statutory responsibility on councils to provide strategic and political leadership for their area and to work with local partners to develop a Sustainable Community Strategy that contributes to sustainable development in the UK.
- *Securing the Future* - the government's 2005 sustainable development strategy, established five guiding principles for sustainable development and four shared priorities for action.

Climate change adaptation

Overarching policy - *The UK National Adaptation Programme*

- National Infrastructure and Adaptation Project

- Planning Policy Statements (PPS) in particular: PPS1 Supplement on Climate Change (a new draft PPS1 was issued for consultation in March 2010): PPS25 on Development and flood risk
- Local Transport Planning Guidance, in particular best practice guidance on adapting local transport to climate change

Climate change mitigation

Overarching policy - *The UK Low Carbon Transition Plan*

- The Carbon Reduction Commitment Energy Efficiency Scheme (CRC) will from 2013 apply mandatory emissions trading to local authorities (LAs) and schools with annual electricity use above 6,000MWh/year. LAs with lower electricity use will be required to disclose their electricity consumption.
- The Renewable Energy Strategy 2009 set targets for 2030 of: 30% of electricity; 12% of heat; and 10% of transport energy, generated from renewable sources.
- The Household Energy Management Strategy established a target for a reduction of 29% in carbon emissions from the household sector by 2020. The Strategy introduces a new strategic role for local authorities to drive and co-ordinate delivery. It also announced the development of a new Warm Homes Standard for social housing, including local authority housing stock.
- Zero Carbon Developments: The government has set targets that: by 2016 all new homes will be zero carbon, with a major progressive tightening of the energy efficiency building regulations up to the zero carbon target in 2016; by 2016 all new schools will be zero carbon; by 2018 all new public sector buildings will be zero carbon.
- The UK Low Carbon Industrial Strategy introduced measures to support innovation and investment in low carbon technologies and develop new skills for a low carbon economy.
- Energy Performance in Buildings - Display Energy Certificates (DEC) must be displayed in all LA buildings larger than 1,000 square metres
- Planning Policy Statements (PPS), in particular: PPS1 Supplement on Climate Change; PPS25 on Renewable Energy. (A new draft PPS1 which combines PPS1 and PPS25 was issued for consultation in March 2010.)
- Local Transport Planning Guidance, in particular best practice guidance on delivering low carbon travel.

Local Government Performance Measures

The Local Performance Framework has two elements, both of which consider climate change:-

- National Indicators (NI): All local areas must report annually on their performance against two indicators of CO₂ emissions and one on climate change adaptation: NI 185: CO₂ reduction from local authority operations; NI 186: Per capita reduction in CO₂ emissions in the local authority area; NI 188: Planning to adapt to climate change.

- Local Area Agreements (LAAs): These are 3 year agreements which end in 2012. Almost a quarter of LAAs include an improvement target for NI 185; two thirds of LAAs include a target for NI 186; and over a third of LAAs include a target for NI 188.

UK Climate Change Legislation

Climate change adaptation

- UK Climate Change Act 2008 introduced:-
 - Five yearly UK wide Climate Change Risk Assessment
 - National Adaptation Programme
- Local Transport Act 2008 placed a duty on local transport authorities, when developing transport policies, to take into account Government policies on climate change adaptation and have regard to any guidance on adaptation issued by the Secretary of State.
- The Planning Act 2008 introduced a duty for Local Development Frameworks to include policies that contribute to climate change adaptation.
- The Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Act 2009 introduced regional strategies which must contribute to climate change adaptation
- The Flood and Water *Bill* will give local authorities the lead role for local flood risk management.

Climate change mitigation

- UK Climate Change Act 2008
 - Target to reduce UK GHG emissions by at least 80% from 1990 levels by 2050
 - Carbon budgets to reduce UK GHG emissions by at least 34% in 2020 relative to 1990 levels
- Local Transport Act 2008 placed a duty on local transport authorities, when developing transport policies, to take into account Government policies on climate change mitigation and have regard to any guidance on mitigation issued by the Secretary of State.
- The Planning Act 2008 introduced a duty for Local Development Frameworks to include policies that contribute to climate change mitigation.
- The Energy Act 2008 introduced powers for a Feed-In Tariff and the Renewable Heat Incentive to drive an increase in renewable energy.
- The Sustainable and Secure Buildings Act 2004 extended the purposes of the Building Act 1984 to further the conservation of fuel and power.
- The Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Act 2009 introduced regional strategies which must contribute to climate change mitigation

International and European Climate Change Agreements and Commitments

Climate change adaptation

- EU White Paper - Adapting to Climate Change 2009: Towards a European framework for action. This recommended improved EU co-operation on adaptation and a mandatory requirement member states to prepare national adaptation strategies from 2012.
- The Second European Climate Change Programme (ECCP II) 2005 which included proposals for a European Framework on Adaptation as well as sector working groups on adaptation

Climate change mitigation

- The Kyoto Protocol commits the UK to reduce its emissions of greenhouse gases (GHG) by 12.5% from 1990 level by 2008-12. (This target has been superseded by the Climate Change Act 2008 targets below.) The Kyoto agreement ends in 2012 and a new international agreement is being negotiated.
- The Copenhagen Accord – an interim agreement in which the signatories committed to make known their targets for GHG emissions reduction.
- EU commitment following Copenhagen Accord: To reduce GHG emissions by 30% by 2020, over 1990 levels, "provided that other developed countries commit themselves to comparable emission reductions and that developing countries contribute adequately according to their responsibilities and respective capabilities."
- EU Directive 2009/28/EC on the promotion of the use of energy from renewable sources. The UK has committed to sourcing 15% of its energy from renewable sources by 2020.
- The Second European Climate Change Programme (ECCP II) 2005 which set out how the EU would meet its targets under the Kyoto protocol and the contribution of each member state

GROWING AND FUTURE DRIVERS

The following list was provided by local authority and other interviewees for this project.

New and growing drivers

Adaptation in particular: risks assessments; understanding the role of council services in responding to this agenda; raising public awareness; avoiding conflicts with mitigation.

Carbon modelling Demonstrating how carbon targets will be met.

Carbon Reduction Commitment Carbon disclosure and carbon trading if the council's energy consumption is high enough to require trading. (Although in most cases the distribution of CRC tasks has yet to be agreed and these may not fall to the CC officer.)

Keeping people engaged Retaining interest and keeping climate change fresh in the face of increasing scepticism and disinterest. Understanding and explaining international debates such as at the Copenhagen conference and questions about data accuracy.

Local carbon budgets / framework How to deliver carbon budgets at a local level.

Low carbon economies especially with the possible changing role of Regional Development Agencies following the general election / Sub National Review

Capital projects Attracting partners and investors for projects.

Renewable technologies Practicalities of which (micro) renewables are most effective and feed-in tariffs for both homeowners and council projects.

Pay-as-you-save schemes.

Reporting performance Understanding, interpreting and presenting national indicator (NI) data. Use of Natural Resources Assessment.

Resource efficiencies Understanding and making the case for projects which offer the best value for money, including collaborative projects.

UK Climate Change Projections 2009 (UKCP09) Using and applying the projections.