

MINUTES OF THE FSA BOARD MEETING HELD ON 14 MARCH 2018

COVOCATION HALL, CHURCH HOUSE, WESTMINSTER

Present:

Heather Hancock, Chair; Laura Sandys, Deputy Chair; David Brooks; Ram Gidoomal; Rosie Glazebrook; Stewart Houston; Ruth Hussey; Colm McKenna; Mary Quicke; Stuart Reid.

Officials attending:

Catherine Bowles - Deputy Director of Regulatory and Legal Strategy
Steven Cowperthwaite - Head of EU & International Strategy (for paper FSA 18/03/08)
Simon Dawson - Head of Operations Assurance (for paper FSA 18/03/07)
Jason Feeney - Chief Executive
Chris Hitchen - Director of Finance and Performance
Maria Jennings - Director of Northern Ireland and Organisational Development
Julie Pierce - Director of Openness, Data and Digital
Guy Poppy - Chief Scientific Adviser
Nina Purcell - Director of Wales and Regulatory Delivery Division
Colin Sullivan - Chief Operating Officer
Sandy Thomas - Chair of the FSA Science Council (for paper FSA 18/03/06)
Michael Wight - Acting Director of Policy and Science

Apologies:

Paul Williams - Board Member
Rod Ainsworth - Director of Regulatory and Legal Strategy
Steve Wearne – Director of Policy and Science Group

1. WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

- 1.1. The Chair welcomed everyone in the room and online to the meeting. She was particularly pleased to see Director Steve Wearne, currently away from his duties, sitting in the audience. Apologies for absence were sent by Board member Paul Williams and from Director Rod Ainsworth, for whom Catherine Bowles was deputising today. The Chair reminded Board members to declare any conflicts of interest prior to each discussion.
- 1.2. Ram Gidoomal declared that he had been appointed to the Parliamentary and Health Services Ombudsman (PHSO) with the position taking effect in April.

2. MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON 6 December 2017 (FSA 18/03/01)

- 2.1. Referring to section 4.3 of the minutes, Ruth Hussey pointed out that at the second meeting with Welsh Government Ministers, it was her and not Jason Feeney who had attended. Apart from this amendment, the minutes were agreed as an accurate record of the 6 December 2017 Board meeting.

3. ACTIONS ARISING (FSA 18/03/02)

3.1. There were no comments on the actions arising.

4. CHAIR'S REPORT TO THE BOARD (FSA 18/03/03)

4.1. The Chair said a full list of her engagements since the December 2017 Board, was available on the FSA's website. She had included in the Board papers a written report of her recent meetings in Brussels.

4.2. The Chair noted that since the Board last met, the Board and Directors held their annual strategic planning and risk away day, where members reviewed the risk register and risk appetite of the FSA and provided early input to the development of the annual business plan.

4.3. On Monday the Audit and Risk Assurance Committee (ARAC) had met. On Tuesday the Board met for a series of briefings, including on the role of the accounting officer, EU exit and a demonstration of the Balanced Score Card for local authorities that is in development. It was an opportunity also for members to tour the new offices of Clive House. The Chair gave special thanks to the team responsible in executing the move successfully and delivering such a high quality working environment.

4.4. The Chair reported that the Board had dinner last night with Ian Wright, Director General of the Food and Drink Federation, where the industry's view of the challenges and changes in food manufacturing and distribution were discussed.

4.5. Together with Ruth Hussey, the Chair had met Mark Drakeford AM and Lesley Griffiths AM, Cabinet Secretaries for Finance and Rural Affairs respectively, in the Welsh Assembly Government. It was a constructive meeting to share perspective on EU exit, FSA planning, and the implications that EU Exit has in terms of FSA responsibilities in Wales.

4.6. The Chair had visited Hattingley Valley Wines and met representatives of Wine GB. The visit reinforced the growth of the industry in England and Wales. There had been useful discussions with the new producer group, Wine GB, aimed at building the principles of Regulating Our Future (ROF) into their approach. She would be taking this further when speaking at WineGB's first AGM in April.

4.7. Since the last Board meeting, a review of meat cutting plants had been announced, to be carried out jointly with Food Standards Scotland. The Board contributed by correspondence to the terms of reference for the review. The Chief Executive and Chair had met senior representatives of the meat industry to discuss their intentions. The Board will have a first opportunity to feed into the review in June; and the day before the June meeting, Board members will visit different meat establishments.

4.8. The Chair was pleased to report that the FSA had secured Ministerial support for moving forward with phase two of the National Food Crime Unit (NFCU). Wwork

is underway to develop the business case. As agreed when the Board last discussed the NFCU, this will be supported by a sub group of five Board members (the chair, Ruth Hussey, Colm McKenna, Stuart Reid and David Brooks). A final report will come to the Board in due course.

- 4.9. The Chair announced that with Ram Gidoomal stepping down as a Board member at the end of April, Paul Williams had kindly agreed join the Audit and Risk Assurance Committee.
- 4.10. The Board had been given the opportunity to contribute to the FSA review of the Food Advisory Committees, which would come to the June meeting for decision.
- 4.11. The Chair noted that the Board meeting in September will be in Cardiff and that she would be inviting members of the Welsh Food Advisory Committee to join the Board on visits the day before. In October it had been decided with Food Standards Scotland to host a joint awayday for the two Boards and Executive teams.
- 4.12. The Chair announced that given the number of incidents that have kept the FSA in the public eye, arrangements have been made for an informal briefing session for MPs at the end of April. This would be headed up by Neil Parish MP who chairs the Environment Food and Rural Affairs (EFRA) Select Committee.
- 4.13. The Chair wanted to put on record her disappointment about a report on the ROF programme from the Food Research Collaboration Unit, City University of London and University of Sussex. The Chair made clear that contrary to the report, there are no plans to remove Local Authorities from the front line in ensuring that food is safe for consumers. In fact, she said the FSA intends to enhance their role by giving them more information to assist them to do their jobs more effectively, and she added that there was no intention for any businesses to have responsibility for regulating themselves.
- 4.14. The Chair welcomed the Chancellor's Spring statement which allocated an initial £14 million to support the FSA's preparation for EU exit and the expansion of the NFCU. However, she noted that it was frustrating that there was still no clarity on the role of the FSA once the UK leaves the EU. It was important, she said, to continue to press Ministers for this clarity.

5. CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S REPORT TO THE BOARD (FSA 18/03/04)

- 5.1. The Chief Executive (CE), Jason Feeney, remarked on the additional funding for the NFCU subject to producing a satisfactory business case. He was pleased to see that this was now getting some traction, which is something that the FSA have been striving to achieve for a couple of years and is a significant milestone for the organisation.
- 5.2. The CE stated that one of the things he had prioritised over the last year was closer and stronger relationships with other government departments and agencies including the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs

(Defra), the Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC) and Public Health England (PHE). He emphasised that the FSA needed to be more coordinated in our actions and communications across government. In relation to this the CE reported on a joint meeting of the executive teams of FSA and PHE in January with another meeting scheduled in the autumn. The CE explained that there was mutual benefit in working more closely including the sharing of data.

- 5.3. The CE turned his attention to recent incidents involving the food industry. He said having seen a series of incidents including 2 Sisters and Russell Hume in the area of meat production, we needed to review the nature of controls in that part of the meat industry and see what improvements could be made from all the key stakeholders involved.
- 5.4. The CE noted that a review is underway, with a report on progress at the Board meeting in June, and with a further report at the September Board meeting, on which decisions will be made. Analysis is being commissioned, SROs appointed and a challenge group being created to enable an external perspective. The point was made that there has been good collaboration with other regulators to take this review forward.
- 5.5. The CE discussed the Global Food Safety Conference in Tokyo that he had attended last week. He made the comparison that two years ago the FSA did not have a speaking slot whereas this year we had four speaking slots and involvement in the meetings that happen around the conference. He mentioned that he was fortunate enough to spend time with Japanese Ministries looking at areas of common interest around risk assessment, risk management and risk communication. The point was made by the CE that the Japanese food system and safety regime operates about 80-90% the same way as UK food system functions. The CE said there were many key features that the UK would recognise. It was important to build understanding and trust with key trading partners we move forward to EU exit.
- 5.6. In response to a question on the NFCU and sustainable funding, the CE replied that within the £14 million received there is an element of funding of around £2 million for the 2018/19 costs of establishing the NFCU. The full year running costs are in the region of £4.5 million. The CE explained that the business case will set out the start-up costs and the operational costs.
- 5.7. On the question of EU exit funding, the CE made it clear that all this funding is for EU exit-related activity. He said it is broken down to the level of what grade of individuals we will be recruiting to do which activities that would drive those costs. We receive the money to spend on those things and those things only. We report back to HM Treasury on how much we have spent and what we have spent it on.
- 5.8. When questioned about the timescale for finalising the business case, the CE informed the meeting that the business case would be submitted no later than June 2018.

6. SCIENCE UPDATE (FSA 18/03/05)

- 6.1. The Chair invited the FSA Chief Scientific Adviser Professor Guy Poppy, to present his paper and Science Council Chair Professor Sandy Thomas to join him at the table.
- 6.2. Prof. Poppy offered his reflections on where we are with regards to science within the FSA, addressing the desire to have science and evidence at the heart of the organisation. He reflected that the department needs to be a scientifically literate regulator both an “intelligent customer of science”, sourcing and using the right science across the Agency’s work, as well as being an “intelligent provider” to the needs of others. He emphasised that bringing these two components together is critical.
- 6.3. In terms of intelligent provision, Prof. Poppy explained that though there are many competent providers within the organisation, there is scope to improve their internal connectivity to one another, and at times, their connectivity to the organisation’s wider objectives. Prof. Poppy explained that another key area where we review evidence is via independent expert committees. He outlined that as a result of the FSA’s Triennial Review of committees, the Science Council was created and a new Advisory Committee on Social Sciences is currently being appointed to.
- 6.4. Prof. Poppy cited two examples when this connection to independent scientific experts was important: fipronil in eggs and Salmonella in eggs. These are instances where the FSA got media attention for good reasons, in part because of the input of the relevant committees. However, FSA should not be complacent and needs to ensure all the committees consistently feel connected and engaged with the organisation. This requires the secretariat to those committees to be well resourced to support the highest quality of input from members, to deliver actions to the FSA and to provide feedback to committees that their contributions have been acted upon.
- 6.5. Conversely as an “intelligent customer” of science, Prof. Poppy stated that the FSA needs to be intelligent about what information already exists, about gaps in that information and recognise where information is coming from and potentially sharing resources with such sources. FSA can therefore be more strategic in commissioning future works.
- 6.6. Prof. Poppy highlighted that the Board had previously explored the opportunities of using a ‘Sir David Spiegelhalter type’ scale of one to four star evidence, and that the Science Council are considering the best means to assess evidence quality. This would support greater confidence whilst making subsequent risk management decisions.
- 6.7. Prof. Poppy made the point that as a CSA he is heavily involved in the cross-governmental CSA Network. They meet collectively, on a weekly basis immediately before a cross-governmental meeting of Permanent Secretaries, and the head of the CSA group attends the Permanent Secretaries’ meeting,

providing direct input at senior governmental level. He outlined that this provides valuable insight and greater access to a breadth of issues and work across government departments, and therefore greater opportunity for FSA to contribute and capitalise. The CSA network offers an opportunity for the FSA to be at the forefront of initiatives, for example by offering food as a case study to work on in relation to EU exit, across Government.

- 6.8. Prof. Poppy highlighted that FSA risk assessment capability had been through an independent review recently. There had also been a review of our social science capability and capacity which is being flagged as a result of wider cultural and behavioural changes. Such changes will influence the decisions and processes of the FSA in the future.
- 6.9. In conclusion, Prof. Poppy emphasised that as a department we need to have the confidence to continue to build on the desire to be an open, high performing, science-lead organisation. As a department, FSA should want to be envied around the world. However, this requires “having your homework marked constructively”, and the honesty to admit where changes should be made.

7. UPDATE FROM THE CHAIR OF THE SCIENCE COUNCIL (FSA 18/03/06)

- 7.1. The Chair asked Board members to save any questions for Professor Poppy until after Professor Sandy Thomas had given her update and reflections.
- 7.2. Prof. Thomas explained the makeup of the Science Council and that it had been in existence for nine months. It was an independent body able to offer advice directly to Prof. Poppy and his team and other colleagues within the FSA.
- 7.3. Prof. Thomas outlined that the Science Council had been set three broad questions by the Board from the outset. The first (Working Group 1) concerns how the Board can be confident that the FSA has access to the right science capability and assurance, and that it is making the best use of this. This work is in two phases – the first is focusing on how the FSA identifies and accesses that science. The second phase is focusing on how the FSA is using science.
- 7.4. The second question from the Board concerns risk and uncertainty (Working Group 2). Prof. Thomas said that the Science Council is producing some principles as a way of giving more foundation to the management of risk and uncertainty in the FSA. The principles will provide a checklist and framework to help ensure consistency across a range of FSA activities. The draft principles have been produced and will be put for approval to the Science Council in June, and then handed over to the FSA. Prof. Thomas stated that a second phase of the work will focus on the communication of risk and uncertainty. Various ideas are being discussed and will be formalised and handed over as a report later in the year.
- 7.5. Prof. Thomas said that the third question from the FSA relates to how the FSA should be improving its horizon scanning capability and its understanding of global food system risks and opportunities. The aim is to help the FSA be on the

front foot regarding new technology, new trends and to inform strategic thinking widely across the organisation. We are planning to produce a report that is widely accessible to different teams across the FSA.

- 7.6. In terms of progress Prof. Thomas said that the first phase of outputs has been largely completed for Working Groups 1 & 2. Phase two outputs will come to the FSA Board in June for these two Working Groups. She made clear that the Working Group 3 work on horizon scanning is a longer piece of work, and it will report later in 2018.
- 7.7. Prof. Thomas wanted to put on record her appreciation of how candid the FSA has been in telling the Science Council what works and what doesn't work so well. This is enabling the Science Council to make plans that would be useful and effective.
- 7.8. Prof. Thomas stressed that it was critical that the FSA remains focused and confident in building up its links internally and externally, presenting well reviewed evidence from FSA Staff who can really communicate well.
- 7.9. In conclusion Prof. Thomas made the point about using the best science and what that means. It was important for the FSA to develop a culture that is comfortable in its thinking about what the best science is, and what to do when evidence was unavailable or conflicting.
- 7.10. On trust and communication, she was pleased to have input from Justin Everard (FSA Communications) in terms of thinking about the risk communication work. Prof. Thomas noted that the uncertainty work was going to be important as the public are often frustrated with why scientific analysis does not always deliver straightforward answers to seemingly straightforward questions.
- 7.11. Regarding new technology, Prof. Thomas indicated that further discussion was needed with Heather and Guy regarding the Science Council's role. With technological changes (in terms of new science and new ways of doing things), she asked how the Science Council can help in making sure that relevant information is available early on. Part of this is about anticipation and about making strong, external connections to the wider scientific community.
- 7.12. In response to a question about how best to communicate our science more widely and effectively, Prof. Poppy stated that there are two strands of communication, one within the FSA and the other to the wider audience, both of which need different approaches. He stipulated that there is not a singular approach and nuances are required according to who you are communicating with.
- 7.13. Replying to a question on different types of business models Prof. Poppy made the argument that there can be a tendency to focus on emerging technologies and forget that a dramatic change in the business cultural model or cultural practices can have a bigger impact on what we are doing than a whole new technology. Thus, we are trying to flag that we are interested in some of the

socio-economic/political type of issues as much as we are interested in any new technology.

- 7.14. The Chair made a point that there is a risk that we overestimate how well the food business understand their own supply chain. This maybe the case with big retailers but there are other actors in food production and retail who do not have that line of sight.
- 7.15. In response to a question on operational matters, Prof. Poppy outlined the importance of having a Head of Science and Deputy CSA person in post. He stated that it was critical to have a science lead in the Executive because it enables the operational side of things to happen as we prepare to leave the EU.
- 7.16. On this issue the Chair was keen to understand the role of a deputy CSA being a full-time FSA employee from a governance point of view. Prof. Poppy offered the explanation that many OGDs have a deputy CSA and they meet as a group but do not deputize in the weekly CSA meetings. The Chair recognised the need for a Head of Science but was unconvinced that the Head of Science and Deputy CSA is quite the same thing.

ACTION 1: The Chief Executive to examine the role of a Deputy CSA in more detail and consider what place it might have in the FSA.

- 7.17. To a question raised about developing global scientific partnerships, Prof. Thomas stated that UK science is ranked highly, and that the UK has extensive international collaborations with partners around the world. Prof. Poppy commented that having expert committees and scientists being present and visible members is critical. We are well placed with good networks but stressed that we need to use them more.
- 7.18. The CE noted that he had met the Head of EFSA last year to explore ways to continue the FSA's involvement after EU exit. He noted that it would be helpful to establish how the FSA's relationship might work continue, regardless of the political framework.
- 7.19. The concern was voiced about communication and how we connect to what matters to the public and are we getting the right science being developed to answer those questions. Prof. Thomas commented that many people want clear advice that's not going to change too frequently, and which can be trusted. The Council's work on risk communication was looking into these issues. Prof. Poppy suggested that the formation of a new Advisory Committee on Social Sciences whose members come from a wide range of backgrounds would be well positioned to help in this space.
- 7.20. A Board Member flagged an issue regarding the Science Council challenging the Board when necessary. Prof. Thomas was confident that her members would not be hesitant to challenge when challenge is needed. She cited an example where her Council is challenging the CSA about the accessing and the use of science and current practice.

- 7.21. The Chair commented about whether the Board is doing enough to open itself up to that questioning and challenge. The Chair accentuated the point that it was important for the CSA and the Science Council to have the space to inform the Board about issues we may have overlooked, not optimized or those that were coming towards us that we not have prepared for. Without this we are not putting science and evidence at the heart of what we do.
- 7.22. In reply to a question about the FSA's priorities post EU exit, the Acting Director of Policy said that on the science side it will be about capability and capacity, and the priority will be for the UK to develop its own standalone risk assessment capability.
- 7.23. Responding to a query about our method in attracting the best universities, Prof. Poppy affirmed that some of the elite educational institutions are coming to the FSA, wanting to share their expertise. This was a clear indication of people wanting to bring their expertise to what we are working on.
- 7.24. To a question about building into science budgets costs for communication, the Director of Openness, Data and Digital replied that communications are important to all our various audiences and that can be complex because it requires the Scientific community to engage and explain and then for the communicators to take that on board and work out who the audience is and how to best frame the messages and get them out there. The Director added that it is very much on our communication agenda going forward.
- 7.25. Prof. Poppy revealed that many research projects are funded under United Kingdom Research and Innovation (UKRI) have a built-in allocation not to communications but what is termed 'pathways to impact'. It is a range of things you may do to translate your work into action. The audience was told that one the Department for International Development (DfID) is quite advanced in this space.
- 7.26. Highlighting Prof. Poppy's paper, the Chair identified some good pointers for the Board about things that could be better. Her question was whether the Board was doing enough to support this and how are we going to tell if the things that have been identified 'could be better' are better.
- 7.27. With regards to identifying positive achievements Prof. Poppy highlighted the increased use of the CSA network and the increase in the profile of individuals. He also mentioned one of the Council working groups helping to develop an engagement plan for science which would enable the development of the things you want to do and the methods of doing them. He was aware that other parts of the FSA were doing similar work so it was worth making sure that the science engagement plan connects up with the rest of the department.
- 7.28. Prof. Poppy underlined the point that it was good to have the trust and confidence of knowing that should the CE and executive team for whatever reason not appear to be listening that he could come to the Board. He added that for some

of the issues to do with how science is being used, he was confident he would be able to challenge Jason and others as a critical friend.

- 7.29. The CE said that in the last 18 months we have put in place some of the key foundation stones for science and its role within the FSA. He highlighted the work that has been done around the Science Committees, establishing the Science Council, the new Social Science committee that is being set up and having a separate and distinct Head of Science post which is in the process of being filled. Finally, the bid for money in relation to EU exit for the additional responsibilities for risk assessment which is a significant increase in the capacity and capability that the FSA has currently.
- 7.30. The Chair on behalf of the Board thanked Prof. Thomas and the Science Council for giving a critical and honest view of where we are and where we could be better.
- 7.31. The Chair also gave special thanks to Prof. Poppy seeing him as integral to the FSA along with his impact across Whitehall and the science community. She stressed that the calibre of candidates that have been appointed to the science committees would not have been the case without his activity to build up interest and encourage these candidates to come forward.
- 7.32. In conclusion the Chair outlined the importance to the Board of having a consistent and rigorous approach to getting the right science done by the right people in the right way on the right priorities which is actionable, explainable and is going to lead to impact. She added that maintaining and enhancing the quality, standing and the reach of science done by or on behalf of the FSA is critical as we leave the EU. The Board wishes to see an annual report to the Board from the CSA, and from the Chair of the Science Council, to identify and track progress.

8. RAW DRINKING MILK (FSA 18/03/07)

Before introducing the paper, the Chair stated that Board member Mary Quicke had declared her interest in this area. Although not engaged in the production of raw drinking milk herself, Mary had supported informally some of the producers of Raw Drinking Milk (RDM). Because of this, the Chair had determined that Mary should be allowed to openly participate in this discussion. When a decision is made on future policy and controls in June, she would reflect further on the right way for Mary to participate in that part of the meeting.

- 8.1. The Chair reminded the Board that today's discussion was for members to consider and raise questions about the science and evidence, and any additional information they felt was needed to enable them to reach a fully informed policy decision in June.
- 8.2. Board member Stuart Reid declared that as Principal of the Royal Veterinary College they own a dairy farm.

- 8.3. The Chair invited Simon Dawson, the Head of Operations Assurance, to present the paper.

By way of context, the Head of Operations Assurance indicated that when work to review RDM was commissioned in September 2017, it was against a backdrop of a significant increase in the volume of RDM being produced, and an increase in the number of producers registered to sell RDM. He added that this coincided with an increase in incidents of consumers falling ill, particularly over the last 12 months. An internal audit report last summer on delivery of RDM controls had identified some weaknesses to address.

- 8.4. The paper addressed 3 issues - firstly to update on implementation of the remaining recommendations of the 2015 policy review. Second, to update the Board in relation to the work done on strengthening the delivery of existing controls to address the issues raised by the internal audit. Finally, to share the emerging findings from the review of the risk assessment, review of the consumer evidence and the review of the economic analysis in advance of further discussion at the Board meeting in June 2018.
- 8.5. With regards to the 2015 policy review recommendations the Head of Operations Assurance updated on the most significant outstanding recommendation in relation to changes to the labelling of RDM, which will have a stronger health warning and mirror the labelling approach adopted in Wales. It was conceded that this has not proceeded as quickly as hoped.
- 8.6. The Head of Operations Assurance outlined another element of the policy review was to improve consumer information. We now publish a register of RDM producers and they receive an inspection rating which is updated monthly. We are also looking at ways to improve the transparency of that information, and the way in which information is made available to consumers.
- 8.7. As outlined in the Board paper one area where the need for improvements have been identified is in the area of producer guidance, and FSA are currently negotiating with the National Farmers Union (NFU) and producer representatives to discuss the potential for industry sponsored guidance with FSA input which would include legislative and field control requirements, best practice and guidance on effective management of the risks.
- 8.8. On the issue of improving delivery of existing controls, the Head of Operations Assurance said the internal audit identified several factors, the most striking was the recommendation that we should undertake a comparative analysis with the Northern Irish (NI) model in relation to RDM. The initial analysis had been completed. The headline finding is the importance of placing more obligation on the food businesses to demonstrate that the products they wish to sell are safe. The NI model is a far more structured and formal arrangement, and the requirement of Food Business Operators, for example, to have a food safety management system, is something we do not have in England and Wales at present.

- 8.9. The Head of Operations Assurance noted that the FSA's internal audit had found evidence of a mix of responsibilities between local authorities (LA) and FSA enforcement. As a consequence, the FSA have consulted on proposed transfer of responsibilities for enforcement for on-farm bottling and sampling from the LA to the FSA. That consultation closed in mid-February and the initial analysis of the results shows a mix of views, but on balance, people are in favour of the proposed transfer. In responding to the consultation and making any final recommendations on transfer or responsibilities the FSA will address any concerns raised by consultation respondents.
- 8.10. Moving on to the initial findings of the evidence review, the Head of Operations Assurance stated that the initial risk assessment has been produced and discussed with the Advisory Committee on the Microbiological Safety of Food. He noted that the key finding from the initial review shows that the current sampling regime does not identify pathogens that might prove to be a risk to public health. He acknowledged that further risk assessment work was ongoing.
- 8.11. In relation to consumer analysis, the proportion of consumers who said that they regularly drink RDM has risen from 3% to 10%, and there is an increase in the number of consumers who said they would try RDM - from 19% to 24%. The reasons given by consumers for drinking Raw Drinking Milk were largely related to perceived health and nutritional benefits. The Chair questioned if these health benefits were true or not. The Acting Director of Policy stated that there was currently no evidence to support the claims made for the health benefits of RDM.
- 8.12. Referring to the economic analysis, the Head of Operations Assurance noted the sizable increase in volume and that a significant proportion of milk (around 17% of total sales) is now sold via vending machine and products are also sold via the internet, which represents a new distribution channel since the last economic analysis was undertaken in 2012.
- 8.13. The Head of Operations Assurance concluded that in terms of next steps there would be engagement with producers in relation to the development of producer guidance. There should also be new labelling requirements in force by June. By June, we also will have reviewed the consultation responses on the issue of transfer of responsibility in relation to on-farm bottling, and we will have published the outcome of the consultation. We will also have completed the economic, and consumer analyses, and the risk assessment. This will be included with the comparative analysis of the NI model, which we will bring back to the Board along with proposed recommendations, in June.
- 8.14. The Chair asked for initial input from representatives from Wales and Northern Ireland as it was important to understand the differences and comparisons from those two nations.
- 8.15. Speaking on behalf of the Welsh Food Advisory Committee (WFAC), Ruth Hussey, the Chair of WFAC, voiced her concern over RDM and the increasing

impact on human health. She also was troubled on the difference of approach that has now emerged in labelling but also in food safety control mechanisms.

- 8.16. However, she was pleased to hear the consideration being given to formulations with different types of sugars added, because milkshakes and ice creams are often targeted to vulnerable sectors of the population. Her committee felt that the sampling arrangements really ought to be considered in more depth and they had noted the more rigorous requirements in Northern Ireland. There was concern that we did not fully understand why people were consuming the product without fully understanding the public health risks. We needed to see what evidence there was behind the headline statistics of what people really thought.
- 8.17. Dr Hussey touched upon the fact that there has been an increase in RDM consumption but questioned why. How has it been driven if the evidence is clear that there are no health benefits? She questioned whether the FSA fully understood what we need to do to address this issue. It was highlighted that if there are different official controls in place across the three nations, what is the science base that underpins that, as it is needed to guide and inform the decisions that are to be taken. Her final point was a wish to see, in the June paper, all the control options - from the prohibition of the sale of the product through to any other options on controlling sales.
- 8.18. Dr Hussey highlighted two specific elements of Welsh legislation, and wanted to ensure that thought is given to the way material is presented which addresses the requirement of both pieces of the Welsh legislation. In general, she welcomed the approach but there were a range of issues that needed addressing and she reiterated that she expected to see a full variety of options expressed and explored in the final paper.
- 8.19. Colm McKenna, stated it RDM a smaller issue in NI as there are only six farms that produce it. He noted that NI have stronger controls which could be adopted across the UK. It was acknowledged that although it is a relatively small amount of milk overall, the level of interest in the product has grown exponentially over the past five years, with potential for further growth. NIFAC had expressed concern about the introduction of ice cream and milkshakes. This would target young people so it was important that the FSA really get the controls right.
- 8.20. Mary Quicke underlined that she had no personal and financial involvement in RDM and explained in depth her interest in this area, which grew after visiting a RDM farm in Devon. She had met producers of RDM who were keen to set up a producer organisation that could interact closely with the FSA. They were also enthusiastic to set up a code of practice along the same lines as the Northern Ireland model.
- 8.21. A Board member remarked that the final report in June should have clear information about the opportunity for full cost recovery for this sector of the market. This is a tiny fraction of the food and drink industry overall, which could cause significant distraction to the FSA. The Board member questioned whether it was appropriate for the FSA to continue to invest time in managing the official

controls if we are not going to get the full funds back from people who are making a profit from the sale of RDM.

- 8.22. A Board member highlighted the strong link between a lighter regulation touch in England and Wales compared to NI, and the number of outbreaks of illnesses in the three nations. We needed to review how we work with the producers. It is worthwhile doing labelling and health warnings (for the benefit of the consumer) but the ultimate responsibility is with the food businesses to not have a product that is deserving of a health warning.
- 8.23. From a consumer point of view, a Board member noted that the term 'raw' has different connotations for consumers, which is not reflected in the report. 'Raw' is viewed, by some consumers, as 'healthy' and about 'clean eating'. She asked whether the terminology might be considered.
- 8.24. The other area highlighted by the Board member is the difference between probiotics and pasteurised, versus RDM. It was felt that we have not got the message out there to consumers that there is a difference between these terms, and it is considered something that the FSA should have a crystal-clear view on.
- 8.25. Finally, a Board member was unimpressed that, when looking on the FSA website for information on this subject, she found the information was very hard to uncover, and was contained in the 'science and policy' section, on an excel spreadsheet. The information is not presented with consumers in mind, and it needs to be more accessible.
- 8.26. The question was raised about the effectiveness of the FSA's communication strategy with regards to questioning and understanding the issue of the purported health benefits of RDM. Although it was understood in FSA that there was no scientific evidence to support the purported health benefits, the consumption of RDM has grown significantly. It was felt the Communication strategy in relation to RDM needed to be reviewed, especially if it is exposing vulnerable consumers to potential health risks.
- 8.27. In terms of evidence, a Board member asked if we have data from other countries within the EU and outside. Is it something that we can be learning from if that data is there and easily available.
- 8.28. The Chair wanted to be reassured that the consumer research contained in the paper is valid. We needed to be very careful by the nature of the numbers and the conclusions we drawn from them. She noted that the number of people saying they regularly drank raw milk and the actual volumes being sold could not be reconciled – unless half a litre a year consumption might be considered regular.
- 8.29. The Chair indicated that we should anticipate a challenge on the science on whether there are benefits of drinking RDM, and to give consideration to the production method. The Chair noted that the Board had already agreed a 'risky foods' framework. Therefore, when this issue is returned to the Board in June it

should be the context of that framework. The Chair was very disappointed that our understanding of the efficacy of controls agreed in 2015 was compromised because three years on from the last Board decision, those controls are not yet fully in place. Thus, we are taking a view about the effectiveness of controls that we cannot yet evaluate them. The Acting Director of Policy had agreed to look at the cause of such delays, and what action could be taken to speed up implementing decisions that create a legislative requirement, or have to get Ministerial approval. This wider issue would return to the Board in due course.

ACTION 2: Michael Wight to investigate and clarify the delay behind establishing controls around RDM labelling.

ACTION 3: Michael Wight to review the way in which implementation of Board decisions is taken forward post Board meeting.

- 8.30. The Chair informed members that having reviewed the minutes of the Board meeting in 2015, where the subject was last discussed in detail, she was disappointed that the Board conclusions had left some unfinished business which she had been unable to trace being reported back to the Board. The Board had asked for triggers to be set to cause them to revisit RDM controls, but there was no record of this having happened. This was deeply unsatisfactory.
- 8.31. The CE, in response to a question about utilising comparable data from other countries, stated there are different levels of official controls in other countries, up to and including completely banning the sale of the product. For instance, RDM is banned in Scotland and Australia. He reflected that the UK is a microcosm of the international picture.
- 8.32. The Acting Director of Policy reaffirmed that whilst there may be currently no evidence for the health benefit claims of RDM, there are other factors that come into play, including peoples' values and perceptions, that determine whether they purchase the product. He believed that this is something we need to look at, as it impacts on how we communicate and how we ensure that consumers are aware of the risks associated with consuming RDM.
- 8.33. The Acting Director of Policy observed that one of the issues that came out of the economic analysis were the other drivers that encouraged other producers to sell RDM. There may be a policy from another government department which potentially could increase RDM availability. He added that there are lots of interesting combinations of factors that we need to evaluate before this was considered in the June Board.
- 8.34. The Chair concluded that the Board should be well prepared to take a decision based on the science and evidence in June. The Board expected advice in June to follow the 'risky food' framework, and to be presented with a range of options: whether to maintain or change controls, to relax or tighten, and with certainty about how the Board would monitor implementation and impact of the agreed regime. The key question for the board was whether, with agreed controls in place and delivered, would the level of risk be acceptable.

9. INTERNATIONAL STRATEGY (FSA 18/03/08)

- 9.1. The Chair invited Catherine Bowles and Steve Cowperthwaite to present the paper. She also welcomed Steve Wearne to the table given his role in Codex and the significant part that plays in terms of our international presence. Before handing over to Steve Cowperthwaite, the Deputy Director of Regulatory and Legal Strategy said that the paper was looking at ways to further develop and strengthen the agency's international strategy. Steve Cowperthwaite stated that the paper was to act as a staging post highlighting the direction in which the strategy is going, and the key challenges and opportunities for the FSA.
- 9.2. The FSA does a lot of international engagement and is influential and respected on the global stage. Despite this, Steve Cowperthwaite stated that our efforts needed to be more focussed and strategic. We need to make sure that the FSA is focussing efforts in the areas where we can make the greatest difference within the resources available. He stated that as the strategy work progresses, we will be ranking and prioritising what the key areas are, and where we want to focus our efforts.
- 9.3. The review of the existing strategy considers three key questions. Firstly, what we currently do. Secondly, how we will get to where we want to be. Lastly, how we will know when we are there. Steve Cowperthwaite outlined that we have reviewed all our existing activities, systems and approaches to inform a revised strategy and inform a solid plan for action. This is reflected in the paper which gives an overview of how the FSA already operates at an international level, how we hope to evolve this activity, and what we hope to achieve. It considers who we work with on a global scale, and what the opportunities are, on which we are seeking to build. It is anticipated that a revised international strategy will strengthen our ambition to be recognised as an exceptional accountable modern regulator. It will also identify ways for the FSA to move faster, smarter and more effectively at an international level.
- 9.4. Steve Cowperthwaite indicated that at a broader level we need to ensure that the FSA's international engagement is consistent with and supports wider government objectives. The FSA had been building up its profile over the last few years which has paid dividends. For instance, the appointment of Steve Wearne as vice chair of Codex, which allows the UK to play a key role in shaping the overall work of Codex.
- 9.5. Steve Cowperthwaite noted that the UK is heading up, for the first three years, the newly created Global Alliance on Food Crime. Alongside this is our increased participation with international organisations such as the Global Food Safety Initiative. He highlighted that other countries recognised and welcomed our increased international focus and presence. The team will be mapping the core international opportunities and using this to provide the FSA with a strong, distinct and influential voice on the world stage. Steve concluded that the next step will be the development of a high-level strategy setting out the short, medium and long-term goals and how we tend to achieve these. The proposed plan is to have the high-level strategy available by the end of April.

- 9.6. In response to the paper, the Deputy Chair stated that it would be useful to have a clearer understanding of what the FSA's objectives and outcomes are and what our role is within the Government's international objectives. She also raised the issue of international knowledge transfer. It was crucial when we look at EU Exit that those networks and relationships have been developed.
- 9.7. A Board member commented that there is a wealth of valuable information available from institutions such as the Chamber of Commerce, the Foreign Office and Embassies of countries within the UK. The FSA could cultivate these resources at zero cost. Another Board member expressed the view that he would have liked to have seen a specific mention of FSA's role in exports. The work that the FSA do in supporting UK exports is significant. He noted that there have been examples where the FSA's intervention has made a huge difference for that export line continuing.
- 9.8. Colm McKenna felt that it was important that we move quickly on this. The FSA has a high international reputation, but if we do not move rapidly and capitalise on this, there is a risk of it being lost.
- 9.9. Ruth Hussey, reflecting comments from WFAC discussion of the paper, was pleased to see the interrelationship between the international relations that are reserved for Westminster, but also the needs of the devolved administrations. She observed that we needed to be clear on what is going to drive the choice of where we go, prioritise against the risks that are emerging, and be willing to change the nature of the engagement as those priorities and risks change. We need to be fleet of foot in the global market to make sure that we are spotting new issues and that the strategy enables that to happen.
- 9.10. A comment was made that we needed to recognise when there are trade barriers arising from political decisions that sit outside our remit. It is about having the capacity to have that kind of impact which can be very important. The importance of having a spokesperson in specific instances, rather than in the general forum, was highlighted.
- 9.11. A Board member had a question around confidential information. They questioned how this would work in overseas markets, and was seeking assurances that this issue is taken into consideration when we talk about sharing with overseas partners.
- 9.12. Steve Wearne as member of Codex gave his perspective. He saw this as a new opportunity for the FSA to be influential. He had looked at issues that Codex have led on in recent months where there is a clear linkage to the delivery of our domestic strategy. Steve Wearne said that if one looks across Codex activities, it is possible to link each one of them to our domestic objectives or how we look to contribute to trade enablement in the UK. He highlighted that Codex has two objectives; the first being to protect consumer health; and the second to ensure fair practices in international trade. Steve Wearne stated that Codex will continue to set rules that the FSA will want to have reference to. The organisation is

responsive to members states' needs and it is a way of getting our issues onto the international agenda.

- 9.13. The CE reaffirmed that we need to be clear about objectives, benefits and the FSA's priorities. He stressed that regulations should be seen as a trade enabler and not trade inhibitor. The CE made reference to the specific challenges that we face internationally such as antimicrobial resistance (AMR), where we need to collaborate to address those challenges.
- 9.14. In her closing remarks, the Chair made the point that the introduction to the paper which said that the FSAs current approach to wider international work has been largely opportunistic was unfair. She felt that over the last 12 months there has been a lot more rigour, focus, discipline and good delivery. The Board wished to discuss the proposed FSA strategy for this important area of activity, reflecting their comments, at the next Board meeting. The next paper should be clear about the objectives, benefits, targets/measures of success, and governance.

10. CHAIR'S ORAL REPORT OF THE AUDIT AND RISK ASSURANCE COMMITTEE (ARAC) MEETING – 12 MARCH 2018

- 10.1. Colm McKenna, the Chair of ARAC, said that it had been a useful and robust meeting of the ARAC. The proceedings commenced with the report from the National Audit Office (NAO), which highlighted the issue of pension liability.
- 10.2. During the meeting, ARAC considered the Risk Management update, which had also been considered at the FSA Board away day in January. There was clear understanding over the new mitigations that had been introduced.
- 10.3. The Chair of ARAC said that the committee considered the update on the internal audit progress report, which is still on track. The Director of Openness, Data and Digital presented the annual security information report. In this area, the ARAC Chair stated that we are in a strong position, having made a significant movement in relation to IT delivery.
- 10.4. The ARAC had considered the first draft of the annual report from ARAC to the Board which contained the review of the Terms of Reference. The ARAC Chair pointed out that in reviewing the Terms of Reference the committee will look at the terms of other organisations within the public sector, with some input from the NAO. There is an expectation around what the ARAC does for the Board, and the Chair stated he intends to ensure the terms of reference captures that correctly. This will come back to the Board in June.
- 10.5. The ARAC had considered the follow-up audit on animal by-products which had resulted in a new approach on how we deal with follow-up audits. The ARAC Chair said that it was agreed that we will now re-grade follow up audits, which will allow us to put more robust management practice in place.
- 10.6. The ARAC Chair stated that the Director of Finance and Performance had presented the draft governance statement. This was received favourably by the

NAO. It was suggested that it should be shared with other parts of Government as an example of good practice.

10.7. The ARAC Chair stipulated that the dates have been agreed for the timelines for the annual accounts, with an initial telephone conference in late May, followed by a full ARAC meeting on 12th June. This will leave enough time for ARAC to be able to make their recommendations to the Board. The accounting officer will then sign off the accounts, so they can be laid in Parliament/with the devolved assemblies before the end of June.

10.8. The ARAC Chair concluded that the committee had considered the whistleblowing update, and agreed that the policy is working as expected, within the agreed process.

11. REPORTS FROM THE CHAIRS OF THE FOOD ADVISORY COMMITTEES (INFO 18/03/01-02)

11.1. In her role as Chair of the Wales Food Advisory Committee (WFAC), Ruth Hussey mentioned that she had had a constructive meeting with the Directors of Public Protection in Wales, to understand the background to the correspondence around the ROF programme, that had been sent to the FSA.

11.2. She highlighted a report on food security which is now complete and is to be published shortly. Although focussing on food security in Wales the report contains data on this issue for all three nations.

11.3. Colm McKenna, in his role as NIFAC Chair, made the point in the context of the science paper that was brought to the Board, questioning whether we are making full use of all the scientific evidence available across the UK and within the industry.

11.4. He reflected NIFAC comments on the public attitude tracker survey. The survey reveals the NI public have a higher regard for the FSA than the other devolved nations. However, we do not fully understand why that is. We needed to find out why, and share that information with other parts of the UK.

12. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

12.1. The Chair stated that she has requested the Director of Openness, Data and Digital to look at alternative ways of dealing with questions from the public during a course of a FSA Board Meeting. Trying to chair and participate during a meeting and at the same time deal with multiple questions coming in you simply cannot deal with all those things properly. A new approach would be trialled at the next Board meeting.

ACTION 3 – Director of Openness, Data and Digital to look at alternative ways of dealing with questions from the public during the course of FSA Board meetings.

The Chair noted that this would be the last formal Board meeting for Ram Gidoomal who is leaving at the end of April. She thanked Ram for his work on the FSA Board, as a champion for small businesses, and for his valuable insight into ethical trade and consumer values in relation to food.

13. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

13.1. The next meeting of the FSA Board will take place on 20 June 2018 in York.

MINUTES OF THE FSA BUSINESS COMMITTEE HELD ON 14 MARCH 2018

COVOCATION HALL, CHURCH HOUSE, WESTMINSTER

Present:

Heather Hancock, Chair; Laura Sandys, Deputy Chair; David Brooks; Ram Gidoomal; Rosie Glazebrook; Stewart Houston; Ruth Hussey; Colm McKenna; Mary Quicke; Stuart Reid.

Officials Attending:

Catherine Bowles - Deputy Director of Regulatory and Legal Strategy
Jason Feeney - Chief Executive
Chris Hitchen - Director of Finance and Performance
Maria Jennings - Director of Northern Ireland and Organisational Development
Julie Pierce - Director of Openness, Data and Digital
Steven Pollock - Director of Communications (for Paper FSA 18/03/12)
Guy Poppy - Chief Scientific Adviser
Nina Purcell - Director of Wales and Regulatory Delivery Division
Colin Sullivan - Chief Operating Officer
Michael Wight - Acting Director of Policy and Science

Apologies:

Paul Williams - Board Member
Rod Ainsworth - Director of Regulatory and Legal Strategy
Steve Wearne - Director of Policy and Science

1 WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

- 1.1 The Chair welcomed everyone to the Business Committee meeting and noted that Ruth Hussey had given her apologies for the latter half of the meeting, as she may need to leave early

2 MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON 6 December 2017 (FSA 18/03/09)

- 2.1 The only comment received on the Minutes was from the Chair - that the title of the Minutes should be the 'Business Committee' minutes, not the 'Board' minutes.

ACTION 1: Board Secretariat to correct the December Business Committee Minutes accordingly.

3 ACTIONS ARISING (FSA 18/03/10)

- 3.1 There were no comments on the Actions Arising paper.

4 CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S REPORT TO THE BUSINESS COMMITTEE (FSA 18/03/11)

- 4.1 Following an invite from the Chair, the Chief Executive (CE) highlighted a number of operational updates in his report to the Business Committee, including: the FSA's coordinated response and report on the 2 Sisters incident to the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (EFRA) Select Committee; the ongoing Russell Hume investigations; the FSA's announcement of a review into cutting plants and cold stores that the Board would hear more about at the June Board meeting; a recent meeting he and the Chair hosted with representatives of all major meat trade bodies, and the joint statement issued after the meeting to encourage more collaborative working; the FSA's ongoing work with Defra to introduce CCTV in slaughterhouses; and an update on FSA prosecutions - including one with a legacy dating back to the CE's first day in the FSA, in March 2015.
- 4.2 The CE also noted a number of HR procedures the FSA had recently updated, including: sponsoring five places on the Positive Action Pathway to intervene and accelerate staff progression; the simplification of recruitment procedures to assist with capacity planning for EU Exit; and the development of a new performance management scheme for the FSA, which has involved consideration of the systems other Government Departments use.
- 4.3 In response to a query from the Chair, the CE noted that, to date, the Russell Hume incident has cost the FSA three quarters of a million pounds. The Chair added that it was helpful to have this cost on the public record, as it emphasises how much public money goes into dealing with an issue as a result of a business doing the wrong thing. The Deputy Chair also noted how grateful the Board were to the FSA's Incidents Team for their quick and efficient response, and continued work to handle this and all other incidents.
- 4.4 The Deputy Chair asked for clarity on the gender pay gap in the FSA. The CE reported that the FSA's Annual Report was due to be published imminently, and that the close analysis shows no disparity between gendered salaries. He noted that from a top level, figures appear distorted due to an incredibly high percentage of male meat inspectors making up a large part of the FSA's workforce, but closer analysis demonstrates that these figures are not skewed.
- 4.5 In response to Rosie Glazebrook's questions about Heads of Professions in the FSA and diversity across different grades, the CE clarified that the FSA does have a number of Heads of Professions with links to Other Government Departments (OGDs), and that analysis on diversity is also stratified by Grade.
- 4.6 In relation to the covert filming at Bowood Farms referenced in the CE's report, and in the interest of preventing future food safety breaches, Ram Gidoomal queried whether those prosecuted should be arraigned to prevent them from being able to work with any animals, rather than just sheep, as specified in the CE's report. The CE noted his comments, and explained that those involved would not be able to obtain the 'Certificate of Competence' required to enable them to work in general meat production (regardless of the type of animal meat).

- 4.7 In response to Dave Brooks' question, the CE noted that there was some appetite for the devolved nations to introduce mandatory CCTV in slaughterhouses, and work with Defra on this would continue.
- 4.8 Stewart Houston asked about the FSA's 'Lessons Learnt' relating to caseloads, which could potentially lead to an improvement in the timeliness of prosecutions. The CE answered that this particular prosecution case was exceptional, and not all cases would take as long to be completed. He noted that an additional legal challenge had delayed matters by another 12 months, but that the FSA would do further work to see how this could be avoided in the future.

ACTION 2: Rod Ainsworth to consider how the timeliness of prosecutions can be improved in future.

5 COMMUNICATIONS: DIRECTION OF TRAVEL (FSA 18/03/12)

- 5.1 The Chair welcomed Steven Pollock, the FSA's new Director of Communications to the table. Julie Pierce explained that his paper would act as a chance for Steven to assess and feedback on his experience of FSA communications whilst new into the role, to target future priority areas and to offer his thoughts on the future communications direction of travel.
- 5.2 Steven explained that his paper focused on three things: firstly, a reflection on key things he thought were important for Communications in the FSA; secondly, his plans for 2018/19; and lastly, a chance to reflect on the four underpinning themes that support and build on the FSA's current work.
- 5.3 He noted that to progress, the FSA needs to be clear on its mission - food we can trust, with a strong focus on Regulating Our Future (ROF), EU exit preparations and on doing the day job exceptionally well. These objectives are clear across all teams, and at all levels. He highlighted that the FSA has a very high level of public trust, the workforce is only 5% away from the Civil Service 'High Performance benchmark' and two thirds of staff are proud of what the FSA does (feedback from the final third will be encouraged and targeted in the coming months, with an Employee Engagement survey). Steven also touched on the 'data driven' nature of the FSA, and the many opportunities to understand audiences and sectors, which could be applied to improve Communications across the Department, to achieve better outcomes.
- 5.4 Steven highlighted his plans for 2018/19 for the FSA's communications channels. He explained that he wanted the FSA to be more proactive when explaining to consumers what the FSA does, including streaming video content and using new technology to tell people about the *Campylobacter* strategy, *E. coli* and allergens, in a variety of formats. This would enable consumers to access information across different platforms. Steven was also keen that the FSA mirrors the internal and external communications work when it launches the nutrition and calorie awareness campaign in Northern Ireland. He noted that the team could take forward targeted engagement in specific areas on EU exit, and that there

were opportunities to bring to life the ROF work, to enable engagement with Local Authorities.

- 5.5 Steven explained his aim for ongoing, systematic engagement, and that this should include Parliamentarians and the consumer and lifestyle media. To contribute to increased overall engagement, he noted the need for communications to drive horizon scanning with science at the front line, as well as the importance of maximising the benefits of access to digital technology to raise the profile of the FSA's social media presence.
- 5.6 The Deputy Chair queried whether communications could focus more on consumer understanding, as she felt that at times the FSA felt trapped by the need to explain the underpinning science. As recruitment for further staff to assist with EU exit planning began, she highlighted the need for the FSA to be seen as a dynamic and exciting place to work. Steven clarified that much of what the FSA does already is consumer- focused, and Julie Pierce added that the FSA will be using short videos to explain complex scientific elements to the public, which will help to give clarity on complex issues quickly. In response to the point on EU exit staff, Steven noted that he hoped to move recruitment adverts on to LinkedIn and other online advertising spaces, and to see some of the language in adverts changed to highlight how the FSA is a great place to work.
- 5.7 Colm McKenna commended Steven for his proactive approach so far, and encouraged him to continue using a variety of means to communicate with consumers.
- 5.8 Mary Quicke noted that despite proactive communications strategies, she felt that the coverage of the ROF workstream had been dominated by incorrect statements of moving to private assurance, and queried how the FSA might steer the press away from this. Steven commented that balanced coverage would be more helpful, and agreed that handling journalists and the media was a big area of work for the communications team. The FSA would continue to respond to inaccuracies quickly and clearly.
- 5.9 In response to Rosie Glazebrook's question on the public trust statistics, Steven clarified that 75% of consumers trusted the FSA, 19% felt neutrally or didn't know and 7% disagreed, which highlighted that there was still some work to be done in this area. He also noted her links in to the Communications Profession and agreed it would be helpful to discuss this in future.
- 5.10 Mary Quicke commented on the Northern Ireland model of communications referenced in Colm McKenna's NIFAC report and queried whether the FSA will discuss shared lessons and successes here. Steven responded that he will discuss any lessons learnt that can be shared, to assist in the development of best practice. The Chair clarified that there is a significant difference in geography concerning the FSA NI's remit, and Maria Jennings added that FSA NI has a wider remit which allows them to be more proactive from a communications standpoint.

ACTION 3: Steven Pollock to follow up with FSA NI Communications team to share lessons learnt.

6 Q3 PERFORMANCE AND RESOURCES REPORT (FSA 18/03/13)

- 6.1 Chris Hitchen highlighted a number of elements from the third quarter Performance and Resources report, including; the continued work with HM Treasury and OGDs on EU exit; the continued progress on registration and segmentation emerging from the ROF workstream; and the FSA's performance and reputation for being clear and trustworthy when doing the day job well. He noted that the FSA is on track to deliver within 1% of its spending targets.
- 6.2 The Board agreed that they were content with this report and noted that this pack contained more slides than usual, due to the desire to highlight engagement survey results in more detail.

7 CORPORATE PERFORMANCE MEASURES (FSA 18/03/14)

- 7.1 The Chair introduced this paper and reminded the Board that having set the areas in which they wished to measure the overall impact and contribution of the FSA, they had asked the Executive to work on appropriate targets. Chris Hitchen agreed and added that this paper would act as an interim update for early feedback on targets the FSA has identified. He noted the important difference between target and ambition, and clarified that whilst it was possible to set exceptionally tough targets, they would come at a cost, and the FSA needed to prioritise resources to achieve best value for money.
- 7.2 Dave Brooks posed several questions on the report. He cautioned against listing some measures as 'no plan to improve', and voiced his concern over the length of time it was taking to demonstrate success on *E. coli* reduction. He also requested that the Minutes of the Business Committee should reflect on the FSA being a good and a safe place to work. Chris noted Dave's comments and added that the Executive Management Team had recently had a thorough discussion on the development of *E. coli* reduction targets and other foodborne disease metrics and these were due to return for further discussion at the Executive and would be brought back to Business Committee for sign-off.
- 7.3 Rosie Glazebrook queried whether data on food allergies were misleading, as some people might not be aware that they have an allergy. She also questioned whether MenuCal was being used as a measure for food being what it says it is, or rather (as she had anticipated) about what is contained within food. Maria Jennings clarified that MenuCal gives a calorie and nutritional breakdown on food, as well as a list of allergens. The Chair noted that this is just one of five components that feeds into the data on food labelling. Michael Wight clarified Rosie's points on allergens, stating that the FSA is aware that it is very difficult to understand how many people have allergies and that is why this piece of work is presented with caveats. He also noted that the FSA measures and collects data on other allergies, which it will continue to do to build a more thorough understanding.

- 7.4 The Deputy Chair noted the importance of Food Business Operators (FBOs), but queried whether the FSA is measuring the right levels of data and capturing enough relevant information. She also questioned what the FSA understands by "trust" and thought that it would be worth clarifying its meaning in the context of FSA issues and assurances. The CE noted this point and added that the FSA's 'Food and You' survey went some way to addressing these issues. However, he agreed that it was right to keep under review whether the right questions are being asked and if the right balance between continuity and complexity was being achieved. The CE noted that for survey data to be comparable year on year the questions needed to remain the same.
- 7.5 In response to Stewart Houston's question about this report being a public document containing public promises, Chris agreed and noted that there were risks that the data and targets could be misunderstood, but that there was still value in setting targets in line with being an Excellent, Accountable regulator. Stewart queried whether the report was clear enough, and Chris acknowledged that the aim for the Board would be firstly to agree the target, and secondly to agree how best to communicate it, and any caveats and uncertainty. He noted this agenda item had stimulated much discussion, and he agreed to bear these points in mind when working on the next version of the paper.
- 7.6 The Chair and Board agreed that they would see this paper again in the next quarter, for further discussion.

ACTION 4: Chris Hitchen to consider the appropriate balance of corporate performance measures across the FSA, and bring back to the board in June.

8 BOARD APPROVAL OF THE 2018/2019 BUDGET (FSA 18/03/15)

- 8.1 Chris Hitchen introduced the paper and noted that it had been a 'whole FSA' team effort to put together, and that it aimed to set out clear priorities and resources supporting the financial direction of travel for the FSA.
- 8.2 He briefly outlined the paper and noted that it focused on financing the FSA's key priorities that had already been discussed and the team had been very keen to set out clearly the key deliverables for: EU exit (including the key products and outcomes); resourcing the ROF workstream; and keeping resources committed so that the FSA can continue its 'business as usual' on doing the day job well. Chris noted the other key supporting programmes that the FSA is running alongside the main three priorities. These are: Surveillance; Our Ways of Working; Evolve IT; Data and Digital; and the People Strategy - which were very important in supporting the overall strategy. Overall, he suggested, the FSA budget optimised FSA resources and represented good value for money.
- 8.3 The Chair noted that change is really important to the FSA and that changes in management of staff and actioned results from the staff survey were a huge step forward. The Board agreed the priorities and budget as laid out in this report and noted they looked forward to monitoring its success.

9 AOB and Close

- 9.1 There was no other business, and the Chair drew the meeting to a close, noting that the Board would next meet on 20 June 2018 in York.