

**FSA Science Council Working Group on Risk and Uncertainty (Working Group 2)**

**Teleconference meeting**

**Tuesday 14 November 2017 9.00-10.00**

**Attendees**

<b>Working Group</b>	<b>Secretariat</b>	<b>FSA</b>
Mark Woolhouse (Chair)	Patrick Miller	Guy Poppy, Chief Scientific Adviser
Sandy Thomas	Gwen Aherne	
John O'Brien	Emma Lamb	
Mark Rolfe	Jane Ince	
Paul Turner		
<b>Unavailable:</b> Sarah O'Brien		

**Agenda item 1 – Set up teleconference and roll call**

1. Science Council Chair Sandy Thomas opened the meeting. She highlighted that it is important for the Working Group to ensure that its recommendations to the FSA Board are fit for purpose and operationally useful, and a basis for giving the Board confidence.
2. The Working Group (WG) Chair Mark Woolhouse welcomed everyone to the call. All but one member, Sarah O'Brien, were available to join on the day.
3. Mark Woolhouse noted that there would not be sufficient time to take all comments at this meeting but that there would be further opportunities to comment before the principles and recommendations were finalised. The Chair proposed that he would introduce each agenda item with some short commentary and go around each member for comments in turn.

**Agenda item 2 - Draft minutes of the 4 October meeting: SC WG2 TC1 paper 2**

4. The Secretariat had circulated draft minutes of the 4 October meeting and received some minor changes. These were tracked in the tabled version for ease of reference. Subject to making a clarification at paragraph 4 that the numbers quoted for FSA risk management capacity referred to staff involved in developing policy risk management, and not inspection staff working on its enforcement and compliance, the Working Group approved the minutes as final.

**ACTION 1 Secretariat to prepare the final version of the 4 October minutes for the record.**

**Agenda item 3 - Revised draft principles on risk and uncertainty: SC WG2 TC1 paper 3**

5. The Secretariat had taken forward the action from the first WG meeting to circulate the draft principles to the Chairs of the FSA's other Scientific Advisory Committees (SACs) for comment, and to the WG and FSA staff for further comment and drafting suggestions. Comments were received from members of the ACNFP and COM; the Chair noted the importance of also having responses from the FSA's two principal risk assessment committees, ACMSF and COT, before

further revisions were made and tasked the Secretariat with following this up as a matter of priority.

**ACTION 2 – Secretariat to follow up with ACMSE and COT Chairs for comments on the draft principles on risk and uncertainty by close of this week 17 November 2017.**

6. The WG discussed ownership of the principles and came to a view that the WG is co-developing the principles with the FSA and will approve them for submission to the Board with the recommendation that they are adopted by the FSA. The FSA would then own the principles (assuming it accepted them) as well as the routes to operationalising these within the organisation. Sandy and Guy would discuss with FSA Chairman.

**ACTION 3 – Sandy Thomas and Guy Poppy to discuss WG view on ownership of principles with FSA Chairman.**

7. In the working draft principles tabled for the meeting, the Secretariat had accepted a number of the suggested changes received in the consultation, but had also left highlighted a range of comments that warranted further consideration by the WG.
8. The Working Group discussed the working draft and made some further suggestions and changes for the Secretariat to reflect in the next draft. The WG also agreed that some of the comments raised issues which were beyond the scope of this task but which the WG should flag to FSA as part of its advice and recommendations as meriting further consideration. Members would also provide additional comments by correspondence by close of the week Friday 17 November. Comments at the meeting included the following:
  - a. A stronger narrative is needed to describe what has changed and why we need the principles now.
  - b. Include as underlying principle within the table the statement that FSA always follows Codex principles as a minimum.
  - c. There is an opportunity to be more ambitious with the principles and to capture that risk analysis is an evolving science and the FSA needs to be agile about what risk science looks like and should aim to keep up to date with state of the art approaches (risk sciences, decision sciences, quality assurance of risk analysis, risk benefit analysis, improvement of risk communication, systemic and cross-disciplinary approaches). This could form one of the recommendations.
  - d. An underpinning feature should be about proportionality.
  - e. Number 3 - Bolster the text to take account of the comment that the three components of the risk analysis process should be documented fully and systematically in a transparent manner (rather than adding this as a separate principle)
  - f. Numbers 5 and/or 7 – capture the fact that the concept of zero risk does not exist (this might also be covered in the narrative).
  - g. Number 5 – capture the FSA’s risk oriented approach and emphasis as more responsive rather than reactive. Need to consider the speed with which the FSA can take proportional action and also achieve closure.
  - h. Number 6 – the acceptability of risk is a complicated issue and the FSA, in articulating its approach, will need to consider fundamental questions such as ‘acceptability to whom’

and the public's view on acceptability of risk. This is an area that can be flagged up as needing further consideration/reflection in the WG's report; it will be relevant to phase 2 of the WG's work.

**ACTION 4 – Working Group members to provide further comments by correspondence by close on 17 November if possible.**

**ACTION 5 – Secretariat to develop the next draft of the principles reflecting the contributions and comments received from the Working Group and SACs.**

**Agenda item 4 – Draft Working Group report on phase 1: SC WG2 TC1 paper 4**

9. The Secretariat had prepared a sketch of a WG report to the Council for consideration and development by Members. The Chair invited comments particularly around the draft recommendations and his own initial thoughts captured on slides 11 and 12. Sandy Thomas noted that the principles are robust for now; they improve the current situation by setting out that the FSA already follows Codex as a minimum and offer a Codex plus approach specifically tailored for FSA. Adoption of the principles will give the Board confidence that risk analysis is carried out effectively and the WG recommendations will provide a clear guide on how the FSA can further strengthen and future-proof its approach.
10. The following comments were made by the WG:
  - a. The WG Chair's commentary is very useful to have. Some of this, together with the Working Group's comments, could be used to flesh out the recommendations.
  - b. Recommendation 1 – include that the best practice principles document needs to be a living document and responsive to external developments.
  - c. Recommendation 2 - Include that FSA should use the standard currently fit for purpose; noting that all standards are evolving so therefore the FSA should keep a watching brief and update approaches accordingly.
  - d. Include as a recommendation that the principles relate to impacts on health, however there are some closely related questions about other types of risk that could give rise to health concerns which the FSA should consider in the wider application of its advice.
  - e. Add recommendation on further work needed to develop FSA approach to acceptability of risk.
  - f. The Science Council Chair asked for clarification on the plans for taking forward recommendations 2 and 4.

**ACTION 6 - The Secretariat will work with the Working Group Chair to prepare a final draft for comments and the final report will be signed off by Sandy Thomas.**

**Agenda item 7 – Next steps phase 1 and planning phase 2: SC WG2 TC1 paper 5 (Terms of Reference)**

11. The Secretariat outlined next steps. WG Chair Mark Woolhouse will report to the Science Council on the Working Group's recommendations on 13 December. There will then be an opportunity to reflect changes and comments in the WG's final report on Phase 1. Sandy Thomas will report

on the Phase 1 recommendations to the FSA Board meeting in March. A WG meeting to progress Phase 2 will be scheduled for February/March 2018.

12. The Working Group has identified further work it could do to help FSA to

- Develop an overarching approach for risk assessment - it was noted WG input would be in the form of high level recommendations/advice rather than operational level input.
- Articulate FSA approach to assessing and managing uncertainty in risk analysis - this will be considered as part of phase 2 as it cuts across both phases.
- Articulating FSA approach to acceptability of risk – this could be picked up under phase 2.

**ACTION 7 - Secretariat to circulate and publish Working Group report to the Science Council by 6 December.**

### Meeting actions list

Action	Detail	Owner	Deadline
ACTION 1	Prepare the final version of the 4 October minutes for the record.	Secretariat	24 November
ACTION 2	Follow up with ACMSF and COT Chairs for comments on the draft principles on risk and uncertainty	Secretariat	17 November
ACTION 3	Discuss WG view on ownership of principles with FSA Chairman	Guy Poppy and Sandy Thomas	End November
ACTION 4	Provide further comments by correspondence	Working Group	17 November
ACTION 5	Develop the next draft of the principles reflecting the contributions and comments received from the Working Group and SACs	Secretariat	24 November
ACTION 6	Prepare a final draft report for comments	Secretariat working with Mark Woolhouse	1 December
ACTION 7	Circulate and publish Working Group report to the Science Council	Secretariat	6 December latest

### Draft timeline of next steps (developed by Secretariat after the meeting)

Second half November	Further work on refining report to the Council including the principles/Circulate draft minutes of teleconference
By 6 December	Report to Science Council finalised/Plans for phase 2 in place/Publish background information on working group
January 2018	Reflect Council comments in Working Group's report on phase 1
February/March 2018	Working Group meeting on phase 2

