SSAC Minutes – 4 March 2020

Atlantic Quay 5, Fleming B, Glasgow

Attendees:

Attendee	Position
Professor Maggie Gill	SSAC Chair
Professor Sheila Rowan	Chief Scientific Adviser for Scotland (*ex officio member*)
Professor David Crossman	Chief Scientific Adviser Health (*ex officio member*)
Professor Andrew Millar	Chief Scientific Adviser ENRA (*ex officio member*)
Professor Robert Bowman	SSAC Member
Professor Anna Dominiczak	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)
Laura Dougan	SG Higher Education and Science (Item 12)
Brenda Calder	Scottish Government – (Item 7)
Roger Halliday	Scottish Government – Chief Statistician (Item 10)
Professor Sir Anton Muscatelli	Principal of University of Glasgow (Item 12)

1.   Networking Lunch

2.   Welcome and Apologies

2.1   The Chair welcomed all to the meeting noting apologies from Dr Caroline Cantley, and from Professor Millar for late arrival and early departure.

3.   Minutes and Actions of last meeting

3.1   The minutes of the last meeting were officially agreed and will now be uploaded onto SSAC website. Secretariat and members updated the meeting on outstanding actions.

Action 14/6   Professor Crossman to provide an update on Guthrie Cards as a research resource.

Professor Crossman explained the potential of this genetic resource as well as the issues regarding its use since it is a non-consented genetic resource. He will update as more information becomes available.

3.2   All previous actions were completed except the following:
(Professor Millar was not in attendance at start of meeting due to other commitments)

Action 14/19 – Ongoing – Professor Millar updated on the DORA (Declaration on Research Assessment) impact factors, implementation of which is ongoing. He highlighted that SSAC may have a role to play in helping to share best practice in this area. SSAC members to advise Professor Millar which academics/Vice Principals in their institutions are responsible for DORA implementation.

15.3 – Ongoing – Secretariat to research and provide further advice regarding a suitable event at which to launch the Sustainable Chemicals Note.

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.

4. CSA Update

4.1   Jo Ward provided an update on behalf of CSA and outlined examples of CSA recent external activity including her support of Sir Patrick Vallance, UK CSA, on his visit to Glasgow where academics showcased areas of science and research innovation.

5. SG Update

5.1   Roddy Macdonald provided an update of SG priorities and highlighted three main areas: SG planning and information gathering about coronavirus, which is now available on the SFC website and also in a Health Protection Scotland document; SG Budget published 6 February; Brexit negotiations are ongoing.

6. Update on Robotics and Autonomous Systems (RAS) Report

6.1   Secretariat provided an update on the above report. It was noted that SSAC members should see the final version of proofs after all comments are accepted/dealt with before publication. Future amendments/feedback should be provided through the collaborative working platform via erdm.connect. It was agreed that a shorter deadline for comments could be given if there were time constraints, but that ideally sufficient time should be given for all members to comment and/or approve.

7. Presentation and Feedback on RAS project

7.1   Brenda Calder (SG Economic Development Directorate) provided positive feedback on the RAS report and advised that the First Minister would refer to the report during her speech at the Idea 59 event taking place on 18 March at Glasgow Science Centre. BC is happy to give further feedback in the future. SSAC discussed the fact that the generic recommendations could be used for a number of other issues (such as the life sciences sector).

Action 16/1 – Brenda Calder to send details of the Idea 59 event to SSAC members and to provide feedback on the event and a further update on the impact of the RAS report over time.

8. Standing Item – Feedback on SSAC Reports – Note 20/2

8.1   Feedback on previous reports was noted and the format commended.

9.   Update on Current Projects/Reports

9.1   Briefing Note:

Sustainable Chemicals Note – Secretariat advised that Professor Hunter will incorporate final comments and once received, secretariat will circulate the final version to the SSAC for comments.

9.2   Commissioned Work:

Fire Service Prevention Technology/Smart Homes Technology – Secretariat advised that the high level position paper by Alan Settery is expected in the next few weeks and would be circulated to the members for comments/feedback via erdm.connect.

Environmental Impacts of the Scottish Manufacturing Industry

Interim measures have been put in place due to Caroline Cantley's sick leave, with the SSAC Chair acting as chair of the project working group and a research assistant has been recruited and funded by SSAC to complete the literature review for the project. Secretariat have organised a workshop for 16 March with key manufacturing sector stakeholders. The outcome of the workshop and literature review will be discussed at the fourth working group meeting on 25 March.

SSAC agreed to amend the scope to focus on climate change impacts whilst taking into account other environmental impacts. SSAC may possibly recommend a further study on these other impacts, to be discussed at the recommendation and strategy stage of the project.

The SSAC Chair will draft an initial version of the report with a summary of the literature review and workshop which will be forwarded to the members for input by SSAC members within tight deadlines.

Action 16/2 – Secretariat to update working group members of the scope agreed by SSAC and incorporate this into the workshop design.

Action 16/3 – Secretariat to invite SSAC members to a teleconference meeting first week of April to discuss the outcome of the workshop and literature review, in order to develop a strategy and practical recommendations as specified in the commissioning note.

Action 16/4 – SSAC members to give input into drafting of Environmental Impacts report.

Geospatial Knowledge Project

Professor Inall gave an update on the project and advised that recruitment of an intern is nearly complete.

10.   Presentation on Research Data Scotland – Roger Halliday, SG Chief Statistician

10.1   Roger Halliday outlined the background of Research Data Scotland which was set up as a charity to discover, to access and link data. He announced that there would be a soft launch around Spring 2020 and aimed to engage with users and the public by end 2020. He

was looking at how best to engage with academics at this stage and confirmed that a meeting had been set up with Professor Dominiczak.

Action 16/5   Professor Sheikh agreed to work with Roger Halliday regarding data catalogue.

Action 16/6   Secretariat to provide Roger Halliday with copy of Geospatial Project commissioning note.

Action 16/7   CSA to update Roger Halliday on her recent visit to the International Centre for Mathematical Studies (ICMS) and the potential for ICMS to work with SG.

11.   Comfort Break

12.   Presentation on the Muscatelli Report – Sir Anton Muscatelli

12.1   Professor Muscatelli discussed his report, Driving Innovation in Scotland, published November 2019. Recommendations broadly fell into three main areas of focus: National Mission; Focus; and Environment.

12.2   SSAC members identified the need to discuss issues around collaboration and skills shortages and to look at examples of how things work elsewhere, eg, in Northern Ireland.

12.3   There was discussion around what SSAC could do to support innovation in Scotland, particularly around identifying potential areas of opportunity.

13.   COP26 – Opportunities for SSAC

13.1   Members discussed ideas for SSAC engagement and participation in COP26 events. Professor Inall attended the COP26 stakeholder event on 4 February and noted that overall feedback from the event was still to be issued. There was agreement to engage with RSE to participate in joint events and a follow up meeting was arranged with CSA/SSAC Chair and RSE to discuss further.

Action 16/8   CSA to follow up with University of Glasgow contact to obtain their views on the theme of collaboration on COP26.

Action 16/9   All SSAC members to identify Scottish solutions to climate change; to consider if the recommendations from the upcoming Environmental Impacts of the Scottish Manufacturing Industry report could be used in this space; and to go forward collectively with stakeholder engagement on COP26.

Action 16/10 Professor Inall to meet RSE regarding an ERC event and will feedback to SSAC.

Action 16/11 SSAC Chair and CSA to discuss joint events with RSE at a meeting on 26 March.

14.   Chair and Member Updates

14.1   Members were advised to think of potential ideas for future SSAC reports which will include an SSAC lead and deputy to mitigate any risks to completion of projects.

14.2 There was discussion around a number of possible future work streams for science advice:

- addressing the skills issues outlined in the Muscatelli report as well as looking at how R&D funding is allocated from UK and developing networks in Scotland to move forward on addressing issues of place.
- the possibility of rearticulating the findings of the RAS report for a number of sectors.
- on Hydrogen and possible carbon storage.
- on the research landscape 'post pools'.

Action 16/12 Professor Underhill to provide details of GeoNetZero Conference to be held on 5 November in Edinburgh.

Action 16/13 SSAC members to consider ideas for future SSAC work and circulate a few sentences for consideration at the next meeting.

15. AOB

15.1 No issues raised.

16. Dates of next meeting

16.1 Post meeting discussion – it was agreed that Professors Underhill and Jones will host the next SSAC meeting on 4 June at Heriot-Watt University.

Action 16/14 Secretariat to ask SSAC members for views on a possible ministerial dinner at the next meeting.

Summary of Actions

No.	Action	Updated 4 Jun 2020
14/19	Professor Millar updated on the DORA (Declaration on Research Assessment) impact factors, implementation of which is ongoing. He highlighted that SSAC may have a role to play in helping to share best practice in this area. SSAC members to advise Professor Millar which academics/Vice Principals in their institutions are responsible for DORA implementation.	Completed
15/3	Secretariat to research and provide further advice regarding a suitable event at which to launch the Sustainable Chemicals Note.	Completed - Update provided – see SSAC Note 20/7
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.	Ongoing - Further engagement will continue post Covid-19 restrictions.
16/1	Brenda Calder to send details of the Idea 59 event to SSAC members and to provide feedback on the event and a further update on the impact of the RAS report over time.	Completed - Idea 59 event cancelled due to Covid-19 impacts. See SSAC Note 20/7 for feedback.
16/2	Secretariat to update Environmental Impacts working group members of the scope agreed by SSAC and incorporate this into the workshop design.	Completed – WG updated following SSAC meeting.
16/3	Secretariat to invite SSAC members to a teleconference meeting first week of April to discuss the outcome of the workshop and literature review, in order to develop a strategy and practical recommendations as specified in the commissioning note.	Completed – Meeting held 13 May - feedback provided.
16/4	SSAC members to give input into drafting of Environmental Impacts report.	Completed – Feedback provided and incorporated into key recommendations.
16/5	Professor Sheikh agreed to work with Roger Halliday regarding data catalogue.	Completed
16/6	Secretariat to provide Roger Halliday with copy of Geospatial Project commissioning note.	Completed
16/7	CSA to update Roger Halliday on her recent visit to the International Centre for Mathematical Studies (ICMS) and the potential for ICMS to work with SG.	Completed
16/8	CSA to follow up with University of Glasgow contact to obtain their views on the theme of collaboration on COP26.	Ongoing - This will be revisited following the announcement of the new date for COP26.
16/9	All SSAC members to identify Scottish solutions to climate change; to consider if the recommendations from the upcoming Environmental Impacts of the Scottish Manufacturing Industry report could be used in this space;	Completed – climate change issues discussed at 4 June meeting.

	and to go forward collectively with stakeholder engagement on COP26.	
16/10	Professor Inall to meet with RSE regarding an ERC event and will feedback to SSAC.	Completed – see SSAC Note 20/6
16/11	SSAC Chair and CSA to discuss joint events with RSE at a meeting on 26 March.	Completed – see SSAC Note 20/6. Mark Inall taking forward Talking Heads
16/12	Professor Underhill to provide details of GeoNetZero Conference to be held on 5 November in Edinburgh.	Completed
16/13	SSAC members to consider ideas for future SSAC work and circulate a few sentences for consideration at the next meeting.	Completed
16/14	Secretariat to ask SSAC members for views on a possible ministerial dinner at the next meeting.	Closed due to Covid-19 restrictions