
**MINUTES OF THE FSA BOARD MEETING HELD ON 21 SEPTEMBER 2016 AT
AVIATION HOUSE, LONDON FROM 09:00-12:00**

Present:

Heather Hancock, Chair; Tim Bennett, Deputy Chair; David Brooks; Ram Gidoomal; Rosie Glazebrook; Ruth Hussey; Stewart Houston; Colm McKenna; Heather Peck; Jim Smart; Paul Williams

Officials attending:

Catherine Brown, FSA Chief Executive
Rod Ainsworth, FSA Director of Regulatory and Legal Strategy
Simon Dawson, FSA Head of Operations Assurance
Nicky Elliston, Head of FSA Executive Office & Board Secretariat
Jason Feeney, FSA Chief Operating Officer
Chris Hitchen, FSA Director of Finance and Strategic Planning
Maria Jennings, FSA Director of Northern Ireland and Organisational Development
Michelle Patel, FSA Director of Communications
Julie Pierce, FSA Director of Openness, Data and Digital
Professor Guy Poppy, FSA Chief Scientific Adviser
Nina Purcell, FSA Director of Wales and Regulatory Delivery
Leigh Sharpington, FSA Regulating our Future Programme Manager
Steve Wearne, FSA Director of Policy

Guest:

Jason Aldiss, Eville and Jones

WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

1. The Chair welcomed two new Board members, Ruth Hussey and Colm McKenna, to their first Board meeting.
2. The Chair reminded all Board members to declare any relevant conflicts of interest before discussions.
3. The Chair accepted one item for Any Other Business: the Collection and Communication of Inspection Results (CCIR).

MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON 13 JULY 2016 (FSA 16/09/01)

4. The minutes were agreed as an accurate record of the 13 July 2016 meeting.

ACTIONS ARISING (FSA 16/09/02)

5. The actions were noted without comment.

CHAIR'S REPORT

6. The Chair said the list of engagements she had undertaken since the July 2016 Board meeting was available on the FSA website. The Chair highlighted her meetings with: Lord Krebs, former Chair of the FSA; HRH The Prince of Wales under the auspices of the Prince's Countryside Fund; the Regulatory Future Review cross-Government Group; Dr Pamela Byrne and the Food Safety Authority of Ireland (FSAI); Asda and Walmart; the Regulating our Future Expert Group; and Professor Jim Rollo, Deputy Director of the UK Trade Policy Observatory.
7. The Chair said she had met with Norman Bagley of the Association of Independent Meat Suppliers (AIMS) to address concerns he had raised that the FSA was biased against the meat industry. She would be meeting with meat industry representatives at the end of October for further discussions.
8. The Chair noted the inaccurate reporting in The Times recently which had erroneously suggested that the FSA was going to stop collecting data on non-stun slaughter. She had written to the editor of The Times to confirm the FSA would still be collecting data in the way it always had, and had had no intention of changing this position.
9. The Deputy Chair said, on behalf of the Chair, he had attended a meeting of government regulators to discuss implications of Brexit.
10. The Deputy Chair said the Stow 2 Steering Group, of which he was a member, had met twice and was making good progress in agreeing principles for a new meat inspection system. He thanked the meat industry representatives and the FSA officials for sitting down and working through the issues. Progress on Stow 2 would feed in to the FSA's Regulating our Future (RoF) programme and the Stow 2 Steering Group was supportive of the RoF timetable. Reform of meat regulation was as much a part of RoF as any other aspect of the FSA's agenda.
11. The Chair thanked Paul Williams for agreeing to join the Stow 2 Steering Group.

CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S REPORT (FSA 16/09/03)

12. The Chief Executive (CE) said she had also attended the launch of the RoF Expert Group and had been pleased at the interest in, and engagement with, the Group.
13. The CE also thanked the Stow 2 Steering Group for their contribution to the RoF Programme.
14. On the Campylobacter campaign, the CE confirmed that the FSA would set and agree data standards and criteria so that we could be assured of the robustness of the data to be published by retailers. There would also be a period of parallel testing when we would continue to test too. Getting retailers to publish data we could trust, thereby eliminating duplication of effort and unnecessary cost to the public purse, was an indication of the direction of travel under the RoF Programme.

15. The Deputy Chair drew attention to the implementation by Rutland County Council of the Food Hygiene Ratings Scheme (FHRS) in October, resulting in all 326 local authorities in England operating the voluntary scheme. He commended the FSA for the many years of hard work on behalf of consumers it had taken to reach this milestone.

16. On Our Food Future, the CE agreed to share with the Board, the names of the six organisations in the food sector with whom we were about to start a joint project to understand the potential role of the consumer as citizen.

ACTION: FSA Director of Communications

17. On the FHRS, the CE said it was evident that mandation of the scheme in Wales was already having a positive impact on public health by giving consumers the ability to make an informed choice about the food they ate. We were pleased with progress to introduce the statutory scheme in Northern Ireland, and we were continuing to develop proposals for the delivery of a statutory scheme in England.

18. The issue of consistency in FHRS standards across all three countries was an important one as the robustness of the FHRS was critical to our RoF Programme. The results of the recent national consistency exercise were encouraging with 97% of local authority officers in agreement on ratings. We were then able to offer targeted training and support to those local authorities who needed it.

19. On AMR, the Chair noted that since the Board's last discussion on AMR in July, the Government had accepted Lord O'Neill's recommendations in full. Among those recommendations, the FSA was listed as joint lead department with Defra on two areas: in our role as UK lead on food safety issues in Codex Alimentarius where, at the request of the Codex Alimentarius Commission, we were (jointly with Australia and the US) convening a physical working group to set the terms of reference for a subsequent intergovernmental task force on AMR; and working to encourage the adoption of clear transparent reporting standards that help consumers have access to and understand information about the responsible use of antibiotics in the food chain.

20. In addition to those two areas of responsibility for the FSA, the CE was proposing a third area which had not specifically been tasked to us in the Government response but which was nevertheless clearly within the remit of the FSA rather than another Government department. The FSA would seek to improve the scientific evidence base relating to antimicrobial resistance in the food chain through supporting relevant research and improving surveillance.

21. Professor Guy Poppy said there were three reasons why the FSA should be involved in combatting AMR:
- Food acted as a reservoir for bacteria containing AMR found on farms and the FSA was responsible for food at retail. We were undertaking a systematic review of AMR in commensal and pathogenic bacteria in food at retail. It would take further work to ascertain how much the levels of AMR in food at retail contributed to public health issues but it was proportionate to act now to ensure responsible use of antimicrobials in agriculture and reduce the size of reservoirs of AMR created.

- by carrying out surveillance on levels of AMR in food at retail, we would be able to assess and demonstrate the impacts of measures other took to improve the situation.
 - We could inform consumers and help them to make an informed choice on the food they chose to eat.
22. The Chair said it was important to reassure the public that:
- if they followed our advice on preparing and cooking food, there was no immediate threat to public health from food containing bacteria with AMR.
 - people were not eating food that contained antibiotics.
23. The CE agreed with a Board member that producers may seek to capitalise on this issue by introducing “antibiotic free” labels on products. Such labels would be misleading as withdrawal period for veterinary medicines were designed to ensure the effective absence of antibiotic residues in any food.
24. The Board emphasised the importance of working in partnership on this issue with the FSA not taking on more responsibility than was appropriate. The CE indicated that the O’Neill Report identified Defra as the lead department for establishing standards for responsible use in animals and suggested that the FSA could potentially assist with this by establishing a scientific consensus on what, given the evidence available, might be considered ‘responsible use’ within the food chain. This could be achieved by establishing a “task and finish” scientific expert group to advise on that specific issue, if the Board wanted to pursue that option.
25. The Chair suggested it may be constructive to build on the expertise of the existing AMR sub-committee of the ACMSF with independent economists and veterinary scientists and other expertise as appropriate to advise on what the evidence base would suggest might constitute “responsible use” and to produce a state of the nation report.
26. Board members agreed the extension of the FSA’s role to establish the short-term group. Work on the FSA’s other areas of responsibility in relation to AMR should progress meanwhile, not wait for the task and finish group to be convened.
27. In response to a suggestion from the Deputy Chair that it would be helpful to clarify roles at a senior level with other department the Chair agreed. She would commit to meet with leaders in DH and Defra to ensure there was no duplication of effort and to ensure there were no gaps in covering the work that had to be done.

ACTION: FSA Chair

28. In concluding the Chair said the Board:
- Re-endorsed its support for the FSA to have a role in combatting AMR
 - Agreed with the three areas of responsibility for the FSA as outlined at paragraph 30 of the CE Report

- Agreed to the creation of a short term task and finish specialist scientific group to advise on what the current evidence base would support as responsible use in the food chain

ACTION: FSA Director of Policy

- Placed great significance on the FSA partnership working with others across Government and in industry
- Cautioned against the FSA's mission creep into areas where others should lead
- Would like, when possible, to receive a one page summary of the FSA's specific objectives on AMR and a list of what we were doing and in partnership with whom

ACTION: FSA Director of Policy

- Supported the Chief Scientific Adviser's Report on AMR being published in time for the UN General Assembly's discussion on AMR.

ACTION: FSA Chief Scientific Adviser

ANIMAL WELFARE (FSA 16/09/04)

29. The Chair welcomed Simon Dawson, FSA Head of Operations Assurance, and Jason Aldiss, Managing Director of Evile and Jones to the table and invited Jason Feeney, the FSA's Chief Operating Officer, to introduce the paper.
30. The FSA's Chief Operating Officer said the role of the FSA in animal welfare was to fulfil its regulatory duty by ensuring industry lived up to its responsibility for the care and welfare of animals in slaughterhouses, and to take account of the wider public interest in the treatment of animals.
31. He explained there were 3 elements to the paper:
 - How our reactive response to serious breaches of animal welfare had improved over the last 18 months; three plants had been closed on animal welfare grounds in that period and none had successfully challenged our decision.
 - Updating the board on our systemic approach to improving standards of animal welfare in abattoirs through a "Deter, Prevent, Detect, Enforce" programme.
 - Seeking the Board's direction on current issues including: the use of CCTV; openness and transparency; and end to end welfare, ensuring others in the chain live up to their responsibilities too.
32. Jason Aldiss said he supported the approach taken in the paper and the comprehensive approach within the FSA's "Deter, Prevent, Detect, Enforce" programme. As a professional veterinarian and lead service provider for the FSA, his primary objective was to drive up standards, improve consistency in decision making and record keeping of actions taken. He supported the Agency's 'Zero Tolerance'

approach and whilst there would be welfare breaches due to accidents, bad practice or malicious intent, he was fully committed to improving standards.

33. A Board member said she was really pleased with the paper and endorsed the approach taken by the FSA as the latest public attitudes tracker showed that animal welfare was the joint third concern of consumers in relation to food.
34. The option to have risk based rotation of OV's in the proposed new contract for OV services was welcomed. While the difficulty and expense of rotating MHIs was recognised, it was suggested that at least in cases where there were ongoing and serious issues with particular plants it should be implemented on a case by case basis. The Chief Operating Officer agreed that this was potentially a sensible approach.
35. He also confirmed in answer to a question that, as part of their wider animal welfare policy responsibility, Defra were responsible for ensuring that plants which carried out non-stun slaughter methods under the derogation for religious compliance were not in breach of that derogation.
36. With regard to animal welfare related data for stun versus non-stun slaughter methods, the FSA's Chief Operating Officer said the majority of slaughterhouses used only stun; around 8% used non-stun; and around 8% used a mixture of both. The plants using both methods were not routinely required to report to the FSA which slaughter method had been used (i.e. stun or non-stun). However, a more systematic approach to allow for the regular, routine collection of this data was being introduced. The Board welcomed this as an opportunity for further transparency.
37. During discussion on the use of CCTV in slaughterhouses, a Board member felt that an increase in the levels of CCTV used in plants using non-stun slaughter methods could see a reduction in the number of major non-compliances in those plants. The Chair of the Welsh Food Advisory Committee (WFAC) said the Committee very strongly supported this position as CCTV was now more affordable for businesses. The FSA should help set standards of use and retention and encourage the sharing of best practice to ensure CCTV was used properly by businesses. The FSA's Chief Operating Officer said setting a protocol for the FSA's use of CCTV in plants could help overcome cultural resistance among some businesses to its introduction.
38. The Board recognised that the FSA were not responsible for mandating the installation of CCTV in plants. This was a Defra responsibility. However, the Board was concerned to see that the voluntary approach to adoption of CCTV and proper protocols had made little progress in the last 2 years: progress in the number of plants and throughput covered by CCTV had plateaued. The Board concluded that the voluntary approach was unlikely to see further progress. The Board agreed that they saw CCTV or equivalent technologies as a valuable management tool to help abattoirs comply with official controls, when installed and used properly. Given the potential to CCTV to play a significant role in improving performance, animal welfare and public assurance, the Board agreed it would now support the case for mandation within its wider programme of reform of the regulatory regime in slaughterhouses.

39. In the meantime, the Agency should continue to encourage plants to adopt CCTV by focusing on its benefits to them as part of their package of management tools. The Board supported the use of CCTV being recognised by assurance schemes as a way of incentivising businesses to use it. Given the availability of affordable technology, the Board supported an outcomes-focused approach which did not specify which technology had to be used.
40. The Board maintained its position that the FSA would not publish details of individual plants with breaches of welfare because of concerns over staff welfare and security, and did not intend to revisit this issue.
41. The FSA's Chief Operating Officer assured the Board that the FSA and Defra shared data on animal welfare.
42. The Board supported the wider and more regular publication of data held by the FSA on welfare issues as a way of making a contribution to the overall improvement in standards of animal welfare throughout the food chain.
43. In concluding the Chair said the Board:
 - Reiterated its commitment to promoting a zero tolerance approach to animal welfare breaches
 - Endorsed the work undertaken by the FSA in relation to animal welfare as set out in the paper
 - Noted the responsibility of Defra for ensuring that plants which carried out non-stun slaughter methods under the derogation for religious compliance were not in breach of that derogation
 - Supported the case for mandatory use of CCTV, or equivalent technology, to enable food business operators to demonstrate how they were meeting their legal obligations on official controls in line with the principles of Regulating Our Future, and the FSA would take this forward with Defra and others
 - Re-confirmed its position on non-publication of individual plants with welfare breaches
 - Supported the sharing of best practice among industry including data sharing
 - Did not wish to take a wider role in ensuring end to end welfare.

THE CONSUMER INTEREST IN THE FOOD SYSTEM (FSA 16/09/05)

44. The Chair welcomed Michelle Patel, FSA Director of Communications, to the table, and invited Julie Pierce, the FSA's Director of Openness, Data and Digital to introduce the paper.
45. The FSA's Director of Openness, Data and Digital said the FSA had been involved in consumer insight work since 2003 looking at: what was important to consumers; how they responded to our policies; and engaging with them in open policy making. Our methods were compliant with social science research standards. We used the most cost effective methods, such as conducting surveys or setting up focus groups, to engage with particular groups of consumers to look at specific, potentially complex, issues, or to get a broader picture of consumers' evolving interests in food.

46. The FSA's Director of Communications said the FSA's consumer insight work on rare burgers was an example of where understanding the consumers' interest had helped inform a Board decision on regulation. The growth of social media was very exciting and opened up a bigger set of data for the team to work with allowing for more insight into the context of consumer behaviour. This was important when we were asking people to change their habitual behaviour in relation to food as it was not always rational.
47. A Board member noted the inter-related nature of consumers' interests in food such as a healthy diet, food safety, and affordability, and asked if the FSA was working with other organisations to capture and share information on areas outside the FSA's remit. The FSA's Director of Communications assured her that partnership working was paramount in this area and she was part of a group of Directors reviewing surveys published across government to ascertain how they well they were used.
48. In response to a Board member's comment on the inaccessibility of the FSA's current website, the FSA's Director of Communications confirmed that we were reviewing the website entirely to make it much easier for consumers to get involved and see how what they had said had influenced our work.
49. During discussion about potentially setting up an FSA's People's Panel, the Chair confirmed that such a Panel would not and could not have a mandate to set policy or priorities; rather it would be an input that the Board would be interested in as part of its own wider considerations.
50. With regard to projects planned and underway, a Board member noted that there was no consumer engagement on animal welfare, despite it being the joint third concern for consumers in relation to food. The FSA's Director of Communications confirmed for the Board that our consumer insight work did relate to the three pillars of the strategy; food is safe; food is what it says it is; and consumers' wider interests in food, and would look at new areas of interest for consumers, such as animal welfare. It would be useful to explore with the Panel where they thought the FSA could usefully focus in order to support the Board's deliberations.
51. The Board suggested hearing more from consumers at Board meetings and the Chair confirmed that we were looking at introducing vox pop videos to allow that to happen. She had invited the new Chairs of the Food Advisory Committees in Northern Ireland and Wales to look at increasing consumer involvement with the Committees.
52. The Chair of WFAC said it would be helpful for the Committee in building a view of Welsh consumers to have the Welsh perspective on the demographics of consumer insight surveys. The FSA's Director of Communications agreed our sample sizes allowed for rich data to be extrapolated and differences were often seen between the three countries.
53. The Deputy Chair emphasised that, given that the Board represented the consumer interest and made decisions in the interests of consumers, it would be good to know, particularly in the context of Regulating our Future, how consumers saw the FSA's

role, or that of government more widely, in relation to food in the post referendum environment.

54. With regard to where the consumer insight team should focus its work in the coming year, the Chair said the data in the paper which stood out for her was that which showed that consumer trust in the food industry was patchy. This was key to our focus in the third pillar of the Agency's strategy: the consumer's wider interests in food. She considered that the FSA's remit included authenticating or explaining, on the basis of science and evidence, the wider claims that were made about food. It was core to the FSA's purpose to enable the public to have more trust and confidence in the food system; where that was deserved. The FSA could do this by raising its profile and awareness of the work it did, by encouraging industry to explain the food system and its actions better to consumers, and by using the same science and evidence starting point as applied in areas of safety and authenticity. She suggested working up a brief "narrative" which explained where the FSA is focusing that the Board could use to paint a compelling picture for consumers and others.
55. In concluding, the Chair said that the Board:
- Wished to raise the visibility of the FSA as part of building public trust in food, this being our key driver
 - Put openness and transparency about the food system at the heart of the third pillar of the strategy
 - Supported the aim to get more insight from the public as an input to policy and decisions
- ACTION: FSA Director of Communications**
- Saw the FSA not as a campaigner, but as a partner with others in addressing trust in wider issues in relation to food.

REGULATING OUR FUTURE PROGRAMME UPDATE (FSA 16/09/06)

56. The Chair welcomed Leigh Sharpington, FSA Regulating our Future Programme Manager, to the table and invited Nina Purcell, FSA Director of Wales and Regulatory Delivery, to introduce the paper.
57. The FSA's Director of Wales and Regulatory Delivery said the RoF Programme's ambition was to deliver a new, modern system for regulating which kept pace with innovation in food sector. We were building a system to respond to future, rather than simply current, challenges.
58. The paper provided an update on the RoF engagement programme to date. We were abiding by the principles of open policy making and talking to people to ensure the best approach and bring them with us. We had set up a consumer advisory group, and recently carried out insight work with consumers and small businesses. The full report on that work would be shared with the Board in due course.

ACTION: FSA Director of Wales and Regulatory Delivery

59. In the meantime, the Director said the insight work with consumers had shown that: industry had a big part to play in assuring consumers they were doing the right thing in relation to food; and consumers had a strong bias to maintaining the status quo. This might be because of consumers' lack of knowledge of the current regulatory system which they imagined to be more draconian than it is. The insight work with small businesses had shown they were: vulnerable to costs; interested in Primary Authority relationships; and interested in new technology.
60. The FSA's Director of Wales and Regulatory Delivery agreed to provide the Board with details of which representatives of small businesses the RoF Programme had engaged with so far.

ACTION: FSA Director of Wales and Regulatory Delivery

61. The Chair of WFAC said professional stakeholders in Wales were still working through the case for change. This underlined the need for adequacy of resourcing in the Programme, to communicate and engage with people.
62. The Board agreed on the importance of communications to the Programme, particularly given the consumer insight findings. It was important to articulate clearly from the beginning the benefits of a new regulatory system, particularly the potential positive impacts on public health, and that there would be no deterioration in protection to consumers.
63. The FSA's Director of Wales and Regulatory Delivery agreed on the importance of engaging with consumers on this Programme and that the initial consumer insight work and the consumer advisory group would be key to the Programme's consumer engagement programme going forward.
64. The Chair reassured the Board that the new system would be delivery agnostic and take into account the different opportunities and risks across the three countries, and across the different food sectors. She highlighted that both communications and recognition of the differing circumstances in the devolved countries, cut across the two strategic risks to the RoF Programme: lack of support; and lack of resources.
65. The Chair of the Audit and Risk Assurance Committee (ARAC) suggested an additional strategic risk to the Programme, namely risks to the continued delivery of the current system, while the new system was being constructed.
66. At its meeting the previous day, ARAC had considered an internal audit report on how the FSA interacted with Local Authorities (LAs). ARAC had supported the merger of the three FSA teams who engaged with LAs with regards collecting data, Environmental Health Officers and Trading Standards, into one team. ARAC felt that the merger would mitigate risks to the current regulatory system by: improving consistency of engagement with LAs; focusing on best outcomes for consumers from the existing system; and allowing for the better use of data and intelligence to take actions to influence LAs on their delivery of existing controls.

**REPORTS FROM THE CHAIRS OF THE FOOD ADVISORY COMMITTEES (INFO
16/09/01–02)**

67. The Chair of WFAC said she had raised most of the Committee's points during discussions on each of the papers. With regards to engagement with citizens, WFAC would look to build on the FSA in Wales' recent engagement programme.
68. The Chair noted that a discussion on the Wellbeing of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 was on the Board's forward agenda. She also noted that the next Board meeting would be in Cardiff.
69. The Chair of NIFAC said in terms of animal welfare, it was important to maintain and strengthen the two way flow of information between the FSA and DAERA (Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs) who had responsibility for policy, delivery and enforcement of animal welfare issues in NI.
70. The Chair of NIFAC noted that NI had a relatively large agri-foods industry which the FSA could usefully use as a test base for new approaches and policies.
71. He brought the new Northern Ireland Executive's Program for Government (PfG) and its outcomes-based approach to the attention of the Board as the FSA's policies would have an impact in delivering the indicators for those outcomes.
72. The Chair noted that a discussion on nutrition and health was on the Board's forward agenda and that we would ensure that it fit with the new NI Health Minister's strategy on health which was due to be published soon.

ANY OTHER BUSINESS

73. A Board member noted that the pig sector would shortly return to relying on the FSA's CCIR (Collection and Communication of Inspection Results) system and offered his assistance to the FSA to help improve it.
74. The FSA's Chief Operating Officer said the overly complex nature of the CCIR system had instilled a lack of confidence in it across all sectors. The FSA had piloted an improved system with the cattle and sheep sectors, and we would now, with the Board member's welcome assistance, look to conclude the improvements to the system by resolving the outstanding issues with the pig sector.
75. The Chair advised that there was no other business and closed the Board meeting.

DATE OF NEXT MEETING

76. The next meeting of the FSA Board would take place on Wednesday 23 November 2016 in Cardiff.

**MINUTES OF THE FSA BUSINESS COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 21
SEPTEMBER 2016 IN AVIATION HOUSE, LONDON FROM 12:05 – 13:40hrs**

Present:

Heather Hancock, Chair
Tim Bennett, Deputy Chair
Rod Ainsworth, Director of Legal and Regulatory Strategy
David Brooks
Catherine Brown, Chief Executive
Jason Feeney, Chief Operating Officer
Ram Gidoomal
Rosie Glazebrook
Chris Hitchen, Director of Finance and Strategic Planning
Stewart Houston
Ruth Hussey
Maria Jennings, Director FSA Northern Ireland and Organisational Development
Colm McKenna
Heather Peck
Julie Pierce, Director of Openness, Data and Digital
Guy Poppy, Chief Scientific Adviser
Nina Purcell, Director FSA Wales and Regulatory Delivery
Jim Smart
Steve Wearne, Director of Policy
Paul Williams

In attendance:

Nicky Elliston, Head of FSA Executive Office & Board Secretariat
Richard McLean, Head of Planning, Performance and Change
Simon Dawson, Head of Operations Assurance
Noel Sykes, Head of Openness

WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

1. The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting. The Chair announced that, due to commercial sensitivity, there would be a closed session of the Business Committee at the end of the open session to discuss the re-tender of the contracts for contract Official Veterinarians and contract Meat Hygiene Inspectors.

**MINUTES OF BUSINESS COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 18 MAY (FSA
16/09/07)**

2. There were no amendments to the minutes and these were accepted as an accurate record of the 18 May Business Committee meeting.

ACTIONS ARISING (FSA 16/09/08)

3. There were no comments on the Actions Arising.

DELIVERING THE FSA STRATEGY: PRIORITIES FOR 2017/18 (FSA 16/09/09)

4. The Chair invited Richard McLean, Head of Planning, Performance and Change to present the paper.
5. Richard said the Business Committee were being consulted on a consolidated view of our future plans earlier this year than in previous years, in order to give the Committee an opportunity to feed in views and shape plans at an earlier stage than before.
6. During discussion Catherine Brown explained to the Committee that there would be opportunities for them to have more in depth discussions on particular elements of the plan – for example the FSA's science agenda and the National Food Crime Unit at their November 2016 meeting. The purpose of this discussion was to enable them to take a view on the overall shape and balance of the plan as a whole.
7. In terms of identifying value for money and savings in the context of a reduced budget in future years, Chris Hitchen said investment was prioritised across the Agency, rather than on a silo basis, and was outcomes-based on merit. The Business Plan and Budget would come to the Committee in March 2017.
8. With regard to negotiations on exit from the EU, Catherine said that at this stage, given the unclarity about the nature of the exit, we could only really focus on our strategic objectives - to ensure that consumers were no worse off and wherever possible better off. Once the UK Government position was clearer, we would be able to identify what objectives were possible and discuss these with the Board.
9. In response to questions from Committee members on communicating and measuring our stakeholder engagement, Catherine said the Regulating our Future (RoF) Programme in particular was contributing to the creation of a stakeholder map. The map would allow for a coherent discussion about stakeholder engagement and give us some ability to measure our success but we would only seek to add Key Performance Indicators where they would add value.
10. In response to a comment from a Committee member Julie Pierce assured the Committee that we already undertook work to: evaluate how our messages to consumers had landed; whether our messages had been understood; and if and how the messages had changed consumers' behaviour. Julie said she would provide the Committee with more information on how we conducted this work and how successful it was.

ACTION: Director of Openness, Data and Digital

11. In relation to a comment by a Committee member, the Chair said it would be useful for the Committee to receive an update on the positive impact the FSA was having on tackling food waste.

ACTION: Director of Policy

12. Steve Wearne explained that Campylobacter was absent from the FSA's priorities for 2017/18, not because we were stepping away from our target of reducing human cases of Campylobacteriosis by 100,000 by the end of 2016/17, but because of the maturity of the Campylobacter Programme. With processors and retailers committed to publishing their data, the FSA's need to commit resource to this programme was decreasing and so we were working on transitioning the programme to business as usual.
13. Colm McKenna said budgets from the devolved administrations were likely to see a 5% cash reduction in future years which made it even more important to focus on outcomes, and to be clear on what we were not going to do and what others were responsible for.
14. The Chair agreed with this position. She summed up the Committee's discussion as wishing to see the following clearly reflected in the first iteration of the Plan:
 - resourcing the NFCU in line with the outcome of the phase 2 review;
 - full resourcing RoF and work on the UK's exit from the EU, so that timescales and objectives could be fully realised;
 - the Board having an opportunity to discuss science priorities;
 - understanding where 'invest to save' decisions were proposed; and
 - clarity on outcomes, and benefits, particularly in relation to partnership working.
15. The Chair concluded by saying that, in the next iteration she expected to see some choices at the margins for the Committee, and clarity on what the Agency would stop doing, do less off, or look to be done by others, to free up resources for the key priorities agreed.

ACTION: Head of Planning, Performance and Change

PERFORMANCE AND RESOURCES UPDATE (FSA 16/09/10)

16. The Chair invited Richard McLean, Head of Planning, Performance and Change, to present the paper. Richard said there were a number of areas in the report where the data suggested some progress in terms of improving the protection of consumer interests in the system. These improvements were not necessarily caused by FSA interventions, although we had done a number of things designed to provoke or support them.
17. There had been significant improvements in the levels of Campylobacter in chicken at retail; FHRS ratings continued to improve as a larger proportion of businesses became fully compliant with hygiene regulations; there had been an increase in the proportion of meat businesses whose compliance was judged to be "good".
18. Richard said this report would continue to evolve and the next iteration would contain information on the RoF Programme.
19. Ruth Hussey asked if it would be possible to see more of the data split by countries. Catherine agreed that we would look at presenting more of the data in

dedicated reports for Wales and Northern Ireland but continue to flag country differences by exception in the overall Business Committee report.

ACTION: Head of Planning, Performance and Change

20. During discussion, Steve said that at least part of the upward trend in Listeria could be attributed to changes in demography and the increase in the numbers of older people. The Agency had provided advice to healthcare providers regarding the provision of sandwiches and similar food in their establishments to older, vulnerable people as these continued to generate a significant proportion of food-related outbreaks of Listeria.
21. Chris said in relation to Listeria we had to consider value for money. Cases of Listeria numbered in the hundreds, in comparison to cases of Campylobacteriosis where cases numbered in the tens of thousands. We had to consider the impact we could have versus the cost of the intervention.
22. Guy Poppy said the report provided headline figures and it would be helpful to understand the detail behind the data because if, for example, certain foods were being consumed a lot more yet the figures for illnesses were staying the same, then we could say that we were having a positive impact on people's health.
23. The Chair agreed more work needed to be done on how we drilled down in to the data in the report to extract the pertinent information which showed where the Committee needed to focus its attention. Catherine agreed the report needed to be more outcomes-focused but cautioned against expanding the size of the report.
24. In response to comments on the format of the report, Chris said we would try to show more clearly the areas for which the FSA had responsibility, and we would consider improving the continuity of presentation so that the Committee were alerted to the areas of interest on each page. Catherine agreed that we would prioritise improving the covering page which accompanied the report.

ACTION: Head of Planning, Performance and Change and Head of Operations Assurance

25. David Brooks noted that in 2015, 1 in 3 appointments were of Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) applicants but it was less than 1 in 4 in 2016. Maria Jennings said all FSA managers received training for conducting interviews and did not know who they were interviewing until the interview. FSA staff also received unconscious bias training. Maria confirmed that we could show the breakdown of BAME recruitment by region or country although sample sizes risked being too small to draw any conclusions at that level, and that we would continue to bring this area to the attention of the Committee.

ACTION: Head of Planning, Performance and Change

26. In response to a question from a Committee member, Julie agreed to share with the Committee the questions asked in relation to public awareness, trust and reputation of the FSA.

ACTION: Director of Openness, Data and Digital

27. Ram Gidoomal asked if we tracked who visited our website, how useful it was for them and what they did with the information they found on it. Julie confirmed that we did track visitors to our website and that we could share that information with Committee members.

ACTION: Director of Openness, Data and Digital

28. Julie said we used the information as a baseline for going forward as we planned to replace the existing website and make it much more user focused.

ANNUAL REPORT: FREEDOM OF INFORMATION REQUESTS, COMPLAINTS AND INTERNAL WHISTLEBLOWING CASES (FSA 16/09/11)

29. The Chair welcomed Noel Sykes, Head of Openness, to the table and invited Rod Ainsworth to introduce the paper which he did.
30. Noel Sykes said the FSA's response rate to Freedom of Information (FOI) requests within the required 20 days was above 90% which compared well with other government departments. As he had only taken up post in May 2016, credit had to go to his predecessor, the Openness team and local contributors across the Agency.
31. Regarding the small number of complaints the FSA received, Noel said this was an area where we would be putting resource into analysis, and seeking to generate more actionable intelligence in future.
32. Paul Williams noted the number of whistleblowing cases had increased from zero to three in one year; one of which had been referred to the Civil Service Commissioner. Noel said this may reflect that we had revised our whistleblowing policy and run a whistleblowing awareness campaign. Catherine said we had also identified the need to correctly identify things as whistleblowing and it was good to see cases being properly recorded as whistleblowing.
33. The Chair said the Committee noted the processes and the levels of compliance but to add value needed to understand what the FSA was learning from these cases, to minimise the need for complaints or anticipate FOI requests, for example.
34. Julie agreed that publishing more data could prevent FOI requests being made. FOI requests could also predict the kind of data in which people were interested in having access, and help us make it more accessible for them.

FSA IT STRATEGY AND IMPLEMENTATION (FSA 16/09/12)

35. The Chair invited Julie Pierce, Head of Openness, Data and Digital, to introduce the paper.
36. Julie said this paper outlined the transformation of IT within the FSA following the publication of the FSA IT Strategy in the spring. The FSA faced challenges with a less than perfect IT system and technology that was reaching the end of its life. Government strategy now was to move away from a huge, single source model of IT provision and to disaggregate into a multi supplier model, while bringing overall control back in-house.
37. The FSA would take opportunities in implementing the new model to be more cost effective. The new IT system needed to enable FSA staff to work in a transformative and collaborative way. The expiry of the FSA's current contract with Capita offered opportunities within the context of the Government strategy to be more efficient and flexible.
38. Jim Smart said, given the relatively small size of the Agency, he had concerns over our ability to recruit and retain additional resource to the FSA IT team. He asked if we would consider support from other providers and government departments to manage the IT service.
39. Julie confirmed that we worked closely with other parts of government and were also considering buying the capability to manage the architecture and the end to end system from the private sector where it was cost effective to do so. Sharing of best practice across Government had improved and there were others such as the Government Digital Service with whom we could work.
40. Julie clarified for the Committee that under the multi supplier model, the FSA would not deliver IT services itself. The FSA would set the overall architecture of the IT system, and then go out to the market to buy in the services we required. For each component that we decided we needed to buy in, we would look for the best route to market, for example, by using the established procurement frameworks of others such as Defra which would allow us to be more agile and responsive to users' needs.
41. There was work currently underway to understand our priorities and needs for the future in the context of the RoF Programme, the Our Ways of Working (OWOW) Programme and becoming a more data driven organisation.
42. Catherine said the risks associated with the IT programme of work were captured on the corporate risk register and considered by the Audit and Risk Assurance Committee (ARAC). The Board would be able to consider the risks in more detail during its annual risk workshop in January 2017.
43. The Chair clarified for the Committee that the new IT system did not involve letting a single contract worth £4.5million. Julie said the Government's new strategy meant that large single contracts were no longer to be used to procure IT services.

Catherine confirmed that the investment was spend which would show in the Budget due to come to the Committee in March 2017.

44. Julie explained that the imminent end of our contract with Capita meant that, in parallel to identifying and constructing business driven IT services which we might wish to buy, and which the market could provide us with, we were also managing risks by progressively taking services away from Capita and awarding them to new suppliers.
45. In concluding the Chair confirmed that:
- The Capita contract would cease
 - We would continue to follow professional and Cabinet Office advice and guidance on how best to approach setting up the new IT arrangements
 - We would task ARAC with taking judgements on risks around people capability and finance
 - The FSA's business planning process would assure us that investment in this area was strategically aligned
 - The Committee would like to understand more about how the new IT approach would support the RoF Programme and the OWOW Programme.

ACTION: Director of Openness, Data and Digital

ANY OTHER BUSINESS

46. The Chair said there were no items for consideration under Any Other Business and concluded the open session of the Business Committee.

DATE OF NEXT MEETING

47. The next meeting of the open Business Committee would take place on Wednesday 23 November 2016 in the Mercure Hotel, Cardiff.