

**BRIEFING NOTE TO INFORM GWENT PUBLIC SERVICES BOARD
 CLIMATE RISK LEADERSHIP SEMINAR 1**
FAO: STEVE MORGAN (NRW)

1. Netherwood Sustainable Futures¹ and Well-being Planner ran the first of three leadership workshops as part of Gwent's Climate Change Risk Assessment (CCRA) project being undertaken for Gwent PSB. The workshop was hosted by University of South Wales in Newport on 4th November. This is a unique approach to CCRA in Wales, undertaking a CCRA while building the leadership capacity of partners to respond to its findings. This note should be read in conjunction with the seminar PowerPoint slide set.
2. The aim of the workshop was to build the capacity of public and third sector leaders in Gwent on the following: leaders' roles during and after the CCRA analysis; learning from CCRA elsewhere; strategic, institutional, operational and community level concerns/opportunities; understanding Gwent's current capacity for adaptation; exploring leaders' roles in policy, advocacy, action and governance. The session also included attendees exploring a number of leadership scenarios – working in different arenas: risk management; highways investment; social services; assets; communities at risk; and finished with attendees exploring their own personal leadership roles in climate risk and adaptation
3. This workshop has provided valuable data on how attendees view strategic, institutional, operational risks; data on key individuals and groups who may be able to contribute to the CCRA; potential approaches to climate adaptation; and levers and conditions for managing climate risks in different scenarios. The data was captured by Well-being Planner using Xleap software and a summary is provided in this briefing note. This data will inform the overall analysis being delivered in the CCRA Technical Report in March 2026.
4. It is worth noting that many leaders from Gwent's PSB partners delegated attendance to the workshop to members of their management team, corporate level managers and policy specialists. A list of attendees is provided in Appendix B. Two more workshops are planned on February 25th and March 4th 2026 to engage with the results of the CCRA and start to plan adaptation activity. It is vital that leaders including CEOs and SLT members engage with this material as it emerges at the end of the project. It is highly likely (based on other CCRA undertaken by other PSBs) to have implications for finance, service redesign, corporate objectives and strategic partnership work.
5. Discussion at the workshop noted that Dr. Alan Netherwood is available to engage senior management meetings on Teams for short slots between now and the end of March to orientate management teams and members on the project and its findings.
6. Attendees undertook a number of interactive exercises in the Seminar and were encouraged to discuss them within groups and in short plenaries. The following diagram shows how attendees viewed leadership challenges of climate risk as different levels, strategic, institutional, operational and within the communities that they serve.

¹ The workshop was designed by **Dr. Alan Netherwood** one of Wales' experts on climate risk and adaptation drawing on a career in local government, Environment Agency Wales, and as a consultant since 2007. He is the author of the Climate Change Committee's CCRA3 Wales Summary Report and worked extensively on the CCRA3 Technical Report at a UK level. Alan has worked on CCRA for Pembrokeshire PSB, Cwm Taf Morganwg PSB, Powys PSB and is about to start work on a regional CCRA for Gwent. He will draw on his work with local Councils to support their work on climate adaptation including a 3 year Leadership Programme for the WLGA, Denbighshire Social Services, with Senior Leadership Teams in Wrexham, Ynys Mon and Powys and with Welsh and UK Organisations including Wales, PHW, Cadw, RNLI and MoD. Alan also held an Honorary Research Fellowship from 2008-25 with Cardiff University School of Geography and Planning focusing on climate adaptation governance.

<p>Strategic leadership challenges: Participants saw a struggle to embed climate resilience into long-term planning due to short political cycles, reactive approaches, and limited control over external risks. However, opportunities were seen in clearer narratives, collaboration, and aligning funding with climate priorities. Attendees saw climate change adaptation as a cross-cutting issue requiring involvement from all sectors. Success in adaptation will depend on securing both political and officer-level support. This requires leadership. A consistent tension exists between short-term demands and long-term climate planning.</p>	<p>Institutional leadership challenges: The group acknowledged the difficulties in coordination across organisations, and climate priorities are often overshadowed by other agendas. Yet, frameworks like the Well-being of Future Generations Act and effective Public Services Board collaboration offer potential for systemic change. Financial constraints and making the business case for adaptive approaches are a recurring concern. Funding limitations and political uncertainty are seen as major barriers to progress. Institutions need stronger leadership on climate adaptation, cross-sector collaboration, and inclusive community engagement.</p>
<p>Operational leadership challenges: Immediate pressures and lack of leadership support often hinder future-focused planning. Still, strategic tools like dynamic risk models and targeted resource allocation were mentioned as opportunities to help bridge the gap. Maladaptation – making decisions now which exacerbate climate risk, such as designing in thermal discomfort in buildings, was seen as a key risk from climate change.</p>	<p>Community leadership challenges: According to the participants, communities often feel overlooked and vulnerable, with the younger generations being left to bear the burden. Engaging residents early and empowering grassroots leaders can foster resilience and shared ownership. Providing services to communities increasingly affected by cumulative impacts of combined climate risks, and those which may become untenable, was seen as a critical leadership issue.</p>

7. Attendees were given four scenarios to explore what good leadership might look like in different arenas addressing specific climate risks and impacts. The scenarios and responses are shown in Appendix A. These included:

Senior Leadership Team

(Effective risk management for cumulative and combined risks)

Cabinet/Executive/Senior Leadership Team

(Communicating resilience/loss to affected communities)

Asset Management

(Dealing with vulnerable school assets)

Highways/Transport

(Financing road and bridge investment)

Social Services & Health

(RPB Commissioning of Domiciliary Care)

8. The final exercises encouraged participants think about their own personal leadership roles on climate risk within the organisation and partnerships they work. Most see their leadership role in climate risk as one of advocacy, coordination, and communication — ensuring climate considerations are embedded across departments, projects, and decision-making. They aim to engage senior leaders, build buy-in, and translate climate risk into relevant actions for their organisations and communities. Roles range from strategic planning and risk assessment to facilitating workshops and driving organisational change.

9. Delegates were asked what leadership support they need from others to plan effectively for climate risk in their portfolios of work and spheres of influence. Seminar participants felt that effective climate risk leadership requires strong support and advocacy from senior leaders, boards, and political figures at both regional and national levels. Mandates from Welsh Government, active engagement from PSBs,

and buy-in from senior officers and department heads were seen as essential to ensure climate risk remains a priority. Internal coordination, clear governance, and visible support to help drive action, especially when responsibilities may add to existing workloads were also mentioned.

10. Finally, attendees were asked to consider how they can enable others to lead on climate risk. Participants felt that to enable effective leadership on climate risk, it's crucial to support key individuals across departments — especially those in estates, fleet, procurement, emergency planning, and sustainability. Influencing those who manage infrastructure, supply chains, and community engagement was also seen as vital, as is empowering anyone with the capacity to act or influence change. Collaboration across departments and sectors, including finance, ICT, and third sector groups, was seen as essential to embed climate risk into everyday decision-making.
11. Gwent's CCRA project also includes two leadership seminars which focus on the results of the CCRA and the leadership needed to respond. The details are provided below

Gwent CCRA Leadership Seminar 2 Tuesday 25 February 2026 10.00 – 12.30 ONLINE – via MS Teams. This interactive seminar will:

- Review the GCCRA findings gathered after the other workshops and surgeries.
- Identify emerging climate adaptation priorities requiring leadership.
- Highlight areas and activities that should be influenced by the CCRA findings.
- Explore the support and information participants need to understand and communicate climate risk and adaptation effectively.

Gwent CCRA Leadership Seminar 3 Tuesday 4 March 2025 10.00 – 12.30 ONLINE – via MS Teams. This interactive seminar will explore:

- Strategic, institutional, operational, and community-level responses to climate risk.
- Ways to engage affected communities and communities of interest.
- Options for a proportionate corporate response.
- Management and resource implications.
- Governance arrangements.

Dr. Alan Netherwood
Netherwood Sustainable Futures
13th November 2025

CABINET/EXECUTIVE/SENIOR LEADERSHIP TEAM

(Working with untenable communities)

1. Evidence is mounting that certain communities will become increasingly untenable due to changing groundwater conditions and slope instability.
2. Partners have no precedent for working with these types of vulnerable communities.
3. Silo working means that there isn't a clear understanding of what services these communities will require and how they will be delivered as vulnerabilities increase.

What sort of advocacy might be required from leaders?

Who might need to be influenced?

What evidence might be needed?

Response

- Leaders must be honest, proactive, and capable of uniting communities around a clear, actionable plan. They should communicate the benefits of interventions effectively, establish trusted local infrastructure, and promote a joined-up narrative that supports resilience.
- Effective leadership requires evidence of the direct impacts of climate risks and the consequences of inaction. This includes examples of past events, balanced messaging to avoid fear, political support, and pre-emptive planning — especially around housing and relocation.
- Influence should be directed toward leaders who understand emergency response and are open to innovation, ensuring they can champion resilience and preparedness across sectors.

HIGHWAYS & TRANSPORT

(Financing road & bridge Investment in a changing climate)

1. The resilience of the region's road and bridge networks are under increasing pressure from combinations of surface water flooding, extreme heat, slope instability, tree damage and river scour.
2. Existing budgets are struggling to manage maintenance backlogs on A and B roads, even without additional deterioration caused by climate change.
3. Current evidence focuses only on flood risk. Annual budgets and emergency funding from WG are inadequate. Highways services are stretched to the limit now and will be further stretched in the coming decade due to climate impacts.

What sort of advocacy might be required ?

Who might need to be influenced?

What evidence might be needed?

Response

- The advocacy suggestions were a bit more strategic about changing investment priorities and engaging with the public.
- Participants felt that the leaders need detailed modelling of both flood and non-flood risks, including their frequency, severity, and impact on specific communities and infrastructure. There's also a need to understand the financial implications of current and future events, assess the sustainability of key assets like roads and schools, and explore nature-based and technological solutions.
- Influence should be directed toward planners, politicians at all levels, businesses, and local communities — especially where services may become unsustainable. The goal is to ensure transport and infrastructure challenges are factored into decision-making and to encourage investment in long-term resilience.

ASSET MANAGEMENT

(Dealing with vulnerable school assets)

1. School buildings and grounds are increasingly being affected by storm damage, water ingress, thermal discomfort, surface water flooding, treefall, electricity, water and gas supply disruption.
2. Access to some schools is becoming problematic due to road conditions. Wildfire and slope stability are causing increasing concern.
3. It is unclear how the Council will deal with this combination of problems at a strategic level.
4. The authority's Transformation Programme is now focused on designing schools service for the 21st Century – clearly climate change needs to be factored in.

What sort of advocacy might be required ?

Who might need to be influenced?

What evidence might be needed?

Response

- Some innovative ideas and solutions, rather than a clear plan on how leaders need to advocate for these changes.
- Participants felt that leaders need access to integrated systems and a unified resilience framework that clearly shows how different elements connect. Effective data-sharing protocols and pre-existing platforms (like the fire brigade's jigsaw system) were seen as essential to support coordinated planning and response.
- Influence should be directed toward those managing information access, procurement, and regional service delivery. There's a call for leadership to address structural issues — such as data sharing and contract design — to ensure continuity and collaboration across counties, rather than isolated local solutions.

SOCIAL SERVICES & HEALTH PARTNERS

(Commissioning domiciliary care)

1. The Regional Partnership Board is commissioning Domiciliary Care Services for the next 5 years (care in people's homes from private sector providers).
2. Past approaches have required emergency plans and business continuity plans for individual severe weather incidents from Domiciliary Care providers.
3. Partners need to be sure that Domiciliary Care providers are preparing for more frequent, impactful severe weather events across the region and are preparing their services for a continually changing climate.
4. They need to evidence this as part of a bidding process in 3 months time.

What sort of advocacy might be required ?

Who might need to be influenced?

What evidence might be needed?

Response

- No focus in terms of the advocacy needed by leaders by the participants.
- Leaders will require integrated access to systems and a clear, system-wide resilience framework. Effective data-sharing protocols and understanding how different components connect were also mentioned as being essential to support informed decision-making and coordinated action.
- Influence should be directed toward those managing information systems, procurement processes, and community support structures. There's a need to shift toward regional frameworks and ensure leadership drives structural changes — particularly around data sharing and continuity planning across counties.

Appendix B - Attendees

Name	Organisation	Position
Joanne Gossage	Newport City Council	Environment and Leisure Services Manager
Rachael O'Shaughnessy	Torfaen CBC	Environmental and Sustainability Manager
Sam Slater	Police and Crime Commissioners Office	Head of Strategy
Gemma Hobson	ABUHB	Public Health Registrar
Terry Watkins	ABUHB	Senior Programme Manager
Morgan, Steve	NRW	Head of SE Operations
Mike Bessell	Uni of South Wales	Director of Estates and Facilities
Alison Palmer	Gwent Association of Voluntary Organisations (GAVO)	Deputy CEO
Bethan Harvey	South Wales Fire and Rescue Service	Sustainability Lead
Robert Picton	Hedyn Housing	Environmental Sustainability Partner
Aimi Morris	Torfaen Voluntary Alliance (TVA)	Operational Executive Officer
Sarah Gore	Cardiff Capital Region	Decarb and Adaptation officer
Daniel Wheelock	Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council	Climate Policy Officer
Hazel Clatworthy	Monmouthshire County Council	Sustainability Policy Officer
Matthew Coe	Gwent Police	Chief Finance Officer, Lead for Estates
Mike Wyatt	South Wales Fire and Rescue Service	Area Manager