

## SSAC Update Report – 2017

The SSAC provides independent advice, through its Chair, to the Chief Scientific Adviser (CSA) for Scotland, to inform policy development and delivery across all areas of the Scottish Government's work. It typically develops advice on a medium- to long-term basis, advising on developments in science and technology and their implications for policy and identifying potential future opportunities and threats.

Chaired by Professor Paul Boyle, the SSAC currently has nine other members, including the Chief Scientific Adviser (CSA) for Scotland, Professor Sheila Rowan, and Professor David Crossman, the Chief Scientist (Health).

This short report follows quarterly meetings held in 2017 on 10 March, 6 June, 29 September and 18 December, and provides an update on the SSAC's workstreams and areas of interest.

### SSAC WORKSTREAMS

✚ A 'Space Technology and Satellite Applications' briefing note was launched at a reception for the Scottish space sector hosted by Paul Wheelhouse, Minister for Business, Innovation and Energy, on 23 May. A copy can be found on the SSAC website: <http://scottishscience.org.uk/publications>.

The SSAC is currently progressing the following pieces of work:

✚ A briefing note on 'Open Science', and the SSAC report on a 'Scottish response' to the UK Government Office for Science Foresight Report '*Future of an Ageing Population*', will be published in spring 2018.

✚ The SSAC is nearing completion of a horizon-scanning project on Cyber Resilience, commissioned by the Scottish Government (SG) Cyber Resilience Unit. A workshop was held with stakeholders from universities, to discuss research direction, advances in technology, and vulnerabilities and security. A final report on this work will be completed and published in spring 2018.

✚ The SG Health and Social Care Directorates have commissioned the SSAC to examine Scotland's current capabilities in human genomic medicine, and to identify potential for future development. A stakeholder workshop was held in December 2017, and the project is expected to be completed by June 2018.

✚ The SSAC has commissioned a report on 'Scotland's Science Landscape', which could be significant for government and the science community in recognising innovation, the potential for economic growth through science, and in raising the profile of Scottish science. In particular, it should provide an opportunity to

identify research areas where Scotland excels, as well as up and coming areas of strength. The report has been commissioned from Elsevier.

- ✚ A number of briefing notes on other topics are currently being scoped and are at an early stage of development.

## **OTHER NEWS**

### **Meetings**

- ✚ Meetings were held in Scottish Government (SG) offices in Glasgow and Edinburgh. Guest speakers and presenters included:
  - SG officials from Honours Secretariat, to discuss the SSAC's potential role in encouraging nominations for honours to recognise the achievements of those working in STEM in Scotland
  - SG officials from the Energy and Climate Change Directorate, to discuss the SG's new Energy Strategy and the future input that the SSAC may have in this area.

### **Consultation responses**

- ✚ SSAC responses to two SG consultations (STEM Education and Training Strategy; Draft Scottish Energy Strategy: The future of energy in Scotland) can be found on the SSAC website at <http://scottishscience.org.uk/publications>

### **Members**

- ✚ Professor Sheila Rowan, CSA for Scotland, and SSAC member Professor Iain Hunter were appointed co-Chairs of the independent Reference Group for the STEM Education and Training Strategy. Further details are on the SG website: <http://www.gov.scot/Topics/Education/Schools/curriculum/STEM/ReferenceGroup>
- ✚ Mr Alan Settery joined the SSAC as a co-opted member in his capacity as the Academic Cyber Security Network Integrator for Scotland.
- ✚ Two ex officio members, Professor Andrew Morris (Chief Scientist, Health), and Professor Louise Heathwaite (Chief Scientific Adviser for Rural Affairs, Food and the Environment) stepped down from the SSAC when they left their SG positions over the summer of 2017.
- ✚ Professor Morris was replaced as CS (Health) by Professor David Crossman. Professor Crossman joined the SG in November 2017 and attended his first SSAC meeting in December.

## Chair's meetings

Over the course of 2017 Professor Boyle met a number of key stakeholders to discuss the work of the SSAC:

- Shirley-Anne Somerville, Minister for Further Education, Higher Education and Science (the Minister also subsequently attended a dinner with SSAC members in December 2017)
- Dame Jocelyn Bell Burnell, President of the Royal Society of Edinburgh (RSE)
- Meeting of Universities Scotland's Research and Knowledge Exchange Committee (attended jointly with CSA Professor Rowan)
- Annual Science and the Parliament event

For further information please contact the SSAC Secretariat.