

**Title of Scrutiny Review: Climate Change**

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**1 What are we looking at?**

**This review will examine:**

- Current scientific thinking on the causes and likely impacts of climate change
- The likely impact of climate change on the district of Uttlesford and the timescale for any impact to be felt
- Current activity being undertaken by Uttlesford District Council to mitigate and adapt to climate change, including energy use, waste management, planning and building control and transport, as well as any opportunities for the council to improve in these areas
- Opportunities for UDC to act as a community leader, encouraging businesses, schools, residents and other community groups to reduce their contribution to CO2 emissions and prepare for the impacts of climate change
- Whether Environmental Management systems such as ISO 14000 and BS8555 are appropriate mechanisms for adoption by the council
- Local authority best practice in the area of climate change action
- Setting local targets for greenhouse gases (specifically carbon dioxide)
- Whether Uttlesford District Council should sign the Nottingham Declaration on Climate Change

**2 What are we not looking at?**

- Wider aspects of sustainability that do not have direct applicability to climate change
- Issues such as waste incineration, nuclear power or carbon capture
- Relative merits of and issues surrounding particular technologies

**3 Why are we looking at this?**

- Climate change potentially poses a threat to the Council and the community in Uttlesford
- We have responsibility for our own contribution to the problem – emissions from council operations
- We have a responsibility to promote well-being
- Climate change action can improve quality of life for residents
- Sustainable energy presents opportunities for new businesses and economic development in the district

**4 What do we hope to achieve?**

We will produce a report including recommendations to the relevant decision makers that will:

- Further the community's understanding of the causes of climate change

- Assess the activity already being undertaken by the council and partners in mitigating and adapting to climate change
- Ensure that consideration of climate change is fully integrated into the governance arrangements of the council and its activities
- Suggest further activities that could be undertaken to tackle climate change both directly by the council and in its role as a community leader
- Raise awareness of climate change, its likely impacts and courses of action that can be taken to address it amongst the wider community
- Contribute to the development of a climate change strategy

## **5 What information do we need?**

- The scientific case for Climate Change

Desktop study of evidence relating to climate change, backed by interviews with academics and other experts in the field.

- Current Activity

Assessment of activities already undertaken by the council and partners to mitigate and adapt to climate change.

- Best Practice

Examination of best practice in mitigating and adapting to climate change elsewhere, including reference to Sustainable Energy Beacon winners.

- Engaging the Wider Community

Engage the wider community seeking the views of groups on climate change in general, what they feel could be done to address climate change and feeding back some of the findings of our review.

## **6 How will the evidence be gathered?**

We will gather information in a number of ways that may include the following:

- Formal interviews with expert witnesses
- Informal interviews with relevant individuals
- Site visits to best practice initiatives
- Gathering written evidence
- Desktop examination of statistical information and academic and other research
- Conferences/seminars/beacon learning events

## **7 Potential witnesses and consultations**

These may include:

- Academics and other experts in the science of climate change
- Essex County Council Executive Members
- UDC and Essex County Council officers
- Local interest groups including Local Agenda 21
- Schools
- Businesses and business organisations
- DEFRA

- EEDA
- EERA
- Energy Saving Trust
- The Carbon Trust
- UK Climate Impacts Programme
- The Local Government Association

## **8 Timescale**

The review will begin in August 2005 and conclude by March 2006.