

## RPC meeting 20 January 2025 - minutes

### Attendees

#### The Committee

Chair: Stephen Gibson  
Daniel Dalton  
Caroline Elliott  
Stephen Gifford  
Hilary Jennings  
John Longworth  
Ryan Williams  
Andrew Williams-Fry (Online)

#### RPC Secretariat

Stuart Sarson – Head of Secretariat

#### Regulation Directorate

Chris Carr – Director, Regulation Directorate  
Dora Addei – Deputy Director, RD

#### External Visitors

Alex Conner, National Physical Laboratory (NPL)  
Suzi Daley, United Kingdom Accreditation Services (UKAS)  
Danil Mansfield, British Standards Institute (BSI)  
Steve Brunige, British Standards Institute (BSI)

## A. Minutes of committee meeting 11 November 2024 and matters arising

1. The **minutes of the 11 November 2024 meeting were agreed**. The minutes are available on the RPC website.
2. **Register of interests:** committee members confirmed the accuracy of their entries in the RPC register of interests (available on the RPC website).
3. **Gifts and hospitality register:** committee members confirmed the accuracy of their entries in the gifts and hospitality register (available on the RPC and DBT websites).
4. An update on recruitment of new members was provided.

## B. Regulation Directorate (RD) Update

### Better Regulation Update

5. Chris Carr (CC) gave an update on the ongoing work in the Regulation Directorate (RD). He said that regulation is a priority within the Government's agenda, and it will continue to do so. The committee welcomed the update.

## C. Engagements Update

6. A list of engagements in which the Chair and committee members had participated had been circulated in advance of the meeting.
7. It was commented that there appeared to be a lack of international engagements, and it would be good to re-engage internationally. Ryan Williams (RW) explained he is happy to do some engagement work with OIRA (Office of Information and Regulatory Affairs) or others while he is in the US.

#### D. External Presentation: Alternatives to Regulation

8. John Longworth gave an overview on alternatives to regulation and introduced representatives from NPL, UKAS and BSI, key bodies in the National Quality Infrastructure (NQI), which is a national, private/public sector framework that builds trust and confidence in markets, and supports innovation and smarter regulation, thus reducing the need for regulation.
9. The representatives informed the committee that National Quality Infrastructure (NQI) focuses on measurement, standards, accreditation, and market surveillance. It is an international effort, and they have international relationships, memberships, and bilateral agreements. The NQI encourages growth, develops tools for businesses to use to influence trade, innovation, and digitisation. The purpose of NQI is not just replacing regulation with similarly costly options, but other solutions whether that is self-regulation, earned recognition through direction, or co-regulation. This reduces barriers to entry and commonality of standards thereby reducing the overall level of regulatory burdens.
10. The committee welcomed the presentation and made the following comments:
  - Less costly alternative routes are often not well defined, and we need to encourage departments to consider such options. The committee raised the risk that standards having legal effects, including in interaction with other regulations, that *de facto* lead to an increase in the costs of regulation to business, without receiving the scrutiny the regulatory provisions undergo.
  - The committee considered the potential conflicts between standards and innovation. The external representative emphasised that innovations are always considered alongside standards which are periodically reviewed.
  - It was felt that there should be greater interaction between accreditation bodies and departments.
11. The meeting was concluded with the Chair thanking John Longworth and the external speakers for their presentation saying this is an important issue which can reduce the need for regulation.