

## SSAC Draft Minutes – 21 March 2023

### Virtual Meeting by Zoom

#### Attendees:

Name	Position
Professor Maggie Gill	SSAC Chair
Professor Julie Fitzpatrick	Chief Scientific Adviser for Scotland ( <i>ex officio member</i> )
Professor Dame Anna Dominiczak	Chief Scientist (Health) ( <i>ex officio member</i> ) (Items 1-4 only)
Professor Mat Williams	Chief Scientific Adviser - Environment, Natural Resources & Agriculture ( <i>ex-officio member</i> ) (Items 1-6 only)
Professor Lisa Boden	SSAC Member
Professor Robert Bowman	SSAC Member
Dr Catherine Elliott	SSAC Member
Professor Louise Horsfall	SSAC Member
Professor Julian Jones	SSAC Member
Dr Graham Kerr	SSAC Member
Professor Nick Owens	SSAC Member
Professor Martyn Pickersgill	SSAC Member
Professor Murray Roberts	SSAC Member
Professor Marian Scott	SSAC Member
Professor Melanie Simms	SSAC Member
Professor Bruce Whitelaw	SSAC Member
Dr Connor Blair	SSAC Associate
Dr Mariana Garcia Criado	SSAC Associate
David Mallon	Head of Policy and Implementation Unit, Climate Change Division, Scottish Government (SG) - (Agenda Item 7)
Dr Ashrika Sharma	SSAC Adaptation Intern – (Agenda Item 8)
Dr Rhona McDonald	Strategic Lead, Science and Research (SG)
Joanne Ward	Head of SSAC Secretariat/Science Advice and Engagement Team (SG)
Alasdair Maclean	SSAC Secretariat, Science Advice and Engagement Team (SG)
Caroline Murray	SSAC Secretariat, Science Advice and Engagement Team (SG)

#### 1. Welcome and actions from last meeting

#### Apologies:

- Professor Linda Bauld, Chief Social Policy Advisor (*ex officio member*)
- Dermot Rhatigan, Deputy Director, Manufacturing and Industries (SG) (Item 2)

- Guest presenter: Ben Johnson, Executive Head of Strategic Research and Innovation Development, University of Strathclyde (Item 3)

1.1 The Chair welcomed all to the meeting. In light of the apologies, advised that they will use the time at Item 3 to discuss a possible SSAC letter to the new FM. The previous minutes had been agreed and published on the SSAC website.

1.2 Ongoing actions from previous meetings were discussed. The Chair requested members indicate if they would like to join the SSAC Science/Policy Interface working group.

**Action 28/1 – Secretariat to follow up on SSAC Science/Policy Interface WG with volunteers – Professors Boden, Dominiczak, Pickersgill, Roberts and Simms and Drs Blair, Criado, Elliott and Kerr.**

## **2. Update from Dr Rhona McDonald, Strategic Lead Science and Research**

2.1 Dr McDonald looked ahead to the anticipated announcement of the new FM and the possibility of portfolio reshuffles, which could also affect the anticipated publication of the Innovation Strategy.

2.2 Updates provided on a number of areas including: ongoing work around Alliances for Research Challenges (ARC), government changes at UK level with the new Department for Science, Innovation and Technology; the recently published 10-point framework; the Glasgow innovation accelerator projects, Sir Paul Nurse review and the Horizon Framework.

2.3 Dr McDonald welcomed comments and ensuing discussion from the council on a number of these topics.

**Action 28/2 – Secretariat to circulate links to the announcements and frameworks mentioned by Dr McDonald**

## **3. The contribution of science to the economy - Ben Johnson, Executive Head of Strategic Research and Innovation Development, University of Strathclyde**

3.1 Item 3 replaced with a discussion on suggestions on what to include in a potential letter to the new First Minister to highlight a number of issues connected to science.

**Action 28/3 – Letter to FM to be drafted by Chair and circulated to SSAC for comment/sign off.**

## **4. Update from ex-officio members:**

4.1 A written update from the Chief Social Policy Adviser was circulated with the meeting papers.

4.2 The CSA began by reflecting on some of the discussions she had with RSE around sustainable chemicals and advised that the SSAC past paper on this was very useful for that.

4.3 The CSA also noted that she had met with Dame Jenny Harries, Chief Executive, UK Health Security Agency (UKHSA) during her recent visit to Edinburgh. Discussion focussed on pandemic preparedness, genomics and biosecurity and that they were keen to retain the science capabilities established during covid.

4.4 CSA updated the group that the Science Advice and Engagement team has now moved from DG Learning and Justice to DG Economy and that a new DG Economy, Gregor Irwin, has been appointed.

4.5 CS (Health) provided an update on her discussions around large clinical trials on vaccines and the UK wide initiative with Moderna led by UKHSA. The Chief Scientist Office is to support innovations in health and economy and NHS end to end innovation pathway.

4.6 CSA ENRA attended the recent meeting of the FM's Environmental Council and chaired various Science Advisory Boards and a new advisory committee on circular economy on waste emissions. There was some discussion around how these advisory groups were set up and balanced without the need for open recruitment.

4.7 The Chair said it was encouraging to see how much science was being drawn upon in these discussions and advised that GOScience had produced a draft science landscape mapping across the UK.

#### **Action 28/4 – Secretariat to share GOScience draft science landscape mapping document**

### **5. Members' Updates**

5.1 Members provided brief updates on the work they were involved in since the last SSAC meeting covering a broad range of areas including innovation adoption in SG and the NHS, interest in alternative feedstocks regarding seaweed, engineering biology funding available for hubs not single centres, and the innovation centres review expected to be published soon.

### **6. Social Media (SSAC Note 23/2) - Maggie Gill**

6.1 The Chair advised that she had asked Professor Whitelaw to set up a discussion with the SSAC associate members on SSAC's use of social media platforms going forward and asked members for their thoughts and ideas around this.

6.2 There was much discussion on this topic but generally members raised concerns around the SSAC entering this space. Concerns focussed on resources to manage/maintain any future SSAC social media account but also that some social media platforms, Twitter in particular, may not be appropriate for SSAC needs. A general concern that Social Media may bring risks but very few benefits.

6.3 Noted that the SSAC website to be upgraded in the coming months which would offer the ability to report number of hits to the site under the new contract in the coming months. There may also be other ways to add content to the website.

6.4 Professor Whitelaw agreed to take this forward and report back to the next SSAC meeting. As well as both Associates, volunteers included Dr Elliott and Professors Boden, Pickersgill and Simms.

**Action 28/5 – Professor Whitelaw to arrange meeting with associate members and other SSAC volunteers to take forward discussions on SSAC Social Media.**

## **7. Standing Agenda Item - Climate Change - Maggie Gill and David Mallon, Climate Change Division, Scottish Government**

7.1 David Mallon discussed the previous Early Career Researchers (ECR) workshop that looked at the TIMES model. He had been in discussion with the SSAC Chair and Professor Jones on holding another one on a different topic in the development of the Climate Change Plan.

7.2 The Chair asked members to volunteer onto the WG to attend/chair the workshop breakout groups. Additional volunteers included Professors Roberts and Simms.

**Action 28/6 – Professor Jones to convene a Working Group to take forward discussion with the associates and David Mallon to establish suitable focus of the next ECR workshop.**

## **8. Update on past/current/future projects (SSAC Note 23/3)**

8.1 The Chair thanked the Aquaculture working group members – Professors Owen, Scott and Dr Kerr – for their help with the project, roundtable and initial draft report. She thanked SSAC members for their comments and feedback on the initial draft.

8.2 The Chair advised that she would take on board the feedback from the discussion and issue a second draft for further comment and sign off before issuing to the Cabinet Secretary by end of March 2023.

8.3 Adaptation – Dr Ashrika Sharma, the project intern, provided an update and overview of the work to date and advised currently at the planning stage for the roundtable event for early May. The Chair asked if SSAC members wished to volunteer to join the Roundtable and to advise if they were aware of any adaptation work that should be highlighted to the project intern.

8.4 Food Security – Professor Scott provided an update on the current project and advised that the next meeting with SG policy officials was scheduled in early April to discuss further.

**Action 28/7 – Secretariat to request a copy of FMEC food summary report for Professor Scott**

8.5 SSAC Climate Change Co-ordination Group (SSAC Note 23/4) – Professor Jones outlined some of the issues in his paper and sought comments from the council. It was agreed that a summary record of climate change recommendations should be produced from past reports to assist with future projects.

**Action 28/8 – Professor Jones to produce a paper on SSAC Climate Change report recommendations to share with SSAC.**

8.6 Past reports (SSAC Note 23/5) – Update had been circulated with the meeting papers.

**9. AOB**

9.1 There was discussion about including the Nurse Review as an agenda item for a future SSAC meeting.

**10. Next meeting – 6 June 09.00-13.00**

10.1 The Chair invited members to note their preference for virtual/hybrid/in person for the June meeting. Majority of responses indicated that in person would be preferred.

## Summary of Actions

Action	Item	Lead	Update
28/1	follow up on SSAC Science/Policy Interface WG with volunteers – Professors Boden, Dominiczak, Pickersgill, Roberts and Simms and Drs Blair, Criado, Elliott and Kerr	Secretariat	
28/2	circulate links to the announcements and frameworks mentioned by Dr McDonald	Secretariat	
28/3	letter to FM to be drafted and circulated to SSAC for comment/sign off.	Chair	
28/4	share GOScience draft science landscape mapping document	Secretariat	
28/5	arrange meeting with associate members and other SSAC volunteers to take forward discussions on SSAC Social Media.	Professor Whitelaw	
28/6	convene a Working Group to take forward discussion with the associates and David Mallon to establish suitable focus of the next ECR workshop.	Professor Jones	
28/7	request a copy of FMEC food summary report for Professor Scott	Secretariat	
28/8	produce a paper on SSAC Climate Change report recommendations to share with SSAC.	Professor Jones	