

# **Hazardous Substances Advisory Committee**

## **Minutes of 28<sup>th</sup> meeting: 16<sup>th</sup> December 2020**

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### **1. Welcome and approval of the draft agenda**

- 1.1 The Chair, Professor Chris Collins, welcomed all attendees to the meeting (see annex A).
- 1.2 The draft agenda was approved with no additional items added under any other business.

### **2. Secretariat update on HSAC recruitment**

- 2.1 Chris Green (Defra) provided an update on the next phase of HSAC recruitment which aims to recruit five new members by April 2021. Areas of expertise being sought from the first phase of recruitment include; nanomaterials and 3D and 4D advanced materials; application of alternative methods including new approach methodologies; hazardous waste management and the chemical-product-waste interface; environmental economics and; green and sustainable chemistry. A second phase of recruitment will follow later in 2021.

ACTION: Secretariat to circulate the areas of expertise to HSAC.

### **3. HSAC review of the Prioritization and Early Warning System (PEWS) for chemicals in the environment- progress report**

- 3.1 Lorraine Hutt (Environment Agency) provided an insight on how HSAC can help develop this work, including information on how the EA might be able to source scientific information and source nominations for chemicals of concern
- 3.2 HSAC sought feedback on an initial draft of a paper of recommendations for the PEWS system to ensure that what they are producing will be useful and addressing the questions for the EA. The EA fed back to HSAC indicating that their input was on the right track

ACTION: EA to review HSAC narrative for the paper and to provide feedback. This will then be developed into a draft with a request for further input and review from HSAC members.

#### **4. Consultation on the revised National Action Plan for the Sustainable use of Pesticides**

4.1 HSAC discussed how best to coordinate a response to the consultation. It was decided that individual members comments will be formulated and brought together into an HSAC collective response. This will be submitted directly to the policy teams with an option to publish it on the HSAC website.

4.2 It was highlighted by HSAC that the document needs to be forward looking and there are areas such as pesticides spraying, compliance checks and biological monitoring that are not fully addressed. HSAC will include their views on missing but important areas in their feedback along with answering the specific questions.

ACTION: HSAC Chair to draft a document responding to the questions before Christmas and will send to members for feedback by mid-January. A coordinated draft will be completed a week before the consultation closes on 26<sup>th</sup> February 2021.

#### **5. Collaborative work on copper with the Expert Committee on Pesticides**

5.1 HSAC discussed that there is a growing concern that copper will accumulate over time as biocidal issues could be growing as more timber treatments are being used. Copper has been shown to not just be a high hazard for aquatic species but also close to the tolerance levels for fungi. HSAC determined that Copper ranks very high on chemicals of concern.

ACTION: HSAC Chair to follow up with Prof Andrew Johnson to request that he takes this work area forward on behalf of the committee alongside a Defra representative from the Pesticides Team, and a contact point to be nominated from the Expert Committee on Pesticides.

#### **6. Developing a horizon scanning exercise to identify chemical issues of emerging concern through a Delphi Method**

6.1 Chris Green (Defra) presented a thought starter for using a Delphi method to horizon scan for future chemical issues. Previous HSAC discussion had highlighted the need to identify future issues, the EAs horizon scanning capabilities and success of a Delphi method for identifying uses of biodiversity conservation (the Global Conservation Horizon Scan by Sutherland et al).

6.2 It was asked if a Delphi method could be potentially used to identify future chemical issues, including opportunities and threats, by HSAC. By conducting horizon scanning it is hoped to increase the likelihood of identifying issues when they are in the range of materializing but still sufficiently distant that actions can avert crisis and opportunities may be seized for proactive policy making.

6.3 It was considered whether it was plausible to run the exercise between January and March 2021 with a panel of HSAC plus six additional members from the Defra family

with methodology support from EA Horizon Scanning and Futures Team. Each panel member would identify two issues to be collated by a coordinator and returned to the panel for two rounds of scoring to identify the top issues.

6.4 HSAC members were enthusiastic and supportive of this exercise, and the following questions were posed;

- Should the number of people included be increased to 20-30?
- Could this be used as an opportunity to go outside government and call upon the international and business communities?
- Would outside expertise be useful such as the RSC or those involved in chemicals development to diversify skill base?

6.5 It was considered that using HSAC members and Defra family alone would be a limitation to the study due to the limited diversity of expertise and sectors and the outputs would not be as strong. It was strongly recommended to reach outside of government for this exercise considering the Royal Society for Chemistry, water companies, the waste sector and those involved in the study of “novel entities” under planetary boundaries. It was recommended to contact Professor Bill Sutherland at the University of Cambridge who has led the Global Conservation Horizon Scan for advice.

Action: Committee members were requested to send the names of individual experts and suggestions for areas of expertise that would be useful to have in a Delphi Method panel. Chris Green (Defra) and EA colleagues will consider how to move the work forward given time and resource constraints. Prof Bill Sutherland should be contacted for guidance.

## **7. CLOSED SESSION: Chemicals Strategy: Review the draft call for evidence**

7.1 Gintare Masiulyte (Defra) explained the development of a Call for Evidence for the Chemicals Strategy. The Call for Evidence will look at a subset of chemicals and intends to build an evidence base for problems that we should explore further. The call is one of the tools to be used to support the development of the Strategy. The Call for Evidence is a UK wide document and there are challenges on how to balance many opinions and priorities of stakeholders.

- 7.2 Committee members provided their input on the draft Call for Evidence

Action: The Chemicals Strategy team will take away HSAC’s thoughts and consider the next steps. We note HSAC’s enthusiasm for ongoing engagement with the draft call for evidence.

## **Annex A**

### **List of attendees:**

#### **HSAC Members**

Professor Christopher Collins (Chair)

Professor Michael Depledge

Professor John Sumpter

Professor Susan Owens

Professor Gary Hutchison

Professor Peter Matthiessen

Professor Richard Murphy

#### **HSAC Secretariat**

Chris Green	Defra – Chemicals, Pesticides and Hazardous Waste Team
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Fatima Nasser	Defra – Chemicals, Pesticides and Hazardous Waste Team
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Robert Jones	Defra – Chemicals, Pesticides and Hazardous Waste Team
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#### **Officials**

Gintare Masiulyte	Defra – Chemicals, Pesticides and Hazardous Waste Team
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Katie Dick	Defra – Chemicals, Pesticides and Hazardous Waste Team
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Eleanor Martell	Defra- Pesticides Team
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Lorraine Hutt	Environment Agency
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Nathalie Tonge	Environment Agency
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Ioanna Katsiadaki	Cefas
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Janet Sheridan	Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs, Northern Ireland
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Eloise Proctor	Welsh Government
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