

## **Bovine TB Partnership: terms of reference**

March 24

### **Role**

The Bovine TB Partnership was established in 2021 in response to Professor Sir Charles Godfray's review of England's 25-year bTB Strategy. The aim of the bTB Partnership is to encourage shared ownership, coordination and decision-making and act as a driving force for further progress towards disease eradication.

### **Responsibilities**

- a. Strategy: contribute to setting strategic direction of the bTB disease eradication programme, helping to identify priorities, monitor progress and address specific opportunities, risks and issues, as an integral part of the bTB Programme's governance.
- b. Co-design: develop potential new policies and communications, e.g. through specific task-and-finish groups.
- c. Comms and stakeholder engagement: engages widely to advocate agreed bTB policy to a range of stakeholders (e.g. media, farmers, vets, industry etc. Encourages formation of and works closely with local groups and creates opportunities for stakeholders/local groups to work together. Regularly reviews how to improve local engagement and maximise the value of local groups.
- d. Expertise: provides expert advice and helps consider the practicalities of implementation in the policy making process.

### **Membership**

The Partnership will be chaired by an independent member. Defra's Deputy Director for the bovine TB Programme will act as the Government Senior Responsible Owner (SRO). In exceptional circumstances, the SRO will act as Chair if the independent Chair is unavailable.

The Bovine TB Partnership is made up of both senior Defra, Animal & Plant Health Agency (APHA) and Natural England (NE) officials and external (non-Defra) members. Members are appointed on the basis of their skills, knowledge and experience, with a particular interest in those from local authorities, the farming industry (with representation from all TB risk areas and an appropriate geographical spread), the private veterinary profession, non-government organisations (NGOs), academia/science and government.

The independent chair and other external members will be appointed by the Minister for a fixed term and will operate under the terms and conditions of appointment. The appointments process will be transparent and open, and the appointments will be

publicly advertised. Members' interests will be published, and any potential conflicts of interest will be dealt with in the appropriate way. The majority of external members will serve in a personal capacity rather than as formal representatives of sectors or organisations, however a small number of seats on the group will be reserved for key organisational appointments to ensure that critical stakeholders are driving ownership of disease control alongside government.

All external members (with the exception of those appointed as organisational representatives) will be remunerated. The Partnership will be served by a secretariat within Defra.

## **Ways of Working**

The Partnership may provide advice and recommendations to Defra's bTB Strategy Board/Programme Board and, where appropriate, directly to Defra Ministers, to help set the strategic direction of the bTB disease eradication programme. Ultimate decision making will continue to rest with Ministers and recommendations made by the Partnership will therefore not be formally binding.

The Partnership will work within the strategic framework provided by the bTB Strategy and the government response to the Godfray Review and be mindful of financial and legal constraints. It does not hold its own budget but may make recommendations as to how funding is directed (e.g. for specific research, evidence etc).

The independent Chair will also be an appointed member of Defra's bTB Strategy Board and have regular meetings with the responsible Minister. The Chair, SRO and Secretariat will work closely together to ensure that the Partnership fulfils its role, in line with its terms of reference, that meetings are delivered to a high quality, and that all members are clear of and are fulfilling the expectations of their roles.

The Partnership may convene smaller focus groups to engage with specific subjects in more detail to support the policy-making process. These groups may vary in length of duration (as agreed by attendees) and any recommendations will be presented to the Partnership for final approval before being put before the bTB Strategy Board/Programme Board, or Ministers. Additional members can be co-opted into these groups for short periods of time to provide expert input as needed. Any temporary members will undergo a standard expression of interest selection process.

All members are responsible for the decisions of the bTB Partnership and any recommendations that flow from its deliberations. The Partnership will regularly reflect on progress and opportunities to improve and increase its impact.

## **Timing**

The Partnership will normally meet bi-monthly and will be reviewed after 12 months.