SSAC Bi-annual Update – November 2026

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 twenty-three members and four associate 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, CSA (Marine), Professor Mark Inall and Chief Social Policy Adviser, Professor Linda Bauld.

The SSAC issues a short report following each bi-annual strategic meeting to provide an update on its latest work streams and areas of interest. The next SSAC operational meeting will be held online on 2 February 2027.

1. SSAC Current Workstreams

- **Energy Demand Management** – Regular working group meetings are being arranged to accommodate the addition of new SSAC members to the group.
- **Skills** – The first draft of the report has been shared with Council for material edits. Next steps will include incorporating these changes before seeking detail edits and sign off via correspondence by Council.
- **Innovation Ecosystem** – One-on-one interviews are being conducted by the project co-leads and roundtable leaders to gain additional unique perspectives to feed into the report. The aim is for the report to be shared with Council for sign off ahead of the next operational meeting.
- **NHS Decarbonisation** – Working group meetings are reducing to monthly as work continues on the initial report draft. Members will be providing comments on a previously shared overview as drafting continues. The aim is to share the first draft with the working group by Christmas and with Council in the new year.
- **Climate Change Plan (CCP)** – Regular working group meetings are being arranged and a project intern is being recruited to support the project. A follow up meeting between the project lead, SSAC Chair, and SG colleagues has been arranged to finalise the project scope.

2. SSAC Membership News

Eight new members and three new associate members joined the SSAC for their first in-person strategic meeting on 27 October 2026. This includes Dr Kirsten Jenkins who received her full membership in the recent recruitment campaign. Their terms will run through to September 2029 and September 2027 respectively, with the possibility for extension.

Six current members have attended their final SSAC meetings ahead of the conclusion of their term on 30 November 2026. Professor Mel Simms has agreed to extend her term via co-option for an additional year, through to 30 November 2027.

3. SSAC Future Workstreams

The new members and associate members were asked to share their project suggestions for consideration by the Chair and CSA for Scotland. Discussions are ongoing about the development of the future workstream.

For further information, please contact the SSAC Secretariat team at: Scottishscience@gov.scot