

BKCC Dissemination Conference 28th March 2007

Summary of Discussion Sessions

Please note that this is *not* a transcript, but a summary of the questions raised by the audience and the answers given by the speakers during the two discussion sessions at the conference. The questions are in *italics*.

Morning Discussion Session

Questioner *A question for Jim. One of your graphs in the corner gives us the probability distribution of a change in precipitation sitting around zero giving a large probability of stress. How do you think we should handle this in practical terms? That is less than some of the specs of the other properties you're modelling for.*

Jeff Levermore - *IPCC working group 3 are producing their work SRES scenarios. There's quite a lot of useful information coming out from the world built environment situation. Is Beseech working within these scenarios? Are the updated SRES scenarios going to feed into Beseech?*

Jonathan Chapman - *To what extent have Environment Agency projects identified policy makers and engaged them with their work?*

Ian Cooper - *Eclipse Consultants – Mentioned the variable availability of insurance cover and drew attention to negotiations between government and ABI about cover in vulnerable areas. How is ABI going to use this information to look at how its going to manage this issue in the future and the expectations its going to place on the UK Government to continue to offer insurance cover to those at risk?*

Jane Milne

In many of the scenarios the question is not just the attitude of insurers to the risks but the availability of capital? In a capital enterprise scenario I think capital would be quite limited. Same would be true among local stewardship. The insurance industry only works within a global capital market these days. It's not just the weather that it throws at us, the legislative and institutional arrangements will be quite key too. We argue very strongly for as liberal markets as possible but we do recognise that regulation and things like the planning system are absolutely key to enabling those free markets to work. In the real world we are going to want to see a combination of those things to truly adapt.

Roger Salmons

We weren't trying to replace the existing scenarios, but rather to offer an alternative perspective, focussing on the ability of systems to adapt. -We were trying to provide a compliment. People shouldn't use scenarios as projections. We are trying to describe a possible future state, not say how *probable* it is

Gerry Metcalf

The stakeholder engagement question is one that would be better directed to the presenters this afternoon. Not sure that we have fully understood the full range of stakeholders that could be involved.

Jim Hall

The range of stakeholder involvement extends from technical stakeholder to policy, the centre of gravity is more in the practitioners, i.e. those who are assessing impacts, designing adaptation solutions and understanding how they are responding. It wasn't BKCC's place to join the policy oriented research.

Questioner working on micro-drainage

Sustainable drainage systems. I think local communities and individuals buy into it. It hasn't been terribly successful (the idea of getting water companies to adopt them). There are good arguments to say county councils at the local level [to adopt them], and perhaps there should be a political element there. Local stewardships seem to fair badly in the scenarios: is there little place for local accountability?

Questioner

- How much does the Stern review influence the perspective of EPSRC with regard to climate change?
- In what way will the BESEECH framework be realised - for example is the context global?

John Handley

- Why is it so difficult to handle storminess and windspeed and how might we go forward on this?

Clare Goodess

- The model was the from the Hadley centre and is fairly typical of other European models. They're not very good at assessing windspeed, particularly over land. There are problems in terms of the local windspeeds. A lot of the regional models don't have what we call gust parameterisations. They're not even attempting to model the extreme winds. That's beginning to change and more models now are incorporating these gust parameterisations. That's at the regional modelling scale. The other issue is how well the global climate models are simulating the storm tracks across the North Atlantic. Fair to say that that performance is improving but there are still issues. If you're not capturing those large scale patterns then you're not going to have reliable local projections. The weather generator that we're using is probably not capturing the wind changes - we didn't really feel that it is feasible because we didn't really believe them. The weather generators are still giving a consistent set of variables but we still have concerns over the windspeed. To improve this we need to run global models at higher resolution and improve parameterisations. The next generation of regional models will be at 25km resolution rather than the current 50 so hopefully that will begin to bring some improvements. So I'm always fairly cautious about what I say about wind. At the moment it's hard to see with UKCIP 08, for example, that that situation will be substantially improved. This is an area where there is a need for real funding of basic science in model parameterisation before we substantially improve the situation.

Jim Hall

There should be some prospect for improvements. There is more that can be done with observed wind at the moment. Given severe uncertainties that leads to a need to analyse the response of your systems and design alternatives under a rather broad range of conditions and understand the broad range of their responses under that broad range of conditions.

Roger Salmons

It wasn't my intention to provide any sort of valued judgement about the scenarios. Each of the scenarios has its own strengths and weaknesses. They are covered in the report. It would be wrong to think of any one scenario in being any better or worse in terms of its ability to adapt, although the types of adaptation under different scenarios are likely to take different forms. The flip side is that it may be harder to get smaller scale adaptations implemented in a global markets scenario than one that looks more like local stewardship. When using these scenarios to develop adaptation responses they should use them to see how robust they are to different views of the world. Are they totally dependent on one view of the world on being implemented or are could they be practical in a range of different scenarios. The other thing to bear in mind is that we're looking 50 years into the future and although the world may look like one scenario now, there is no guarantee that it will continue to look like that into the future.

In terms of the scale we were working at. For the story lines, the qualitative aspect, we were looking on a national scale, bearing in mind that decision-making takes place at different scales. The projections have all been built up at a regional level for the regions in the UK. We didn't feel confident in terms of the situations we were dealing with to go to a more local level.

Gerry Metcalf

I'm not aware of any particular areas of policy that influence UKCIP that emerge directly from the Stern review. But I am aware that over the last twelve months various influences including the Stern review have changed the profile of climate change amongst decision makers in the UK. No longer do we have to demonstrate that the climate is changing but the questions are what are we going to do about it. So we work in an increasingly powerful policy context. We and our stakeholders are using that context to up the ante in terms of the resources going into what we are doing. Precautionary Principle: better to tackle the issues now.

Afternoon Discussion Session

Tadj Oreszczyn We used the same materials that was used in the original building. We also allowed a reasonable amount of time for the wall to stabilise. We tried to recreate the situation as closely as possible.

Roger Street: Noted the combined effort of modelling in the lab and also on the real site.

Questioner *I understand that there are processes that the stone goes through and that these are not fully understood.*

Tadj Oreszczyn We haven't taken new bricks so they should have aged in a same way.

City planner questioner *One of the issues of the planning system is that to develop good policy we need good evidence. ASSCUE is exactly the sort of data we need. Is this available to share?*

John Handley We would like to make it available. We are in communication with AGMA (Association of Greater Manchester Authorities) about this.

Local authority questioner

Were the emergency services and emergency planners involved in this?

John Handley

They got on board quickly with the project. It turned out to be very relevant to emergency planning and to the civil contingencies act.

Roger Street

A lot of the work on adaptation has arisen from the emergency planning community.

Roger Salmons

- a) Simon: You've identified a problem with the system but are you proposing any adaptation responses to this.*
- b) Measures clearly rely heavily on effective planning system and/or behaviour change. How robust are the proposals to alternative scenarios?*

Simon Watson

No were not proposing an adaptation strategy. We're trying to flag up something that National Grid aren't looking at

in much detail.

John Handley

The thing that has struck me is not simply the importance of the planning system but the importance of responses at the micro-level. There is a building next to Oxford Road station which has wind turbines and solar panels – that's the future. How we promote the kind of actions that might be occurring under local stewardship is therefore important. Climate Change is going to demand a certain response and part of that will have to involve a level of community engagement.

John Blanksby

People need information about what to do, and to be given simple low-cost ways. People need to be informed about the consequences of their actions, e.g. paving over their gardens and increasing the severity of flooding.

Elisabeth Wilson

Are the adaptation strategies consistent with reducing our greenhouse gas emissions?

Rob Shaw

It's a tricky one. Planners and decision makers are just getting their heads round climate change. Don't want them to give up because they are being told that adaptation measures may be making emissions worse. Need to emphasise that this is just another part of their role as a planning – to bring together these objectives. This is the sort of thing that planners do all the time and they have the capacity to do it, but they need training.

Roger Street

Need to 'Think Outside the Box'. There are different ways of having greenspaces, for examples.

Questioner

Capacity is an issue. We [planners] are setting objectives, policy and standards and aspirations faster than our capacity to catch up. I'd recommend training as part of a future round of funding for this process. Getting everyone up to speed is an important next step.

Mike Kaufman

Asks about the transferability of this research to the developing world.

John Blanksby

They often manage it better – and put a much better value on water.

John Handley

I endorse that. Using the highways system as flood conveyance is something that we can learn from. We're lucky at Manchester to have the School of Environment and Development which brings together Planners, Architects Geography and International Development so we are looking at this.

Coming back previous point: In most of the big floods, the first thing to be taken out, right in the centre of the deepest flood water, were the emergency services. They coped until the electricity failed. More than half of the electricity substations in Greater Manchester are in the areas at highest risk of flooding.