



12 February 2010

Dear Sir/Madam

**ROYAL COMMISSION ON ENVIRONMENTAL POLLUTION STUDY: THE ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS OF DEMOGRAPHIC CHANGE IN THE UK**

**INVITATION TO SUBMIT EVIDENCE TO THE STUDY**

The Royal Commission announced on 19 March 2009 that our next major study would investigate the environmental impacts of demographic change in the UK. In view of the broad range of interest generated by this announcement, we decided to collect evidence for the study in two stages and on 25 September 2009 we invited a number of organisations to submit information for the first stage. As I explained at the time, we wanted to gain a clear understanding of what was already known about the changes likely to take place by 2050 before deciding which aspects to explore in more depth.

We have identified a number of specific trends with the potential to have a significant impact on the UK environment. These are:

- projected increases in the total population,
- the changing age structure of the population,
- changes in household size and composition,
- the distribution of population between urban and rural areas, and
- the regional distribution of population and the regional variation in population change.

The information we have received so far has convinced us that it is sensible to explore the possible environmental impacts the trends listed above may have in the UK. We are particularly interested in the effect of these demographic trends on water use, energy consumption (and greenhouse gas emissions), waste generation, landscape and biodiversity in different parts of the UK. We have therefore decided to address specific queries directly to those whom we consider most likely to have the most relevant detailed information. Others are invited to respond to a set of more general questions.

**I am writing to you now to invite you to submit formal evidence to the Commission by responding to the questions listed in the Annex to this letter**, where possible illustrating your answers with specific examples, and supplementing them with more general comments if appropriate. Some organisations have already provided information covering a number of these points, for which we are grateful. If you feel that there are additional important points which are not covered in the questions, please comment on these, too. However, we note that a number of studies have already considered (or are currently investigating) various aspects of food security and have therefore decided not to pursue this area of enquiry.

**Please reply by Friday 9<sup>th</sup> April** and send your response by email to [yolanda.rizzi@rcep.org.uk](mailto:yolanda.rizzi@rcep.org.uk). If you have any queries, please contact Yolanda Rizzi on 0300 068 6468, or Stuart Matheson on 0300 068 6335. The full list of questions, earlier letters about this study and more information about the work of the Commission can be found at [www.rcep.org.uk](http://www.rcep.org.uk). Our aim remains to publish a report towards the end of 2010.

It is the Commission's normal policy to publish the information it receives on its website, so please make it clear if you do not wish your comments to be publicly available.

Yours faithfully

Professor Sir John Lawton  
Chairman, Royal Commission on Environmental Pollution

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## **A – General questions**

1. Do you use the demographic figures and projections prepared by the Office for National Statistics? In what context? How well do they meet your needs in assessing the environmental implications of demographic change?
2. What other evidence or techniques do you use to assess future demographic trends and their potential implications for the environment?
3. What information do you have about the impact of specific demographic trends – eg ageing, household composition, spatial distribution etc – on the environment?
4. In your view, how important is demographic change for the environment compared with other drivers of environmental change in the UK?
5. What arrangements are in place to anticipate and deliver infrastructure and services in response to demographic change? How do these take account of the environmental implications?
6. Are current spatial planning processes able to anticipate and address the environmental implications of demographic change?
7. Do you have any information about good practice in preparing for the environmental challenges of demographic change in other countries, from which lessons of relevance to the UK can be drawn?

## **B - Questions for energy companies**

1. Do you use the demographic figures and projections prepared by the Office for National Statistics? In what context? How well do they meet your needs in assessing the environmental implications of demographic change?
2. What other evidence or techniques do you use to assess future demographic trends and their potential implications for the environment?
3. What information do you have about the impact of specific demographic trends – eg ageing, household composition, spatial distribution etc – on the environment?
4. In your view, how important is demographic change for the environment compared with other drivers of environmental change in the UK?
5. What arrangements are in place to anticipate and deliver infrastructure and services in response to demographic change? How do these take account of the environmental implications?
6. Are current spatial planning processes able to anticipate and address the environmental implications of demographic change?
7. Do you have any information about good practice in preparing for the environmental challenges of demographic change in other countries, from which lessons of relevance to the UK can be drawn?
8. In what ways will demographic change affect the services you provide between now and 2050? What are the environmental consequences? How are you dealing with these? Are there any constraints preventing you from doing so?
9. How do you expect demographic trends – and your ability to respond to them - to be affected by the technological change required to deliver against carbon reduction targets?
10. What information do you have on different levels of consumption in different groups (eg age, household size, location, socio-economic status)? How do you anticipate that these will change? What are the environmental consequences?

## **C –Questions for water companies**

1. Do you use the demographic figures and projections prepared by the Office for National Statistics? In what context? How well do they meet your needs in assessing the environmental implications of demographic change?
2. What other evidence or techniques do you use to assess future demographic trends and their potential implications for the environment?
3. What information do you have about the impact of specific demographic trends – eg ageing, household composition, spatial distribution etc – on the environment?
4. In your view, how important is demographic change for the environment compared with other drivers of environmental change in the UK?
5. What arrangements are in place to anticipate and deliver infrastructure and services in response to demographic change? How do these take account of the environmental implications?
6. Are current spatial planning processes able to anticipate and address the environmental implications of demographic change?
7. Do you have any information about good practice in preparing for the environmental challenges of demographic change in other countries, from which lessons of relevance to the UK can be drawn?
8. In what ways will demographic change affect the services you provide between now and 2050? What are the environmental consequences? How are you dealing with these? Are there any constraints preventing you from doing so?
9. How do you expect demographic trends – and your ability to respond to them - to be affected by the technological change required to deliver against carbon reduction targets?
10. How will demographic change affect your ability to meet demand for water - in terms of quantity and quality?
11. What information do you have on different levels of consumption in different groups (eg age, household size, location, socio-economic status)? How do you anticipate that these will change? What are the environmental consequences?

## **D – Questions for waste disposal authorities and other waste bodies**

1. Do you use the demographic figures and projections prepared by the Office for National Statistics? In what context? How well do they meet your needs in assessing the environmental implications of demographic change?
2. What other evidence or techniques do you use to assess future demographic trends and their potential implications for the environment?
3. What information do you have about the impact of specific demographic trends – eg ageing, household composition, spatial distribution etc – on the environment?
4. In your view, how important is demographic change for the environment compared with other drivers of environmental change in the UK?
5. What arrangements are in place to anticipate and deliver infrastructure and services in response to demographic change? How do these take account of the environmental implications?
6. Are current spatial planning processes able to anticipate and address the environmental implications of demographic change?
7. Do you have any information about good practice in preparing for the environmental challenges of demographic change in other countries, from which lessons of relevance to the UK can be drawn?
8. In what ways will demographic change affect the services you provide between now and 2050? What are the environmental consequences? How are you dealing with these? Are there any constraints preventing you from doing so?
9. How do you expect demographic trends – and your ability to respond to them – to be affected by the technological change required to deliver against carbon reduction targets?
10. What information do you have on different levels and types of waste production in different groups (eg age, household size, location, socio-economic status)? How do you anticipate that these will change? What are the environmental consequences?

## **E –Questions for Government Departments**

1. Do you use the demographic figures and projections prepared by the Office for National Statistics? In what context? How well do they meet your needs in assessing the environmental implications of demographic change?
2. What other evidence or techniques do you use to assess future demographic trends and their potential implications for the environment?
3. What information do you have about the impact of specific demographic trends – eg ageing, household composition, spatial distribution etc – on the environment?
4. In your view, how important is demographic change for the environment compared with other drivers of environmental change in the UK?
5. What arrangements are in place to anticipate and deliver infrastructure and services in response to demographic change? How do these take account of the environmental implications?
6. Are current spatial planning processes able to anticipate and address the environmental implications of demographic change?
7. Do you have any information about good practice in preparing for the environmental challenges of demographic change in other countries, from which lessons of relevance to the UK can be drawn?
8. What assumptions about future demographic changes have informed your planning to meet policy objectives? How have they influenced your approach? What are the consequences for the environment?
9. How secure are underlying assumptions about how much energy, land and other resources are needed per head of population?
10. What evidence do you have about the different environmental impacts of settlements of different size and location?

## **F–Questions for Local authorities, Regional Offices, Regional partnerships and development bodies**

1. Do you use the demographic figures and projections prepared by the Office for National Statistics? In what context? How well do they meet your needs in assessing the environmental implications of demographic change?
2. What other evidence or techniques do you use to assess future demographic trends and their potential implications for the environment?
3. What information do you have about the impact of specific demographic trends – eg ageing, household composition, spatial distribution etc – on the environment?
4. In your view, how important is demographic change for the environment compared with other drivers of environmental change in the UK?
5. What arrangements are in place to anticipate and deliver infrastructure and services in response to demographic change? How do these take account of the environmental implications?
6. Are current spatial planning processes able to anticipate and address the environmental implications of demographic change?
7. Do you have any information about good practice in preparing for the environmental challenges of demographic change in other countries, from which lessons of relevance to the UK can be drawn?
8. In what ways will demographic change affect the services you provide between now and 2050? What are the environmental consequences? How are you dealing with these? Are there any constraints preventing you from doing so?
9. In what ways, if any, does your area/region differ from the national trends? Are there any particular factors which might make the likely demographic changes more or less challenging for your area/region?
10. How effective are the environmental/sustainability appraisals conducted as part of the development of regional spatial strategies as a means of responding to demographic change while protecting the environment?
11. How do you expect demographic trends – and your ability to respond to them – to be affected by the technological change required to deliver against carbon reduction targets?
12. What information do you have on levels of energy and water consumption and amounts and types of waste production in different groups (eg age, household size, location, socio-economic status)? How do you anticipate that these will change? What are the environmental consequences?
13. What evidence do you have about the different environmental impacts of settlements of different size and location?

## **G– Questions for Devolved administrations**

1. Do you use the demographic figures and projections prepared by the Office for National Statistics/General Register Office for Scotland/Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency? In what context? How well do they meet your needs in assessing the environmental implications of demographic change?
2. What other evidence or techniques do you use to assess future demographic trends and their potential implications for the environment?
3. What information do you have about the impact of specific demographic trends – eg ageing, household composition, spatial distribution etc – on the environment?
4. In your view, how important is demographic change for the environment compared with other drivers of environmental change in the UK?
5. What arrangements are in place to anticipate and deliver infrastructure and services in response to demographic change? How do these take account of the environmental implications?
6. Are current spatial planning processes able to anticipate and address the environmental implications of demographic change?
7. Do you have any information about good practice in preparing for the environmental challenges of demographic change in other countries, from which lessons of relevance to the UK can be drawn?
8. In what ways will demographic change affect the services you provide between now and 2050? What are the environmental consequences? How are you dealing with these?
9. Are there any special factors which might affect demographic trends in your country? How will these affect the environment?
10. How do you expect demographic trends – and your ability to respond to them – to be affected by the technological change required to deliver against carbon reduction targets?
11. What information do you have on levels of energy and water consumption and amounts and types of waste production in different groups (eg age, household size, location, socio-economic status)? How do you anticipate that these will change? What are the environmental consequences?