

Scottish Science Advisory Council

**Minute of meeting held on 18 September 2008 at 9.30am, at
Kingsmills Hotel
Culcabock Road, Inverness, IV2 3LP**

Present:

Professor Anne Glover (Co-Chair), Professor Stuart Monro (Co-Chair), Professor Alan Bundy, Professor Julie Fitzpatrick, Professor Peter Morgan, Professor Andy Porter, Professor Stuart Reid, Mr Ian Ritchie, Dr Barbara Spruce, Professor Joyce Tait, Professor Ian Underwood, Professor Graham Wren, Dr Avril Davidson and Anna Milne (Minute Secretary).

Items 1 & 2: Welcome and Apologies

1. Professor Glover opened the meeting and welcomed the committee members. She conveyed apologies from Professor Chris van der Kuyl, Dr Karen Jervis, Professor Roland Wolf, Professor Mike Ferguson, Professor Steve Beaumont, Professor Bob Tooze and Professor Jim McDonald.
2. Professor Glover welcomed Professor Ian Underwood to his first SSAC meeting. She explained that Ian had been appointed to the SSAC, following the resignation of Professor Sir Kenneth Calman, due to potential conflicts of interest with his role as Chair of the Commission on Scottish Devolution.

Item 3: Dialogue with Highlands and Islands Enterprise

3. Professor Monro welcomed Laura Dingwall, Senior Development Manager for Entrepreneurship, Innovation and Knowledge Transfer at Highlands and Islands Enterprise (HIE) and Steve Brown from Innovate4Growth Consulting who works with the Enterprise Solutions Team at HIE.

Laura Dingwall, Senior Development Manager for Entrepreneurship, Innovation and Knowledge Transfer at Highlands and Islands Enterprise (HIE)

4. Ms Dingwall provided an overview of HIE and its role in promoting science-based and hi-tech businesses in the highlands and islands region, setting it in the context of the Government's Economic Strategy, Skills for Success and the Enterprise Networks Review. She highlighted a number of recent changes that had taken place at HIE in response to the range of new proposals emerging from the Scottish Government.

5. Ms Dingwall outlined four main areas of focus for HIE: supporting business with growth potential; growing key sectors; developing infrastructure and conditions to improve regional competitiveness; and strengthening communities, especially in fragile areas. She then focused on a number of key strategic projects involving UHI and MIT and aimed at developing corporate knowledge relationships, emerging sectors and niche markets and internationalisation and global collaborations. She outlined the challenges facing the Highlands and Islands region in relation to growing businesses and explained the Highlands and Islands innovation system which has similarities and differences to that operated by Scottish Enterprise. Ms Dingwall then outlined a number of programmes and interventions that have been established and put in place by HIE to promote knowledge transfer, innovation and entrepreneurship including targeted support for business growth, business challenge competitions, knowledge exchange projects and joint programmes with MIT.

Steve Brown Innovate4Growth Consulting

6. Mr Brown made a short presentation to the SSAC, highlighting his experiences in the US especially in relation to working with technology start up companies at MIT and advising on commercialising inventions, and of his experience of working in the highlands and islands region with HIE and Fusion.

7. Following the presentations the group discussed a number of points arising from the presentations including, IP management, the innovation process and risk, international opportunities and the Global Scots network.

8. Professor Glover asked both presenters what the SSAC could do for them in helping them meet their aspirations for the highlands and islands. Mr Brown and Ms Dingwall agreed to reflect on the question and to feed their thoughts back to the SSAC. Professor Glover thanked both presenters for very interesting presentations and stimulating discussion.

9. Professor Glover welcomed any further comments from the SSAC and agreed to provide feedback to the presenters.

Item 4: Minutes of the last SSAC meeting held on 26 June 2008

10. The SSAC agreed and approved the minute of the last SSAC meeting as an accurate record of the meeting held on 26 June 2008 in Edinburgh.

Review of Action Points arising from the meeting held on 26 June 2008

11. Members discussed progress with the action points arising from the last meeting.

Item 5. Matters Arising

Joint Future Thinking Taskforce on Universities

12. Professor Glover thanked members for their contributions to the SSAC response to the Interim Report of the Joint Future Thinking Taskforce on Universities¹.

Science Education

13. Professor Monro thanked SSAC members who had contributed to his request for science nuggets. He commented that the information received to date had been very helpful for LTS to allow it to look for linkages and cross-overs between discipline areas.

Item 6. Chairs Updates

Professor Glover updated the SSAC on a range of issues:

Science Framework

14. Professor Glover reported that the Cabinet Secretary for Education and Lifelong Learning was currently considering options for the Science Framework.

Innovation Framework

15. Having been disengaged from the science framework, work is progressing on this as a separate piece of work. It is however taking account of discussions that have been held in relation to the science framework.

Saltire Prize

16. The Scottish Government has announced one of the biggest international innovation prizes in history through its plans for the Saltire Prize - a £10 million (\$20 million) challenge prize for advances in clean energy. The winner has to demonstrate the technology in Scotland. Professor Jim McDonald is chairing the Technical Advisory Board and Professor Glover is chairing the Challenge Committee which will meet for the first time on October 3 2008. The challenge will be announced around 2 December 2008.

¹ <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/Education/UniversitiesColleges/16640/hetaskforce>

UK Astronomy Technology Centre (UK ATC²) Mind Mapping Event

17. Jim Mather, Minister for Enterprise hosted this event to showcase the technology currently developed by the UK Astronomy Technology Centre (UK ATC) and discuss how Government and the public sector can work together in partnership with industry and other sectors to exploit this technology further to ensure sustainable economic growth.

Large Hadron Collider

18. Professor Peter Higgs took part in briefings for MSPs and for the Cabinet Secretary for Education and Lifelong Learning on 10 September 2008. The SSAC welcomed the involvement of the Scottish science community in the work at CERN where over 50 countries are working co-operatively to deliver one of the world's biggest science experiments.

Science Campaign

19. The SSAC viewed a number of the images that will be used in the forthcoming "Science Campaign", being co-ordinated by the Office of the Chief Scientific Adviser (OCSA). The SSAC was very positive about the images and supportive of the aims of the campaign.

Engagement with Scottish Government

20. Professor Glover outlined plans for the SSAC to hold a joint meeting with the Scottish Government Strategic Board. She conveyed the message that the Strategic Board would very much welcome such an engagement.

Meeting with Anne Begg MP and Lewis McDonald MSP

21. Professor Glover outlined a meeting she had held recently where she had had the opportunity to brief Anne Begg and Lewis McDonald on stem cell research in relation to the Human Fertilisation and Embryology Bill. She had welcomed the constructive dialogue with the politicians on science issues.

Science Education

Professor Monro updated the Committee on a range of issues:

22. He outlines recent meetings in which he had been involved in relation to the new science curriculum, curriculum for excellence with LTS and the development of the new science baccalaureate qualification being developed by SQA.

Foundation for Science and Technology (FST) Event

23. Professor Monro noted that the annual FST discussion dinner would be held on 24 September at the RSE. The theme of the event is Innovation in Scotland.

Science and the Parliament Event

24. It was noted that this would be held on 5th November in Dynamic Earth with a theme of science education. The Cabinet Secretary for Education and Lifelong Learning had agreed to attend and give the keynote speech. Professor Monro had been invited to address the event.

Cross Party Groups and Engagement with MSPs

25. Professor Monro highlighted the list of cross party groups which had been circulated. He suggested that members of the SSAC should engage with these groups where appropriate. He had recently attended the group on Science and Technology for the first time. He suggested that there was also an opportunity to hold a parliamentary reception for MSPs. The SSAC agreed that this would be a useful way of engaging with MSPs.

Item 7. Member Updates**Getrandomised.org**

26. Professor Porter commented on the "getrandomised³" adverts on television, encouraging individuals to take part in clinical trials. He was interested to find out more about the thinking behind the campaign.

² www.roe.ac.uk/atc

Generation Science

27. Mr Ritchie updated the SSAC on plans to re-launch the Generation Science Club⁴ with a wider membership. He commented on the wish to be better joined up with other organisations and providers. Professor Glover added that her office was planning a workshop to discuss better linkages between providers of science engagement activities early in 2009 and expressed a wish that members of the SSAC might also wish to get involved in this event.

Item 8. Updates on Ongoing Work**Animal Bioscience**

28. Professor Fitzpatrick reported that a draft report of the recent workshop had been circulated for information. She commented that the workshop had been very positive and that a small group was now taking the actions forward.

29. Professors Fitzpatrick and Reid thanked the SSAC for recognising the potential of this area and for supporting the work over the past couple of years.

R&D in Business

30. In the absence of Professor Beaumont, Dr Davidson provided a brief update indicating that the report was in the final stages of editing.

Science Education

31. Professor Monro commented that he was considering how best to deal with the proposed update to *Why Science Education Matters*.

Item 9. Relationship with the Scottish Government's Council of Economic Advisers⁵ (CEA)

32. Professor Glover updated the SSAC on a recent meeting she had held with Sir George Mathewson, Chair of the CEA. The Council was created to advise the First Minister on the best way to improve Scotland's sustainable economic growth rate. Professor Glover would like the SSAC to engage with the CEA, to persuade the Council that science, engineering and technology have an important part to play in increasing sustainable economic growth in Scotland.

Item 10. SSAC Corporate Image

33. Professor Glover introduced the proposed new SSAC logo. A wide-ranging discussion allowed members to comment on the logo and associated strap line.

34. Professor Glover commented on the change of name to Council. She explained that this would bring the Committee in line with the Council of Economic Advisers and the Council for Science and Technology (CST). The Committee were content with this proposal.

Item 11. Future Work Programme**CST Report**

35. Professor Glover introduced this item. Professor Monro updated the SSAC on a recent meeting held with Geoffrey Boulton of CST, to better understand the processes the CST had gone through in producing its report. It was proposed that the SSAC took the CST framework and data as a starting point and carry out a small piece of work applying the framework to Scotland. Professor Wren has agreed to take this forward.

³ <http://www.getrandomised.org/home.htm>

⁴ <http://www.generationscience.co.uk/>

⁵ <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/Economy/Council-Economic-Advisers>

Horizon Scanning Workshop

36. Professor Glover explained that she and Professor Monro were planning a horizon scanning workshop to identify opportunities for Scotland's science base to work together to deliver scientific, social and economic benefits for Scotland.

Item: 12 Breakout Exercise

37. Professor Glover reminded that SSAC that at the meeting held at the University of the West of Scotland they had briefly discussed topics for the SSAC future work programme.

38. She and Professor Monro had had further thoughts on this list and had prioritised four themes which could be summarised as:

- Science engagement
- Drug development
- Cost of sustainable energy: cradle to grave: a methodology for evidence based policy making.
- Assistive technologies

39. The SSAC split into 4 groups, each to discuss on these themes with the aim of prioritising them for further consideration with the Scottish Government Strategic Board.

40. Professor Glover thanked SSAC and agreed to write up a note on each of these topics. This would form the basis of discussions with the Scottish Government Directors General and the Strategic Board.

41. **Any Other Business**
No other business was raised.

42. **Date of Next Meeting**
The next SSAC meeting would be held on 11 December 2008. The venue would be confirmed in due course.

SSAC Secretariat
October 2008