INTRODUCTION

This City Pack provides high level, non-technical summaries of climate change projections for an individual city or town. It uses scientific research to provide robust climate information to help decision makers plan for the future, enabling cities and towns to become more resilient to climate change.

Urban areas experience unique challenges from climate change. For example, urban environments contain surfaces which don’t soak up and store rainfall, such as tarmac and paving, which might increase flood risk. Urban areas are also affected by the urban heat island effect, which results in higher urban temperatures compared with surrounding rural areas.

WHAT AFFECTS THE REGION’S WEATHER?

London is located within the ‘Southern England’ region of the UK which includes Greater London and other urban areas including Reading and Brighton. Here are some of the types of weather that the region experiences across a year:

- **Continental Europe** brings cold spells in winter and hot, humid weather in summer to Southern England. Coastal areas experience sea breezes, which result in lower maximum summer temperatures and milder winter temperatures, compared to inland.

- **Southern England** is also furthest away from the paths of Atlantic depressions which bring cloud, wind and rain. Coastal areas may experience greatest rainfall in autumn and early winter whilst inland areas may experience greater rainfall in summer, due to convective showers.

- The sunniest locations within mainland UK are found within Southern England. At some coastal locations, average annual sunshine hours exceed 1800 hours.

- Southern England experiences high summer temperatures. London’s average daily maximum temperature for July is 23.5°C - the highest in the UK. The Urban Heat Island effect also contributes.

HOW HAS LONDON’S CLIMATE CHANGED?

The stripes show how temperatures in London have increased, with many of the hottest years occurring in the last few decades.

Temperature Difference (°C)
Data: HadUK-Grid
Concept: Ed Hawkins
OBSERVED CHANGES

How are temperature and rainfall changing across the UK?

These maps show changes in temperature (left) and rainfall (right) from 1991-2020 compared to a baseline period of 1961-1990. We can see that temperatures have risen in all areas across the UK. We can also see that whilst some areas have become drier, more areas have become wetter.

IMPACTS

Cities and towns across the UK are already experiencing the impacts of climate change. The negative impacts of climate change for urban areas may include:

- **HEAT**: Increased energy demand for summer cooling
- **HEALTH**: Increased risk to health from heat stress
- **TRANSPORT**: Increased disruption to transport due to heat e.g. rail buckling
- **SEA LEVEL RISE**: Increased risk of coastal flooding
- **HEAVY RAINFALL**: Increased risk of river and surface water flooding
- **DROUGHT**: Risk to water supplies from drought
- **DRAINAGE**: Increased disruptions to urban drainage system
- **ENVIRONMENT**: Increased risk to biodiversity (plants and animals)
- **ENERGY**: Infrastructure such as gas pipes are at high risk from flooding events.

FUTURE HEADLINES

The climate is already changing, and we are already seeing impacts. But how might the UK's climate change in the future? The statements below are headline statements from the UK Climate Projections – cutting-edge climate science which provide an up-to-date assessment of how the climate is expected to change in the future:

- There is an increased chance of warmer, wetter winters and hotter, drier summers.
- Hot summers are expected to become more common. By 2050, every other summer may be as hot as the record breaking summer of 2018.
- Although the trend is for drier summers in the future, there may be increases in the intensity of heavy summer rainfall events.
- Sea level will continue to rise in the 21st century even if greenhouse gas emissions are reduced rapidly.
PROJECTIONS USED IN THE CITY PACK

The City Pack uses the UK Climate Projections (UKCP) Probabilistic Projections at 25 km resolution.

EMISSIONS SCENARIOS

Our future climate is determined by ongoing and future greenhouse gas emissions, which are uncertain. To capture this uncertainty, we use emissions scenarios, such as the Representative Concentration Pathways (RCPs).

RCPs describe possible future emissions based on assumptions about human activity.

RCP8.5 (HIGH)
Global emissions grow unmitigated.

RCP4.5 and RCP6.0 (MEDIUM)
Global emissions are mitigated to varying levels.

RCP2.6 (LOW)
Global emissions are strongly mitigated and reduced. Global temperature rise is kept below 2°C.

The RCP pathways represent a broad range of possible futures and are neither forecasts nor policy recommendations.

This map shows the location of London and the area in focus for this City Pack. Projection information provided within this City Pack is calculated as the average (mean) value across the smaller inset box (a 25 km grid cell).

This box may include rural, coastal and mountainous areas as well as urban areas. As such, results for point locations within the grid box may differ from the average result of the box.

At 25 km resolution, detailed urban effects are not represented in the model. For urban representation, a higher resolution model is required. The use of UKCP Local (2.2 km) may be more appropriate.
GLOBAL WARMING LEVELS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Global Warming Level</th>
<th>Time Period</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4°C</td>
<td>2065 to 2100+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2°C</td>
<td>2031 to 2056</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Under a high emission scenario (RCP8.5, 90th percentile) we could reach 4°C as soon as 2065. Under a medium emission scenario (RCP4.5, 50th percentile) we wouldn’t expect to reach 4°C within this century. Under a low emissions scenario (RCP2.6), with stronger mitigation, we may not reach 2°C of global warming.

These dates are not forecasts, but simply offer possible futures for comparison. Global warming level dates may not always correspond with the City results below, due to differences in spatial scales.

Global warming levels tell us about future temperature change at the global scale. What about at changes at the local scale?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2030s</th>
<th>2050s</th>
<th>2080s</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Summertime Average Air Temperature (°C)</td>
<td>+1.1 to +2.3</td>
<td>+1.9 to +3.9</td>
<td>+3.0 to +7.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Summertime Maximum Air Temperature (°C)</td>
<td>+1.2 to +2.8</td>
<td>+2.0 to +4.6</td>
<td>+3.4 to +8.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wintertime Average Air Temperature (°C)</td>
<td>+0.8 to +1.7</td>
<td>+1.3 to +2.8</td>
<td>+1.8 to +4.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wintertime Minimum Air Temperature (°C)</td>
<td>+0.8 to +1.9</td>
<td>+1.3 to +3.1</td>
<td>+2.0 to +5.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Annual Average Air Temperature (°C)</td>
<td>+0.9 to +1.7</td>
<td>+1.4 to +2.8</td>
<td>+2.2 to +5.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Summer Precipitation Rate (%)</td>
<td>-4 to -29</td>
<td>-12 to -44</td>
<td>-20 to -63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wintertime Precipitation Rate (%)</td>
<td>+7 to +20</td>
<td>+9 to +28</td>
<td>+14 to +49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sea Level Change (m)</td>
<td>+0.14 to +0.19</td>
<td>+0.25 to +0.37</td>
<td>+0.43 to +0.74</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Results are calculated as change from the baseline period: 1981-2000.
Summer: June, July, August.
Winter: December, January, February.
Time periods are 20-year time slices: 2020-2039, 2040-2059, 2070-2089.
Precipitation is relative change (%) in mm per day.

1st number in the range is RCP4.5 at the 50th percentile. 2nd number in the range is RCP8.5 at the 90th (except summer rainfall, which is the 10th percentile), calculated from UKCP 25 km Probabilistic Projections.

Results show changes in variables averaged over a season, and as such do not represent possible extreme conditions. For assessment of possible extremes, the use of UKCP Local (2.2km) may be more appropriate.
The risk posed from a changing climate, and the potential for resultant impacts, depends on three key factors:

**HAZARD:** weather and climate events which may have adverse effects. The occurrence, duration and intensity of which may change due to climate change.

**EXPOSURE:** the location of people, property and other economic resource, relative to a hazard.

**VULNERABILITY:** the likelihood of the exposed people, property and other economic resources suffering adverse effects from the hazard. Vulnerability is in turn affected by the capacity of people and places to adapt or respond to the hazard.

Following COP26, limiting warming to below 1.5°C above pre-industrial levels remains possible but will require bigger emission reductions than currently pledged by nations around the world. Current emission reduction pledges, made as part of nationally determined contributions, are likely to lead to warming above 2°C.

The Paris Agreement says that we must limit global warming to well below 2°C, whilst aiming for 1.5°C.

The Committee on Climate Change advises the UK to adapt to a 2°C rise in temperatures, whilst assessing the risk at 4°C.

To achieve Net Zero, and also prepare for the impacts of climate change, to which we are already committed, both mitigation and adaptation approaches are required.

**MITIGATION**
- Efforts to reduce or prevent emissions of greenhouse gases.

**ADAPTATION**
- Action that helps cope with and reduce the impacts of climate change. Adaptation is essential to address the “locked-in” effects of climate change.

**RESILIENCE**
- The positive effects that taking climate action has on society.

**NET ZERO AND BEYOND**
- Ending contributions to global warming by balancing emissions released with emissions removed from the atmosphere.

Adaptation and mitigation both help to reduce the risk a city will face from climate change. Mitigation will help to limit the hazard, whilst adaptation can help to reduce exposure and vulnerability.

This City Pack contains information about some of the climate and weather **HAZARDS** the city may face in the future. This helps to inform about risk within the city, which in turn provides an evidence base for decision making about adaptation and mitigation.
If anyone would like to provide feedback or discuss the factsheets further with a member of the Urban Climate Services team, we can be contacted via email at: urbanclimateservices@metoffice.gov.uk

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