1. Introduction

The chair opened the re-scheduled August TBEAG meeting. Apologies were received and noted. Minutes were signed off after a minor addition to attendees list.

2. TB Programme Update

The Deputy Director gave a policy update. This is an exceptionally busy time of the year within the programme and in a department preparing for EU Exit.

Cattle measures: Defra is working on the proposal to introduce earned recognition in those parts of the Edge Area where 6 monthly surveillance testing applies, subject to clearance. In line with Defra’s High Risk area consultation proposal, previously discussed with TBEAG, herds that have not had a breakdown in the last 6 years and/or are CHeCS accredited would be placed on annual testing.
The public consultation on extending the use of lay TB testers beyond APHA has concluded. TBEAG’s valuable input and support on this was noted. Defra is collating responses.

EU Matters: Funding allocated for 2017 UK bTB eradication plan withheld due to slow progress.

Strategy Review: Sir Charles Godfray is on track to complete the bTB Strategy Review and submit his report to Ministers within the next few weeks.

Badger Edge Vaccination Scheme (BEVS): Defra confirmed plans to open a second application round later this year for vaccination projects starting in 2019.

Biosecurity: Defra has agreed the joint Government and industry Biosecurity Progress Report with the NFU and others. This report summarises progress against the 2014 Biosecurity Actions and outlines a new set of actions.

Defra are working with Westpoint, who have the contract for the TB Advisory Service on possible farmer events. One was held in the Shropshire/Cheshire area in early July. Events in East and West Sussex are being planned.

Communications: Defra made a set of TB announcements including the annual publication of the badger control licences, authorisation letters, costs and min/max numbers. Defra also published the latest data analysis from the Brunton et al research project.

Future TBEAG Activities:

- Further visit to the APHA Customer Service Centre for TB in Exeter took place on the 12 September.

- TBEAG secretariat have planned a Meet and Greet event to be held with local TBEG and TBEAG members on the 11 October.

3. Update on Livestock Information programme

An update was provided on The Livestock Information programme (LIP) by the TBEAG chair. LIP is the programme to deliver Livestock Information Service (LIS). The ultimate aim is for a levy board to host and run LIP and it will be multi-species (cattle, sheep, goats, pigs, horses). The bovine phase will be rolled out first, then sheep/goats, then pigs, then horses.

The timescale is very ambitious – the aim is to have a system for cattle live and enabled by November 2019. Legislative issues and transition phase may complicate delivery of LIS.

The Programme takes the Devolved Administrations into account. Scotland and NI have data systems that they want to stick with, and LIS will be able to communicate with these.
systems. Wales has not yet committed to LIP but will probably opt in and then a bilingual system will be required.

The strategy review team recognise the value of LIP.

**Action: TBEAG Sept 051** It was agreed that a LIP update would be a standing item on the agenda for the next few TBEAG meetings.

### 4. TB Eradication Strategy Review

The Report is on-track for submission to Ministers by end-September. Charles Godfray and team are working exceptionally hard.

Draft report is really starting to take shape. The team has benefitted from a lot of ideas and input from industry and academia – including through the formal call for evidence that ran in April. Charles and team have had a number of meetings with key stakeholders, including the NFU, wildlife groups, previous discussions at TBEAG, various academics. This has all been extremely helpful – although the report, ultimately, is the Reviewers’ own.

The report when completed will be at least 150 pages plus annexes. The report will offer some upfront commentary on the course of the disease and key aspects of current policy – to set the scene.

Main body of the report goes on to explore a wide range of interventions that could be considered in the future to control bovine TB in England. The Report tries to weigh up their advantages and disadvantages as neutrally/objectively as possible.

In its final chapter the Report sets out its conclusions and highlights some key issues that Sir Charles and team believe should be at the front of decision-makers minds when determining future policy.

The Secretariat are not in a position to reveal the detail of the findings at this stage.

The report will include advice on future policy and some important research priorities.

Once the report is published, Defra propose to work with stakeholders to establish priorities and explore how to progress the Review’s findings. Defra is keen to do this in a collaborative way.

Defra aim to publish an Action Plan in spring 2019. This would set out what we plan to implement, how and when.

The Strategy secretariat invited TBEAG members to help with this work and asked for suggestions on how to engage with TBEAG members to make best use of the experience and expertise.
5. For Information and feedback from TBEAG members who attend local TBEG meeting. New standing item

There will now be a standing agenda item for TBEAG members to give a brief verbal update describing which meetings they have attended e.g. numbers of attendees, issues/concerns raised, discussion points and what TBEAG members were able to provide at the meeting. If there are any areas of knowledge that TBEAG members require for TBEG meetings then Defra TB Programme will assist.

6. Update on Exeter Service Centre visit

One of the TBEAG member's reported back on the Exeter Service Centre. The visit was overall very positive.

APHA colleague thanked the TBEAG members for taking the time to visit Exeter CSC. APHA is operating at the minimum capability required by Defra. Vet numbers have decreased over the years and resources has been streamlined. The recent exercise Blackthorn (medium sized FMD outbreak) demonstrated that APHA has the necessary veterinary capability. APHA vets are becoming more specialised e.g. epidemiology.

7. TBEAG Meet and Greet discussions for event on the 11 October

TB Programme secretariat outlined the purpose of the meeting and discussed the logistics of the day. The Secretariat then went through the proposed draft agenda for the day which the members approved.

8. Update on comms strategy

An update on the Comms strategy was given and discussion followed.

9. AOB

Next meeting : 6 December 2018 London Nobel House