



Minutes

Title of meeting Home Office Science Advisory Council - 12th March
Date 12 March 2024
Time 9:30-11:30
Venue Security and Policing Exhibition, Farnborough International Exhibition and Conference Centre

Attendees

HOSAC Members
Prof Brooke Rogers (Co-chair)
Prof Hugh Griffiths
Prof Tushna Vandrevala
Prof Mark Watson-Gandy
Prof Shane Johnson
Prof Tom Kirchmaier
Prof David Delpy
Prof Gabriella Spinelli
Prof Paul Grasby

Home Office Officials
Jason Dewhurst
Sam Lawrence
David Martin
Parri Desai
Ed Wightman

Apologies

Prof Guy Nason (Co-chair)
Prof Jennifer Rubin
Prof Owen Bowden-Jones
Prof Brian Bell
Prof David Main
Ollie Whitehouse
Prof Lucina Hackman
Prof Stuart Boyd
Prof David C Lane
Prof Helen Margetts

Item 1: Welcome from HOSAC Co-Chair

- 1.1 Brooke welcomed attendees to the meeting and noted the exciting plans for the day at the Security and Policing Exhibition 2024.
- 1.2 Brooke noted that, among others, Guy Nason (the HOSAC Co-Chair) and Jennifer Rubin (DG STAR/CSA) had sent their apologies for this meeting.
- 1.3 Brooke drew attention to the fact that Hugh Griffiths will be stepping down as Chair of the Defence Science Expert Committee and that, therefore, this will be his last HOSAC meeting. Brooke thanked him for his excellent service to HOSAC over the past 6-7 years.

Item 2: Opening remarks and introduction to Home Office X

- 2.1 Jason Dewhurst, Director of Home Office Science, welcomed HOSAC to the Security and Policing Exhibition and reflected on the positive developments he has seen over the past few years. There is now a greater understanding of the link between science and analysis.
- 2.2 Jason briefly introduced Home Office X, a new innovation pull-through hub to enable innovation coordination across the Home Office.

Item 3: Overview of Home Office X

- 3.1 Samantha Lawrence provided a more detailed overview of current plans for Home Office X (HOX), and the proposed operating model for the innovation hub.
- 3.2 Samantha asked for thoughts from HOSAC members on what they'd like to see HOX achieve, and lessons learnt from similar projects.
- 3.3 Gabriella said that the collaboration with science should also include collaboration around analytical considerations. Perhaps the Home Office is big enough to expand the remit to a commercial model.
- 3.4 Dave said that, from his experience, initiatives such as this are often very exciting but can fail. This is largely due to churn, so a single point of contact is important. It is also important to focus on a small number of identified projects.
- 3.5 Tom noted that, generally, we are very good at finding technical solutions, but it only works if we change our behaviour to fit the technical solutions. This is where the pushback/failure/cost often comes from.
- 3.6 Sam responded to a question from Mark by stating that HOX will be designed to be a one stop shop and could create a HO directory for HO contacts. A point was raised about ensuring HO-X established a customer relationship management process to understand and record what previous engagements have been undertaken.

3.7 Hugh suggested that there will be some lessons that we can learn from DASA, notably around their quick and efficient contracting process. Sam noted that they are working with DASA closely.

3.8 Samantha thanked the group for their input and offered to provide an update in a few months' time. **ACTION 1 - Samantha to update HOSAC on HOX by November 2024.**

Item 4: National Policing Capability Team – AI and Policing

4.1 David Martin, from the National Policing Capability Team in the Home Office's Public Safety Group (PSG), introduced his topic and provided context around the paper that was shared ahead of the meeting.

4.2 David outlined the areas he'd like to discuss in the session with HOSAC:

- What effective upstream actions can DSIT impose on the ecosystem? Even if just to provide friction to the processes behind deepfakes etc.
- Public education and communication campaigns.
- Deepfake detection as an area for innovation.

4.3 Tom said he could talk to David in greater detail in future but raised a few points:

- The paper was great but could do with including more examples.
- Could work with the new Home Office X team to push boundaries further.
- Speak to Dutch counterparts who will have shared these challenges.
- Quality assurance processes will be important to limit risk of AI use.

4.4 Tushna added that it is hard to stop people from sharing deepfakes within their communities when they support their beliefs.

4.5 Shane thanked David for the paper and for citing his work. Shane would like to hear more about the consequences of the child sexual abuse scenario and can share research from this area if helpful. Might also be good to think about a police educational piece so that they can understand the severity of related issues.

4.6 Brooke added that a social identity and health model would be helpful for application to education and communications pieces. The upcoming UKRI Building a Secure Resilient World Hub and NIHR Health Protection Research Units could be helpful to speak to despite the lack of obvious links.

4.7 Gabriella stated that she shared an EPSCR update with Ed a few months ago and suggested that Ed should pass it onto David. **ACTION 2 - Secretariat to share EPSCR update with David before COP.**

4.8 Shane highlighted that, in many ways, we are five years late to be having these conversations despite previous recommendations to start earlier and this needs

to improve in future. David asks HOSAC to come to him with anything in his area that we should start looking into before it is too late.

- 4.9 Brooke noted that HOSAC should carry out a more regular sweep across the Home Office to think about future threats to work on now. **ACTION 3 - HOSAC Secretariat to scope a piece of work where HOSAC assesses future threats facing Home Office business areas.**

Item 5: Science and Technology – Delivering scientific innovation and technological insight to support Homeland Security missions.

- 5.1 The Head of Science and Technology, Homeland Security Group (HSG), provided an overview of science and technology in HSG.
- 5.2 Brooke noted that there are more groups outside of CREST that would be helpful in the behavioural science space and HOSAC can help with these links. **ACTION 4 - Brooke to share the names of groups to engage with in the behavioural science space.**
- 5.3 An idea was proposed for HOSAC to be used for HSG S&T Scientific Portfolio Assurance. Brooke summarised that there are different ways that HOSAC can provide support in this area including the establishment of a working sub-group, workshops, or more informal ad-hoc support. **ACTION 5 - HOSAC Secretariat to facilitate a conversation on HOSAC/HSG S&T collaboration.**
- 5.4 Dave asked whether there is a system that looks at what is available now, as well as the commissioning of projects/research as this can take 5-8 years. It was explained that The Joint Security and Resilience Centre (JSARC) used to do this but now it is becoming the responsibility of technical groups that are embedded. This does need to be coordinated better and there will be a new team in HSG which looks more at future threats.

Item 6: Thanks and Close

- 6.1 Brooke remarked on a productive meeting and thanked all for engaging. She explained that planning is underway for the next HOSAC meeting and summer reception and the secretariat will be in touch when a date has been identified.

Summary of Actions

- 1. Samantha to update HOSAC on HOX by November 2024.**
- 2. Secretariat to share EPSCR update with David before COP.**
- 3. HOSAC Secretariat to scope a piece of work where HOSAC assesses future threats facing Home Office business areas.**
- 4. Brooke to share the names of groups to engage with in the behavioural science space.**
- 5. HOSAC Secretariat to facilitate a conversation on HOSAC/HSG S&T collaboration.**