

How councils have implemented the Adaptive Capacity Checklist

Implementing the Adaptive Capacity Checklist (organisation-level)

Adaptive Capacity Checklist users shared that checklist completion time averaged: 1 hour and 50 minutes for the organisational level checklist.

Methods to implement organisational checklist include:

- Sustainability team meeting with council executive team to complete the checklist over 3 separate meetings, inviting discussion.
- Meeting as a sustainability team to workshop the checklist and invite discussion.
- Completed by the sustainability officer in consultation with coordinator and manager.



The examples below are from councils that implemented the checklist during the pilot of the updated checklist in 2023.

Councils reported that the context in which the Adaptive Capacity Checklist was delivered was important to how it was received and valued by other council staff. If you can align the use of the checklist to enhance another climate adaptation process it is very effective.

Example council 1

We met as a sustainability team to workshop our responses to the organisation-level Adaptive capacity checklist. This approach worked well for us as we got to hear a range of perspectives and responses to the questions and the conversation it generated within the team was valuable.

Example council 2

The sustainability team held a briefing with our executive leadership team on climate resilience. This involved a presentation on financial and transition risks, which was effective because it balanced the risks with what we're doing to address them.

We now have a commitment from our executive leadership team to meet every 6 weeks for an hour on the governance control group for climate risk. They want to know: Where are we at? What are the steps we need to take? What do we measure? How are we progressing? We are using the checklist during these meetings to engage and mature their understanding of climate adaptation.

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Example council 3

Our governance committee asked for a review of how well council was adapting, which led to an internal audit. As a result, we ran through the entire Adaptive Capacity Checklist with a steering group of manager-level staff. However, going through the whole checklist was quite lengthy for a big group-setting. Next time, we'd prefer to introduce a smaller selection of checklist questions and then use the judgement of the sustainability team to fill in some of the more general questions within the checklist to take the burden off operational teams and make the process feel valuable to them.

Note: The VCRC team recommends using the staff capacity checklist to engage with service / operational teams – a shorter questionnaire that relates back to the organisation-level checklist, rather than using the entire organisation-level Adaptive Capacity Checklist with service teams.

Example council 4

We did a workshop with our Senior Leadership Team, and during that workshop we had some presentations on climate change and climate impacts relevant to our municipality. We framed a smaller selection of the questions from the checklist with a climate change risk assessment lens, as we want to revisit our climate risk assessment this year. So we also explained the climate risk process at the beginning of the workshop.

We didn't show them the checklist, but took some of the key questions from the checklist and delivered them in a workshop format. We had different tables, with different climate impacts and we asked staff to talk in more detail about hazards and risks and how these might impact council services or assets.

Then taking that information, we were able to get an overall picture of what the main hazards or risks are, without asking them that question directly. It was framed more around how does climate impact your service delivery?

Then we ran a Mentee survey at the end of the workshop, with follow up questions from the checklist, such as: 'How confident are you in addressing risks?' and 'What are the sources of information you use to inform your climate response?' We used the responses in the checklist as multi-choice response options in the Mentee survey.

The next step is to run a series of workshops at the divisional and team level, and go through a similar process with a view to developing climate change scenarios for our risk assessment. So a lot of the discussions around hazard identification will feed into the development of climate scenarios.

How councils have implemented the Adaptive Capacity Checklist

Implementing the staff capacity checklist

Staff capacity checklist users reported that checklist completion time averaged: 35 minutes for the staff capacity checklist (per service team surveyed / meeting held).

Methods to implement the staff capacity checklist varied amongst councils, including:

- Respond to the checklist in a single guided session for all the service teams surveyed.
- A one-on-one meeting with the individual service teams to assist with completion and allow for reflective discussion.
- Allowing the service team to fill out survey by themselves, then having follow up discussion with sustainability officer.



Example council 5

In our experience, providing context and framing the process of using the checklist was important to successfully having other council areas engage with the checklist. We'd done a bit of engagement with teams prior to using the checklist so that they weren't completely unfamiliar with the topics of climate change adaptation and reasons for doing the checklist.

However, some teams were worried about being assessed. So we had to reassure those teams that this wasn't about being judged and falling short, and more about a process to understand gaps and support them to build capacity.

Example council 6

We deliberately haven't gone out with the checklist to our staff yet because we're not too sure about the context and the understanding – some staff are confused about emissions reduction, as opposed to climate adaptation.

So, the approach we've taken is gently, gently in some circumstances, but not so gently in others. For example, we have a staff induction video that is compulsory and covers off on climate change information including the difference between mitigation and adaptation responses, and the actions that support them.

We're thinking of running the checklist for staff but we're wondering if we need to deliver a contextual training session upfront to help them tease out what their issues are. We really need staff to be engaged and interested, and not make them feel like it's a tick-box exercise.