

## Case Study: Hampshire's Climate Change Commission of Inquiry

### Introduction

The Council recognises that climate change represents the single biggest threat to the achievement of its long term vision which states that,

***"Within a decade Hampshire will prosper without risking our Environment"***

As a result, Hampshire's Climate Change Commission of Inquiry was established in 2006 by Cllr Ken Thornber, the Leader of Hampshire County Council.

### Leadership and Innovation

The Commission of Inquiry was established to:

- ensure that Hampshire's communities understand the impact of climate change on their well-being;
- identify climate change adaptation measures that will make Hampshire more resilient;
- identify and prioritise actions especially for Hampshire County Council and its partners to undertake to make the region more resilient.

To date, Hampshire County Council is the only county council that has held a cross party Commission of Inquiry into adapting to climate change.

The initial Commission hearings ran from April to October 2007.

The commissioners were drawn from academia, business, media and councillors representing all the political parties of the County Council.

The following four themed hearings were held:

- Physical Environment
- Infrastructure
- Wellbeing and Society, and
- Economy

The Commission received evidence from members of the public as well as experts in their respective fields and key findings were agreed by the commissioners.



The full Council considered the findings of the Commission in November 2007. It identified four priority areas for action:

- knowledge gaps;
- partnership building;
- education and communication; and
- immediate actions relevant to Hampshire County Council's operations.

***“In Hampshire, we accept that climate change is inevitable. There is nothing we can do to prevent the impacts that will occur over the next 50 years. What we can do is prepare for them as best as we can”.***

Councillor Ken Thornber  
Leader of Hampshire County Council

The immediate actions agreed by the County Council were centred around the County Council's functions in emergency and disaster recovery planning.

### **Good practice**

To underpin the County Council's commitment, a new cross Council policy on Climate Change was adopted. This states that:

***“The County Council, through its own operations and in partnership with others, will seek to ensure a resilient sustainable Hampshire by placing climate change considerations at the heart of its decision making processes, its policy development, and its operational activities.”***

### **Current position**

The outcomes of the 2007 Commission hearings are being taken forward through a range of actions both by Hampshire County Council and in partnership. The Commission continues to convene on a regular basis. Recent hearings have focused on:

- Climate risks for Children's Services
- Adaptation within the LAA Partnership
- Progress within the Council's Environment Department

The Commission's continuing role is to monitor the progress of adaptation actions, to receive evidence on new areas of interest, and to advise the Council further on relevant considerations.

### **Further Information**

#### **Related Publications:**

- Hampshire's Climate Change Commission of Inquiry, HCC, 2007
- A Changing Climate in Hampshire- a film of the Climate Change Commission, HCC, 2007

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