

Responding to Climate Change

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Climate Change Discussion

- What is happening, what will happen?
 - evidence and model forecasts
- What are the effects?
 - evidence and model scenarios
- **What we should do about it?**
 - **action plans, action**

Responses

- Mitigate – reduce the severity of
- Adaptation- process of adjustment

Mitigation

- Favoured by International Community- concentrates on reducing carbon emissions
- Can only work if climate change is human induced
- 30-50 year lag
- Individual action → global impact
- 'Top down' – greatest tangible benefit likely to be compliance with legislation
- Links well with the Sustainability Agenda

Adaptation



Barriers

- Uncertainty and complexity
- Short planning horizons
- Resource constraints
- Lack of 'buy-in'
- Resistance to change

Uncertainty

- Unpredictability of the climate system

“Regional climate prediction is characterized by inherent uncertainty due to the unpredictability of the climatic and global systems”. (Timothy Mitchell and Mike Hulme 1999)

“Some uncertainty aspects may be irreducible in principle, and hence decision-makers will have to continue to take action under significant uncertainty”. Climate Adaptation: Risk, Uncertainty and Decision-making UKCIP Technical Report May 2003)

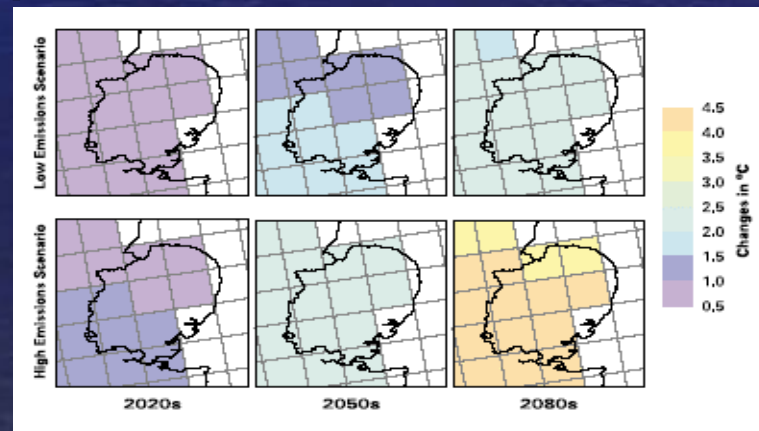
Uncertainty

- Incomplete Scientific Understanding
 - e.g. modelling inputs - future greenhouse gas emissions, future socio-economic change
 - e.g. modelling process - GCM variability
- How science works v how policy works
 - i.e. Science is iterative, policy is definitive

Uncertainty

Good policymaking has depended on science to provide certain and unbiased answers.

Adaptive responses to climate change require accurate predictive information on regional scales.



Traditional Responses to Uncertainty

- Can pretend there is no uncertainty e.g. scientists and policy makers make bold statements and predictions
- Current approaches to environmental management tend to avoid uncertainty

Acknowledging Uncertainty

- Climate Change is a business risk - needs to be factored into core business
 - Financial risk
 - Reputational risk
 - Shareholder pressure
- Flexibility
 - Build adaptive capacity rather than implement adaptive action?

Acknowledging Uncertainty

- No risk/low risk and other benefit options
 - Water efficiencies
 - Emergency plans (including flooding)
 - Improved ventilation
 - Modified working conditions
- Consider opportunities
 - Competitor advantage
 - New markets
 - Social responsibility
 - Reduction in costs e.g. energy

Conclusions

- Make the business case
- Change the culture
- Make the link to sustainability
- Shades of Green

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