

**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.