

SSAC Minutes – 4 June 2020

Zoom video conference – hosted by Chair SSAC

Attendees:

Attendee	Position
Professor Maggie Gill	SSAC Chair
Professor Sheila Rowan	Chief Scientific Adviser for Scotland (<i>ex officio member</i>) – Item 7 onwards
Professor Andrew Millar	Chief Scientific Adviser ENRA (<i>ex officio member</i>)
Professor Robert Bowman	SSAC Member
Dr Caroline Cantley	SSAC Member
Professor Bob Ferrier	SSAC Member
Professor Mark Inall	SSAC Member
Professor Julian Jones	SSAC Member
Professor Wayne Powell	SSAC Member
Professor Marian Scott	SSAC Member
Professor Aziz Sheikh	SSAC Member
Professor John Underhill	SSAC Member
Dr Roddy Macdonald	Deputy Director and Head of Higher Education and Science (Scottish Government)
Joanne Ward	Head of SSAC Secretariat/Science Advice and Engagement Team (SG)
Dr Heather Owen	SSAC Secretariat, SAE Team (SG)
Caroline Murray	SSAC Secretariat, SAE Team (SG)

1. **Welcome and Apologies**

1.1 The Chair welcomed all to the meeting noting apologies from:

Professor Anna Dominiczak
Professor David Crossman

2. **Minutes and Actions of last meeting**

2.1 The minutes of the last meeting were officially agreed and will be uploaded onto SSAC website.

2.2 All previous actions were completed except the following on-going due to impacts of Covid-19:

15.12 – Ongoing – Secretariat to invite relevant officials to present at a future meeting on the following topics: the Infrastructure Commission; and the ‘well-being economy’. Secretariat to take forward other suggestions for guest speakers, made at the SSAC dinner.

16.8 – Ongoing - CSA to follow up with University of Glasgow contact to obtain their views on the theme of collaboration on COP26.

3. **Standing Item – Feedback on SSAC Reports – SSAC Note 20/8**

3.1 Secretariat provided an update on the impact of the Robotics and Autonomous Systems (RAS) report which was completed in March 2020. Policy colleagues are taking

forward the recommendations from the report and advised that it would be useful to have a Covid-19 perspective update on the RAS report going forward.

3.2 There had also been a request from SG Covid-19 Advisory Group about information on the capacity of robotics to disinfect healthcare settings. Stakeholders had been consulted and considered the current research was too upstream for immediate application. The possibility of updating the RAS briefing note was discussed under item 8.5.

3.3 It was commented that there is an SRPe Robotics & Autonomous Systems Thematic Leadership Group (RAS-TLG) and MASTS marine robotics group that are good sources of expertise. There may be some potential for this sector to get funding from the £800 million new UK Government research funding of high risk activities - Advanced Research Projects Agency (ARPA).

4. Update on Current Projects/Reports

Commissioned work:

4.1 **The Environmental Impacts of the Scottish Manufacturing Industry** – Caroline Cantley provided an update of this work and thanked the Working Group, SSAC, Rachel Jamieson and secretariat for support. There was discussion around the scope diagram and some minor presentational feedback which will be incorporated by the project lead. The intention is to publish the main report on the website together with the Annexes, once feedback from the remaining stakeholders has been incorporated.

Action 17.1 Caroline Cantley to complete the manufacturing report: re-order summary, incorporate stakeholder comments and adjust diagram (with input). SSAC Chair to sign off the final report on behalf of SSAC. Secretariat to forward the report to policy colleagues, upload onto SSAC website and obtain feedback from policy.

4.2 **Fire Service (Prevention Technology) SSAC Note 20/9** – Secretariat advised that the draft had previously been circulated to SSAC for comment. All feedback received and further clarification from project lead, Alan Settery (former SSAC member) had been included in this final version.

Action 17.2 Secretariat to complete Fire Prevention/Smart Home Technology report with background around commissioning and scope of the report prior to publishing on SSAC website following approval from the Chair on behalf of SSAC.

4.3 Members thought it would be useful to have a standardised approach to report templates.

Action 17.3 Secretariat to develop examples of possible templates for future use. To help with this, Bob Ferrier to provide examples used for science advice from CREW centre of expertise.

4.4 **Geospatial Knowledge Project** – Mark Inall provided a verbal update on this project which is supported by Andrew Millar and Shona Nicol (SG policy – Head of Geodata). Some of the work had been disrupted due to Covid-19, but a project intern (PhD student) is helping with the project for six months, and is currently looking at case studies. Four main questions under consideration are: wildfires; land use change; marine issues and infectious diseases in plants.

Action 17.4 Mark Inall to circulate the questions about geospatial data to SSAC members for feedback and refining. SSAC members who would like to engage in the project are to contact Mark Inall to become involved.

Action 17.5 Mark Inall to liaise with Andrew Millar and Secretariat to help identify policy stakeholders and refine geospatial questions.

5. Climate Change Issues

5.1 **COVID-19 'the new normal'** – The Chair introduced this session, where a broad range of issues was discussed, linking post Covid-19 green recovery and climate change issues. The ongoing manufacturing report and the sustainable chemicals note was also discussed in this session.

5.2 **COP26 Talking Heads (SSAC/RSE project)** (SSAC Note 20/6) – Mark Inall has taken the lead on this, with support from the Chair and secretariat. It is a joint piece of work with RSE leading up to COP26 (now Nov 2021). SSAC members were generally supportive of the idea and discussed the different possible messages and aims of the work. SSAC members felt that the young participants might be best placed to design the videos (rather than paying professionals) but it was recognised that there was a joint ownership of the project with the RSE.

Action 17.6 Mark Inall to revise the one pager on Talking Heads videos (SSAC Note 20/6), focusing on aim and audience, and circulate to SSAC for input and to further liaise with RSE.

5.3 **Sustainable Chemicals Note (SSAC Note 20/7)** – The Chair led the discussion on this report, and its links to the recommendations in the Manufacturing report. It was agreed that if the report were to remain with the current focus it would need to include the outcomes from the manufacturing project. There is an opportunity to broaden out to use a systems approach to connect Scotland's resources (waste and natural) and the demand for these resources. This approach would require more SSAC members to work together.

Action 17.7 Andrew Millar to talk to former SSAC member Iain Hunter (who led this project) about SSAC views on the sustainable chemicals note and feedback to SSAC after which the Chair and Robert Bowman will develop a proposal for taking the report forward.

5.4 **Roundtable on other SSAC projects/work** – Discussion identified there was a need to work across sectors to provide a holistic approach to future work.

Action 17.8 SSAC Chair to develop the idea of a picture of systems thinking around Scottish resources and demand as a possible framework for policy teams and COP26.

6. Scottish Government Update

6.1 Roddy Macdonald provided an update on the policy work in the Higher Education and Science Division, which has been Covid-19 based over the last three months. He advised that further SG guidance is expected in a few weeks around the opening of university labs and campuses in the later phases of the First Minister's route map and that SG has commissioned SFC to review funding issues in light of Covid-19.

7. CSA Update

7.1 CSA provided an update on the work she has been involved with, noting that more teams across the Scottish Government were needing to apply science advice to their policy areas, in the context of Covid-19.

8. Covid-19

8.1 **SAGE** (Scientific Advisory Group for Emergencies) – Sheila Rowan advised that she has attended the twice-weekly meetings of UK SAGE since 28 April reflecting the broader discussions that take place given the wider impacts of Covid-19. UK SAGE minutes are available online.

CMO and other advisory groups – Structures have now evolved to deal with the science advice needs in the pandemic, including the new Advisory Group set up to support the CMO in March. Andrew Millar has been contributing to a group on environmental monitoring in understanding how to use waste water testing to detect corona virus in the general population.

8.2 There was discussion around current advice mechanisms and current state of the emergency, which is moving from respond to recover stage. Also discussed were issues on data and how this has been addressed in Scotland with the difficulties in making sure it can be used quickly due to the layers of permissions required. Questions were also asked about models used by advisory groups and lessons to be learnt on the resilience of supply chains for PPE and food. SG-funded projects have been given flexibility to adapt research projects and there have been a few responsive calls from UK Government, including from UKRI and ESRC.

8.3 **CMO and other advisory groups** – Structures have now evolved to deal with the science advice needs in the pandemic, including the new Advisory Group set up to support the CMO in March.

8.4 **Roundtable on SSAC members current Covid-19 related involvement with Scottish Government and UK bodies** – All members gave an update on their Covid-19 related work associated with their non-SSAC roles.

8.5 **Suggestions for potential SSAC work on Covid-19 issues** – there is potential to update existing work. Secretariat had contacted relevant policy teams to ascertain demand and potential benefit. Robotics policy team had already indicated it would be useful.

Action 17.9 Secretariat to continue to contact relevant policy teams to establish whether there is a need for an update on previous SSAC advice due to Covid-19 eg, energy and hydrogen economy, ageing population.

Action 17.10 Caroline Cantley offered help from SRPe for updating the RAS briefing note and is to liaise with Colin McInnes.

8.6 There were many other suggestions put forward for consideration as well as whether a longer term, cross cutting piece of work on an aspect such as the green recovery would be useful.

Action 17.11 SSAC Chair, CSA and secretariat to consider all suggestions put forward and where SSAC could add most value in green recovery work and to circulate ideas to SSAC.

Action 17.12 SSAC members to provide secretariat with details of Covid-19 Recovery Task Forces and similar groups focused on post-lockdown recovery that they are aware of and secretariat to include a list of any SG Task Force work streams to identify any gaps which SSAC may take forward.

9. Member Updates – non COVID-19 related

9.1 There were no non-Covid-19 updates.

10. Any Other Business

10.1 There were questions raised about the Heathwaite report on pooling.

11. Date of Next Meeting

11.1 The next SSAC meeting will be held on 3 September 2020 by video conference.

Summary of Actions

15/12	Secretariat to invite relevant officials to present at a future meeting on the following topics: the Infrastructure Commission; and the 'well-being economy'. Secretariat to take forward other suggestions for guest speakers, made at the SSAC dinner.	Closed. Invited speakers in relevant areas. Further suggestions to be made at next meeting.
16/8	CSA to follow up with University of Glasgow contact to obtain their views on the theme of collaboration on COP26.	Closed. COP26 delayed. SSAC and RSE working on 'Talking heads' with Mark Inall leading.
17/1	Caroline Cantley to complete the manufacturing report: re-order summary, incorporate stakeholder comments and adjust diagram (with input). SSAC Chair to sign off the final report on behalf of SSAC. Secretariat to forward the report to policy colleagues, upload onto SSAC website and obtain feedback from policy.	Completed. Report published 27 July. Policy feedback provided in SSAC Note 20/13
17/2	Secretariat to complete Fire Prevention/Smart Home Technology report with background around commissioning and scope of the report prior to publishing on SSAC website following approval from the Chair on behalf of SSAC.	Completed. Report with policy officials. Publication on website to be considered post implementation of Fire Service Framework strategy.
17/3	Secretariat to develop examples of possible templates for future use. To help with this, Bob Ferrier to provide examples used for science advice from CREW centre of expertise.	Completed. SSAC Note 20/16 circulated for comment.
17/4	Mark Inall to circulate the questions about geospatial data to SSAC members for feedback and refining. SSAC members who would like to engage in the project are to contact Mark Inall to become involved.	Completed.
17/5	Mark Inall to liaise with Andrew Millar and Secretariat to help identify policy stakeholders and refine geospatial questions.	Completed – feedback provided.
17/6	Mark Inall to revise the one pager on Talking Heads videos (SSAC Note 20/6), focusing on aim and audience, and circulate to SSAC for input and to further liaise with RSE.	Completed – Update on SSAC Note 20/14
17/7	Andrew Millar to talk to former SSAC member Iain Hunter (who led this project) about SSAC views on the sustainable chemicals note and feedback to SSAC after which the Chair and Robert Bowman will develop a proposal for taking the report forward.	Ongoing – Andrew Millar followed up with Iain Hunter. Chair to discuss at 3 Sep Meeting.
17/8	SSAC Chair to develop the idea of a picture of systems thinking around Scottish resources and demand as a possible framework for policy teams and COP26.	Closed. See SSAC Note 20/12
17/9	Secretariat to continue to contact relevant policy teams to establish whether there is a need for an update on previous SSAC advice due to Covid-19 eg, energy and hydrogen economy, ageing population.	Completed – Hydrogen and climate change policy teams presenting at Sep SSAC meeting.

17/10	Caroline Cantley offered help from SRPe for updating the RAS briefing note and is to liaise with Colin McInnes.	Completed – Colin McInnes content to assist.
17/11	SSAC Chair, CSA and secretariat to consider all suggestions put forward and where SSAC could add most value in green recovery work and to circulate ideas to SSAC.	Completed – Chair paper provided in SSAC Note 20/12
17/12	SSAC members to provide secretariat with details of Covid-19 Recovery Task Forces and similar groups focused on post-lockdown recovery that they are aware of and secretariat to include a list of any SG Task Force work streams to identify any gaps which SSAC may take forward.	Completed - Secretariat circulated link to list of SG/CSA Covid-19 groups – SSAC members to include their details.