

Third Northern Ireland Climate Change Adaptation Programme (NICCAP3)

To: All local authorities in Northern Ireland
For info: England, Scotland, Wales

1 Overview

On 19 March 2026, the third Northern Ireland Climate Change Adaptation Programme (NICCAP3) was published by the Northern Ireland Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs (DAERA).¹

NICCAP3 sets out over 280 actions designed to help Northern Ireland (NI) adapt to the current and future impacts of climate change. The Programme adopts a whole-society approach by involving a wide range of organisations such as local councils, NI Water, the voluntary sector and businesses.

It responds to the latest UK Climate Change Risk Assessment, which identifies major climate risks facing the UK and Northern Ireland. The impacts of climate change both already happening and are expected to occur include:

- Stronger storms
- More frequent and intense flooding
- New animal diseases
- Wildfires
- Damage to communities and businesses

2 Key elements of the Programme

The range of climate actions contained within NICCAP3 include:

- A new Peatland Strategy for NI (see [APSE Briefing 25-33: Northern Ireland Peatland Strategy](#) for further details).
- City Draining Plans for Derry/Londonderry and Belfast.

¹ <https://www.daera-ni.gov.uk/news/northern-irelands-third-climate-change-adaptation-programme-published>

- A Sustainable Agriculture Programme.
- A new Food Strategy Framework.

3 Implication for councils

NICCAP3 explicitly recognises the role of local government in delivering climate adaptation at a local level. As identified partners, councils will be expected to actively contribute to the initiative.

This is likely to involve working collaboratively with the DAERA and external stakeholders to implement the Programme. It is also likely for councils to be expected to demonstrate alignment between their local policies and NICCAP3 objectives to maintain consistency across the region.

3.1 Consultation feedback

DAERA launched an eight-week public consultation for NICCAP3 between June and August 2025. Feedback indicated strong support for the Programme, with 89% of respondents supporting the inclusion of actions outside of government departments and over 70% agreed the proposed actions would support effective climate adaptation.

As highlighted in [APSE Briefing 24-23: Northern Ireland Environmental Statistics Report 2024](#), 78% of respondents were very or fairly concerned about the environment. This demonstrates how NICCAP3 aligns with strong public support for action on climate change and recognition of the role local councils can play.

4 APSE Comment

NICCAP3 represents another significant step forward in Northern Ireland's approach to climate adaptation and resilience. APSE welcomes the Programme's recognition that a collaborative approach is essential and that local authorities are key partners in this process. The Programme provides an opportunity to strengthen partnerships between councils, central government and other stakeholders, supported by clear national policy direction.

However, successful delivery of NICCAP3 within local government will depend on adequate resourcing, clarity of roles and expectations as well as continued engagement with councils to ensure actions are realistic and deliverable at a local level.

APSE runs a range of Carbon Literacy training courses designed to raise awareness of and equip participants with the knowledge to tackle the climate crisis. By understanding the pivotal role local government plays in climate change, councils can continue adopting best practice while recognising the environmental impact of their decisions. Members receive special rates. For more information about the course and to book your place click [here](#).

Hannah Cocker
Communications Officer, APSE

Matt Ellis
Principal Advisor, APSE

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Association for Public Service Excellence
3rd floor,
Trafford House,
Chester Road, Manchester M32 0RS.
telephone: 0161 772 1810
fax: 0161 772 1811
web: www.apse.org.uk

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