



Delivering Climate Change Adaptation Through Spatial Planning – *Can We Do It?*

TCPA/ Environment Wales Seminar Briefing Paper 29 July 2010

1. Background to the Seminar

The Town and Country Planning Association are delivering this seminar for you as someone concerned with how planning can help communities adapt to the impacts of climate change. This seminar is a culmination of a number of key initiatives led by the TCPA – primarily a European project called [GRaBS \(Green and Blue Space Adaptation for Urban Areas and Eco-towns\)](#), which aims to facilitate the exchange of knowledge and experience and the transfer of good practice on climate change adaptation strategies. Part of the TCPA's role in the project is to improve national, regional and local UK policy on climate change and planning, and disseminate findings to a wider audience.

A key step in achieving this has been establishing the [Planning and Climate Change Coalition](#) (of over 30 leading organisations) in 2009, which has signed up to a 'position statement' making detailed suggestions for improving the planning process by making it fairer, and ensuring that it plays its part in mitigation and adaptation to climate change.

The TCPA also undertook research in 2009 to inform the Royal Commission on Environmental Pollution's study – [Adapting Institutions to Climate Change](#), which was published in March 2010. A key conclusion from the research and the study report was that, in relation to climate change adaptation, the UK spatial planning system is underperforming. Delivery barriers include the lack of skills and resources (limited professional capacity to tackle climate change adaptation), and lack of training and awareness of politicians, community groups and other decision makers.

2. Purpose of the Seminar

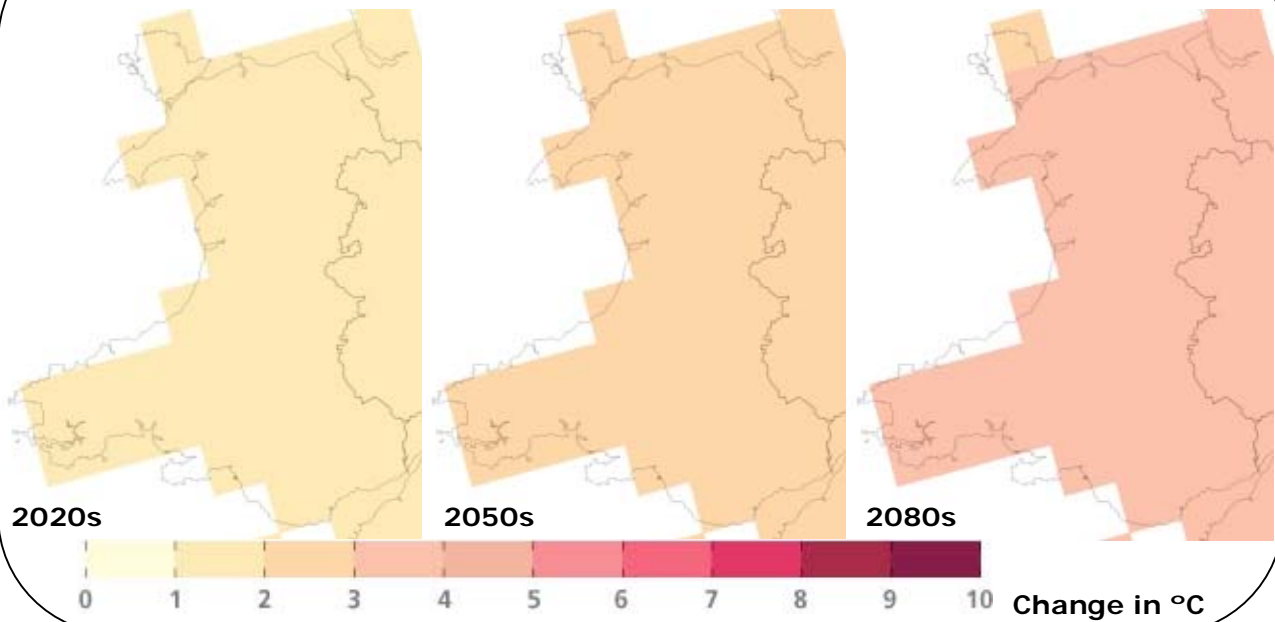
The seminar seeks to establish an interactive forum in which practitioners can be brought together in one room to communicate how to take forward effective adaptation using the Welsh planning system. The key aims of the workshop are:

- to facilitate the exchange of ideas on how the Welsh system can help to deliver climate change adaptation;
- to enhance participants' understanding about how adaptation features in policy and development planning in the UK and Europe;
- to enhance participants' understanding on how different actors can and should be engaged in planning for adaptation, how they can influence approaches; and
- to facilitate the exchange of knowledge and experience on climate change adaptation strategies and delivery to authorities and agencies in Wales.

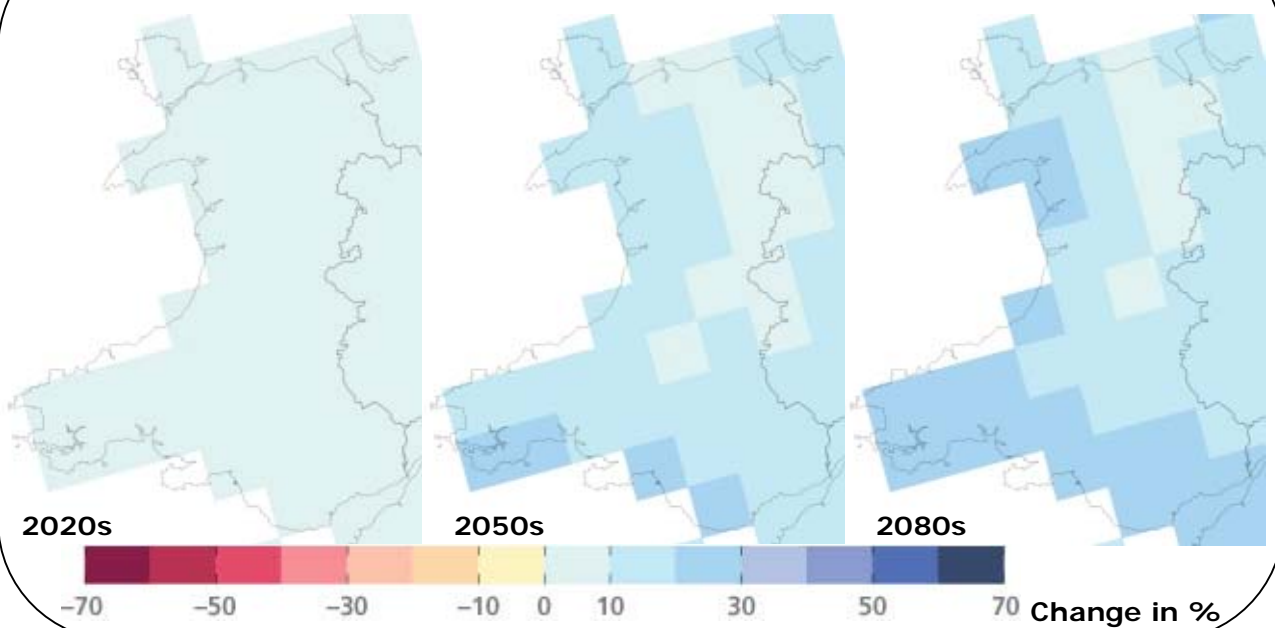
3. Climate Change Impacts in Wales

The UK Climate Impacts Programme (UKCIP) publishes authoritative climate change information on behalf of the UK Government to assist practitioners plan to adapt to a changing climate. Based on the latest projections from UK Climate Projects '09, the impact from climate change will likely to be felt through increasing temperatures and rainfall (see maps below). Good adaptation decisions in spatial planning and development must look to no regrets, low regrets, win-win and adaptable measures to manage these climate risks.

Change in Annual Mean Temperature for a Medium-Emissions 50% Probability Scenario



Change in Winter Mean Precipitation for a Medium-Emissions 50% Probability Scenario



© UK Climate Projections, 2009



4. Overview of the Welsh Policy Context

The Welsh Assembly Government's aim for climate change includes ensuring Wales is resilient to the impacts of climate change. Its aim is that planning should provide for homes, infrastructure, investment and jobs in a way that helps to reduce Wales' ecological footprint. The overarching principle of the national spatial planning framework, the [Wales Spatial Plan \(2008 Update\)](#) and the [One Wales Agreement](#), is that development should be sustainable. The aim is to ensure the work of the public, private and third sectors in Wales is integrated and sustainable, and that actions within an area support each other and jointly move towards a shared vision for Wales. Climate change comes under the "Valuing Our Environment" theme.

[Planning Policy Wales \(June 2010\)](#) provides the strategic policy framework for local planning authorities to use when preparing development plans and determining applications for planning permission. Speaking recently, the Environment Sustainability and Housing Minister said: "The main driver for this consolidated version of Planning Policy Wales is to further embed the need to tackle climate change into the planning system. Climate change is one of the most serious global threats facing us today. As a society we must take action to minimise the causes of global climate change as well as understand and deal with the consequences of inevitable change".

5. Key Principles of Adaptation

Key guiding principles by which local authorities can deliver climate change adaptation:

- Seek opportunities to incorporate adaptation into new and existing developments;
- Work in partnership with communities;
- Incorporate flexibility to deal with changing risks;
- Understand existing vulnerabilities to climate and identify critical thresholds;
- Identify key climate change risks using the latest climate change scenarios;
- Look for no regrets, low regrets, win-win and adaptable measures to manage climate risks;
- Adopt a sequential and risk-based approach to development decisions;
- Avoid actions that will make it more difficult to cope with climate risks in the future;
- Review your adaptation strategy regularly.

These are set out in more detail in '[Climate change adaptation by design: a guide for sustainable communities](#)', published by the TCPA in 2007.

6. Further Information

The GRaBS series of briefing papers aims at providing UK partners with information, policy contexts and overview of literature of topical issues related to adaptation. You can access the briefings at <http://www.tcpa.org.uk/resources.php?action=category&id=23>:

1. Understanding the environmental and social impact of garden development, January 2010
2. Delivering green infrastructure benefits to communities and places through planning, June 2010
3. Delivering adaptation in the UK – key themes and messages, June 2010

CABE Space and the Greater London Authority, [Open space strategies. Best practice guidance](#), 2009

Design for London, 2008, [Living Roofs and Walls Technical Report: Supporting London Plan Policy](#)

TCPA, 2007, [Climate change adaptation by design. A guide for sustainable communities](#)

TCPA, 2004, [Biodiversity by design. A guide for sustainable communities](#)

DIAGRAM. Illustrating the delivery of adaptation through the Wales planning system

