

## **SSAC Quarterly Update – September 2025**

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 (SG) 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 Julian Jones from 1 December 2023, the SSAC has nineteen other members, in addition to the Scottish Government's Chief Scientific Advisers, all of whom are ex-officio members: Chief Scientific Adviser (CSA) for Scotland, Professor Calum Semple, Chief Scientist (Health), Professor Dame Anna Dominiczak, CSA (Environment, Natural Resources and Agriculture), Professor Mathew Williams, Chief Social Policy Adviser, Professor Linda Bauld and CSA (Marine), Professor Mark Inall.

The SSAC issues a short report following each quarterly meeting to provide an update on its latest work streams and areas of interest. The next SSAC quarterly meeting will be held on 2 December 2025, thereafter the format of the SSAC meetings will change to two in-person strategic meetings in 2026 with four operational online meetings.

### **1. SSAC CURRENT WORKSTREAMS**

- Engineering Biology – a rough draft was shared with the SSAC ahead of the meeting on 9 September for feedback with a caveat that a number of sections were still to be fully written. Progress continues on the report with full agreement to come via email correspondence in due course.
- Critical Technologies – the first draft of the report was shared with the wider SSAC at the 9 September meeting for feedback and general sign off. General approval of the report was agreed, subject to comments on specific details and further drafting. A final draft is to be prepared for approval by email correspondence.

### **2. SSAC FUTURE WORKSTREAMS**

- Near-term skills – A meeting was held on 2 September with SSAC working group and SG colleagues to identify focus of a potential project in this area - awaiting feedback from SG.
- NHS decarbonisation – Following meetings with the SSAC working group and SG policy colleagues a draft scoping document was prepared for discussion at the SSAC 9 September meeting. WG meeting again on 25 September to continue refining the scope. Work is expected to be underway ahead of next SSAC meeting on 28 October.
- Innovation Ecosystems – A meeting with SSAC and SG policy officials was held in August to discuss the potential for this project. They identified similar work is being carried out by other groups. Awaiting feedback from SG on whether there are gaps or overlaps with work already underway.
- Flexible Energy Demand Management – Following the findings from the initial roundtable in May 2025, a draft scoping document for a future project was shared with the wider SSAC on 9 September. SSAC to provide feedback on the draft and advise if they would like to be included in the working group to take this work forward.
- Other future project suggestions are under consideration with further advice and feedback sought from SG colleagues including AI and hydrogen.

### **3. SSAC MEMBERSHIP NEWS**



- The new CSA, Professor Calum Semple, came into post on 5 August 2025 and attended his first SSAC meeting on 9 September.
- Six existing members of the SSAC - Professors Horsfall, Kerr, Owens, Pickersgill, Roberts and Simms - have extended their terms for a further 12 months, with terms now ending on 30 November 2026.
- Associate member Dr Connor Blair will complete his term on 30 November 2025 having been extended twice, the maximum offered.
- Professor Boden's term will end on 30 November 2025.

For further information, please contact the SSAC Secretariat team at:

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