

Adapting Rugby Borough to Climate Change

Lead organisation:

Sustainability West Midlands

Project Manager: Alan Carr (Senior Sustainability Adviser)

Customers:



WM Sustainability Roadmap themes addressed:



Project Duration:

January – July 2024

The Project:

[Using our experience](#) of supporting local authorities with climate change adaptation, SWM was commissioned by Rugby Borough Council to produce a Climate Change Adaptation Plan for the borough, a climate change risk assessment, and a Technical Report that analyses how climate change may affect Rugby Borough in future.

Aims

- To analyse [UK Climate Change Projections](#) to gain a clearer picture of how Rugby Borough's climate may change over the course of this century; we worked with our [Associate Ailsa Gibson](#) to do this.
- To develop a Climate Change Risk Assessment summarising the key risks Rugby Borough will face.
- To develop a Climate Change Adaptation Plan in response to this which details how we feel Rugby Borough's people, businesses, infrastructure, natural environment and services need to respond to deal with climate change impacts.
- To engage with many stakeholders across the Borough and wider area to upskill them on climate change adaptation and extract their views on climate risk, impact and response.

SWM's role

Through stakeholder engagement, frequent liaison with the Deputy Chief Executive at Rugby Borough Council and our own experience and knowledge gained from the delivery of other related projects, we were responsible for producing outputs that helped fulfil the aims outlined above, including extensive stakeholder engagement. SWM project managed the work, overseeing and delivering outputs but also managing the work of our Associate as identified.

The Outputs:

Through extensive engagement and research, the following outputs have been delivered:

- A Technical Report outlining the future climate change projections for Rugby Borough.
- A climate change risk assessment for Rugby Borough (embedded into the below document).
- The main resource: a Climate Change Adaptation Plan for Rugby Borough.



Draycote Water © Rugby Borough Council

Hyperlinks to the above outputs will be included when they are published.

By way of stakeholder engagement, we:

- Conducted ~20 one-to-one online meetings with various stakeholders both internal to the council and from other organisations to ask in-depth questions about climate adaptation and their perception of risk.
- Ran an online engagement session with community group representatives, assisted by the Warwickshire and West Midlands Association of Local Councils (WALC), to find out how climate change and severe weather is affecting them on the ground.
- Ran a session with elected council members to hear their thoughts on what should be included in the draft climate change adaptation plan.

Challenges

- Warwickshire County Council produced a climate change adaptation plan for the county of Warwickshire, in which Rugby is situated, in 2022. While our approach differed considerably from theirs, it was important to ensure alignment between the two. This was tricky given these contrasting approaches but we cross-referenced both plans to ensure all relevant aspects were covered.
- Ensuring the reality of climate change was not too doom-mongering was quite hard; the reality of climate change projections and impacts is a harsh one, and presenting this in an opportunistic and optimistic way is almost impossible. Striking a balance between not scaremongering but being clear on what the likely impacts will be required very specific uses of language and tone.

- The work we have supported Rugby Borough Council with is very much a starting point, and the next step is responding to the actions that have been identified in their adaptation plan. As a small Borough, this is tricky and the council must work with numerous partners to achieve this so that actions do not become too overwhelming.

In the Future:

We are keen to continue working with Rugby Borough Council, both individually and as part of our wider regional work on adaptation, to help support its work on adaptation. Unlike most traditional consultancies, we do not deliver a piece of work and then disappear forever, expecting the client to get on with it, especially when it comes to our local stakeholders and members. We will continue to engage with the Council on this agenda to help develop their forthcoming adaptation planning.



Wolston, often prone to flooding © Rugby Borough Council

Accolades:

"We wanted to work with SWM on this important agenda as they are leading the way on catalysing the Borough's approach to climate change adaptation. We were very pleased with the way they prioritised stakeholder engagement to ensure the Plan is as relevant to Rugby Borough as possible, and the action plan gives us a clear way forward on what we as a council needs to do next, and who we need to work with on this difficult subject. The professionalism and expertise offered by SWM throughout the process ensured the delivery of a high quality product which met our specification. I would highly recommend them to any local authority wanting to start work on climate change adaptation." – Dan Green, Deputy Chief Executive, Rugby Borough Council

Contact Details:

For further information on the project or to work with us in one of a variety of ways, please [see our consultancy page](#) or contact the SWM team on enquiries@swm.org.uk.