Localis calls for Local Resilience Act to give places power to combat climate change and extreme weather

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Press release

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Independent think-tank Localis has today launched a campaign calling for the streamlining of legislation to give local leaders powers and independent funding to protect areas from climate change and extreme weather.

In making the case for a Local Resilience Act, Localis argue that England's local authorities are best placed to understand and to act upon individual resilience requirements from city to country to coast.

Recent analyses of place policy undertaken by Localis have consistently revealed the current funding landscape for local government to deliver resilient places is far too piecemeal and insufficient, and that the responsibilities between local, central and industry are also too fragmented and disconnected for this to be addressed as a whole place agenda.

To address this, Localis is proposes a Local Resilience Act that would work 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.

The Act would streamline existing legislation to allow the absolutely necessary changes to happen at the local level - the level where climate change adaptation is most able to mitigate the risks of dangerous weather changes.

Changes to transport, buildings, local businesses, land use and biodiversity are all required and could be enacted by local authorities - but only if the role of local government in directing resilience is consolidated and if the necessary funding and revenue streams provided.

Localis chief executive, Jonathan Werran, said: "As climate shifts worldwide, councils across England are being hit by increasingly extreme weather patterns including violent storm surges, unbearable temperatures, and widespread flooding.

"Even under the most minimal of warming scenarios, infrastructure, public health, and GDP will all worsen due to the weighty pressure of extreme weather events. Different areas are undergoing their own unique changes, and specialised adaptation is necessary.

"Failure to fund whole place resilience is folly. The prolonged breakdown of infrastructure and the sustained inability of our built environment to withstand extreme weather will cost the nation far more further down the line – perhaps to the point where it will threaten to undermine economic growth and social stability."

Localis head of research, Joe Fyans, said: "Whole place resilience is vital. It has been predicted that without suitable adaptation measures and mitigation, the country will see extraordinary costs as communities struggle to keep up with the changes forced upon it by climate change.

"If action is not taken, the UK might see damages of up to 7.4 percent reduction of its potential GDP by the end of the century, alongside devastating shocks to its agricultural sector and to the health of its population. However, with suitable upstream mitigation and preventative measures in place, that figure would drop to a predicted 2.4 percent.

"In the face of the climate emergency, our current lack of place resilience is precarious. The structure of funding for local authorities needs to transform in order that adaptation can take place, and that long-term planning is enabled for the sake of minimising future long-term costs."

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Related Keywords:

Local Government :: Climate Change :: Infrastructure :: Weather :: Resilience :: Funding :: Devolution ::

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Notes to Editors:

1. **About Localis**

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

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

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