

**FSA Science Council 2nd meeting
Future work programme (discussion paper)**

Questions for the Council:

1. What are Members' initial thoughts on the early suggestions and questions for its future work programme (below)?
2. Are there 'hot topics' Members would like to highlight to inform the discussion?
3. Are there 'bigger' questions coming out of the three Working Groups that the Council feels would be tackled best as a separate, new piece of work?
4. On Science Council ways of working, what has gone well, and what could be improved?
5. In particular, how could the Council develop its engagement with key people across the FSA and with relevant external expertise or perspectives such as those in the other Scientific Advisory Committees (SACs)?

Background

1. At the first meeting of the Science Council in June 2017 the FSA Chairman Heather Hancock outlined the three strategic priorities the FSA needs to concentrate on over the next two to three years: Delivering the Regulating Our Future (ROF) transformation; anticipating, planning for and delivering the consequences of exiting the EU; doing the day job exceptionally well. Heather introduced the main issues and challenges on which the FSA would like input from the Science Council in the next two years:
 - I. To advise the Board on how it can get confident that we have access to the right science capability and capacity.
 - II. What does the Council advise to be best practice in establishing and communicating risk and certainty?
 - III. What should the FSA do to improve its horizon scanning and its understanding of global food systems risks (and opportunities)?

Current Science Council work programme

2. Working Groups of the Science Council have been set up to answer the questions and each Group is taking a phased approach so that the Council can deliver useful outputs as it works.
3. The Working Groups are completing phase 1 of their work with reports to the December meeting.
4. The next step will be to take forward Phase 2 through working group meetings between February and April, which will report to the Council's 3rd meeting in

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June (date to be confirmed). The Science Council Chair will report to the FSA Board at the 14 March 2018 open Board meeting.

5. This work is likely to fully occupy the Council's capacity to the middle of 2018 but the Council Chair and FSA would like to start to discuss possible priorities beyond this.

Future work programme

6. The Science Council will discuss its future work programme in more detail at its 3rd meeting. The Council Chair and CSA would like to invite early thoughts from the Council on this on 13 December to
 - a. inform the discussion at the next meeting and
 - b. identify any new priority activities, if any, that should be taken forward before then (in addition to the planned activity on the 3 established Working Groups).
7. The ideas for possible issues set out below have arisen in the course of discussions with the FSA Chair, CSA, Council Chair and Secretariat. They are presented as ideas for discussion, not as a set of agreed priorities.

Innovation in the food chain

8. Part of the rationale for the FSA's Regulating our Future approach is that it wants to be more on the front foot, anticipate future risks and harness innovation. Innovation in food preparation and delivery and technological innovation are topical and of particular interest to the FSA.
9. In March 2016, the Triennial Review of FSA Scientific Advisory Committees recommended that: "FSA should replace the risk advisory functions of the ACNFP and the ACAF with a new core expert Committee, which would retain any future functions required from these two committees within the framework of a wider remit on innovation in the food chain."
10. The FSA has completed some in-house scoping work to evaluate the FSA's need for advice on innovation and to propose an approach to obtaining expert advice.
11. Fully worked up advice proposals were developed for seven different areas across FSA, and following a prioritisation exercise three of these were selected for the pilot stage.
12. The Council's role could be to consider and comment on these proposals to help identify the inputs in terms of evidence and expertise which would be needed to address them.

How should FSA science work following UK exit from the European Union

13. Does the FSA require the Science Council's advice on strategic science issues specifically related to its preparations for the UK exiting the European Union?
14. It should be clear what sorts of outputs the FSA might require from this work. It should also be noted that the FSA's contingency planning for EU Exit does not pre-empt the outcome of the ongoing negotiations, and the Science

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Council advice would need to provide the flexibility to respond to a wide range of negotiated outcomes.

Future food systems

15. The question on 'what might a future food system look like and how should the FSA be prepared' is incorporated in the remit and research to inform Working Group 3.
16. However, there is scope for ongoing work for the Council to consider how the research findings will inform and shape its future work activities.

Issues coming out of the Working Groups

17. Are there cross-cutting or priority areas or suggestions for future work arising from the 3 Working Groups that should be taken forward as new/separate piece(s) of work?

Ways of working

18. The Council may want to reflect on ways of working to date and whether or not it would like to make any changes to this, thinking about how Members work together, but also with FSA, and the support it receives from the Secretariat.
19. The Council Chair noted it may not be practical to establish new working groups to answer every new question. Another option would be to have representatives from each of the established working groups to work on new questions in the work programme.
20. What does being an excellent accountable modern regulator mean for science & evidence specifically? This is not a specific/developed question for the Council to address but rather a key aspect of the context of all its work and something for the Council to bear in mind when developing its work programme.