

Committee on Climate Change
Adaptation Sub-Committee
7 Holbein Place
LONDON,
SW1W 8NR

10 February 2012

Lord Chris Smith
Chairman
Environment Agency
Millbank Tower, 25th Floor,
21/24 Millbank,
LONDON, SW1P 4XL

Dear Chris

On behalf of the Adaptation Sub-Committee, I would like to thank you, Paul and Tony for attending our January meeting. It was also good to share a platform with you at the CCRA launch last week.

It struck me from our meeting that both of our organisations are currently engaged in developing our respective contributions to the Government's National Adaptation Programme (NAP): your adaptation delivery function and our monitoring and evaluation framework based around indicators. I suggest that over the coming months we should jointly explore synergies between our respective work, based around the three broad issues that we discussed below.

Developing indicators

I was encouraged that you agree that developing a series of indicators that are accepted as robust would be enormously helpful for assessing progress in the implementation of the NAP. I am keen that we work closely with Defra and yourselves to consider how our indicators can align with the delivery of the NAP. I suggest that we hold a working session between our respective officials and the ACC team in Defra later in the spring to explore this further.

Stakeholder engagement

You highlighted the impact that the ASC, as an independent and expert advisor, can have on influencing the mindset and practices of other organisations vital to adaptation. In my view, both of our organisations are in a strong position to demonstrate how organisations can take a long-term and flexible approach to decision-making that accounts for the range of future uncertainties. We believe

developing indicators that robustly measure long-term trends in risk can add significant value here, by focussing the minds of decision-makers to thinking beyond short-term objectives. I am keen to explore how we can support your work on providing guidance and advice to decision-makers on embedding adaptation into long-term business and strategic planning.

Highlighting the 'big adaptation issues'

We touched on a number of examples of how long-term decision making is needed for the country to be able to address the 'big adaptation issues', including (but not limited to) the viability of some coastal communities and the sustainable use of water. As well as developing a long-term mindset, we agreed that some decisions will need to continue to be made at a strategic scale. Again, joint engagement between us in communicating these often very difficult and sensitive issues will be important over the coming months and years.

My officials will be in touch with Tony and with the ACC team at Defra to discuss holding a working session on indicators, and as such I am copying this letter to Neil Thornton. In the meantime, thank you again for taking the time to meet us.

Yours ever,



Lord Krebs Kt FRS
Chair
Adaptation Sub-Committee
Committee on Climate Change

Cc
Neil Thornton, Defra