

SUMMARY

In early 2009, the Inland Waterways Advisory Council (IWAC) received a grant from the Department of Environment, Food and Rural Affairs to research and to publish evidence of how inland waterways in England and Wales can assist in mitigating and adapting to the effects of climate change. The IWAC is an independent statutory body created to advise the UK government, navigation authorities and other interested persons on matters relevant to Britain's inland waterways.

There is now little doubt that climate change is happening. If the worst effects of global warming are to be avoided, it is vital for all sectors to take steps to reduce their greenhouse gas emissions. Measures which reduce a sector's contribution to the climate change problem are referred to as

mitigation measures.

However, whilst mitigation measures might help to lessen the scale of the problem, some impacts of global warming are now inevitable. Adaptation will therefore also be essential. Adaptation measures help society prepare for and adapt to the anticipated effects of climate change by reducing vulnerability and increasing long-term resilience.

This article summarises some of the findings of the IWAC research report. Based on the 'most likely' impacts of climate change, it highlights the anticipated consequences for inland waterways in England and Wales and explores the range of potentially appropriate climate change mitigation and adaptation measures.