

**BIOSCIENCE FOR SOCIETY STRATEGY ADVISORY PANEL**

Minutes of the Bioscience for Society Strategy Advisory Panel (BSS) meeting held on 5<sup>th</sup> March 2018 in London at the De Vere West One, Portland Place, W1B 1PR.

Panel Members	BBSRC Staff
Present at the meeting	
Dr Erinma Ochu (University of Salford) – Chair Dr Jane Calvert (University of Edinburgh) Dr Lawrence McGinty (Independent) Patrick Mulvany (Food Ethics Council) Dr Patrick Sinnett-Smith (Independent) Professor Sarah Wolfensohn (University of Surrey)	Paul Gemmill Dr Patrick Middleton Dr Kate Turton Simone Doe
Apologies received	
None	None

**AGENDA**

Paper N°	Item	Purpose
04/2018	2. Minutes and actions from previous meeting	To approve the minutes and summarise the actions arising from the last meeting on 9 <sup>th</sup> January 2018
Oral	3. Updates on BBSRC and UK Research and Innovation	To provide an update on developments towards the creation of UK Research and Innovation
05/2018	4. Terms of Reference	To agree the revised terms of reference and ways of working for BSS
06/2018	5. Forward Workplan	To clarify the purpose, objectives, outcomes and outputs for each project and agree a timeline for delivery.
Oral	6. Ways of Working	To develop and agree a forward workplan to structure the work of BSS
07/2018	7. AOB	To discuss BSSAP advice to the Regenerative Biology and Stem Cell Working Group

**KEY OUTCOMES AND ACTIONS**

Paper N°	Item N°	Outcomes and Action N°	Owner	Due date / progress
04/2018	2	BSS approved the minutes with minor amendments <b>Action 1</b> Secretariat to amend wording from previous minutes to reflect requested changes and publish online	Office	
Oral	3	<b>Action 2</b> Secretariat to provide an overview of the high-level structure for UK Research and Innovation	Office	
05/2018	4	BSS agreed the terms of reference subject to minor amendments <b>Action 3</b> Secretariat to amend wording to reflect requested changes	Office	

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		BSS agreed to review the terms of reference on an annual basis <b>Action 4</b> Secretariat to add this as a standing item for the first meeting of each year	Office	
06/2018	5	BSS agreed the three projects that would form the priority areas for the workplan <b>Action 5</b> Secretariat to lead on delivery of this work under advice from BSSAP members	Office	
Oral	6	BSS agreed that the delivery of project work should be led by the Secretariat, utilising extranet and telephone/video-conference facilities	Office	
07/2018	7	<b>Action 6</b> Dr Sinnett-Smith to represent BSS' interests in the portfolio analysis of regenerative biology and stem cells <b>Action 7</b> secretariat to alert BFH secretariat of Dr Sinnett-Smith's role	Dr Sinnett-Smith	

## ITEM 1: WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

1. The Chair welcomed members to the meeting, reminding them of the underpinning values for BSS and the wider context within which BBSRC operates. Members noted that the purpose of this meeting was to agree the Panel's terms of reference and ways of working to ensure it remains fit for purpose and continues to support the strategic aims of BBSRC and UK Research and Innovation.

## ITEM 2: MINUTES AND ACTIONS FROM PREVIOUS MEETING (BSS 04/2018)

2. The minutes of the meeting were approved, subject to the following corrections:
  - a. (Para 11) Members identified key contextual elements relevant to the research landscape, for researchers, for BBSRC, **for wider society**, and for the work of the Panel...
  - b. (Para 14) The Panel agreed that it should also continue two-way exchange with BBSRC's Research Advisory Panel (RAP)
  - c. (Para 16) ...the Panel's prior work had spanned five broad areas of activity: science topics; organisational operation; **oversight of BBSRC's communication practice; oversight of BBSRC's engagement practice**; ethical monitoring; and the Panel's own form and function.
3. The Panel also requested that a summary of the Panel's values, expertise and accountability and the subsequent discussion of the collaborative context within which BBSRC operates be provided as an Appendix to the minutes.
4. Finally, the Chair noted that the actions relating to BSS terms of reference and forward workplan had been brought back to the Panel as items for discussion at this meeting (outlined in papers BSS 05/2018 and BSS 06/2018).

### Action:

- BSS approved the minutes with minor amendments
- Secretariat to amend wording from previous minutes to reflect requested changes and publish the minutes online

## ITEM 3: UPDATES ON BBSRC AND UK RESEARCH AND INNOVATION

### *UK Research and Innovation*

5. Mr Gemmill updated the Panel on progress with the creation of UK Research and Innovation. The appointments of Executive Chairs for seven of the nine Councils within UK Research and Innovation had been formally announced, as had some Council member appointments. However, BBSRC was still awaiting Ministerial approval for the appointments of its future Executive Chair. Council members are expected to be announced at the same time as the Executive Chair.
6. The Panel requested an overview of the high-level structure for UK Research and Innovation, including the appointments of Executive Chairs and Council members to date. Members also asked that biographical details of the newly appointed BBSRC Council members be made available once the appointments had been announced.
7. The Panel noted that appointments had also been made to roles within UK Research and Innovation's Corporate Services and Strategy and Policy teams; vacancies had also been advertised in the central Communications and Engagement team. On the creation of a central Communications and Engagement team, Mr Gemmill said that

closer working across the nine Councils, under the leadership of a senior Director, would create a stronger, united voice for UK Research and Innovation. However, discipline-specific expertise within the Councils would be an ongoing requirement.

8. The Panel also noted that funding for the Government's Sciencewise programme, which provides assistance to policy-makers to carry out public dialogue to inform their decision-making on science and technology issues, will move into UK Research and Innovation. This programme, funded by the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS), is expected to become part of UK Research and Innovation's public engagement portfolio.
9. The Panel thanked Mr Gemmill for the update and expressed support for BBSRC staff during this period of organisational change. Members encouraged BBSRC to continue monitoring staff health and wellbeing, and to ensure that equality, diversity and inclusivity were embedded in the change programme. BBSRC should seek to identify opportunities to learn from lived experience and draw those perspectives into its future work and the work of its advisory structures.

*Strategic Framework for UK Biotechnology and Biological Sciences*

10. Mr Gemmill advised the Panel that the Strategic Framework for UK Biotechnology and Biological Sciences would be published, within the wider context of UK Research and Innovation's overarching strategy.

*Institute Assessment Exercise: Quadram Institute*

11. Mr Gemmill reminded members that BBSRC had completed its quinquennial institute assessment exercise to review the quality of research undertaken at its strategically-sponsored institutes and determine funding for their future research programmes. Construction and development work at the Quadram Institute in Norwich had meant that its submission had not been considered by BBSRC Council until December 2017. A formal announcement of its future funding was expected to be made in the spring.

**Action:**

- Secretariat to provide an overview of the high-level structure for UK Research and Innovation

**ITEM 4: TERMS OF REFERENCE**

12. Dr Middleton introduced this paper, which presented a redrafted set of terms of reference for the Panel to comment on and agree. These terms of reference were drafted from members' input to discussions at the previous meeting and incorporated the Panel's collective values and responsibilities.
13. The Panel agreed the terms of reference subject to the following amendment:
  - a. (Para 1) It offers challenge to BBSRC on the **wider** aspects of the research...
14. The Panel requested that its collective values (discussed at the previous meeting) should be incorporated into the terms of reference and agreed that these terms of reference should be reviewed annually. The Chair noted that the terms of reference should be framed within current contexts and position BSS to continue to advise and

influence decision-makers on science and society issues both within BBSRC and UK Research and Innovation.

15. On the issue of engagement with decision-makers and other advisory structures, the Panel agreed that it should engage in two-way dialogue with BBSRC's other Strategy Advisory Panels including via RAP. This would include: encouraging embedding bioscience for society approaches within BBSRC's values; maintaining breadth and diversity across BBSRC's research-funding portfolio; and assuring that bioscience and biotechnology remains an important part of the broader UK Research and Innovation portfolio.
16. Finally, the Panel considered the opportunities and mechanisms by which members of the public can engage with and challenge BBSRC funding for research. Drawing the Sciencewise programme into UK Research and Innovation's portfolio would provide a framework to enable public dialogue on issues relating to the work of the individual Councils and interdisciplinary global challenges.

**Action:**

- BSS agreed the terms of reference subject to minor amendments
- Secretariat to amend wording to reflect requested changes
- BSS agreed to review the terms of reference on an annual basis
- Secretariat to add this as a standing item for the first meeting of each year

**ITEM 5: FORWARD PLAN**

17. Dr Middleton introduced this paper, which set out three proposed project areas for the Panel's work over the next 8-12 months. These priorities had been identified at the previous meeting and were framed within the Panel's collective values and the wider context around BBSRC and UK Research and Innovation. The Panel was invited to agree a clear set of outcomes and outputs for each project, as well as a timeframe for delivery.
18. The Chair noted that two Panel members had been nominated to lead each project and requested a BBSRC representative also be nominated to support and manage the delivery of each project. Dr Ochu will remain independent of the projects in order to offer facilitation and support in her role as Chair. She reminded members that their role was to provide advice (i.e. ways of thinking, processes, potential solutions or models) to BBSRC in each of these project areas and to consider opportunities to influence the embedding of bioscience for society values and approaches in research and innovation practice.
19. The Panel agreed that it would be important to record the process behind the work of each project. The outcome for each would be advice to BBSRC.
20. The Panel agreed that a short progress report on each of these projects would be brought to the next meeting for discussion.

*Bioscience for Society approaches in practice*

21. The purpose of this project is to develop guidance for embedding good practice in the consideration of wider perspectives in fast-paced strategy setting. The Transforming Food Production (TFP) programme recently announced under the Industrial Strategy Challenge Fund (ISCF) could be used as a case study relevant to BBSRC's portfolio.

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The intended output will be recommendations on how to develop future activities in a way that considers diverse and non-traditional perspectives to benefit the work of UK Research and Innovation.

22. The Panel recommended that this project would benefit from the involvement of BBSRC's other Strategy Advisory Panels and a reflection on the panels' role in acting as a critical friend to BBSRC in its policy-setting and decision-making.
23. Dr Calvert and Mr Mulvany agreed to lead this project, with support from BBSRC's lead for the TFP programme.

### *Openness, what next?*

24. The purpose of this project is to ensure that BBSRC's approach to the openness agenda and its work on wider perspectives are fit for purpose. The intended outcome will be a clearly articulated approach to openness in research and a plan for further implementing this agenda within the context of BBSRC's portfolio.
25. The Panel noted BBSRC's values of participation, accountability and transparency and considered where opportunities exist for openness in bioscience research as well as marginalised perspectives that could inform future approaches. Members reflected on the previous work undertaken in this area by BSS Secretariat and recommended that the starting point should be a summary of actions to date, from which lessons learnt could be drawn out.
26. Professor Wolfensohn and Dr Sinnott-Smith agreed to lead this project; Dr Turton agreed to provide support from the Secretariat.

### *The potential influence of BSSAP in the UK Research and Innovation landscape*

27. The purpose of this project is to ensure that the lessons BBSRC has learnt around organisational approaches to bioscience in society are incorporated in UK Research and Innovation practice to authoritatively demonstrate good leadership around, for example, research integrity, responsible research and innovation, dialogue and engagement, ethics and openness.
28. The Panel agreed that this project should seek to identify lessons learnt from the work of BSS since its creation and to set out a vision for the future of how bioscience for society principles could be embedded within research and innovation. The perspective of science for society from other academic disciplines should also be explored, with identification of examples of positive outcomes from taking a societal approach.
29. In discussing this project, members reflected upon the work of BSS and the history of its creation in 2005. The Bioscience for Society Panel was one of seven strategy panels approved by BBSRC Council to maintain an overview of issues of strategic relevance relating to their remit and their views. The Bioscience for Society Panel was established to provide strategic input on societal issues surrounding the conduct and outcomes of research supported by BBSRC.
30. Dr McGinty and Professor Wolfensohn agreed to lead this project, with support from Dr Middleton. The Panel suggested that a useful output would be a SWOT analysis of the potential influence of bioscience for society approaches in the UK Research and Innovation landscape.

**Action:**

- BSS agreed the three projects that would form priority areas for the workplan
- Secretariat to lead on the delivery of work under advice from BSSAP members

**ITEM 6: WAYS OF WORKING**

31. Dr Middleton introduced this item, which sought to develop and agree the forward work plan of BSS. In particular, members were encouraged to consider how best to take forward the work outlined under the three priority project areas discussed under the previous agenda item.
32. The Panel agreed to work in the identified sub-groups with the Secretariat to advise on the outcomes and outputs from the three project areas. Meeting papers will be shared via the secure extranet and sub-group meetings should be held by telephone or video-conference where possible.

**Action:**

- BSS agreed that delivery of project work should be led by the Secretariat, utilising the extranet and telephone/video-conference facilities

**ITEM 7: ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

33. Dr Middleton introduced paper 08/2018, which requested advice from BSS on a portfolio analysis of BBSRC's investments in regenerative biology and stem cells. Dr Sinnett-Smith agreed to represent the Panel's interests in the work of the Regenerative Biology and Stem Cell Working Group.
34. Dr Ochu asked the Secretariat to include the minutes of BBSRC RAP meetings as a standing item on future BSS agendas.
35. The Chair closed the meeting, thanking members for their input to discussion and reminding them to review their entries in the register of declared interests. The next Panel meeting would be scheduled for June 2018 (date to be confirmed).

**Action:**

- Dr Sinnett-Smith to represent BSSAP's interests in the portfolio analysis of regenerative biology and stem cells

**Appendix**

The chair opened and closed the meeting with a reading and a quote from the following books respectively.

Davis A. & Barat, F (2016) Freedom Is a Constant Struggle: Ferguson, Palestine, and the Foundations of a Movement. Haymarket Books.

Lorde, A.(2017) Your Silence Will Not Protect You: Essays and Poems.