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Impact of climate change on north-east coastline examined

Scientists from across the globe are gathering today (Wednesday November 3) to examine the potential impacts of climate change on north-east Scotland's coastline.

More than 30 delegates are attending a meeting in Aberdeen, focusing on measures to reduce changes to the area's coastlines and the consequences for local communities.

Visits will be held today at sites vulnerable to the effects of climate change along the north-east coast - including the Bervie Braes in Stonehaven where landslips caused homes to be evacuated earlier this year.

Ways in which the local public are being encouraged to share their views on the impact of climate change in their area will also be outlined.

The two-day meeting — which began yesterday (Tuesday November 2) - brings together scientists, policy makers, educators and stakeholders working together under the Innovative Management for Europe's Changing Coastal Resource (IMCORE) project.

Funded by a €6million EU grant, the project involves 15 partners from across north-west Europe.

Its aim is to develop a unified approach to safeguard the future of our coasts from the ecological, social and economic impacts of climate change.

This includes developing approaches to defend coastal communities from flooding and erosion and protect coastal sectors such as fisheries and aquaculture, ports and shipping, and marine recreation.

Delegates will hear of a partnership initiative between the University of Aberdeen and Aberdeen City Council to develop a local coastal adaptation strategy for the north-east.

By engaging with local stakeholders, the research aims to create a co-ordinated approach to identify coastal areas in Aberdeen city and shire that are vulnerable to the impact of climate



change and the necessary measures which need to be taken to maintain them for the future.

The potential impact of sea level rise, increased rainfall and flooding on the Rivers Dee, Don, Aberdeen Harbour and the Stonehaven coast, is already being investigated.

A website - www.aberdeencimatechange.net/ - has also been launched by the initiative to provide an online resource for people to share data, information and views about climate change issues relating to Aberdeen city and shire.

David R. Green from the University of Aberdeen's Institute for Coastal Science and Management who is leading the IMCORE project in Aberdeen said: "The potential impacts of climate change on parts of the north-east coastline may already be evident through recent incidents such as the landslips and flooding in Stonehaven earlier this year.

"Rising sea levels, higher waves and increased storms and rainfall are a reality which we may well be facing.

"It is therefore paramount we ensure the correct approaches are put in place to safeguard coastal areas in the north-east already identified as vulnerable.

"Acting now to protect these areas could save them from the potentially far-reaching consequences of climate change in the future - which could result in significant economic, ecological and social costs for communities.

"IMCORE is an excellent opportunity for local scientists, policy makers, educators, and stakeholders to engage in dialogue, to share expertise, tools and technology, and to influence and shape how coastal communities will respond to the potential impacts of climate change in the future.

"This meeting will bring together those involved in IMCORE to highlight and discuss the work which has been conducted to date to protect the north-east coastline against the effects of climate change.

"This includes efforts to bring together local coastal stakeholders to work collaboratively on measures to tackle climate change and the development of the Aberdeen Climate Change website which provides the opportunity for local people to have their say on this important issue."

Gordon McIntosh, Director of Enterprise, Planning and Infrastructure at the City Council added: "Working closely with experts locally and from further afield to share knowledge and experience is essential to ensure that coastal areas are protected as much as possible from the effects of climate change.

"The close collaboration between Aberdeen City Council, the University of Aberdeen and our multi-sector partners will bring benefits now and for years to come.

"It is essential that we get also local people interested and involved in this initiative because they have so much to lose or gain from the erosion or protection of the coastline. Their in-depth knowledge of, and familiarity with, their own areas will be invaluable to those carrying out this important piece of work.

"The important focus on climate challenges will help us to attract European attention to the stunning north-east coastline and the need to both conserve and enhance it."

The Innovative Management for Europe's Changing Coastal Resource (IMCORE) meeting is being held at the Aberdeen Exhibition and Conference Centre.

For more information on IMCORE visit www.imcore.eu/

Notes to Editors

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