

About Weathering Change

Weathering Change was an action research project in north Glasgow exploring how communities can become more resilient in the face of climate change.

The context

Scotland's climate is changing and is projected to change more rapidly in the future, presenting a wide range of challenges and opportunities.

Projected climate trends for the west of Scotland are:

- Average temperatures will increase in all seasons, with the greatest increase in summer months.
- Heatwaves and extremely hot summers will occur more frequently in future.
- Rainfall is projected to become more seasonal, with an increase in average winter and autumn rainfall.
- Average summer rainfall may decrease.
- Heavy rainfall events may occur more frequently in winter, spring and autumn.

- Winter storms with extreme rainfall may become more frequent.
- Sea level will rise.

Rather than considering climate change as a stand-alone issue the project rationale was that existing social, environmental and economic stresses will be made worse by climate change. A changing climate has the potential to widen inequalities. Certain population groups, such as those with limited income, poor health, or without flood insurance, may be more vulnerable and have fewer resources to cope.

Weathering Change was about understanding how to increase the capacity of communities living in north Glasgow to survive and adapt in the face of shocks and stresses, including those that a changing climate may bring; i.e. to become more resilient. Weathering Change cut across many policy areas, including community empowerment, planning and development, the delivery of public services, active travel, and placemaking, all of which can influence how the impacts of climate change are experienced locally.

How community resilience is reflected in local and national policy

"Our aspiration is to have open and transparent relationships between communities and the institutions that serve them. Autonomous and resourceful communities are crucial for a more resilient city and we want to empower all Glaswegians to be able to shape the future of their neighbourhoods."

[GLASGOW'S RESILIENCE STRATEGY¹]

"Scotland's communities are a rich source of energy, creativity and talent. They are made up of people with rich and diverse backgrounds who each have something to contribute to making Scotland flourish. Central and local government needs to help communities to work together and release that potential to create a more prosperous and fairer Scotland."

[COMMUNITY EMPOWERMENT (SCOTLAND) ACT 2015 – A SUMMARY²]

"We need to engage with the public on the impacts of climate change, bringing them along as active participants in the transition."

[CLIMATE CHANGE PLAN: THE THIRD REPORT ON PROPOSALS AND POLICIES 2018-2032³]

Key planning outcomes in Scottish Planning Policy⁴

- A successful sustainable place – supporting economic growth, regeneration and the creation of well-designed places
- A low carbon place – reducing our carbon emissions and adapting to climate change
- A natural resilient place – helping to protect and enhance our natural cultural assets and facilitating their sustainable use
- A connected place – supporting better transport and digital connectivity

1 <https://www.glasgow.gov.uk/CHttpHandler.ashx?id=35134&p=0>

2 <https://beta.gov.scot/publications/community-empowerment-scotland-act-summary/>

3 <http://www.gov.scot/Publications/2018/02/8448>

4 <http://www.gov.scot/Publications/2014/06/5823>

Geographical focus

Three neighbouring areas in north Glasgow were chosen as the geographical focus for Weathering Change: Lambhill, Possilpark and Milton. In these parts of the city many people face multiple health, social and environmental challenges. Life expectancy is relatively low and around one third of adults are in receipt of out-of-work benefits. It is also an area where almost all of the population lives within 500 metres of vacant or derelict land. Despite these challenges, north Glasgow is an area with a planned strategic regeneration focus, with significant capital being invested in delivering infrastructural improvements especially along the canal corridor. Several community organisations provide support for local people and an opportunity to be involved in community life across the three areas, including several groups with a focus on growing or supporting environmental improvements. Project team members had previous experience of working in the Lambhill area through 'Climate Ready Lambhill'.



Who was involved?

Weathering Change was planned, managed and delivered by the Glasgow Centre for Population Health (GCPH), Sniffer, greenspace scotland and Glasgow City Council. The project team worked with a broad range of stakeholders – including people living in north Glasgow and strategic organisations that have a remit in this part of the city. By identifying planned activity and future priorities for local and strategic organisations in the area, the project was designed to link up and support planned projects and area improvements.

Approach and key findings

The project team began by meeting with key contacts in the area to explore local challenges, priorities and opportunities. Through conversations with people working for community, third sector and statutory organisations, team members built up an understanding of the various activities, strategic drivers and plans of organisations working within the project area. This information was supplemented by available socioeconomic, health and environmental data to create an up-to-date area profile.



Key findings

- Local strategies and plans for regeneration were being developed and could be influenced by the project. The project team identified over 50 relevant activities (plans, strategies and projects).
- Several local groups were already involved in projects in the area but were not always well linked due to a competitive funding environment.
- Based on the understanding of local context and future opportunities the project team considered that adding to, and joining up existing activity would be the most effective way for the project to have a positive influence.

From this exploratory phase the project team developed a Weathering Change 'logic model' and a set of assumptions to be tested. The project approach involved working with local people to understand their aspirations, before engaging with statutory organisations to identify and understand their strategic priorities for the area. Lastly, the project team looked at opportunities for collaborative action. This involved a facilitated process over an 18 month period to explore opportunities to take forward projects or initiatives to support area improvements exploring and tracking the various actions and knowledge that emerged. We revisited our model at the end of the project and reworked this to reflect our learning - see our theory of change on the back page.

Messages from community consultation

Community consultation

The Weathering Change team conducted on-street consultation with 95 local residents under the banner of 'Whatever the Weather'. Conversations were shaped around five key themes thought to be relevant to community resilience in the face of climate change: leisure; getting around; food; keeping warm and dry; and social connections. Engagement materials were transported by a purpose-built rickshaw which was parked at locations across north Glasgow. The aim of the consultation was:

- To understand key local issues and priorities for change for people living in the area.
- To gauge public opinion on climate change and how it might impact on what people value in their local area.
- To encourage local participation in the project.



Key findings

- Priorities for improvement were employment, opportunities for young people, environmental conditions, local facilities, transport and food options.
- There was a general belief that climate change was happening but people felt powerless to do anything and burdened with a problem that they did not create.
- Climate change was not seen to be an important issue given the context of poverty, deprivation and the wish for more physical and social regeneration in the area.
- A lack of investment over a number of years in the area had tested the relationship between local people and statutory organisations.
- Community spirit was apparent, however, many respondents did not engage with local organisations.



Community group consultation

Five community groups were invited to a workshop held in Glasgow. Key learning was presented from the 'Whatever the Weather' consultation. The aim of this workshop was:

- To identify what community groups were planning of relevance to the key issues from the community consultation and how they may be addressing climate change.
- To identify opportunities for local groups to work together on areas of shared interest.
- To establish what community groups need from statutory organisations in terms of support and to enable more productive partnership working.



Key findings

A number of initiatives were identified and a shared enthusiasm emerged for groups to work more closely with each other. Some community groups, despite being close to each other, had an opportunity to meet for the first time. Groups made plans for future collaboration, including:

- sharing community facilities and investment;
- joining up approaches to funding applications, training and seeking accreditation;
- opportunities to expand on ideas for local land use;
- food growing and urban farming; and
- greater cooperation with various strategic partners.

Community groups' expectations of statutory organisations that were identified included:

- greater cooperation between statutory organisations working across the geographic communities;
- greater accountability in relation to the Community Empowerment Act;
- statutory organisations engaging community groups as training providers; and
- more regular feedback from strategic partners in the area regarding master planning and progress

Community groups articulated an aspiration for north Glasgow to be a recognised source of expertise for practitioners and professionals around sustainability, greenspace and community issues.



Messages from statutory organisations

The Weathering Change team met with staff from local and statutory organisations to explore their interests and priorities. The organisations included the Thriving Places Community Planning Partnership, Canal Regeneration Partnership (which is involved in physical regeneration of the Forth and Clyde Canal corridor), Glasgow City Council and the Metropolitan Glasgow Strategic Drainage Partnership. The aim was:

- To share the learning from the community consultation with local and statutory organisations.
- To align shared ambitions between statutory and community organisations.
- To identify opportunities to shape emerging plans of statutory organisations working in the Weathering Change project area.



Key findings

Many plans for the area were identified in relation to active travel, land-use, regeneration and large scale projects/ infrastructure improvements. Statutory organisations were receptive to working with communities in relation to:

- The design of sustainable urban drainage systems;
- Supporting Stalled Spaces applications for the development of identified vacant sites
- the role of local housing associations in supporting communities; and
- Providing training for young people through Scottish Canals and the John Muir Trust.

Based on the series of conversations the project team identified a number of opportunities for organisations and communities to work together at an area level.



Opportunities for collaboration

The Weathering Change team brought together local and statutory organisations at a workshop to identify opportunities for action. The event brought together community groups (Love Milton, Lambhill Stables, North Glasgow Community Food Initiative and Friends of Possilpark Greenspace), Glasgow City Council, Metropolitan Glasgow Strategic Drainage Partnership, Scottish Canals, Thriving Places and the NHS.

Those taking part discussed a number of initiatives and opportunities that were clustered into four key themes and identified on a map of the area. From the group conversations specific actions were identified that could be taken forward collaboratively.



Key findings

Priorities for action were identified in relation to better partnership working between neighbouring community organisations, unlocking vacant land for development by community organisations, establishing a food growing network and linking in to future plans to improve active travel. Low attendance from representatives of statutory organisations and limited resources to take forward prioritised actions were recognised as barriers to progress. Climate adaptation was not an explicit consideration in identifying future priorities but was instead part of the wider conversation on social and environmental change.

Priorities for action identified by communities and organisations

Theme	Areas of focus		
Developing a food growing network	Natural environment <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Using vacant and derelict land Maintenance of sites 	Urban growing <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Urban farming Development of allotment sites Volunteering Skills development 	Community food network <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establishment of a local food network and addressing surplus food Surplus food Growing practice
Placemaking along the canal corridor	Placemaking projects <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Using boats to increase traffic on canal Creating destinations 	Local cultural heritage and identity <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promoting local heritage Retention of industrial heritage 	Local tourism and business generation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Development of north as place for sustainability Volunteering/training
Improving active travel links	Active travel routes <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improving links to local destinations Creating routes along the canal Signposting to destinations Improve lighting and remove litter 	Active travel provision <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bike hire scheme expansion Organised walking and cycling trips Create cycle clubs Improving cycling infrastructure 	Education, awareness and health <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide cycle maintenance courses Social prescribing
Working together			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sharing knowledge and resources such as specialist knowledge and skills, volunteering opportunities, resources, joint funding bids, and identifying opportunities for young people. Collaboration between local and statutory organisations through more regular communication and an effort to ensure that local people and their communities can benefit from the Community Empowerment Act. Strengthening community links by establishing projects on neighbourhood boundaries and by supporting new members of the community, such as migrants, to get involved. 			

What next?

Several opportunities identified from the Weathering Change project were reported back to project stakeholders and three key priorities were agreed as a basis for collective action:

- Progressing a food growing network for north Glasgow, particularly in relation to growing and marketing, to share information and identify opportunities for collaboration.
- Supporting on-going collaboration between local people and organisations in relation

to the use of vacant and derelict land, the development of a green corridor, better quality greenspace and making links to local heritage.

- Involving community groups in the development of plans to improve connectivity, accessibility and transport in the area, particularly in relation to improved active travel infrastructure and bus services.



Overall learning

Our learning from north Glasgow

Community resilience can be supported in north Glasgow if local and statutory organisations work together to address shared interests and priorities. Weathering Change identified an appetite for greater collaborative working but we also identified some barriers such as organisational differences, shrinking resources, fewer dedicated resources for community development and competition for funding.

Although some priorities to support area improvements were identified through the project, mechanisms for taking them forward were difficult to agree upon.

Principles of building community resilience in the face of climate change

Based on project learning, principles for building community resilience to climate change are presented. This covers two key areas of supporting resilience: local and statutory organisations working together and how climate related activity is framed.

Local and statutory organisations working together

Joint working between statutory and third sector organisations requires commitment from all involved, and capacity to do so. It may also require preliminary work to develop a shared understanding and greater resources for community engagement in some areas.

- **Understanding community interests** – Community engagement is more likely to be effective if it relates to what communities are interested in and can influence in the short term. This can be supported through effective community consultation and by identifying community organisations to establish what is of interest and to add value to what is already happening. Consultation can be an effective way of getting community groups together

to discuss public opinion and how it can be collectively addressed. It is important to address broad community interests rather than those of specific community groups which may not be representative. This will involve identifying appropriate ‘ways in’ to working with the community. Weathering Change identified groups with an interest in food growing and green networks. It is also important to create opportunities for different community organisations to work together to share ideas and opportunities with each other.

- **Aligning activities/ placemaking** – Community participation is more likely to be effective if the intentions of the various strategic organisations working in the same area are aligned. Interventions that derive from different policy drivers such as community empowerment, food growing and regeneration can benefit from being joined up and delivered flexibly in a way that is sympathetic to the local context. Consideration should be given to what place-based consultation has already happened and what changes occurred as a result. In doing so it is helpful to recognise that the community may be less engaged on strategic and development issues than on immediate local challenges.
- **Recognising the value of collaboration** – a collaborative approach between organisations and communities is more likely to bring about change than working separately. This means exploring community priorities, plans and intentions rather than undertaking actions on their behalf. Local organisations are well placed to support statutory organisations to deliver their own ambitions and priorities through their existing relationships with local people, an understanding of how to engage with them and an understanding of key local issues.
- **Importance of timescales** – Timing can be an important factor in shaping whether productive collaborations between local and statutory organisations can emerge. For local groups there may be a wish for quick improvement, whereas statutory organisations

tend to be working in a more strategic and long-term way. This tension requires careful management, with regular communication being important for maintaining local interest.

- **Long term commitment and trust** – Community consultation benefits from being linked to real, long term drivers and senior level commitment from those who are able to resource/invest in the changes that are needed. Representatives from local groups need to feel that their concerns are being met and acted upon, and that there are clear lines to statutory decision-making. Where infrastructure projects are happening, effort should be made to ensure that communities can have a role in shaping and delivering them. Regular communication with local people following consultation is important to maintain trust.
- **Enabling mechanisms** – Building collaborations and community resilience within an area requires time, understanding, and people who can enable change - such as facilitators or community champions. The Weathering Change project team found it helpful to facilitate conversations between different local and statutory interests. Impartial facilitators can play an important role in exploring organisational differences between statutory and third sector organisations, including the timescales that they work to and the role of funding in shaping decision-making and practice across both sectors.

Framing climate related activity

Learning from Weathering Change is that although people may not see climate change as a priority for action or feel that they have the capacity to respond, conversations about climate impacts can be an important aspect of participatory placemaking processes. Climate change can be addressed indirectly through subjects that are relevant to people's everyday lives such as heating, energy, getting around, and food. Climate impacts may also

be considered directly, in relation to what local people would like to maintain or improve in their community in the face of climate change. This requires an understanding of what impact climate change is likely to have locally.

- **The value of seeing place through a climate lens** – Communities, groups and organisations may not understand how a changing climate will affect them or could widen existing social, environmental and economic inequalities. Being 'resilient to climate change' is about more than responding to identified climate related risks. Understanding the local context, valued assets and building social networks are all important precursors for considering actions that can reduce climate risk and create opportunities.
- **Climate justice** – Climate adaptation and climate justice were not explicit considerations in identifying future priorities for north Glasgow; they were instead seen to be part of a process of wider action to tackle social and environmental injustice. By supporting access to local resources such as land, facilities, funding and human resources, local authorities can play an important role in building community resilience and addressing justice issues.
- **Climate-related resources** – Creative and pro-active approaches may be needed to effectively engage with a broad range of people about climate change, rather than consultation events designed around an identified climate related threat. Tools and resources are needed to increase understanding of how climate change may affect people and places, be it directly or indirectly. Opportunities may need to be framed in ways that also highlight wider economic, social and environmental benefits. Food growing, active travel, placemaking and regeneration (social and physical) are useful and appropriate subjects for introducing conversations and supporting action on climate adaptation.

Summary

Learning from Weathering Change is that Climate Change is best addressed as part of a broader response to systemic issues. While climate impacts may not be part of current conversations regarding priorities for improvement in many communities, it can be helpfully incorporated into future conversations about the strategic development of an area through locality plans, placemaking, regeneration and active travel strategies, for example.

Time, investment, careful planning and political will are needed to support communities to become more resilient in the face of climate change. This requires going beyond both stand-alone policies for strategic organisations and working with single interest / potentially competing community groups which may not necessarily reflect wider community interests within a locality. Mechanisms are needed to facilitate long term collaborative working and knowledge building within a locality. The benefits to be reaped are relevant to many policy areas – empowered and healthy communities, better places to live work and play – all of which can support communities who may be impacted by a changing climate.

Findings from this project raise important questions about how communities and organisations can work together more effectively to support processes of change. The need for more effective collaborative working to address multiple neighbourhood challenges sits within an important context of a changing climate. Learning from this project contributed to the Adaptation Scotland/Sniffer model of creating climate ready and resilient places and communities.

Recommendations

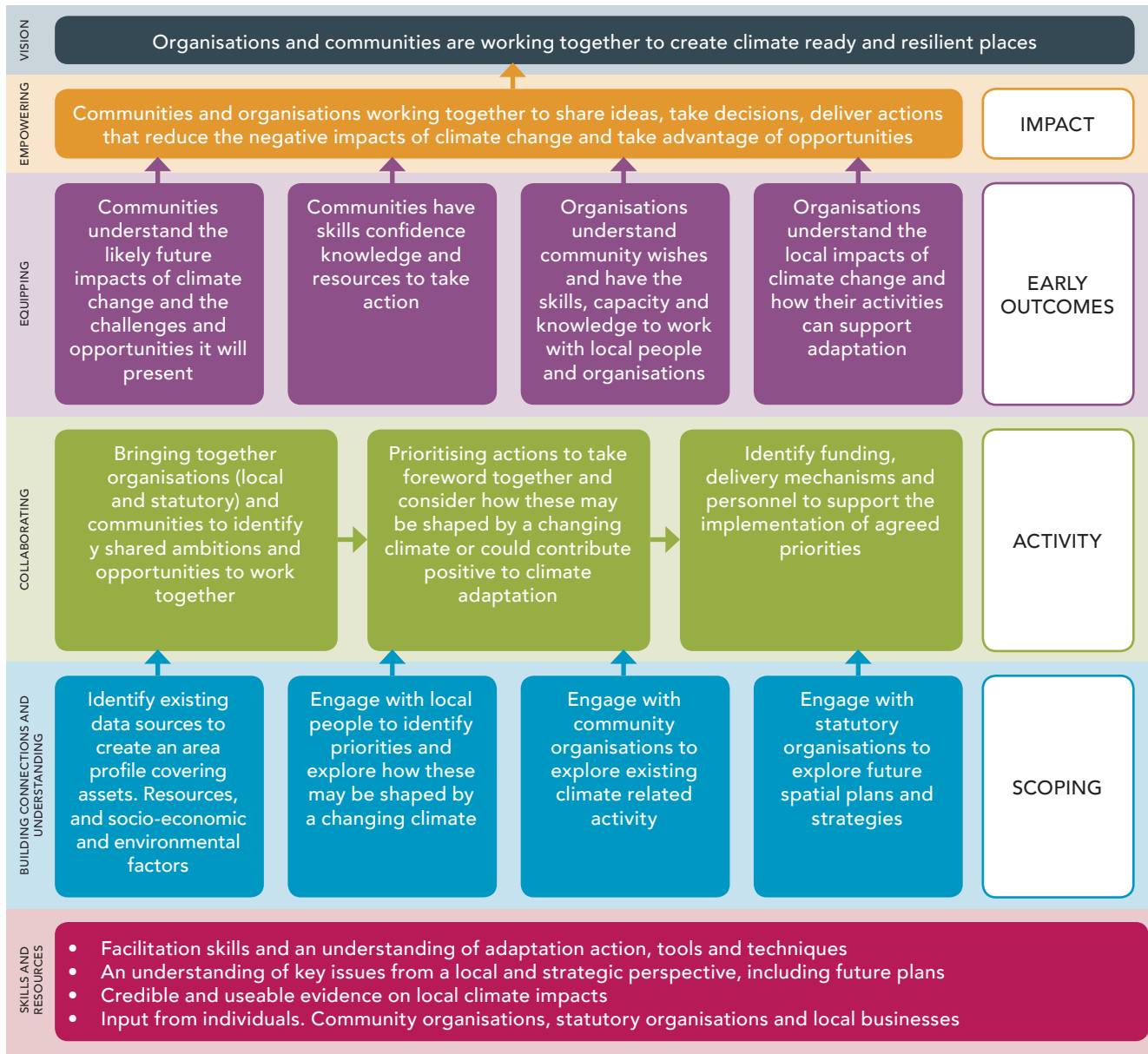
- **Enabling mechanisms are required to support meaningful and productive collaboration between community groups and institutions.** This requires institutions to ensure suitable levels of political backing, consider how new ways of working can be resourced, and ensure that leadership and accountability is appropriately shared between partners.
- The policy drivers for building community resilience are varied. And the delivery of more resilient communities is an outcome that benefits the whole system. Therefore, **building community resilience in the face of climate change is an agenda that needs to be fully integrated into planning and decision making processes across multiple policy areas.** This requires politicians and policy makers to be made aware of the stresses and strains that threaten to weaken the fabric of local communities, and to consider them as part of long-term policy making processes of which climate change is an important component, taking into account the wider benefits.
- Local communities are the real experts on the areas in which they live and work. **Institutions and local organisations need to work together to give these communities sufficient opportunities to influence and shape the decisions affecting their areas.** Furthermore, local decisions need to be firmly based on the interests and needs of local people.

Who was involved

The project partners would like to thank the following for their input:

- Forestry Commission
- Friends of Possilpark Greenspace
- Glasgow City Council – Access officer
- Glasgow City Council – Neighbourhood Planning
- Glasgow City Council – Planning
- Glasgow City Council – Strategic Infrastructure and Place
- Glasgow City Council – Sustainable Glasgow
- Glasgow City Council- Flooding and drainage
- Glasgow City Council/MGSDP
- Glasgow and Clyde Valley Green Network Partnership
- greenspace scotland
- Health Improvement Manager, Glasgow City Council CHP (North West Sector)
- Lambhill Stables
- Love Milton
- Milton Community
- NHS – Thriving Places
- NHS GGC
- North Glasgow Community Food Initiative
- North Glasgow Healthy Living Centre/ Axis health hub
- North West Glasgow CPP
- Possil Park Community
- Scottish Canals
- Scottish Wildlife Trust

Our 'theory of change' (adapted from Sniffer/Adaptation Scotland's theory of change)



The project was funded by Glasgow City Council and the Glasgow Centre for Population Health and delivered by a project team comprising Glasgow City Council, the Glasgow Centre for Population Health, Sniffer and greenspace scotland.



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