

**Devil's bargain? Energy risks and the public : Government response to the Committee's first report of session 2012-13 : third special report of session 2012-13 / House of Commons, Science and Technology Committee.**

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House of Commons

Science and Technology  
Committee

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**Devil's bargain? Energy  
risks and the public:  
Government Response  
to the Committee's  
First Report of  
Session 2012–13**

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**Third Special Report of  
Session 2012–13**

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## Science and Technology Committee

The Science and Technology Committee is appointed by the House of Commons to examine the expenditure, administration and policy of the Government Office for Science and associated public bodies.

### Current membership

Andrew Miller (*Labour, Ellesmere Port and Neston*) (*Chair*)  
Caroline Dinenage (*Conservative, Gosport*)  
Jim Dowd (*Labour, Lewisham West and Penge*)  
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Graham Stringer (*Labour, Blackley and Broughton*)  
Hywel Williams (*Plaid Cymru, Arfon*)  
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The following members were also members of the committee during the parliament:

Gavin Barwell (*Conservative, Croydon Central*)  
Gregg McClymont (*Labour, Cumbernauld, Kilsyth and Kirkintilloch East*)  
Stephen McPartland (*Conservative, Stevenage*)  
David Morris (*Conservative, Morecambe and Lunesdale*)  
Jonathan Reynolds (*Labour/Co-operative, Stalybridge and Hyde*)

### Powers

The Committee is one of the departmental Select Committees, the powers of which are set out in House of Commons Standing Orders, principally in SO No.152. These are available on the Internet via [www.parliament.uk](http://www.parliament.uk)

### Publications

The Reports and evidence of the Committee are published by The Stationery Office by Order of the House. All publications of the Committee (including press notices) are on the Internet at <http://www.parliament.uk/science>. A list of reports from the Committee in this Parliament is included at the back of this volume.

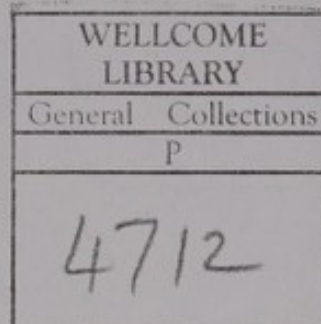
The Reports of the Committee, the formal minutes relating to that report, oral evidence taken and some or all written evidence are available in printed volume(s). Additional written evidence may be published on the internet only.

### Committee staff

The current staff of the Committee are: Dr Stephen McGinness (Clerk); Jessica Montgomery (Second Clerk); Xameerah Malik (Senior Committee Specialist); Darren Hackett (Senior Committee Assistant); Julie Storey (Committee Assistant); Henry Ayi-Hyde (Committee Office Assistant); and Nick Davies (Media Officer).

### Contacts

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## Third Special Report

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On 9 July 2012 the Science and Technology Committee published its First Report of Session 2012–13, *Devil's bargain? Energy risks and the public* [HC 428]. On 17 October 2012 the Committee received a memorandum from the Government which contained a response to the Report. The memorandum is published as appendix to this Report.

## Appendix: Government response

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The Government welcomes the Science and Technology Committee's report on energy risks and the public.

This response has been prepared by the Department of Energy and Climate Change (DECC), with input from the Government Office for Science (GO-Science), the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills (BIS), the Cabinet Office (CO), HM Treasury, the Environment Agency (EA), the Office for Nuclear Regulation (ONR) and the Health and Safety Executive (HSE).

The Committee's recommendations are shown in bold and the paragraph references at the end of each recommendation correspond with those in the Committee's report. The Government's response is given beneath each recommendation, or group of recommendations.

### The Science of Risk Perception

1. When public risk perceptions diverge from the scientifically objective risks it should not necessarily be characterised as irrational or anti-scientific. Public concerns may be influenced by the level of scientific understanding, but are also likely to be influenced by other affective (that is, feeling or emotion-based) factors that may not be changed by explaining risk in scientific terms. (Paragraph 30)
2. It is possible for some of the fright factors affecting risk perceptions to be mitigated, for example by building public trust, communicating effectively, improving risk governance and operating in a transparent manner. (Paragraph 31)
3. The Government considers nuclear power to be an essential part of the UK's energy mix. The evidence shows that around half of the population support this, even though it may be a reluctant support for the least worst option. The Government's position as an advocate for nuclear power makes it difficult for the public to trust it as an impartial source of information. In our view, this perceived lack of impartiality further emphasises the importance of Government demonstrating that all energy policies are strongly based on rigorous scientific evidence. (Paragraph 32)



## Risk Communication and Dialogue

4. While it is commendable that individual Departments have embedded risk frameworks, coordination of risk communication across Government is lacking. A senior individual in Government should be visibly responsible for overseeing risk communication, research and training across Government. This individual should lead a Risk Communication Strategy team, drawing together existing expertise within Departments and public bodies, which should sit at the centre of Government, either within the Cabinet Office, which houses the Civil Contingencies Secretariat and the Behavioural Insights team, or the Treasury, which provides cross-Government risk management guidance. (Paragraph 39)

5. While comparisons of risk from different energy sources can be useful for engaging with some audiences, experience has shown that such factual information does not always change risk perceptions because they don't take the influence of "fright factors" into account. The Risk Communication Strategy team should evaluate whether it would be possible and beneficial to publish risk comparisons where fright factors have been controlled (for example, not comparing voluntary risks with involuntary risks). (Paragraph 40)

6. Not everyone is interested in understanding energy risks and the roles of various stakeholders. The Government, via the proposed Risk Communication Strategy team, should evaluate the public appetite for risk information and consider how this information would be best disseminated. We recommend that information should be disseminated using existing sources, with a focus on developing the public profile of independent regulators as trusted and authoritative information sources. (Paragraph 50)

It is for lead departments to take the lead on risk communication for the risks they own. Work on the Government's National Risk Assessment does encompass risks communication aspects, on which there is already available guidance on the UK Resilience website.<sup>1</sup>

Both the Treasury and the Cabinet Office are considering how to address cross government communication on risk within central government risk management guidance. The Committee's recommendations will be taken into account in the review of the current guidance.

The Health and Safety Executive's (HSE's) corporate communications efforts make clear HSE's role as an independent regulator working in the interests of the public. HSE expends significant effort in explaining its role and building public understanding of health and safety and the importance of keeping risk in perspective and managing it proportionately. The HSE website (which incorporates the Office for Nuclear Regulation) is designed to provide easy access for specialists and the public to straightforward information about the way HSE and ONR regulate and manage risk.

<sup>1</sup> <http://www.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/ukresilience>



The Environment Agency (EA) recognises fully its responsibilities in providing information to stakeholders about its roles and functions in the energy sector and on explaining the potential environmental risks that can arise. Information is targeted at meeting different stakeholders' needs and interests. The EA also provides advice and information to Government so that it can include consideration of environmental risks in its decision making.

Amongst the range of hazards that the Health Protection Agency (HPA) deals with, it provides government bodies and others with responsibility for radiological protection with independent evidence-based advice on the health risks from exposure to ionising radiation. Summaries are available on the HPA website. The HPA also periodically publishes a breakdown of the radiation exposure of the UK population which can be used for placing different sources of exposure, for example nuclear power, in perspective.

**7. Good communication is essential for allaying public fear during an emergency, but time spent by key experts briefing the media must be balanced with the primary responsibility of producing scientific advice and advising Government. We commend the work of the Government Chief Scientific Adviser and SAGE during the Fukushima emergency and consider the UK's scientific response to have been exemplary. However, the Government should publish the long overdue "Amplified Science Guidance" on SAGE as soon as possible, which should include protocols for SAGE members' engagement with the media. (Paragraph 48)**

The Cabinet Office is currently finalising updated guidance on the provision of science advice during national emergencies to take account of experience and learning from recent operations and exercises. The new guidance, which has been developed in close consultation with relevant organisations, will be published shortly and will cover, among other things, the role of SAGE members in communicating science advice in an emergency as part of the overall strategic communications strategy set by Ministers through COBR.

**8. In principle, anyone providing scientific advice to Government during an emergency, including public bodies, should also consider adhering to media engagement protocols in the "Amplified Science Guidance" on SAGE when dealing with high profile events. (Paragraph 49)**

The Government agrees that anybody providing scientific advice to Government should try to adhere to the media protocols established for SAGE. Annex C of the Government's memorandum to your inquiry "Scientific advice and evidence in emergencies" is the current SAGE guidance on media engagement during an emergency<sup>2</sup>. The "Amplified Science Guidance" will also provide guidance on media response, and the Government is currently considering how we may improve our guidance, building on work such as the Blackett Review on high impact low probability risks which includes a chapter on communicating scientific risks more effectively.

**9. We consider that regulatory bodies such as the Health and Safety Executive, Environment Agency and Office for Nuclear Regulation, that are independent of Government and technically competent, are in a unique position to engender public**

<sup>2</sup> Enhanced SAGE Guidance: A strategic framework for the Scientific Advisory Group for Emergencies (SAGE), Cabinet Office, <http://www.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/resource-library/scientific-advisory-group-emergencies>



**trust and influence risk perceptions. The impact and profile of the Weightman review in the UK is a testament to the importance of independent, evidence-based evaluation of risks. In addition to providing risk information for technical audiences, regulators should also make greater efforts to communicate risk to the public and develop their role as trusted sources of information for lay people. (Paragraph 51)**

The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) is a national, independent regulator, working in the public interest. The focus of HSE's corporate communications is to explain this position through a variety of channels, including the media, Twitter and the HSE website. It provides information accessible to the general public, in addition to direct communications with stakeholders and technical specialists. HSE's website is its main point of with the public and it received more than 27 million visitors last year. In the last two years, HSE has increased its public profile as a national authority on sensible risk management, including through the launch of a panel to challenge disproportionately risk aversion safety decisions.

Following the Weightman Review, and as part of its transparency agenda, the Office of Nuclear Regulation (ONR) embarked upon an ongoing programme of risk communications with non-governmental organisations and communities and groups with an interest in nuclear facilities across the UK. The purpose of these is to make 'expert' regulators available to the public and provide evidence-based information about the work of ONR in regulating the safety and security of the nuclear industry. In doing so, ONR have made great strides in developing a role as a trusted source of information for the general public.

In addition to this ONR now publishes executive summaries of its project assessment reports (PARS). These are written in non-technical language to ensure the public has access to the information and processes that have led to specific regulatory decisions. ONR is working to make more reports routinely available.

The Environment Agency (EA) puts significant effort into engaging with stakeholders on their decisions relating to nuclear sites. They consult with stakeholders when making decisions about applications for key operational environmental permits for nuclear sites. They provide technical and summary documents explaining our proposed decisions and the potential impacts on people and the environment. They ensure that documents are written in plain English that can be readily understood. EA staff engage in "surgeries" in the vicinity of the sites to facilitate public engagement. Issues raised are addressed in the decision documents that are published following consultation.

The EA works closely with other regulators and relevant bodies to help agree risk assessments and coordinate communications where appropriate.

The Health Protection Agency (HPA) assists the regulatory bodies by providing independent evidence-based advice and information on radiation doses and on the health risks associated with such doses.

**10. We commend the work of the Science Media Centre in connecting journalists with scientists, but consider that more could be done to improve risk communication of scientific matters in the media. The Government should clarify what progress has been made in the consideration and implementation of the recommendations made in 2010**



**by its expert group on Science and the Media. We may return to this matter in the future. (Paragraph 57)**

Significant progress has been made in the consideration and implementation of the recommendations of the Science and the Media report: *Securing the Future*. For example, Government funding has enabled the creation of a National Coordinator for Science Journalism Training who has run over 20 workshops for science journalists to address issues emanating from non-specialist journalists and editors. Government support has also enabled the training of 214 Science Press Officers who provide that important, and often overlooked, link in the chain between science and news stories. The Action Plan from the report has recently been reviewed and updated and can be found at: <http://interactive.bis.gov.uk/scienceandsociety/site/media/>

**11. Although it is useful to have a scale to enable the public to make informed comparative assessments of risk, we agree that the International Nuclear and Radiological Event Scale (INES) is not an adequate communication tool for conveying risks. The IAEA, in reviewing the INES, should pay particular attention to (i) the technical basis of the scale and whether it incorporates sufficient information about risk as well as hazard; (ii) how to better represent orders of magnitude; and (iii) how to make the scale comprehensible to non-technical audiences. As a member state of the IAEA, the UK Government should influence the review of the INES in this direction. (Paragraph 60)**

**12. The IAEA and UK Government should also consider whether the INES, or its successor, should communicate the likely impacts of a nuclear accident on people and the environment, as well as quantifying the release of radioactive materials. Consideration should be given to the best method of communicating acute and chronic impacts. (Paragraph 61)**

The Government supports the recommendation for the IAEA to review the INES. It asks that it is evidence based and will support the Office for Nuclear Regulation (ONR) in their discussions at the technical level. The Government is working with ONR to ensure that the new scale is fit for purpose and fully reflects learning from Fukushima from a public communications perspective.

In addition, there should be a framework for communicating predicted dose rates on maps, similar to the air quality maps used by the Environment Agency.

**13. Radiation exposure thresholds based on reducing exposure to levels that are as low as reasonably practical (ALARP) should be retained, as they are key to maintaining public confidence that risks are being stringently managed. (Paragraph 64)**

Radiological protection is based on recommendations of the International Commission on Radiological Protection. Three principles are used in relation to exposure to ionising radiation - Justification, Optimization and Limitation. It is the principle of Optimization that is relevant to ALARP. The recommendations are used by the International Atomic Energy Agency and the European Commission (EC) to develop Basic Safety Standards for the protection of workers and public against ionising radiation. The current extant EC directive in relation to this is 96/29 Euratom of 13 May 1996. The UK is required to



implement these requirements and has done so principally through the Ionising Radiation Regulations 1999 (IRR99).

In the EC directive, the requirement is that *'in the context of optimization, all exposures shall be kept as low as reasonably achievable, economic and social factors being taken into account'*. This is translated into UK law as regulation 8 (1) of the IRR99: *'every radiation employer shall, in relation to any work with ionising radiation that he undertakes, take all necessary steps to restrict so far as is reasonably practicable the extent to which his employees and other people are exposed to ionising radiation.'*

Any exposure not related to a threshold is required to be ALARP. It is a basic requirement of UK law that exposures are restricted ALARP. The point at which the exposure is deemed to be ALARP would need to be examined on a case-by-case basis and would, ultimately, be for the courts to decide.

The system of radiological protection in use worldwide is based on the recommendations of the International Commission on Radiological Protection (ICRP). Independent advice on the application of ICRP recommendations to the UK is provided by the Health Protection Agency (HPA), including advice on the application of the principle of optimisation which is relevant to ALARP. As part of its latest advice, the HPA has recommended levels of radiation dose to members of the public that should be taken into account as part of the optimisation/ALARP process for both new and existing nuclear plants. The HPA also gives guidance on how to calculate radiation doses to members of the public.

**However, the Government, regulators and other information sources must emphasise that exceeding ALARP levels may not pose any risk to people or the environment, and that there is a difference between operational thresholds (which are purposely set very low) and safety thresholds (based on scientific evidence) that may allow for significantly greater radiation exposure to occur without significant risk to health or the environment. (Paragraph 64)**

The Government strongly agrees with the Committee in their view on the communication of risk thresholds.

The protection of people is based on optimisation (ALARP) and internationally agreed limits of exposure to ionising radiation. Exposures (doses) should be optimised (kept ALARP) below the dose limit. Therefore exposures above the ALARP levels but within dose limits should not lead to significant risks to health of people. The Government, regulators and others (i.e. employers) should explain this. Where people, in particular the public, have been exposed above the ALARP level then the Government, regulators and others should give those exposed appropriate information about their risks from those exposures.

The Health Protection Agency (HPA) notes that the term 'threshold' may be misleading in that it could imply that health risks only occur above certain levels of dose. Whereas at the levels of dose relevant to ALARP, for radiological protection purposes, it is assumed that there is a linear relationship between dose and health risk. However, in the context of response to accidental (or malicious) releases of radioactivity, HPA recognises that the dose criteria adopted for regulation in normal situations may not be appropriate. HPA has



published guidance on emergency preparedness and response and Emergency Reference Levels (ERLs) of dose for application in such circumstances. The ERLs are adopted in legislation (IRRs 1999).

### Public Engagement in Planning Process

**14. The Government, working with industry, regulators, social scientists and communities, should produce guidance on best practice in risk communication for those living near existing or proposed nuclear facilities. The guidance should address how to present risk information in accessible formats and language. Complex, technical documents should continue to be available in the interests of transparency. (Paragraph 72)**

The Government will look to take forward the Committee's recommendation, working with industry, regulators, local authorities, social scientists and communities.

The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) and the Office for Nuclear Regulation (ONR) are willing to contribute their experience and expertise to assist in the production of guidance on best practice in risk communication.

The Environment Agency supports this work. It will seek to work with other regulators and relevant bodies to coordinate its engagement activities with stakeholders to avoid stakeholder fatigue and ensure that they can obtain a more comprehensive understanding of issues in an effective and efficient way.

The Health Protection Agency would welcome the opportunity to contribute to this work on risk communication.

**15. Community benefits are an important way of building trust and negotiations can enable the public to feel a greater sense of control, choice over and ownership of energy projects. We encourage the further use of current community engagement processes led by energy companies, working with local government and the public, for building trust around nuclear new build proposals. (Paragraph 73)**

The Government is committed to engaging closely with local communities around new build nuclear sites. We have held extensive consultations with the public, in particular during the 2007 consultation on nuclear power and the National Policy Statement consultations where there was strong local engagement including roadshows, seminars and workshops. The Office for Nuclear Development within DECC continues to work closely with local communities on all aspects around the Nuclear New Build process. Around all proposed developments the Government will establish Strategic Delivery Fora, such as the Hinkley Strategic Delivery Forum that bring together all relevant Government Departments with the Local Authorities in the area and EDF to ensure that we can work together to maximise the benefits for the local community from any development.

Alongside this the Government continues to work closely with the local community on specific community benefit issues and remains committed to work with them to ensure a satisfactory agreement. The Government is considering all feasible options to effectively capture community benefits.



As a specific example of community benefits, the Government's Managing Radioactive Waste Safely (MRWS) programme provides resources from central Government to any local community that expresses an interest in finding out more about geological disposal. This Engagement Package is agreed as grant funding under the Local Government Act. Community representatives involved have full control over how the money is spent, meaning they allocate it in line with community priorities without being unduly influenced by the Government. The local authorities in Cumbria have received over £2.8m and have used this to engage with their local community, seek their input and provide information. This has built better understanding of the MRWS process and what it involves so that local authorities can make informed decisions.

**16. We were impressed by the citizen partnership model being developed in Germany for wind farms and suggest that enabling communities to feel more ownership of local energy infrastructure by offering shares in projects could be conducive to building trust and acceptance. Partnership models could form part of community benefits discussions for new nuclear build and other energy infrastructure. (Paragraph 74)**

While the majority of the public supports the growth of onshore wind in the UK, we recognise that there are concerns within communities over onshore wind deployment in their area. Government will undertake a Call for Evidence on onshore wind community engagement and benefits, alongside onshore wind costs, and this is due to be published in the Autumn. It will examine how communities can have more of a say over, and receive greater economic benefit from, hosting onshore wind farms. We will be encouraging stakeholders to submit evidence of best practice in how communities are involved in onshore wind projects, including schemes for shared ownership and joint ventures.

**17. The Government and regulators should make better use of their resources to communicate and engage with the public via the internet and social media. Lessons could be learned from the communication strategies employed by campaigning organisations. (Paragraph 76)**

The DECC website received over 13 million page views and 3.3 million visits last year. It engages with its 28,500+ followers via Twitter and the blog (part of the DECC site), which encourages stakeholders, consumers and business to engage and comment on the issues of the day. Several successful webchats have been held in the last year on key policy areas, encouraging people to ask questions to Ministers and policy officials on key issues, such as the Green Deal, smart meters and energy bills. Policy officials have also taken part in forums and webchats on 3rd party sites (such as *Which?*).

The DECC eCommunications team is working with key policy teams, Cabinet Office and partners on the use of digital media in emergency situations where communication of risk is paramount. It has resilience plans in place which take account of the potential demands and risks. For example the Department has at its disposal, a cloud based website to be readied at the first indication of a situation arising that requires real time support to the public (most recently this was prepared, but not activated, for the potential fuel tanker driver strike). This can be backed up by Government and partner social media channels, driving traffic to the site. Round the clock monitoring of Twitter to identify key trends and consumer behaviour is also planned for should the situation arise.



Monitoring social media channels is an integral part of the daily work of the DECC eCommunications team and the Communications Directorate as a whole takes a keen interest in the work of campaigning organisations and the channels and methods they use. Given the reach of its existing channels and the experience of the team, it considers itself well placed to engage, but this needs to be balanced against the existing demands of the Department and the finite resources of the team.

As a specific example of communicating and engaging with the public, in 2010 the Government published its 2050 Calculator and Pathways Analysis work, with a view to engaging the public and decision-makers about the long-term energy and emissions scenarios facing the UK. This innovative, interactive, and simple to use computer tool encourages people to consider the system-wide and long-term changes which are available to us. The tool can help in stimulating an energy-literate debate and raising public awareness and understanding of the energy and climate change challenge.

The 2050 Calculator is freely available on the web in three formats: a web tool, a computer simulation and the full Excel model, to spark the interest of people ranging from the most experienced experts in the field, to school children. Further support has been offered in the form of school lesson plans and ideas, and the DECC Chief Scientist has led interactive sessions with the public, for example at this year's Hay Festival. To date 85,000 unique users have explored the My2050 simulation, 65,000 have used the 2050 webtool and following publication of My2050 in March 2011, 14,000 full pathways were submitted. Further public engagement work about the options for our energy future, using the 2050 Calculator, is planned.

Health and Safety Executive (HSE) and Office for Nuclear Regulation (ONR) communications are increasingly utilising digital and social media both proactively and reactively to communicate issues around risk. HSE/ONR's website is the main channel through which HSE engages with the public and this has more than 27 million visitors each year. HSE uses the website not only to engage with the public using simple, information and guidance about general health and safety requirements, it also hosts sector specific information for areas such as nuclear energy, offshore windfarms, and shale gas. All of HSE's public statements, press releases and rebuttals are accessible on the website along with a regular blog from the Chair which aims to prompt debate and address misconceptions about HSE and risk. HSE also produces podcasts on specific topics which are hosted on the site and takes part in podcasts hosted by other organisations.

HSE has more than 14,500 followers on Twitter, with whom it regularly engages with clear and simple information and news. HSE also uses Twitter to make experts available to answer questions from the public about a given issue.

HSE has utilised digital and social media in its emergency planning work and has informal agreements with other government departments to facilitate the 'retweeting' of important information.

As part of HSE's work on partnership marketing, the use of digital and social media by other organisations, including campaigners, will be explored.

The Environment Agency (EA) website received 56 million page views in 2011 and 39 million visits. This reflects the EA's wide range of roles and functions. The EA actively uses



social media as a communication channel and has a number of social media accounts, including Twitter, Facebook and Youtube. The most popular account is the national Twitter account, with close to 40,000 followers. The EA's National Contact Centre has three staff dedicated to dealing with queries and conversations on social media channels, as well as a member of staff in each region responsible for social media activity and interaction with local interest groups in their area. Social media plays an important role in the EA's incident response work.

Although not a regulator, the Health Protection Agency (HPA) maintains a strong web and social media presence.

## New Energy Technologies

**18. The UK is yet to develop a pilot CCS project and UK public concerns may be different to those in Germany. However we consider that public outreach, such as site visits, should be considered a vital part of the Government's public engagement strategy for CCS and other novel energy infrastructure. (Paragraph 77)**

The Government recognises the importance of learning from the approaches taken to public engagement for both existing and new energy technologies, within the UK and internationally, and intends to undertake further work to harness existing knowledge and evidence on this issue, including working with the academic community.

In relation to Carbon Capture and Storage (CCS), the Government agrees that public outreach, such as site visits, should be considered as part of any public engagement strategy for CCS projects.

The UK already has a number of CCS pilots. These include the carbon capture pilot plant at SSE's Ferrybridge coal power station (CCPilot100+). This £21million project was launched in November 2011 with project partners SSE, Doosan Power Systems and Vattenfall. During the planning process, the project held a public exhibition for the local community as part of its outreach programme, and invited local community representatives to its opening launch. The Ferrybridge CCPilot100+ also provides a facility for university researchers to gain experience as part of its academic programme.

Further, a new £13m Government funded UK CCS Research Centre, launched in April this year, includes a new Pilot Scale Advanced Capture Technology (PACT) Centre near Sheffield. The UKCCSRC was set up to develop UK academic excellence and promote academic collaboration with industry. The Government continues to work with partners to ensure the visibility and public dissemination of information from these projects.

On 3 April 2012, the Government launched a new CCS Commercialisation Programme with £1bn upfront capital funding to support commercial-scale CCS. The evaluation in the new UK Competition includes 'the public engagement status' as one of many sub-criteria informing the selection of projects<sup>3</sup>. Working with Government, preferred projects will be

<sup>3</sup> 'Carbon Capture & Storage Commercialisation Programme: Invitation to Participate in Discussion'

<http://www.contractsfinder.businesslink.gov.uk/Common/View%20Notice.aspx?site=1000&lang=en&NoticeId=560937>



expected to determine the appropriate project specific approach toward public engagement.

**19. We hope our inquiry will highlight the importance of risk dialogue and understanding public risk perceptions. The Government must ensure that lessons are learned from risk communication and dialogue experiences in relation to nuclear energy when developing new energy technologies and infrastructure. (Paragraph 78)**

The Government agrees that lessons should be learned from risk communication and dialogue experiences in relation to nuclear energy when developing new energy technologies and infrastructure. The Government will ensure that the Committee's recommendations are fully considered and will look to take forward this important area of work in conjunction with industry, regulators and local communities.

**20. If the Government intends to rely on carbon capture and storage (CCS) as part of emissions reduction strategies, it should examine the difficulties experienced in Germany due to public concerns. (Paragraph 79)**

The Government has considered carefully the experience in Germany and has remained in close touch with colleagues in Germany, both at the project level and in the administration, to make sure that we fully understand the public concerns. Looking forward, learning from experience remains integral to the UK CCS Commercialisation Programme. We remain in close contact through, for example, the North Sea Basin Task Force and Zero Emissions Platform and will continue to keep under active review whether further work is needed to support the development and deployment of CCS.

Following the experience in some other countries such as Germany and the Netherlands, where potential public anxiety focussed around onshore storage, the Government decided that the priority in the UK for the present time is CCS with offshore storage. Targeting the current UK CCS Commercialisation Programme around offshore storage will enable the UK to capitalise on the large numbers of offshore storage sites deep under the UK seabed, particularly the North Sea, and expertise from the offshore oil and gas industry.

The Government's commitment to learn from experience is also why, following the first UK CCS competition, it made the complete Front End Engineering and Design (FEED) Studies at Longannet and Kingsnorth freely available to support the worldwide development of the technology. These studies have already provided practical experience of community engagement and the regulatory framework in the UK.

## Conclusions

**21. We consider that public risk perceptions must be understood and taken into account when policies are developed, but that public views are one form of evidence that must be balanced against political, ethical and scientific considerations. However, when public opinion diverges from the evidence of objective risk, policies and decisions should be primarily based on scientific evidence on risk and safety. In our view, basing policies firmly on evidence from independent, impartial, scientific sources and engaging in robust risk dialogue at local and national levels, are the best way to ensure public confidence. (Paragraph 81)**



The American Medical Association is a non-profit corporation organized for the purpose of promoting the interests of the medical profession and the public. It is composed of members who are physicians, dentists, and other health care professionals. The Association's primary concern is the advancement of the medical profession and the improvement of the health of the people. It does this by publishing the Journal of the American Medical Association, which is one of the most important medical journals in the world. The Journal contains articles on a wide variety of medical topics, including clinical medicine, surgery, and public health. It also contains information on the latest medical research and the activities of the medical profession.

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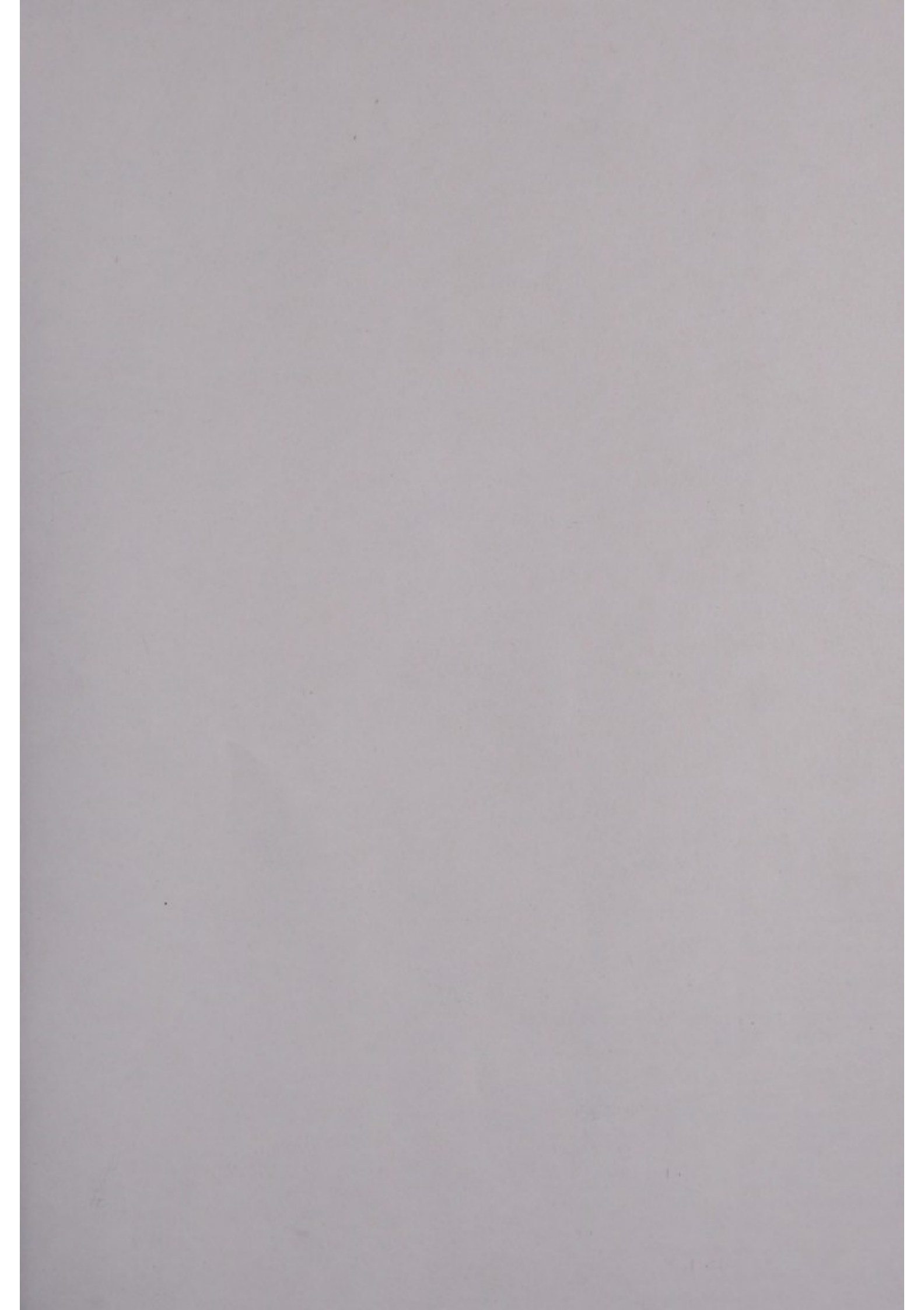
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