From Rt Hon Norman Lamb MP, Chair

Rt Hon Claire Perry MP
Minister of State for Energy and Clean Growth
Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy
1 Victoria Street
London. SW1H 0ET

27 February 2019

Dear Clare,

The impact of climate change on health and productivity in the UK

You may be aware that the Science and Technology Committee ran its “My Science Inquiry” initiative in January. This was an open opportunity for the science community, and the wider public, to suggest science and technology areas for scrutiny. We received 86 submissions of which 10 were shortlisted and invited to pitch their idea to us, in person, in Westminster.

One of the people we heard from was Dr Gesche Huebner at the UCL Energy Institute who proposed that we look at the impact of climate change on health and productivity in the UK. You can view her full pitch to us at Q66–68 of the transcript (goo.gl/ioSjEe).

She raised a number of issues that required attention, including:

• Where Government funding should be directed to fill knowledge gaps on the impact of climate change on health and productivity in the UK;
• Whether current standards and regulations were fit for purpose and future-proofed—for example, Dr Huebner highlighted that the Industrial Strategy sought to halve energy use of new builds by 2030 but that new buildings were very likely to overheat. She explained that this raised questions about how risks were managed, and the efficacy and enforcement of building regulations;
• What actions the Government is taking to investigate the potential impacts of rising CO₂ levels on cognitive performance and building energy use;
• Are consistent metrics used for collecting data which inform policy development in this area—Dr Huebner cited evidence of two different figures being given to explain the scale of summer deaths; and
• How does the Government cost health benefits into its calculations and policies which are intended to mitigate climate change?
In your response I should appreciate if you would set out the actions that the Government could take to address the concerns raised by Dr Huebner. I understand that you may need to consult Government colleagues on these issues to inform your response. If possible, I would be grateful if you could reply by Friday 15 March.

Rt Hon Norman Lamb MP
Chair