



SSAC Update Report - April 2014

The SSAC is Scotland's highest level science advisory body, providing independent advice and recommendations on science strategy, policy and priorities to the Scottish Government's Chief Scientific Adviser. Professor Muffy Calder, the Chief Scientific Adviser for Scotland (CSA) and Dr Chris Masters are co-chairs of the SSAC.

SSAC issues a short report following each quarterly meeting to provide an update on their latest workstreams and areas of interest. This is the seventh of these reports. The SSAC held its last meeting at the Victoria Quay, Edinburgh on 20 March 2014.

ONGOING WORK STREAMS

Current work includes:

- ✚ SSAC continues to progress work on **the current scientific evidence around Synthetic Biology** and the impact of novel biology on the Scottish economy. This work aims to consider the key issues surrounding synthetic biology and highlight the potential economic and environmental benefits for Scotland and potential risks. The SSAC hosted the second of two stakeholder events on 3 February. This workshop focused on the broader societal issues associated with synthetic biology. The event was an opportunity to meet with a number of stakeholder groups and NGOs to better understand the range of opinions on synthetic biology, and what scientific evidence these opinions are based on. The outputs from this event will feed into the final report. In addition to the workshop events the researcher has gathered further evidence by interviewing key individuals and groups with an interest in Synthetic Biology. The researcher presented a summary of his key findings to SSAC at their meeting on 20 March and the working group are now preparing their final report, which will be submitted to Council for sign off at their meeting on 12 June.
- ✚ Dr Allan, Minister for Learning Science and Scotland's Languages has invited SSAC to undertake a piece of work to consider current **Scientific Infrastructure and Scotland's needs and requirements for the future**. This request follows a recent House of Lords Select Committee on Science and Technology report on Scientific Infrastructure published in November 2013. The resulting report will inform policy-makers and others. A SSAC working group led by Professor Julian Jones and Professor David Cumming will be consulting widely with the science and engineering community in Scotland in order to collect evidence to support this work.

OTHER NEWS

- ✚ **SSAC Recruitment 2014.** A number of the SSAC membership will be stepping down in January 2015 (nine members in total) as their term of membership had come to an end. In order for SSAC to continue to deliver on its remit the SSAC Secretariat will be starting the process of recruiting new members in spring 2014. Full details will be made available on the SSAC website www.scottishscience.org.uk and will be advertised in the national and scientific press. For further information please contact the SSAC Secretariat.