Localis calls for climate resilience in Local Plans

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Press release

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Successful climate adaptation will require an overhaul of the planning system to embed measurable targets for consistent local action nationwide, a report published by the think-tank Localis has argued today.

In a study entitled **'Climate resilience in Local Plans'** the think-tank calls for a nationally accepted definition for 'resilience' as a prerequisite to enable local authorities to proactively adapt to defend communities from climate change.

Analysis of 88 English Local Plans by Localis revealed:

- More than half (54.5 percent) of Local Plans emphasise water stress as a potential pressure, and many authorities in areas of serious water stress make note of this factor – although not all do;
- Around two-in-five (40.9 percent) of the plans surveyed consider the use of building regulations such as Passivhaus for housing or BREEAM standards for construction as potential solutions to climate change;
- While retrofitting and resilient buildings are a primary factor of extreme temperature adaptation, a focus on resilient buildings in reference to climate change resilience only appeared in two-in five (39.8 percent) of surveyed plans.

Localis head of research, Joe Fyans, said: "Given what we know from Met Office Climate Projection about best case scenarios for the probable damage likely to be wrought by increased flooding and the impact of heatwaves, what is worrying here is that current legislation comes nowhere close enough to covering the risk impact.

"Where rules are not in place, appropriate measures are not provided by all Local Plans. On the ground, this means there is a great deal of variability in local government preparations for climate change.

"Suitable resilience is needed for all areas, and a place-based approach that accounts for levels of vulnerability will be the appropriate remedy for many of the country's upcoming climate problems."

Localis researcher, Sandy Forsyth, said: "England is seen as a world-leader in terms of adaptation policy.

"A Local Resilience Act would simply work to codify the roles of actors with regard to a specific definition of resilience, setting out quantifiable obligations and resulting in funding dedicated to councils to provide resilient communities and infrastructure, so that best practice might become common practice across all areas of the country."

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Note to Editors:

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Localis is an independent think-tank dedicated to issues related to politics, public service reform and localism. We carry out innovative research, hold events and facilitate an ever-growing network of members to stimulate and challenge the current orthodoxy of the governance of the UK.

www.localis.org.uk

Climate Resilience in Local Plans

An embargoed copy of the report **Climate Resilience in Local Plans can be** downloaded here:

Localis is running a policy webinar to debate the report findings and issues arising on **Wednesday 8 March from 11.00 to 12.00.**

The panellists will include:

- Alastair Brown, Director, Arete Consultancy & Management Ltd
- Laura Frost, Associate and Climate Change Lead, Arup
- Harry Steele, Infrastructure Specialist, Royal Town and Planning Institute
- Jo Wall, Strategic Director – Climate Response, Local Partnerships LLP

To sign up to the webinar:
https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/resilience-in-local-planning-tickets-506046959077

Local Resilience Act Campaign

More details on Localis's Local Resilience Act campaign can be found here:

https://www.localis.org.uk/research/local-resilience-act/

In proposing for the creation of a **Local Resilience Act**, Localis would expect the legislation to:

- Ensure funding for place resilience to meet a statutory duty upon local authorities, as a core service line, to provide the best adaptation measures for the built and natural environments in the coming generations.
- Streamline existing legislation to allow the necessary changes to happen at the local level.
- Provide a workable and clearly defined conception of 'resilience' to be adopted in place.

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