Triennial Reviews Team
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From the Biological Secretary and Vice-President Sir John Skehel FMedSci FRS

25 April 2014
Our ref: JS/NG/JB

Dear Sirs

The Royal Society welcomes the opportunity to contribute to the Triennial Reviews of the Science Advisory Council (SAC) and the Advisory Committee on Releases to the Environment (ACRE). Independent expert advice is vital to good policy development and building trust in the policy-making process. To help achieve this one of the Society’s aims is to ensure that policy-makers and individual citizens alike can engage with the science that underpins the functioning of modern life. The provision of independent expert advice through bodies, such as SAC and ACRE, to policymakers is vital in achieving this.

The Society welcomed the establishment of the SAC in 2004 to provide Defra’s Chief Scientific Adviser with essential independent assurance and challenge, which still remains important ten years on. Similarly, ACRE allows ministers to access independent, timely expert advice on the release of Genetically Modified Organisms (GMOs). The recent Public Attitudes to Science 2014 survey highlighted the key role of independent expert advice that is delivered in a transparent way in underpinning public confidence in the regulation of GMOs.

Please do not hesitate to contact me if you think there is any way in which the Society can contribute further to your review.

Yours faithfully

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