

**SUBJECT:** Minutes of 9 January 2018

**MEETING:** Bioscience for Society Strategy Advisory Panel  
5 March 2018

**SUMMARY:**

The Panel is invited to review and comment on the minutes of the last meeting and note progress on the actions arising.

**ACTIONS:**

The panel is invited to:

- i. Comment on and agree the minutes as an accurate record of the meeting
- ii. Note progress on the actions arising

Minutes of the Bioscience for Society Strategy Advisory Panel meeting held on 9 January 2018 at De Vere West One, 9-10 Portland Place, London, W1B 1PR.

**Those Attending:**

Panel Members

Dr Erinma Ochu (Chair)  
Dr Jane Calvert  
Dr Lawrence McGinty  
Mr Patrick Mulvany  
Dr Patrick Sinnett-Smith  
Professor Sarah Wolfensohn

BBSRC Office

Simone Doe  
Mr Paul Gemmill  
Dr Patrick Middleton  
Dr Kate Turton

**ITEM 1: CHAIR'S WELCOME AND INTRODUCTION (ORAL)**

1. The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting, noting no apologies for absence. She informed members that Dr Charly Cureton, former Secretariat for the Bioscience for Society Strategy Advisory Panel, had left BBSRC. The Panel expressed thanks to Dr Cureton for her good work in supporting its activities.
2. The Chair reminded members that the purpose of this meeting was to review and revise the Panel's ways of working to ensure it remains fit for purpose, continues to deliver its terms of reference, and provides the best support to both BBSRC and UK Research and Innovation.

**ITEM 2: UPDATE FROM BBSRC (ORAL)**

*UK Research and Innovation*

3. Mr Gemmill updated the Panel on progress with the creation of UK Research and Innovation. Interviews had recently taken place for an Executive Chair and a new Council for BBSRC; formal announcement of these appointments was likely to be made in the coming weeks.
4. The Panel was assured that a broad range of interests were considered during the selection and recruitment process for new BBSRC Council Members. It was noted that there will be a mechanism to co-opt additional experts on to the Council to provide advice on specific issues that may arise.
5. With respect to ongoing work to shape the communication and engagement functions of UK Research and Innovation, the Panel noted that a Communications and Engagement Strategy was being developed that will provide clear direction for the individual Councils.

*Industrial Strategy Challenge Fund*

6. Mr Gemmill informed the Panel that the next wave of funding under the Government's Industrial Strategy Challenge Fund had been announced in the Autumn Budget 2017. The Industrial Strategy includes an ambition to put the UK at the forefront of the global move to high-efficiency agriculture. A new 'Transforming Food Production: From Farm to Fork' programme will focus on developing precision technologies that can transform food production whilst reducing emissions, pollution, waste and soil erosion.

*Strategic Framework for UK Biotechnology and Biological Sciences*

7. Finally, Mr Gemmill said that BBSRC has developed a Strategic Framework for UK Biotechnology and Biological Sciences, which will be published in 2018. The panel noted that this framework will replace BBSRC's previous Strategic Plan but that successful delivery would require cross-sector collaboration and a coordinated national approach.

**ITEM 3: VALUES, EXPERTISE AND ACCOUNTABILITY**

8. Dr Ochu introduced this item, which sought to identify and recognise the skills, values and attributes of individual members and reflect upon how their collective experience benefits the Panel's work in supporting science in society.
9. The Panel considered the beneficiaries of UK bioscience and BBSRC's responsibility to ensure appropriate use of public funds for research and innovation, and were reminded of the Seven Principles of Public Life: selflessness; integrity; objectivity; accountability; openness; honesty; and leadership. Members agreed that these principles and their personal values provide a framework within which the Panel's terms of reference and ways of working can operate. This was borne in mind during discussion of subsequent agenda items.

**ITEM 4: COLLABORATIVE CONTEXT MAPPING EXERCISE**

10. Dr Middleton introduced this item, which aimed to develop a shared understanding of the context and landscape around research and innovation in the UK, as well as within BBSRC and the work of the Panel. He reminded members that the research landscape is evolving in response to factors (such as the creation of UK Research and Innovation, the UK's exit from the European Union, and changes in the way research is carried out), and that this leads to both direct and indirect impacts on the way BBSRC and the Panel operate.
11. In discussion, the Panel considered a broad range of external factors that may influence the delivery of BBSRC's strategy. Members identified key contextual elements relevant to the research landscape, for researchers, for BBSRC, for wider society, and for the work of the Panel, focusing on four themes: legal, governance and regulatory changes; the wider political environment; social and cultural issues; and economic shifts. It was acknowledged that responding to some of these elements would fall outside the Panel's terms of reference but that, where possible, members should identify opportunities to exert influence, make change, provide input and demonstrate leadership.

**ITEM 5: REVIEW OF THE PANEL'S TERMS OF REFERENCE AND WAY OF WORKING**

12. Dr Middleton introduced this item, which provided an opportunity to review the Panel's terms of reference and ways of working in light of its reformation. He explained that the current terms of reference had been in place for several years but that it was timely to reflect upon them since the constitution of the Panel had been reduced to a smaller membership. He noted that the change had been made to make the Panel more agile, capable of supporting key activities and offering continuity and consistency with advice.
13. The Panel was reminded that its terms of reference had last been considered in January 2016 but that no changes were agreed at that time. Subsequently, in March 2017, the Panel had discussed the priority functions and capabilities that BBSRC should maintain throughout the transition to the creation of UK Research and Innovation. Within this context, and drawing on its earlier discussions on values, expertise and accountability and context mapping, the Panel considered its terms of reference and future ways of working.
14. The Panel agreed that it should continue to:
  - Provide independent, authoritative and considered advice to BBSRC around its activities, investments and interactions
  - Hold BBSRC to account on how it considers and responds to wider political, economic, social, technological, legal and environmental (PESTLE) considerations
  - Work closely with BBSRC to horizon-scan for PESTLE issues and opportunities emerging in bioscience and biotechnology
  - Provide BBSRC with access to a diverse set of views and values; either through membership or members' knowledge of, or contacts in, non-bioscience communities
  - Report regularly to the BBSRC (Chief) Executive
  - The Panel agreed that it should also continue two-way exchange with BBSRC's Research Advisory Panel (RAP)

15. The Panel agreed that the terms of reference should be revised to reflect its values and priorities within the context outlined in discussions earlier in the meeting. Furthermore, the new terms of reference should position the Panel to continue its work for the longer-term.

**Action:** Secretariat to draft a revised set of terms of reference and ways of working for the reformed Bioscience for Society Advisory Panel, for formal agreement at the next meeting.

#### **ITEM 6: FORWARD PLAN OF THE PANEL'S WORK FOR THE YEAR**

16. Dr Middleton introduced this item, which sought to develop and agree a plan to structure the Panel's work and support from the Secretariat over the next 8-12 months. He reminded members that 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.

17. The Panel identified three areas of activity for the forward workplan:

- BSS approaches in practice (using 'Transforming Food Production: From Farm to Fork' as a case study)
- Influencing UK Research and Innovation's approaches to science for society
- Next steps in the openness agenda
- Agreement of refreshed Terms of Reference for BSS

18. The Panel agreed that each of these areas of activity should be led by a Panel member, who will work with the Secretariat and deliver a position paper for BBSRC and/or UK Research and Innovation.

**Action:** Secretariat to provide a list of activities, with identified Panel member leads, for agreement at the next meeting.

#### **ITEM 7: ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

19. Members were reminded to check their details currently held on the declared interests register and amend as necessary.

**Action:** Members to review their entries on the declared interests register and update as necessary

**SUBJECT:** Terms of Reference

**MEETING:** Bioscience for Society Strategy Advisory Panel  
5 March 2018

**SUMMARY:**

PAPER TO FOLLOW

This paper sets out the Panels' revised terms of reference and ways of working, as discussed at the previous meeting.

**ACTIONS:**

The panel is invited to agree the revised terms of reference

**SUBJECT:** Forward plan

**MEETING:** Bioscience for Society Strategy Advisory Panel  
5 March 2018

**SUMMARY:**

This item sets out the proposed project areas for the Panel's forward work over the next 8-12 months. Panel members have been assigned to scope out and lead the activities within each project. For each project, the Panel should agree a clear set of outcomes and outputs as well as a timeframe for delivery, which the Secretariat can implement.

**ACTIONS:**

The panel is invited to:

- i. Agree that these are the right priorities for the forward workplan
- ii. Clarify the purpose, objectives, outputs and outcomes for each project
- iii. Agree a timeline for the delivery of each project

## **FORWARD PLAN**

### **BSS approaches in practice**

Proposed members: Patrick Mulvany; Jane Calvert

#### **Purpose:**

Develop and embed good practice for UK Research and Innovation for fast-paced strategy setting by examining the transforming food production ISCF programme as a recent case study.

#### **Objectives**

- Time limited project, three months
- Using TFP as a case study, examine the how during agenda setting we ensure that the right/diverse perspectives (knowledge, views, values etc) are accessed and considered
- Identify the opportunities where engagement with diverse and non-traditional perspectives can add value and have traction during fast-paced strategy setting
- Consider the applicability of this case study to other strategy setting activities by UK Research and Innovation

#### **Outputs**

- Recommendations on how future activities should be scoped/developed in a way that considers diverse and non-traditional perspectives. These recommendations should, as much as possible, be widely applicable to the work of UK Research and Innovation (i.e. not just ISCF-type work)

#### **Outcomes**

- UK Research and Innovation's strategy setting is high quality, robust and credible with a wide range of stakeholders

### **Influencing UKRI**

Proposed members: Sarah; Lawrence

#### **Purpose**

- Ensure that the lessons that BBSRC has learnt around organisational approaches to openness/engagement/ethics etc are incorporated in UKRI practice so that we operate in a way that allows us to make the best decisions and inspires trust among our stakeholder communities and public.
- Ensure UKRI is in a position to authoritatively demonstrate good leadership around integrity, responsibility etc. (get own house in order)

#### **Objectives**

- Time limited project, three months
- Clearly articulate BBSRC/BSS' offering in this space and the case for its wider adoption
- Propose a strategy for positively influencing the practice of wider UK Research and Innovation

#### **Outputs**

- Articulation of the offering and the case for it

- Proposal for the approach to influence practice across UK Research and Innovation

**Outcomes**

- UK Research and Innovation has a reputation for excellence in organisational approaches to openness/engagement/practice/ethics and leads by example

**Openness, what next?**

Proposed members: Sarah; Patrick S-S

**Purpose**

- To make sure BBSRC's approach to the openness agenda is fit for purpose

**Objectives**

- Review the work to date around openness, including the wider perspectives work, and BBSRC's response to the agenda
- Identify what has worked well and what hasn't – identify the enablers and barriers to this
- Review the relevance and importance of the openness agenda in today's context
- Recommend the best way forward

**Outputs**

- Short summary of BBSRC's activities in this space including successes and their enablers and failures and the barriers.
- Recommendations on if, why and how BBSRC should take this work forward

**Outcomes**

- BBSRC has a clearly articulated approach to the openness agenda and an action plan to implement it