



The Royal Commission
on Environmental Pollution

Corporate Plan

2009 - 2010

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Introduction

1.1 Terms of Reference

The RCEP's terms of reference, as set out in the Royal Warrant are:

"To advise on matters, both national and international, concerning the pollution of the environment; on the adequacy of research in this field; and the future possibilities of danger to the environment"

The RCEP is independent of Government departments, but it is accountable for its use of public resources through its sponsorship body, Defra. This document sets out the way in which those resources are used.

1.2 Purpose of this document

The requirement for an annual Corporate Plan is set out in the Framework Document, describing the roles and responsibilities of the sponsor department (Defra) and of the Royal Commission. The Corporate Plan defines the strategic direction, priorities and goals of the RCEP and its Secretariat over the next three years. It also includes a review of the last year's performance and objectives and targets for forthcoming financial years.

1.3 Aims of the Royal Commission

Information about the Commission's status and the ways in which we work are set out at Annex A. The key concepts guiding our work are:

- **Independence** – the Commission is an independent standing body established by Royal Warrant;
- **Cross-border** – our work should serve and bear relevance to all parts of the UK;
- **Long-term** – our studies should look well beyond the normal political horizon;
- **High quality** – the Members of the Commission are appointed to bring experience, skill and expertise to our work. Our reports are designed to be informative and accessible;
- **Effective** – our reports are a major influence in the development of environmental policy;
- **Efficient** – we aim to make maximum use of the resources available to us.

2. Achievement of objectives for 2008/09

2.1 Studies

2.1.1 Short report on *The Environmental Effects of Civil Aircraft in Flight* (published in 2002)

There was a resurgence of interest in the Commission's report from the media in January 2009, following the announcement of the Government's decision to expand Heathrow. Professor Cumpsty was also able to work with a student at

Imperial College producing a short radio package on the subject of emissions and pollution due to aircraft travel.

2.1.2 *Turning the Tide - Addressing the Impact of Fisheries on the Marine Environment* (25th report, published in 2004)

The publication of the draft Marine Bill in April 2008 and the Marine Bill in December caused the media to revisit the RCEP's 2005 report on *Turning the Tide - Addressing the Impact of Fisheries on the Marine Environment*; the RCEP also submitted a written response to the consultation on the draft Marine Bill. In July the RCEP presented oral evidence to the First Report of the *Joint Committee on the Draft Marine Bill*. In August an article in *Environmental Conservation* entitled '*Why conserve marine environments*' makes reference to the RCEP's report and in September the journal *Science* published an article entitled '*Privatization prevents collapse of fish stocks, global analysis shows.*' The article alluded to advice published by the RCEP warning that excessive harvesting of worldwide commercial fisheries could cause them to collapse by 2048. The *BBC news online* published an article in December entitled '*Call to widen curbs on UK fishing*' making reference to the fact that the RCEP had called in 2004 for 30% of UK seas to be protected as marine reserves closed to commercial fishing.

The RCEP continues to watch with interest the progress of the Marine Bill through Parliament.

2.1.3 *The Urban Environment* (26th report, published in 2007)

Despite letters to the Scottish Government, they have not formally responded to the RCEP report that was published in 2007. The UK government response to the report was published in 2008, but the Scottish Government said that it wanted to reply separately.

In April 2008 Professor Holgate (former Member of the RCEP) chaired a discussion on the outputs of the Urban Environment report at an Environmental Protection Air Quality Spring workshop. Also in April, Sir John Lawton gave a presentation entitled *Yorkshire's Green and Healthy Land? Connecting urban and rural greenspace*, at a workshop organised by PLACE and the Royal Geographical Society. Sir John also presented on the report's findings at a workshop entitled *Towards a sustainable transport system* in June 2008. In November 2008 Sir John gave a presentation on the Urban Environment report at an event at the University of Birmingham and Professor Depledge disseminated the outputs of the report at a WHO conference (hosted at the University of Bonn) entitled *Urban planning and environmental health conditions*, where it was reported that the RCEP's *Urban Environment* report is seen as one of the definitive texts for planners in Italy.

In February 2009, Professor Holgate (former Member of the RCEP) attended a workshop at the Cabinet Office in order to translate the RCEP's health recommendations from the *Urban Environment* report into future Government strategy, as it relates to the use of Health Impact assessments.

In March-April 2009, Professors Holgate and Liss both referred to the *Urban Environment* report at presentations they made to a workshop held by the MRC on Environmental Exposure-Response Relationships to inform on a joint call on new grants in this area in collaboration with NERC, and at the inaugural conference of the Institute for Sustainability, Health and Environment at the University of the West of England, in Bristol.

2.1.4 Crop Spraying and the Health of Residents and Bystanders (2005)

In December it was announced that the High Court held that the Government's policies concerning pesticide spraying and bystanders were incompatible with European Community Law. The applicant, Georgina Downs, gave evidence to the RCEP investigation into pesticides. In 2005, the RCEP called in their report for a more precautionary policy, recommending the use of buffer zones, notification of residents before spraying and the re-evaluation of current risk models. The Government chose to appeal against the High Court's ruling – a decision regarding the appeal is expected in summer 2009. In December 2008, former Member of the RCEP Richard Macrory wrote a case commentary entitled '*High court supports pesticides campaign*' for the *ENDS* environmental policy report bulletin.

On 7th July 2009 it was announced that the Court of Appeal had overturned the High Court's ruling.

2.1.5 Novel Materials in the Environment: The case of nanotechnology (27th report, 2008)

In November the RCEP launched its 27th report on *Novel materials*. A well-attended press briefing was held on 11th November at the *Science Media Centre* in London; this generated coverage in *The Guardian* (p.3), *The Times*, *The Independent*, *The Daily Telegraph*, *The Financial Times* and *The Daily Mail*. There was equivalent online coverage on news websites (including the *PA* and *Reuters* websites), and references to the report in over 20 other websites in the 12 days following the launch.

The Chairman was interviewed on *BBC Radio 4's Today Programme*, and on the *Channel 4 lunchtime news* on 12th November, with other Members also providing information to the media. The *ENDS report*, *New Scientist*, *Chemistry World* (April 2009), *Materials Today* (Jan-Feb 2009) and *Chemical Watch* all ran stories on the report. On 12th November, the Chairman presented the report to interested stakeholders at the Institute of Materials, Minerals and Mining, where he was supported by Members. In December 2008 the *Science for Environment Policy* newsletter (DG Environment news alert service) published an article announcing the RCEP's *Novel materials* report.

On 18th November 2008 the Secretary was asked to serve as a panel Member at the International Consumer Product Health and Safety Organization (ICPHSO) conference in Brussels, where he also presented the outputs of the RCEP's *Novel materials* report.

The RCEP has also written articles for the *Science and Technology review* (January 2009) and *Nano Today* (due to be in press in July 2009). An article for *Environmental Toxicology and Chemistry*, authored by Professor Depledge and the Chairman, is also in progress. In December 2008 the Chairman wrote to the Heads of the Research Councils regarding the RCEP's recommendations.

Following the launch of the *Novel Materials in the Environment* report the RCEP were invited to present the report's findings to officials representing DG Enterprise and DG Environment at the European Commission in Brussels in January 2009. This is the first occasion in which the RCEP have been invited to provide information to the Commission. During the visit, which was co-ordinated by UKREP, Members of the Commissions and its Secretariat also met with

officials from DG Environment regarding the RCEP's forthcoming report on *Adapting the UK to Climate Change*.

The Chairman was invited to a meeting on nanotechnology of the House of Lords Science and Technology Select Committee in November 2008, and he was invited to a meeting of Government Chief Scientific Advisers in December 2008 to present the Commission's findings. Also in December, Sir John Lawton has a meeting with Professor Bob Watson to discuss the Commission's report.

In February, the Secretary and Dr Graham-Bryce presented the findings of the Novel Materials report to representatives of the RCEP's sister organisation in Germany, *The German Advisory Council for the Environment*, in Berlin, who are also conducting an investigation into nanomaterials. Also in February, Laura Pleasants from the Secretariat attending a *Framing Nano* stakeholder workshop in Brussels.

In March 2009 the Secretary travelled to France to present the findings of the *Novel Materials* report to officials on the Working Party for Manufactured Nanomaterials (WPMN) of the OECD, in Paris.

In March 2009, Nina Horne, a Researcher from the Center of Integrated Nanomechanical Systems at the University of California, Berkley, visited Tom Eddy to discuss the *Novel Materials* report.

In March 2009 Professor Depledge visited the US to attend a workshop on *Advancing the Eco-Responsible Design and Disposal of Engineered Nanomaterials*. During his week in the US he also made contact with a number of scientists in the US who had provided evidence for the RCEP's report on *Novel Materials*. As a result of his endeavours in the US on behalf of the Commission, there is wide interest in the possibility of Professor Depledge presenting evidence to the Senate when they draft their nanotechnology bill this year. Furthermore, all of the organisations involved expressed their desire to keep in touch with the RCEP and to hear more about the RCEP's work.

Also in March 2009, Professor Holgate, ex-Member of the RCEP, was asked to act as a scientific adviser to the House of Lords Select Committee Science and Technology investigation into the use of nanotechnology in food (including food packaging).

Professor Depledge was interviewed during the conference by 'SciGuy', the Science correspondent from the Houston Chronicle – an opportunity to raise the Commission's broad concern about the fate of nanomaterials in the environment:

"There's a remarkable degree of ignorance about the likely impacts of nanomaterials should they enter the environment and they may pose a threat not only to ecosystems but also to human health", and their specific recommendations on priorities for testing: "[The Commission have recommended] Taking a much closer look at the different kinds of functionality of different nanomaterials. So we want to try and make a priority list of those which might cause some kind of problem. And we need to develop new kinds of toxicity tests because the ones that are currently used by regulatory agencies do not seem to be adequate"

Professor Depledge also took part in a German radio interview in February 2009, which is available online: www.dradio.de/dlf/sendungen/forschak/926071/.

2.1.6 Forthcoming report on *Adapting the UK to Climate Change* (28th report, to be published in 2009)

The *Adaptation* report is now in its writing phase. Late 2008 saw the beginning of a series of evidence-gathering visits. In September 2008 seminars were held in Reading and Edinburgh to facilitate discussions between interested organisations to inform the direction of the study. The reports of these seminars are available on the RCEP website. In December 2008 the Commission's monthly meeting was held in Wales, where Members also visited the Gower Peninsular, a visit that was facilitated by the National Trust. In January 2009 the Commission visited the Netherlands and the EU Commission in Brussels as part of its evidence gathering. In February they visited Norfolk (Happisburgh and the Broads, a visit which was reported in the *Eastern Daily Press* 'Investigators see Coastal Erosion' in February 2009), the Thames Barrier and the Met Office. A planned visit to Exmoor had to be abandoned due to bad weather.

In January 2008 the *Royal Society of Chemistry policy bulletin* ran a story on the RCEP's investigation into climate change adaptation.

During the course of the study the writing team were assisted for three months by two NERC policy placement students, Debbie Putt and Philine zu Ermgassen, and more recently by a temporary secondee from the Scottish Government, Madeleine Cusack.

In May 2009 the Commission were joined during part of the monthly meeting by representatives from the US Government Accountability Office, who were interested to learn about the progress of the Commission's adaptation report.

The Commission are working towards an ambitious schedule that would see the report published in November 2009, in time to inform the negotiations at the UN Climate Conference in Copenhagen in December 2009.

2.1.7 Forthcoming short report on *Artificial light in the Environment* (expected in late 2009)

The production of this report was seriously delayed in 2008 due to the departure on promotion of the fast-streamer who was working on it. Work on the report has continued, drawing on existing resources in the Secretariat. In January 2009 the Commission took new evidence from Alison Quant from Hampshire County Council and Carl Gardner, editor of *Lighting* journal. There has been much interest in the outcome of the Commission's investigation, including an article in the *Guardian* in March 2009 entitled *Taking a dim view*, in which the Secretary is quoted. The short report will be published in late 2009.

2.1.8 New study: *The Environmental Impacts of Demographic Change in the UK* (29th report; anticipated in 2010)

Following the publication of a short list of possible topics for consideration for the 29th report, the Commission issued a call for information to inform the scoping of the study in March 2009, with a view to issuing the call for evidence in Autumn 2009. There has already been a considerable amount of interest in the study, and Yolanda Rizzi has attended a Forum for the Future roundtable event on

population growth, and a meeting with the Town and Country Planning Association.

2.1.9 European Engagement

In October 2008 the Secretary and Professor Cumpsty attended the EEAC annual conference in Bordeaux.

The Secretary has attended three EEAC Energy working group meetings this year, with a view to contributing to a statement on *Sustainable Infrastructures for Europe*.

2.1.10 Maintaining the Commission's effectiveness

In August 2008 an article was published in *Energy Policy* entitled '*From long-term targets to cumulative emission pathways: Reframing UK climate policy*', making reference to the Commission's report on '*Energy – the Changing Climate*', published in 2000, demonstrating the longevity and policy-relevance of the Commission's reports. Also in August 2008, the RCEP's report on the marine environment (*Turning the Tide*, 2004), was referenced in an article in *Environmental Conservation* entitled '*Why conserve marine environments?*'. In September 2008 there was a reference to the same RCEP report in the journal *Science* in an article entitled '*Privatization prevents collapse of fish stocks, global analysis shows*'.

In September 2008 the Secretary met with Mike Dixon, Hilary Benn's political advisor, to discuss the *Urban Environment* report and the work of the RCEP more generally. RCEP have also liaised with SDC on EEAC work, and RCEP took place in an inter-agency meeting on *Health, Place and Environment* with SDC, EA and CABE in September 2008.

In January 2009 the Commission welcomed its first NERC policy secondees to the RCEP Secretariat – two postgraduate students, Debbie Putt and Philine zu Ermgassen, worked for three months in support of the *Adapting the UK to Climate Change* study. The students produced a short report each on topics pertinent to their own areas of expertise and the adaptation study and attended Commission meetings and evidence gathering visits. The students commented that they thought it had been a very worthwhile learning experience:

"We have enjoyed the challenge and entertaining debate surrounding the Commission meetings and visits, and very much value not only the in-depth view of one aspect of the science to policy interface we have experienced, but also the first hand experience of the European Commission and stakeholder engagement"

In early 2009 the Commission's report on *Novel Materials* was reviewed by *EnviroSci News* online. Of the report, the reviewer said:

"The subject matter is not easy to access for those not familiar with nano-science. However the Commission eases the reader into the subject by setting the scene and giving good definitions and rationalisation for the study: The formal (and expected professional nature) of the report is reflected in the huge amount of jargon, although many examples are given to facilitate your understanding.

"I feel that this report gives a noteworthy and comprehensive entry-level account of nanomaterials and their potential impacts. For the non-specialist this is a complex subject and this may be as simple an exploration of the topic as there can be".

In February 2009 the Chairman, Sir John Lawton met with the Rt. Hon. Hilary Benn MP, Secretary of State for the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs. This was a useful opportunity for both to have a discussion regarding the RCEP's activities and forthcoming study on adaptation. It confirmed RCEP's standing as a 'critical friend' of the Government. In May 2009 the Commission released the first edition of its e-newsletter, *Our News*. Released quarterly, the aim of the newsletter is to update all those interested in the work of the Commission on progress achieved on current and forthcoming studies. In early June 2009 the Commission launched its new website. In its first week, it attracted a number of enquiries regarding the short report on *Biomass* (2006) and the *Novel Materials* and *Urban Environment* reports.

Also in May 2009, the Commission were re-branded, which was the culmination of three months work selecting a designer and choosing an appropriate design. The new design has been applied to the RCEP's website; the contents of which have been completely revised, with the new website being launched on 1st June 2009. The new website features up-to-date information on the status of reports in progress, news features, information on Members and how to contact the Secretariat, information about past reports (accessible in reverse chronological order and by theme), information on how organisations can engage with the work of the RCEP and guidance on becoming a NERC policy secondee. There is also a link to the RCEP's new quarterly newsletter, *Our News*.

2.2 Budget

The outcome for 2008/09 is attached at Annex B: this was under budget as the nature of the ongoing study on adaptation to climate change necessitated less foreign travel (Belgium, Netherlands) in 2008/09 than the previous study on novel materials, which in 2007/08 involved travel to the US and Japan. Staff costs were lower as one post was not filled on the departure of the postholder on promotion, following a decision by Members not to undertake further short studies in the immediate future. Outturn for 2007/08 was £19,000 less than shown last year as an expected payment for IT services from the contractor was not requested by the contractor. That and similar payments for 2008/09 have been brought forward as contingent liabilities for 2009/10.

2.3 Staff

There was considerable turnover of staff in 2008/09, one of the Assistant Secretaries, Jo Bray, left us in September 2008 and was not replaced until November, when Yolanda Rizzi joined us to start work on the next long report.

In line with the PwC report the HEO communication post was upgraded to an SEO/SSO post, the previous postholder leaving in April 2008, and the new Dissemination Manager starting in July 2008 with a broader portfolio and a specific remit to improve public engagement. The HEO/HSO post was given up in August 2008 and the HEO(D) also left us then on promotion. The new HEO(D) did not join until November 2008, and joined the main writing team replacing the HEO/HSO as work on the short report was put onto a slower track. The Office Manager left in December 2008 and was not replaced until March 2009. The unfilled AO post was eventually filled in March 2009 when a temporary agency worker was released. The PS to the Chair and Secretary went on sick leave in November 2008, retiring in February 2009. A replacement joined us in January 2009.

2.4 Efficiency Gains

This has been taken forward through implementing the changes agreed following the PwC review as outlined above and through managing staff changes to reduce costs.

3. Strategy for the next three years

The Commission's strategy for publishing reports and monitoring their effectiveness was set out in the first corporate plan and is repeated here in [Annex A](#).

The prime driver will be the implementation of those aspects of the PwC review accepted by the Commission and Government in the response published in June 2008 which falls to the Commission. Some aspects, such as profiles and numbers of Members, fall to Government who advise the Sovereign on appointments, but most fall to the RCEP or the RCEP and Government. Action needs to be taken forward in conjunction with Government (Defra) to take some of these forward. Others, as discussed, are well in hand.

The move to smaller, cheaper accommodation on the Defra estate took place in May 2009 though budgetary savings were delayed as new tenants could not be found for the old building where the lease runs out in 2011. In 2009/10 new tenants were found albeit temporarily and costs related with the old building transferred to Defra allowing the expected savings to start to accrue.

The Framework Document which has governed relations between DETR (sic) and the RCEP since 2001 has been renegotiated and currently (July 2009) lies with Defra Ministers for approval. The changes are small largely reflecting the change in sponsor department and other changes in accepted good practice. The framework document also reflects the useful agreement by Defra to provide more certainty through a 3 year budget horizon.

As part of an ongoing process to ensure the Commission continues to offer the best possible advice to Government, the Chair and Members will, on advice from the Secretariat, need to review priorities. At present it is clear that Members see the production of major reports as the main priority and other work such as short reports will need to be introduced as and when resources permit. The other main priority will be, as per the response to the PwC report, to put more effort

into engagement with Government to help understanding of and follow through on recommendations in previous reports. The new Dissemination Manager (DM) is in post and will have a key role to play in this area. The DM has developed a more effective IT platform through the web site to facilitate engagement with Government Departments and to improve our ability to engage with the wider community. This became operational on 1st June 2009.

In 2010 it will be 40 years since the inception of the Royal Commission on Environmental Pollution. The precise nature of the events to mark this important milestone is something that the new Secretary to the Commission will have an opportunity to take forward when he joins the Secretariat in Summer 2009.

4. Objectives for 2009/10 – Forward Look

4.1 Key outputs anticipated in 2009/10

The Government response to the Novel Materials report was published on 2 June 2009.

The Commission were invited by the then Department for Innovation, University and Skills (DIUS; now BIS) to provide comment on an early draft of the forthcoming UK strategy for nanotechnology, and it is likely that RCEP involvement in this will continue in 2009-10.

In winter 2009 the Commission plans to launch its *Adapting the UK to Climate Change* report and the results of its investigation into *Artificial Light in the Environment*. It is anticipated that the Adaptation report will be published in advance of the UN conference on Climate Change in Copenhagen in December 2009. It is anticipated that this will present an opportunity for the RCEP's report to influence the UK's position at this conference.

4.2 Selection of next report (30th report)

The topic for the 30th report will be selected in early 2010.

4.3 Advice in other forms

In May 2008 Sir John Lawton was asked to be guest editor of *Environmental Scientist* (the Journal of the Institute of Environmental Sciences), which he agreed to do.

In October 2008, Professor Holgate, former Member of the RCEP, presented to an audience at Church House, Westminster, on the future programme of the RCEP.

Also in October 2008, the *Committee on Climate Change* published their interim advice on the 50% reduction in CO₂ emissions by 2050, making reference to the advice the RCEP published in their report on *Energy – the Changing Climate* (2000). The Secretary also attended a meeting of the Parliamentary and Scientific Committee in October entitled *Nuclear waste - what do we do with it?*

In December 2008 Sir John Lawton was asked to take part in a BBC Radio 4 discussion series entitled *Science Friction*, where he argued the case for blue skies research. Also in December, the BBC published an article online entitled *Calls to widen curbs on UK fishing*, which made reference to the RCEP's report *Turning the Tide* (2005).

In February 2009 Professor Holgate presented at the American Academy of Allergy Asthma and Immunology on the *Effect of climate change on ecosystems*, drawing on his experience as a former RCEP Member.

In March 2009, the Institution of Civil Engineers (ICE) contacted RCEP to invite us to submit evidence to a major new inquiry they are conducting into how infrastructure can be designed, developed, maintained and operated to deliver significant reductions in carbon emissions against current levels. The RCEP highlighted that their *Biomass* study would be relevant to this information gathering phase. Also in March, the RCEP were contacted by Enviros, who are undertaking a review of Defra's Air Quality Expert Group, in order to understand from RCEP how other committees and advisory bodies operate and manage, so that lessons may be learned for AQEG going forward.

The Chairman and the Secretary met with Professor Bob Watson and Defra's Chief Economist, Richard Price, In March 2009 to discuss the use of discount rates.

In April 2009 the ERFF published the output of a report they had commissioned on the *Mapping of co-ordination bodies for environmental evidence in the UK*, which makes reference to the work of the RCEP.

In May 2009, Sir John Lawton gave an invited lecture (jointly with Professor Owens a former Member) on *The Science – Policy Interface* – the case of the UK Royal Commission on Environmental Pollution at an international workshop at the Institute of Ecosystem Studies, New York.

During March-June 2009 Members of the Secretariat attended a number of workshops and seminars on issues pertinent to past or future RCEP reports – these include events relating to waste, transport and demographic change and the UK economy.

4.4 Resources – staff and office facilities

An organogramme showing the current Secretariat structure is at [Annex C](#).

4.5 Risks

| Risk | Likelihood | Seriousness | Management |
|---|-------------------|--------------------|--|
| Budget cut | Low* | High | Depends on size of cut, but could make RCEP non-viable. |
| Protracted staff vacancies | High | High | Redistribute work as far as possible; delay studies; seek more consultancy support. Make full use of NERC policy placement students (do not incur cost to RCEP other than travel expenses) |
| Members unable to contribute fully at key times | Medium | High | Set out very clearly in project plans when we need key outputs from Members. |
| Loss of building | Very low | Very high | A business continuity plan has been prepared, and updated in 2009. |
| Loss of IT systems | Very low | High | The RCEP IT system is supplied by IBM on the same terms as the Defra contract. In September 2008 all staff were issued with IBM laptops, and some staff have mobile broadband access, enabling the Secretariat to work more flexibly. On June 2009 the Commission launched its new website, which is replicated on a live and a development server. The RCEP have also implemented an internal team site (SharePoint), which replaces the L: drive (as of March 2009). |

* Defra fixed this on a 3 year basis in 2008.

5. Workplan for 2010/11

5.1 Objectives for 2010/11

5.2 Longer-term objectives

In the longer term the Commission will continue to investigate significant policy areas within the terms of its Warrant. The priorities will be determined by the Chair and the Members, and will take into account information received from other interested parties.

5.3 Baseline resources and implications

Baseline resources for 2009/10 and 2010/11 are attached at Annex B. RCEP did receive flat funding over a three year period from 2009.

5.3.1 Implications of a 5% cut each year in baseline resources

Year on year reductions of this size would have a dramatic effect on the output of the Commission, largely because the high percentage of fixed costs (accommodation, Members' fees and associated T&S, rent and rates) leave only staff costs and scientific consultancies available to absorb the shortfall. The point was accepted by Pricewaterhouse Coopers in their review.

The Government response to the model preferred by PwC which would have seen a 25% increase in budget was to continue the budget on a flat basis with no uprating for inflation, but an 8-9% reduction in costs achieved through accommodation changes. The budget remains very tight and a 5% cut would mean it would no longer be possible for the Secretariat to undertake preparatory work for a study while progressing the previous study at an acceptable pace and to the desired quality. Production of short reports would end. Continued reductions at this rate would mean that studies would have to be undertaken sequentially rather than overlapping as at present, halving the Commission's output of major studies. It is doubtful if the RCEP would remain viable on this basis – as recognised by Pricewaterhouse Coopers, it would wither on the vine and cease to be a significant source of independent outside advice to Government, as set out in the Royal Warrant.

Working Methods

A.1 Background

The Royal Commission on Environmental Pollution is an independent standing body established by Royal Warrant in 1970 to provide advice on environmental issues. Her Majesty the Queen appoints the Chairman and Members of the Commission on the advice of the Prime Minister.

The Commission's functions relate to all parts of the United Kingdom. It therefore advises both on matters that are the responsibility of the UK government and on matters which are the responsibility of the devolved administrations. The Commission and its full-time Secretariat are funded through the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) on behalf of the UK Government.

A.2 Mode of operation

The Members of the Royal Commission on Environmental Pollution are drawn from a variety of backgrounds in academia, industry and public life. Contributing a wide range of expertise and experience in science, medicine, engineering, law, economics and business, Members serve part-time and as individuals, not as representatives of organisations or professions. The term of appointment is three years, but Members may be reappointed. They are required to declare in a Register of Members' Interests any interests that may conflict with their role as Commission Members.

A full-time Secretariat supports the Chairman and Members by arranging, preparing papers for, and recording meetings; by handling the Commission's finances, administration and correspondence; and by drafting and producing the Commission's reports.

The Commission normally meets for 1½-2 days a month. Additionally, smaller groups of Members may meet to take forward particular aspects of studies. Minutes of Commission meetings are published on the Commission's website.

The way the Commission sets about tasks is described in Guidelines for the Conduct of Commission Studies (available on the Commission's website www.rcep.org.uk). These are kept under review and implementation is revised from time to time in the light of experience.

A.3 Timing of studies

The Commission's broad target is to publish a major report roughly every 15 months. The review of working methods, which reported in January 1998, concluded that the target timetable for a study should be 25 months from announcement to publication, on the assumption that substantial time (up to 12 months) had been spent prior to the announcement on scoping and initial preparation. The Commission's working methods involve working on more than one study in parallel.

The timetable for future studies is being drawn up on the basis that the Commission will publish reports at 15-month intervals. On the basis of the target timetables for each stage, this requires that, before the most advanced current study has been completed, written evidence will have been invited on the next study; and the next but one study will have been selected following consultations.

A.4 Indicators of performance

The Commission's ability to take a long view means that it may be some time before its recommendations are acted upon. Suitable performance indicators are therefore best aimed at long-term outcomes. The Commission will produce an evaluation of each of its main studies, starting three years after publication of the report, taking into account the objectives and any indicators of performance, expressed in terms of outcomes rather than processes, identified at the outset of each study. The conclusions of these evaluations will then be published in its annual review of activities. To facilitate this process the Commission will, as part of the scoping phase of studies, seek to define the impacts the eventual report is intended to have.

At the process level, the Commission will make every effort to adhere to the planned timetables for studies. However revisions to the timetable often achieve a more effective outcome, because they enable the Commission either to produce a more convincing and cogent report, or to relate the report more closely to developments in government policies or the availability of other crucial information. So, while indicative timetables will be published to assist work planning they will not form part of the Commission's formal performance indicators.

A.5 Rationale for subjects being considered

The primary aim of the Commission is to contribute to policy development in the longer term by providing an authoritative factual basis for policy-making and debate, and setting new policy agendas and priorities. In reaching its conclusions, the Commission seeks to take account of the wider implications for society of any measures proposed. This involves consideration of the economic, social and ethical aspects of issues as well as the scientific and technological aspects.

Other activities ancillary to this primary aim are disseminating the messages of published reports and evaluating previous reports. From time to time the Commission produces other statements, often as contributions to government consultation exercises, and usually on topics on which it has expressed views in previous reports. The Commission will continue to keep under review the balance of effort between these ancillary activities and its current major studies, taking into account data now being collected about the proportions of Secretariat effort devoted to various activities.

In choosing subjects for study, the Commission is guided by the following criteria (although any one study will not necessarily satisfy all of them):

- The topics chosen should be what the Commission's First Report called 'priorities for enquiry': issues which require detailed and rigorous analysis before satisfactory policies can be adopted;
- They should raise wide issues, both intellectually (in the sense of spanning several disciplines) and organisationally (in the sense of not falling within the terms of reference of any other single body);
- They are likely to involve general issues of principle;
- They should not normally duplicate other studies already in progress or planned in the near future;
- There should be a reasonable prospect that worthwhile conclusions can be produced within two years with the resources likely to be available to the Commission;
- They should take into account trends in environmental policy at European and global levels which seem to have significant implications for the UK.

Studies are therefore generally complex and challenging, covering broad cross-disciplinary issues.

The Royal Warrant provides for Ministers to refer matters to the Commission. In practice, the government has rarely used these powers to request the Commission to study a particular issue and the Commission itself has chosen virtually all the subjects for study.

Following an Order in Council, Scottish Ministers have the same rights of referral as their UK counterparts. Although there is no statutory requirement, it is agreed that the Commission will treat references from Ministers in Northern Ireland, or Secretaries to the Welsh Assembly in the same way as those from Scottish Ministers. The Commission is not required to inquire into matters referred by the Devolved Administrations, but it is sensitive to their needs, and is committed to doing its utmost to satisfy their requests.

The Commission also maintains a close liaison with other advisory bodies and Select Committees in order to ensure a sensible relationship between the respective work programmes, taking into account the distinctive role of each body.

A.6 Secretariat Objectives

Provide high quality support to the Chairman and Members of the Commission, including:

- Preparing and circulating papers that provide a satisfactory basis for Commission meetings.
- Circulating promptly minutes of Commission meetings which accurately and concisely record all substantive points.
- Making efficient arrangements for submission of written and oral evidence, presentations and visits, and the employment of consultants and special advisers.
- Drafting reports and handling their publication.
- Briefing the Chairman and Members for speaking engagements and interviews and identifying current policy issues on which statements by the Commission would reinforce the impact of its reports.

Ensure that all Commission reports and statements are progressed effectively, continue to meet the highest standards of accuracy and authoritativeness, and remain at the cutting edge, including:

- Ensuring Members have information about the relevant policy context for Commission studies at national, European and international levels.
- Ensuring the Commission is aware of new trends and developments of other kinds.
- Identifying, and briefing Members on, relevant conclusions and recommendations in previous Commission reports and statements.
- Identifying, obtaining and analysing other information that has a material bearing on Commission studies, and ensuring all relevant interests have been taken into account.
- Carrying out consultation, research and checking to finalise and verify the content of Commission reports.
- Advising, and undertaking consultations, on the selection and scoping of subjects for Commission reports.

Maintain the Commission's reputation and viability as an independent body by:

- Developing and operating the systems required for its efficient functioning

- Ensuring that appropriate objectives and targets are identified, relating them to the resources required, and reviewing and evaluating outputs in order to improve the Commission's performance
- Maintaining high standards of financial management
- Effective dissemination of information about the Commission and its work through its website and in other ways
- Maintaining effective liaison with the Commission's major customers and with advisory bodies in other European countries.

ANNEX B

Outturns for 2007/08 to 2008/09 and 2009/10 to 2010/11 forecast

Figures in £000s as at June 2009

| | F/Y 2007/08 Outturn | F/Y 2008/09 Outturn | F/Y 2009/10 Forecast | F/Y 2010/11 Forecast |
|---|--------------------------------|--------------------------------|---------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| Members' fees | 87 | 98 | 113 | 120 |
| Staff costs | 494 | 452 | 500 | 510 |
| T&S | 77 | 43 | 80 | 80 |
| Scientific consultancies | 1 ^(a) | 58 ^(b) | 47 | 40 |
| Rent | 123 | 135 | 41 ^(c) | 0 |
| Business Rates on offices and premises | 27 | 28 | 29 | 0 |
| Other Office costs | 136 | 137 | 188 | 286 |
| Capital | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| IT | 0 ^(d) | 0 ^(e) | 57 ^(f) | 19 |
| IT – Website Revamp | 0 | 0 ^(g) | 0 | 0 |
| TOTAL | 945 | 951 | 1055 | 1055 |

Footnote:

(a) Consultancy payment of £48k for 07/08 was accrued to 08/09 financial year

(b) Consultancy payment of £48K carried over from 07/08 due to late payment by defra Finance

(c) Payment of rent to be paid by defra estates from June 09

(d) IT costs of £19k for 07/08 not paid in financial year

(e) IT costs of £19k for 08/09 not paid in financial year

(f) IT costs to include £38k for 07/08 & 08/09

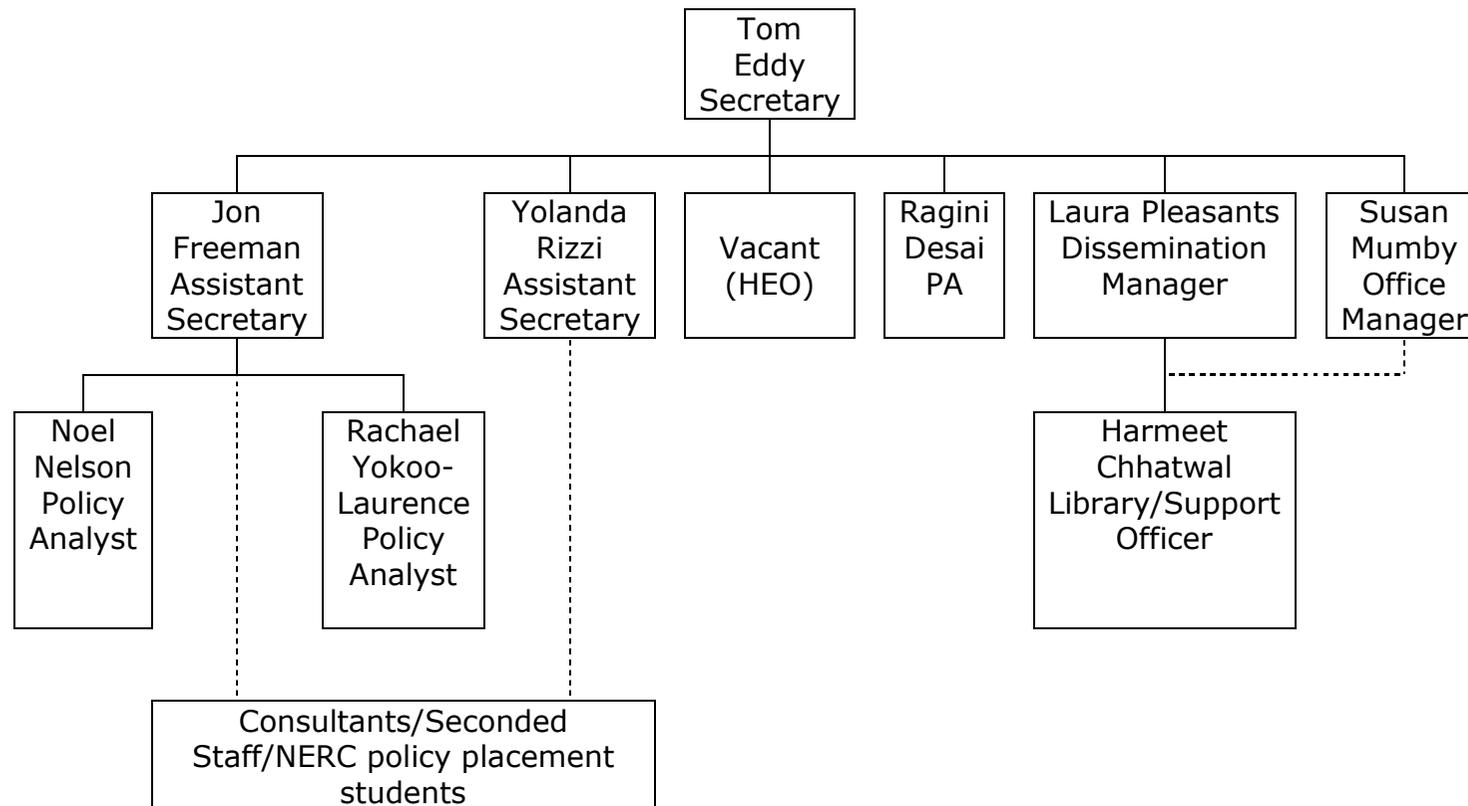
(g) Cost of website revamp not incurred due to support and assistance from defra. Minimal costs involved were attributed to Other Office Costs.

Annex C - Timetable and Staffing**C.1 Timetable of reports**

| Financial year | 2008/09 | | | | 2009/10 | | | | 2010/11 | | | | |
|--------------------------------------|---------|--------|--------|--------|---------|--------|--------|--------|---------|--------|--------|--------|--------|
| | Jan-08 | Apr-08 | Jul-08 | Oct-08 | Jan-09 | Apr-09 | Jul-09 | Oct-09 | Jan-10 | Apr-10 | Jul-10 | Oct-10 | Jan-11 |
| Quarter beginning | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| (i) Main Reports | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 27th report (Novel materials) | 5 | 5 | 5 | 5 | | | | | | | | | |
| 28th report (Adaptation) | 2 | 2 | 3 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 5 | 5 | | | | | |
| 29th report (Demographic change) | | | 1 | 1 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 3 | 3 | 4 | 4 | 5 | 5 |
| 30th report (topic TBC) | | | | | | | | 1 | 1 | 2 | 2 | 3 | 3 |
| (ii) Short Studies | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Artificial Light | 3 | 4 | 4 | 4 | 4 | 4 | 4 | 5 | | | | | |
| New short Study | TBC | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| (iii) Reviews of past Reports | TBC | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Key | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Selection of topic | 1 | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Scoping phase | 2 | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Invitation to submit evidence | 3 | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Main phase | 4 | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Drafting and Publication | 5 | | | | | | | | | | | | |

C.2 Organogramme

The diagram below shows the Secretariat structure at the end of May 2009.





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