

# Ten lessons in 10 minutes:

## Getting started with Adaptation Pathways

How can our places continue to thrive despite the heightened flood risks brought by rising sea levels and more intense and frequent rainstorms? Managed adaptive approaches to planning can outperform traditional methods in the context of climate change. Managed adaptive flood risk planning, unlike traditional 'predict then adapt' approaches, anticipates the fact that as learning about the climate takes place, future flood risk management planners will have more detailed information on flood risks than current planners.

Most importantly, managed adaptive approaches build on wider stakeholder engagement to identify trigger points, desired outcomes and are better suited to dealing with this uncertainty and build social, economic and environmental resilience than 'predict and adapt'.

These 10 lessons are drawn from research projects for the Scottish Government and the Scottish Environment Protection Agency (SEPA) looking at how to secure investment and drive adaptive planning in Scottish flood risk management. For links to all the projects see QR1.

For the latest guidance on coastal adaptation planning in Scotland see QR2



QR1.



QR2

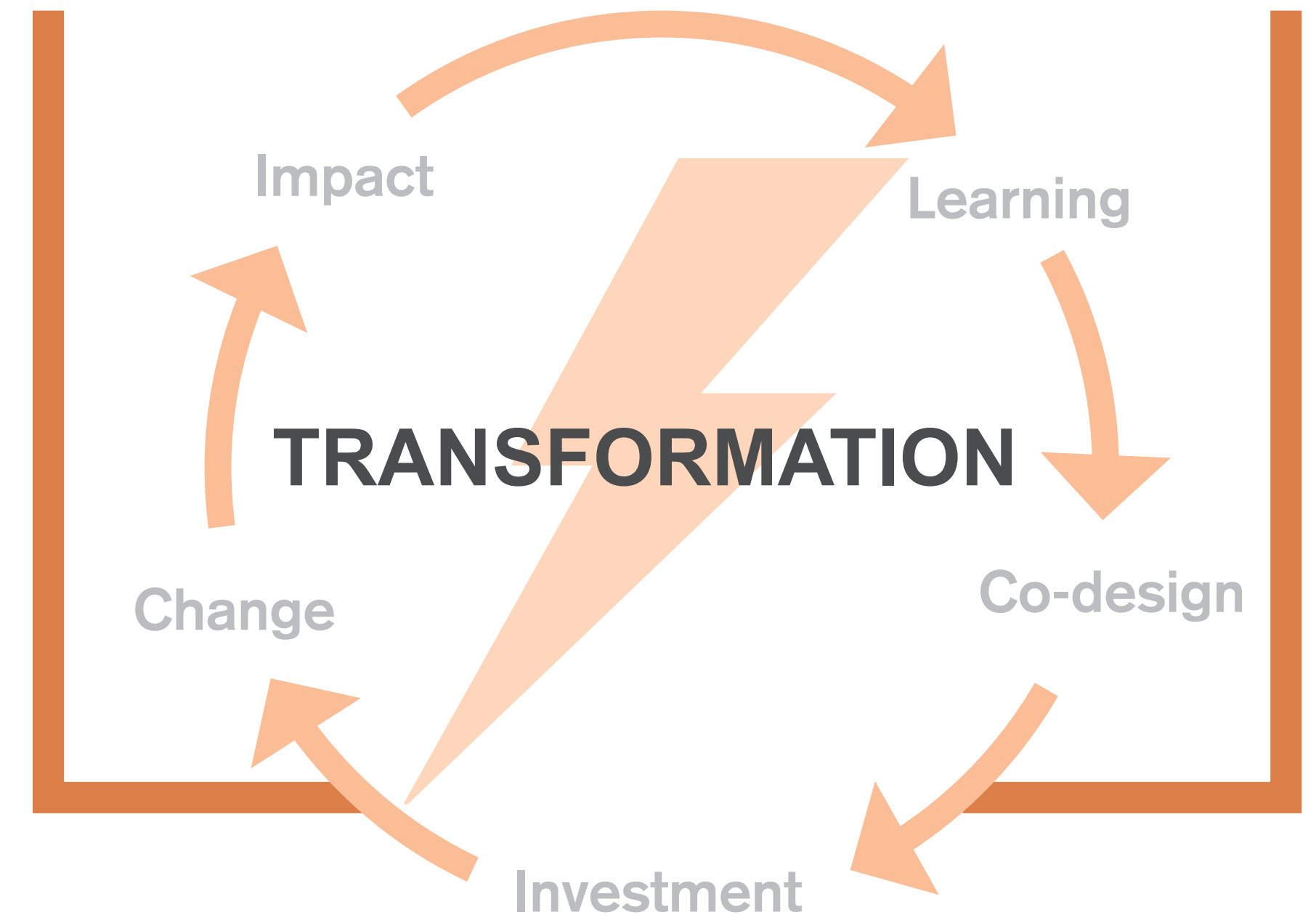
1. Framing is everything: Setting the context well will set you on a path to achieve positive transformation that considers how to manage shocks and stresses accompanied by a positive ambition for a thriving community.
2. Playbook not rule book: One size does not fit all. Find the narrative that works for the place and the principles you want to work to.
3. Charge the battery: Data is important but most useful when it complements experience and informs and enables experimentation. Science and engineering must be balanced with engagement, lived experience and innovative approaches.
4. People and mindset: Be clear on the change that you want to achieve and who needs to be involved to make it happen. Adaptation pathways are about putting a business case and a Theory of Change together.
5. Narrative: Bring in story-tellers and system-thinkers to create narratives that take people with us. Think impact, not damages avoided.
6. Appraising investment: What is the value potential? (Rather than the loss avoided)
7. The 3 Cs of design: Spend the time getting Certainty about immediate options; Clarity on what we can influence; and Consensus on what good looks like.
8. Investment portfolio: Think big to build capacity for adaptation: Educate in the space across grey, green and soft infrastructure to anticipate, resist, respond and adapt
9. Don't wait for perfect: Have a framework for the long run that sets out the choices and frames what you do in the short term. See *QR2 on coastal adaptation guidance*
10. Learning by doing: Adaptation pathways is a learning by doing exercise. Get ready enough to have a go. You have to start to know what the end game is.

## Powering Climate Resilient Communities and Places



**POSITIVE**  
Ambitions

**NEGATIVE**  
Shocks & Stresses



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