

The ASC
Animals in Science Committee
Dr Sally Robinson, Chair of the Animals in Science Committee
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27 June 2025

Dear Lord Hanson,

Animals in Science Committee: timescales for commissioned advice

I am writing to you as the new Chair of the Animals in Science Committee (ASC), a role to which I was appointed as of 1 June 2025. I am greatly looking forward to progressing the Committee's work programme, particularly in light of the government's manifesto commitment on partnering with scientists and industry to work towards the phasing out of animal testing. Following initial discussions with the Committee, I would like to take this opportunity to provide an update on the progress of the active ASC commissions, and the timescales to which the Committee are able to deliver this advice.

As you will be aware, your predecessor wrote to my predecessor on 29 February 2024 outlining the government's forward commission for advice from the ASC¹. The ASC has since received detailed scoping documents from your officials for three out of the four outlined workstreams: improving non-technical summaries (NTSs) and retrospective assessments (RAs), strengthening leading practice in the animals in science sector, and strengthening the functioning of Animal Welfare and Ethical Review Bodies (AWERBs) and Named Information Officer (NIO).

The ASC's work on improving NTSs and RAs is progressing well. The responsible Subgroup has made significant headway in reviewing existing licences, engaging with both sector and non-sector stakeholders, and developing their recommendations. We remain confident that we will be able to deliver our final advice by the original deadline of 30 September 2025.

The workstream on strengthening leading practice is also advancing. The responsible Subgroup have conducted an open call for evidence and subsequent stakeholder engagement workshop to explore the issues in more depth. This engagement has reinforced the complexity of this subject matter, with a breadth of considerations to make. The Subgroup have requested additional time to refine the scope of the report

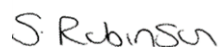
¹ [Letter from Lord Sharpe of Epsom with a forward commission for advice in 2024 - GOV.UK](#)

and its recommendations. I would therefore like to request an extension of three months for the delivery of this report, with a new final deadline of 31 December 2025.

The third commission, on strengthening the functioning of AWERBs and NIO, represents a substantially larger piece of work. Firstly, we anticipate that the insights from the report on strengthening leading practice will inform this work. Secondly, I would welcome the opportunity, in my capacity as the new Chair of the ASC, to engage with your officials to further refine the scope of this commission. In consideration of these factors, I would like to propose a revised timeline, with work commencing in January 2026 and a final report to be submitted by 30 September 2026.

I trust that these proposed adjustments to the timescales will support the delivery of high-quality independent scientific advice to the Home Office. I would be grateful for your response agreeing these proposals, or if required, the opportunity to meet with you or your officials to discuss further.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'S. Robinson'.

Dr Sally Robinson

Chair of the Animals in Science Committee