

Committee on Climate Change  
7 Holbein Place  
London SW1W 8NR

Colin Church  
Director for Climate, Waste and Atmosphere  
Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs  
Ergon House, Horseferry Road  
London SW1P 2AL

24 June 2013

*Dear Colin*

**Follow-up to discussions for the second climate change risk assessment**

It was useful to meet with you and Ian to discuss Defra's emerging thinking on plans for the next climate change risk assessment and what role the ASC might play.

I understood from the meeting that Defra would like the next risk assessment to be more policy relevant, and focus more strongly on how the actions and policies set out in the Government's national adaptation programme will affect risk. You felt that it should not repeat the comprehensive assessment of all the risks identified in the first assessment.

I agree with your proposal to take a more policy focussed approach, not least to establish an iterative cycle between each subsequent risk assessment and the national adaptation programme.

The assessment toolkit that the ASC has been developing to deliver its statutory reporting duty on the national adaptation programme could provide a useful basis for the next risk assessment. We are identifying indicators of exposure, vulnerability and action for all the key risks from the first risk assessment. Doing this will enable us to track how risks are changing over time. We are also using economic and decision-making analysis to explore policy barriers to action. The approach has received a lot of interest internationally, with colleagues in the US, Australia, and Europe actively drawing on our approach for their own programmes.

I suggested that the ASC could use its methodology to provide the evidence base for the next risk assessment. As part of this, we could also look at where the understanding of risk has changed as a result of the latest scientific evidence. This would fulfil our statutory duty to provide advice to the Defra Secretary of State on the preparation of the risk assessment, no later than six months before it is laid in Parliament. As we discussed, this approach would ensure that the evidence for the next risk assessment was independent.

If Defra were to adopt this approach, it would be important for us to discuss the following points at an early stage:

- Defra's role in shaping the work so that it fulfils your requirements for the next risk assessment.
- How to ensure peer review of the work by the academic community and other experts.

I suggest meeting early in the autumn. I am copying this letter to Ian Boyd, Defra's Chief Scientist.

*James Lever*  
Lord Krebs Kt FRS  
Chair, Adaptation Sub-Committee

*Colin Church*