



Home Office

# Minutes

<b>Date</b>	Home Office Science Advisory Council 28 <sup>th</sup> September 2021
<b>Time</b>	13:00-16:30
<b>Venue</b>	Microsoft Teams (virtual)
<b>Attendees</b>	<u>HOSAC Members</u> Prof Brooke Rogers (Chair) Prof David Delpy Prof Mark Watson-Gandy Prof Shane Johnson Dr Paul Grasby Prof Helen Margetts Prof Jonathan Shepherd Prof Hugh Griffiths Prof David Main Prof Brian Bell  <u>Home Office Officials</u> Prof Jennifer Rubin (CSA) Amber Haywood (Secretary) Mark Greenhorn Callum Davies Kieran O'Malley
<b>Apologies</b>	Prof Owen Bowden-Jones Prof David C Lane
<b>Meeting objectives</b>	Routine Meeting

**Item 1: Welcome and apologies**

1.1 The Chair welcomed the HOSAC members and Home Office officials to the meeting.

**Item 2: Actions from last meeting**

2.1 The status of actions from previous meetings were discussed. A few actions were completed and are now marked as closed.

**Item 3: Secretariat Update**

3.1 The Secretariat provided a summary of the outcomes of the recent internal review of HOSAC processes and procedures, which include:

3.1.1 New project templates to use with policy/operational delivery teams who require HOSAC input in large or enduring pieces of work. These templates will help organise HOSAC priorities and resource on different demands from the department for scientific advice.

3.1.2 A Newsletter will be regularly produced and circulated to HOSAC members to keep them updated with key developments in the department between quarterly council meetings.

**ACTION RAISED – HOSAC members to provide feedback on Newsletters, including their content and frequency.**

3.1.3 Terms of Reference have been updated.

**ACTION RAISED – New Terms of Reference to be reflected on the gov.uk page**

3.1.4 A new annual performance review process will be implemented in 2022 with the Chair and CSA holding stocktakes with individual members to discuss contributions made in the preceding 12months.

**ACTION RAISED – Availability for these annual reviews to be sought from members**

3.1.5 As per the newly agreed Terms of Appointment, an annual honorarium will be paid to all Members, the Chair and Associate Members (specifically those do not already receive one for their Chair-person role), subject to satisfactory completing their annual review.

3.2 Members were notified of the following changes to the membership of HOSAC

3.2.1 Mike Pidd will shortly retire from his role as a member

3.2.2 Hugh Griffiths (currently also serving as chair of DSEC) will become a full member

3.2.3 David Main will become an associate member (sitting as chair of ASC)

3.2.4 Brian Bell will become an associate member (sitting as chair of MAC)

3.2.5 Owen Bowden-Jones will become an associate member (sitting as chair of ACMD)

3.2.6 Mark Watson-Gandy will become an associate member (sitting as chair of BFEG)

3.3 Members were given an update on the recruitment for new members and a Deputy Chair. At the time of the meeting, recruitment was in the final stages, following a round of interviews. New appointments will be announced in due course.

3.4. The Chair and all members expressed their gratitude for the efforts of the outgoing secretariat and welcomed the incoming secretariat to HOSAC.

#### **Item 4: Chairs Update**

4.1. The Chair outlined her aspiration for HOSAC to embed further into the department and help strengthen links between officials and the wider academic community via the Areas of Research Interest (ARI) document. (see Item 8 for further discussion ARIs).

4.2 The Chair drew attention to the contributions that have been made to the department by several members since the last meeting.

#### **Item 5: CSA Update**

5.1 The CSA started by thanking all members for their attendance today and for their contributions as outlined earlier by the Chair.

5.2 The CSA then outlined her previous academic and industrial experience before taking up her current role as both the Home Office Chief Scientific Advisor and Director General of Science, Technology, Analysis and Research (STAR). Details of the CSA's biography are already in the public domain<sup>1</sup>.

5.3 The CSA then outlined her responsibilities in her two roles, firstly as CSA and then as DG STAR. This includes responsibility for a number of Directorates.

5.4 The CSA then provided a summary of her priorities since joining the department, which has included recognising the support provided by the academic community during the pandemic and increasing the awareness of HOSAC within the department.

**ACTION RAISED – formal meetings to be arranged between HOSAC members and members of the department's Executive Committee.**

#### **Item 6: HOSAC Hosts – Introduction to the Home Office's Outcome Delivery Plan**

6.1 The Director of Strategy joined the meeting and delivered a presentation on the Outcome Delivery Plan (ODP) process, and summarised the ODP for the Home Office covering 2021-2022. Information on the ODP process, and the Home Office's ODP are already in the public domain.<sup>2</sup>

#### **Item 7: Discussion of Item 6**

7.1 HOSAC members provided initial comments on the ODP process and the objectives of the current Home Office ODP. It was then agreed to set up a separate call to discuss the ODP in more detail.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/people/jennifer-rubin>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/home-office-outcome-delivery-plan>

**ACTION RAISED – a dedicated workshop to be arranged between HOSAC members and Home Office to allow a more detailed discussion and feedback to be provided on the current ODP.**

**Item 8: Areas of Research Interest Document Workshop**

8.1 The Secretariat provided a short presentation outlining the ongoing work in the department to refresh the Areas of Research Interest (ARI) document. This is a public-facing document that outlines the research questions and statements that if answered would support policy or operational outcomes of the department. The overall aim of the ARI document is to promote better collaboration with academics who are encouraged to contact the department in question on areas of shared interest.

8.2 As part of a planned refresh to ensure the ARI document for the Home Office remains relevant and reflects our current research priorities, an internal consultation process was completed. The current version of the new ARI document is now ready for HOSAC to provide review and advice.

8.3 HOSAC Members provided initial thoughts on the ARI process.

**ACTION RAISED – a dedicated workshop/working group to be arranged between HOSAC members and Secretariat to develop the current ARI draft.**

**Item 9: HOSAC Impact – Homeland Security Group academic support update**

9.1 Officials from the Homeland Security Group and Paul Grasby provided an update on work to set up a more formal arrangement between academics in HOSAC and policy teams.

**Item 10: Discussion of Item 9**

10.1 There was general agreement that the proposal to establish an internal subgroup was sound and should be explored further.

**ACTION RAISED – Secretariat to follow up on next steps to establish the internal subgroup**

**ACTION RAISED – Paul Grasby and Homeland Security Group to continue to develop the proposal and work with the Secretariat to establish the internal subgroup.**

**Item 11: Member Spotlights – Helen Margetts on Data Ethics, and David Main on Animals in Science Horizon Scanning**

11.1 Helen Margetts provided a presentation on work with the Alan Turing Institute on the Ethics and Responsible Innovation Public Policy Programme. Guidance produced by the Institute (Understanding bias in facial recognition technologies<sup>3</sup>) has been developed and now used by the Council of Europe. The Data Ethics Framework, focusing on AI ethics and safety, first published in 2018 is now in use with a range of government departments and agencies.

11.2 David Main provided a presentation on the work of ASC, in particular horizon scanning work recently completed. A Futures Working Group has been set up to provide advice to the department on 'futures' issues that may impact on regulation/use of animals in science. Findings and recommendations from a recent exercise to build an evidence base of futures issues will be

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<sup>3</sup>[https://www.turing.ac.uk/sites/default/files/2020-10/understanding\\_bias\\_in\\_facial\\_recognition\\_technology.pdf](https://www.turing.ac.uk/sites/default/files/2020-10/understanding_bias_in_facial_recognition_technology.pdf)

published in the New Year. It may be that this approach could be something HOSAC could adapt and utilise across a range of other topics.

### **Item 12: Science Advisory Council's Updates Discussion**

12.1 Mark Watson-Gandy provided an update on the work of BFEG. This included advice on the collection, use, retention and deletion of extracted digital forensic material, ethical guidance for the Home Office Biometrics programme and guidance on ethical issues with future digital border solutions.

### **Item 13: AOB**

13.1 CSA mentioned that the new expertise of incoming members will be important for growing the role of HOSAC across the department. CSA also flagged that raising awareness of HOSAC internally will be essential, and in her role as DG STAR, she will look to increase awareness with other senior officials of the various departmental boards she is a member of.

13.2 Jonathan Shepherd mentioned the incoming NPCC CSA (Paul Taylor) and the need for HOSAC to align with the equivalent SAC being set up for Policing. CSA and Chair agreed and stated regular discussions are already taking place with Paul.

### **Item 14: Thanks and Close**

14.1 The Chair drew the meeting to a close and thanked all members for their attendance. Details of the next meeting would be provided by the Secretariat.