



Home Office

# Minutes

<b>Title of meeting</b>	Home Office Science Advisory Council
<b>Date</b>	15 <sup>th</sup> December 2021
<b>Time</b>	10:00-14:30
<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 Jonathan Shepherd Prof Hugh Griffiths Prof David Main Prof Owen Bowden-Jones Prof David C Lane  <u>Home Office Officials</u> Prof Jennifer Rubin (CSA) Jason Dewhurst (HO Director of Science) Rupert Shute (DCSA) Callum Davies Kieran O'Malley Tom Cliffe (Secretary)  <u>Observers/Guests</u> Prof Paul Taylor (Policing CSA) Luke Reynolds (GO Science) Jason Field (MoD)
<b>Apologies</b>	Prof Brian Bell Prof Helen Margetts
<b>Meeting objectives</b>	Routine Meeting and Workshop on Developing Future Workplan

## **Item 1: Welcome and Apologies**

1.1 The Chair welcomed the HOSAC members and Home Office officials to the meeting and noted the apologies that had been provided.

1.2 The Chair then outlined that the main purpose of this meeting is to hold a workshop to develop a new workplan for HOSAC in 2022 (Item 8).

## **Item 2: Actions from the last meeting**

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

## **Items 3, 4 and 5: Chair, CSA and Secretariat Updates**

3.1. The Chair updating members on the following developments since the last meeting, including work to develop a new onboarding and induction process for appointing new members to the Council. The Chair also proposed a number of changes to the Terms of Reference, including a new Co-Chair arrangement, with leadership for the Council and responsibilities of the current Chair shared between two members. Members were asked for their views, and all agreed in principle to the change. The Chair and the Secretariat will prepare draft wording for amending the ToRs, and present these to members for formal approval at the next quarterly meeting.

4.1 Prof Jennifer Rubin provided a short update to HOSAC, thanking members for attending the meeting, as well as thanking Prof Brooke Rogers, Prof Shane Johnson and Dr Paul Grasby for their support last month in responding to an urgent commission in November in support of the Department.

4.2 Prof Jonathan Shepherd highlighted the recent NAO report on government spending, published earlier this month, including the need it identified to improve the link between the analytical and policy professions. This report can be found in the open domain<sup>1</sup>.

5.1 (Secretariat provided an update during Item 8).

## **Item 6: HOSAC Hosts Jason Dewhurst**

6.1 The Chair then turned to Prof Dave Delpy who gave an introduction to Jason Dewhurst, the Home Office Director of Science & Technology Delivery and Strategy.

6.2 Jason gave a summary of his background before taking up his current role and then delivered a short presentation on the Directorate he leads, which includes responsibility for the Home Office S&T Commissioning Hub, the Forensic Information Database Service (FINDS) and the Animals in Science Regulation Unit (ASRU). More information on these teams can be found in the open domain.

6.3 Jason also gave an overview of key elements of the wider science 'ecosystem' within the Home Office, and the provision of science advice to Jennifer. This highlighted the various organisations within the Home Office, and how S&T is completed by different teams.

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<sup>1</sup> [Evaluating government spending - National Audit Office \(NAO\) Report](#)

6.4 Jason then gave an outline of his personal priorities going forward in his new role. These are summarised below:

6.4.1 Continuous professionalisation of the science & technology function, including exploring greater use of professional memberships, maintaining currency, development, and career pathways.

6.4.2 Celebrating science & technology investment and realising benefits, including through better and more relevant communication, and embedding S&T in the wider evidence base to influence decision making.

6.4.3 Making S&T more accessible, for example, exploring bite-sized learning to develop a more scientifically (and analytically) inquisitive department.

6.5 Members then asked a number of questions and made a number of comments regarding Jason's presentation. Key points are highlighted below:

6.5.1 The Home Office has a number of large operational delivery organisations such as Border Force, and it is important they have sufficient situational awareness of new technologies relevant to their work.

6.5.2 Science and professions in general tend to be distributed across the Department, which can make it difficult for science literate individuals to feel part of a wider community. Jason agreed it was important to encourage secondment opportunities between the Home Office and other organisations involved in R&D and asked for HOSAC's support to explore ways of getting more S&T professionals into the Home Office.

6.5.3 There is arguably a need to broaden thinking of S&T professionals outside of the core Department, and also work more closely with other government departments, as there are many cross-cutting S&T priorities the Home Office is involved in.

6.5.4 Jason is currently the Department's Head of Profession for Operational Research. An opportunity was highlighted to encourage more civil servants who are part of the Government Operational Research Service (GORS) to become members of the Operational Research Society.

6.6 The Chair thanked Jason and Dave, and asked that Dave leads HOSAC's relationship with Jason and his team going forward.

**ACTION RAISED – Dave, as HOSAC Host, to meet with Jason regularly in the future.**

### **Item 7: HOSAC Hosts Prof Paul Taylor**

7.1 The Chair then turned to Prof Shane Johnson who gave an introduction to Prof Paul Taylor, the CSA for National Policing (NPCC).

7.2 Prof Paul Taylor then delivered a short presentation outlining the current structure of Policing S&T and opportunities for HOSAC to work closely with him and his team going forward. Key priorities and opportunities included:

7.2.1 Getting the science eco-system right. Policing S&T is a very complex environment.

7.2.2 Knowledge management. There are lots of stakeholders involved in S&T and opportunity to strengthen how they interact with the Home Office.

7.2.3 Joint deep dives between the Home Office (including HOSAC) and National Policing on shared areas of interest.

7.2.4 Wider joining with other government science advisory bodies

7.3 HOSAC members then asked a number of questions and made a number of comments about Paul's presentation. The key points are summarised below.

7.3.1 Using systems thinking to help understand and strengthen the science eco-system within Policing and the join-up with Home Office.

7.3.2 Helping local forces coordinate investment in technologies or addressing challenges to minimise wastage, by promoting communication and improving situational awareness.

7.3.3 Prof Jonathan Shepherd highlighted progress with professionalising policing, for example, by the establishment of the College of Policing, the What Works Centre for Crime Reduction, centres for police research including at Cardiff University and UCL, and the Police Knowledge Fund (PKF). Jonathan reflected that more needed to be done. For example, unlike professional bodies in other sectors such as teaching, engineering and medicine, police officers do not have a stake in their professional body - the College of Policing - through paying annual membership fees. Jonathan said that it was a pity that the PKF had been ended after two grant rounds. Paul agreed that it was unfortunate that this had not been continued. Jonathan suggested that the individual R&D budgets of the 43 police forces should be consolidated into a national police R&D scheme akin to the highly successful National Institute for Health Research (NIHR) which had been established by consolidating all the NHS Trust R&D budgets.

7.4 The Chair thanked Paul and Shane, and asked that Shane leads HOSAC's relationship with Paul and his team going forward.

**ACTION RAISED – Shane as HOSAC Host, to meet with Prof Paul Taylor regularly in the future.**

### **Item 8: Workshop**

8.1 Based on a discussion paper circulated before the meeting, the Secretariat delivered a presentation to members outlining the purpose of the workshop, including explaining the high-level organisation of the Department, and its priorities, as defined by the Outcome Delivery Plan (ODP). This is available in the public domain.<sup>2</sup>

8.2 It was noted that HOSAC, given its strategic remit, should have a good foundational understanding of all four priority outcomes, and their associated key priorities, and

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<sup>2</sup> [Home Office Outcome Delivery Plan: 2021 to 2022 - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/97822/2021-2022-odp.pdf)

therefore should expect to engage with officials working in teams across the Department going forward.

8.3 Jennifer highlighted to members that her key priority as CSA is to strengthen the science eco-system in the Department to enable the Home Office to be evidence based and evidence building, and to provide the best scientific advice to Ministers and officials, and revamping HOSAC is seen as key to achieving this. To support this ambition, a draft vision for HOSAC was proposed to members in the paper and highlighted in the presentation for initial comment. This is provided below:

- **An active, utilised, and informed core membership** that has the right balance of expertise to support the Home Office address its key priorities, and sufficient capacity to support the Department with both longer-term commitments and urgent requests;
- **A wider network of affiliated and registered experts across academia/industry** who can be readily utilised when additional expertise and/or resource is needed, reflecting more widely a stronger HOSAC presence across the UK Research Base;
- **A clear annual workplan based on Departmental priorities**, agreed with senior colleagues and commissioned by the CSA;
- **Increased visibility of HOSAC and the benefits it can offer the Department**, with closer working relationships with senior officials who proactively seek out, utilise and implement their advice;
- **A close working relationship with other departmental science advisory bodies**, with members collaborating closely on areas of shared departmental interests; and
- **An efficient and effective secretariat to support the work of members**, with processes in place to ensure advice can be sought and shared easily, with appropriate levels of transparency.

8.4 The Secretariat then gave a quick summary of all the work that had gone on over the past 18 months to revamp HOSAC, including the recent recruitment campaign for new members to HOSAC, revising the Terms of Reference, developing a draft vision (as outlined above), and creating an annual workplan (the purpose of this workshop).

8.5 The Secretariat finally outlined expectations for members going forward, and the nature of the contributions they would likely make to the Department (a draft Operating Model):

- Being involved in 'mission-led' interventions on key priorities of the Department (which will be captured in the workplan)
- Being involved in cross-cutting and/or CSA-own priority taskings (which will also be captured in the workplan), including, for example, playing a role in advocating for and raising awareness of science across the Department
- Responding, where able to ad hoc requests for support and advice
- Attending quarterly meetings of HOSAC

**ACTION RAISED – Members to provide feedback on the whole discussion paper in writing to the Secretariat, specifically the Vision and the proposed Operating Model, as well as any comments on the plan going forward.**

8.6 The Secretariat then explained that the purpose of the workshop was to introduce members to the longlist of priority areas the Department has, and to ask them to identify areas that they thought HOSAC could and should prioritise addressing in 2022 as part of the workplan. The longlist was produced following conversations the Chair and Secretariat have been having with senior officials across all key areas of the Home Office over the past few months, as well as initial analysis of the Department's ODP, specifically the priorities listed under each Outcome (as shown in the slides).

8.7 A number of caveats were given/noted during the workshop:

8.7.1 The longlist aimed to capture the current whole picture of priorities the Department is engaged in. HOSAC would not be expected to address all of them.

8.7.2 HOSAC members who are asked to work on certain priorities going forward would be offered support to gain further understanding of specific areas, through introductions and presentations from appropriate officials to help them feel comfortable providing advice and support. This more targeted engagement would also help members agree specific interventions with the relevant officials.

8.7.3 This will be the first workplan that has been created in recent years for HOSAC.

8.8 Members and officials were then organised into breakout rooms, where they discussed the longlist around themes based on the four priority outcomes. After spending time discussing each Outcome, everyone came together to feedback.

**ACTION RAISED – members and officials are encouraged to share any further reflections in the meantime with the Secretariat following the breakout room discussions.**

8.9 The Chair brought the workshop to a close, and thanked members for their views. The Chair and Secretariat clarified to members there would be further opportunities for them to engage in developing the workshop.

**ACTION RAISED – Secretariat to produce a revised product for members to engage with to help develop the workplan further. Additional meetings/workshops may be arranged in the new year.**

#### **Item 9: AOB**

9.1 The Chair opened up the meeting for any AOB. The only point raised was an ask for HOASC members from the CSA to provide views on an internal commission.

**ACTION RAISED – Secretariat to share internal commission for HOSAC views.**

#### **Item 10: Thanks and Close**

10.1 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.

#### **Summary of New Actions**

1. Dave as HOSAC Host, to meet with Jason regularly in the future.

2. Shane as HOSAC Host, to meet with Prof Paul Taylor regularly in the future.
3. Members to provide feedback on the whole discussion paper in writing to the Secretariat, specifically the Vision and the proposed Operating Model.
4. Members and officials are encouraged to share any further reflections in the meantime with the Secretariat following the breakout room discussions.
5. Secretariat to produce a revised product for members to engage with to help develop the workplan further. Additional meetings/workshops may be arranged in the new year.
6. Secretariat to share internal commission for HOSAC views.