

**MINUTES OF THE FSA BUSINESS COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 15 MARCH
2017 IN AVIATION HOUSE, LONDON FROM 13:05 to 13:55hrs**

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 Performance
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:

Richard McLean, Head of Planning, Performance and Change

WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

1. The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting.

**MINUTES OF BUSINESS COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 23 NOVEMBER 2016
(FSA 17/03/08)**

2. There were no amendments to the minutes and these were accepted as an accurate record of the 23 November 2016 Business Committee meeting.

ACTIONS ARISING (FSA 17/03/09)

3. There were no comments on the Actions Arising.

PERFORMANCE AND RESOURCES UPDATE (FSA 17/03/10)

4. The Chair invited Richard McLean, Head of Planning, Performance and Change, to present the paper.
5. Richard said the paper was the latest quarterly report on our performance and the use of our resources to achieve that performance. The paper looked at outcomes

in the food system which the FSA had a joint responsibility with others to improve, and outputs which the FSA was responsible for producing.

6. In terms of the former, we had seen a reduction in the number of cases of human campylobacteriosis during the same period that action from industry as a result of the FSA's campaign had seen contamination levels of campylobacter in poultry decrease. We had also seen a continuation in industry's improving compliance with hygiene controls. Furthermore, public trust in the FSA remained at its highest since records began.
7. In terms of outputs for which the FSA was responsible, the FSA had delivered 93 of the 105 milestones in quarters 1-3 of its corporate business plan for 2016/17. The paper also contained information on milestones not yet reached.
8. Heather Peck noted that in terms of non-compliances with animal welfare, a third of poultry establishments had recorded issues in quarter 3. There had also been an increase in non-compliances related to stunning poultry. Neither of these statistics was favourable when compared with red meat species. Heather asked if the increase in stunning non-compliances was due to carelessness on account of increased throughput, or demonstrated an issue with the specifications around stunning.
9. Jason Feeney responded that it was because of the former rather than the latter and there was a seasonality factor to take into account for quarter 3. We were also getting better at being a regulator by becoming stronger in identifying breaches of animal welfare and more consistent in categorising breaches. There was no evidence that the breaches were related to the specifications around stunning.
10. Rosie Glazebrook asked about the openness rating of datasets and how many datasets we expected to have published by year end. Julie Pierce said the openness ratings were an international standard used to judge how useable datasets were by people and IT systems. On a scale of 1 to 5, 1 meant the data was in a format that computers could not read such as PDFs; 5 meant the data could immediately be read by IT systems. Given our understanding of our datasets a year ago, we had set ourselves a target of 3. However, even achieving a 3 rating was quite challenging. We had decided to try to publish as much as possible in consultation with data owners with the aim of improving the quality of what was published over time. We wanted to get used to making our data open and assess how much interest there was in a dataset before deciding to improve it.
11. Julie said there was a long lead-in time from agreeing data could be published to finally publishing it and we were in the process of preparing a lot of data for publication. We expected to publish 90% of our datasets by the end of April 2017. We would not meet our original target of 95% but that had been a very stretching target and since we had set it, we had discovered more datasets.

12. Chris Hitchen said the datasets related to Information Assets owned by each Director and publishing them involved a culture change in the Agency. For example we had to reformat datasets in the area of finance and charging to desensitise the data and make it less commercially sensitive. Catherine Brown agreed that to get the datasets to a basic standard to allow them to be published facilitating a culture change for the Agency, and as we had started with only 15-20% of our datasets being published, she was very pleased with progress.
13. Ram Gidoomal said it would be useful to see how ethnicity by grade had shifted over the last 3-4 years and Catherine Brown agreed to come back to the Committee with that information.

ACTION: Head of Planning, Performance and Change

FSA PRIORITIES AND BUDGET FOR 2017/18 (FSA 17/03/11)

14. The Chair invited Chris Hitchen, the FSA's Director of Finance and Performance, to introduce the paper.
15. Chris Hitchen said this was the most challenging budget the FSA Executive team had been through. The FSA's spending review settlement with the Treasury for the four years 2016/17 to 2019/20 kept the FSA's Westminster budget flat at its 2015/16 baseline level. 2017/18 would see the FSA move out of Aviation House which would cost a significant amount of money. There was some flexibility in the budget, as shown in the forecast, for other opportunities alongside the Regulating our Future (RoF) programme and preparations for the UK to exit the EU.
16. The Chair said the paper showed that a lot of work had gone into adjusting the priorities and the budget since the Board had held its away day in January 2017, and cautioned the Committee not to reprioritise all over again.
17. During discussion about the types of science included in the money allocated to science and evidence, Steve Wearne noted that the spend in this budget paper was by team, whereas the spend mentioned in the Chief Executive's Report to the Board had been according to a wider definition of science and evidence which included, for example, surveillance. Steve agreed to provide the Committee with a note detailing the distribution and timescales of spend on science and evidence.

ACTION: Director of Policy

18. Colm McKenna asked if we were incurring risk by reducing the amount spent on official controls. Chris Hitchen explained that any reduction in resource was decided on a collaborative basis with industry but the final decision rested with the FSA; where there were compliance issues, the resource remained to ensure we continued to put consumer safety first. Jason Feeney added the reduction was a result of Food Business Operators (FBOs) engaging with efficiency initiatives including re-designing their lines thereby removing inspection points and reducing operating during premium hours.

19. Steve Wearne noted that official controls were also carried out by local authorities on our behalf and this had been one of the most intense areas of discussion by the FSA Executive team in drawing up this budget.
20. David Brooks noted that our work on campylobacter now became part of doing the day job exceptionally well and asked if we would be setting a new numerical target for further reduction in campylobacter in chicken. Catherine Brown agreed this was a valid point but cautioned about the risk of expanding the priorities beyond what the resources of the organisation can support. In the overall prioritisation, however, she felt it was a weakness that there was nothing with a public health outcome. She was attracted to something explicit beyond the mechanics of being a regulator such as campylobacter or allergens.
21. The Chair agreed that our work on allergens was beginning to feel like it could become our headline public health outcome. She said we had taken the decision on how to move forward with our campylobacter campaign months ago and if industry did not sustain its part in further reducing campylobacter levels in chicken then the topic would be back on the table for the Board to consider.
22. Steve Wearne agreed to provide the Committee with a detailed note on what work would continue to be done by the FSA on reducing campylobacter in chickens.

ACTION: Director of Policy

23. During discussion about the 10% reduction in the National Food Crime Unit's budget, the Chair said Defra Ministers had agreed to convene the Ministerial Group to discuss the Unit's future scope. If the Group agreed with the FSA's conclusions, the lengthy process of a business case for additional funding would mean a decision on the Unit would not impact us until 2018/19. Catherine Brown highlighted that the process of doing the business case in accordance with Treasury rules would not be cost free and there would be a risk that the business case would not result in the additional funding the FSA needed to be able to increase the scope of the Unit and therefore be a non-value adding distraction from the focus of the organisation on its agreed priorities.
24. In concluding the Chair said the Business Committee agreed the FSA's high-level priorities and budget for 2017/18. The Chair said the Committee had a good line of sight on the budget and thanked the Committee for the way in which they had approached the budget and for the good discussion they had had around it.

OUR WAYS OF WORKING PROGRAMME (FSA 17/03/12)

25. The Chair invited Maria Jennings, Director of Northern Ireland and Organisational Development to introduce the paper.
26. Maria Jennings said this paper was to update the Committee on phase 2 of the Our Ways of Working programme which was set up to create an environment that allowed our people to be the best that they could be so that they chose to make outstanding contributions to deliver our strategy.

27. Phase 2 was the mainstream delivery phase and had four key elements.
- i. The following week, we were launching three new contract types for staff: home-based; multi-location; and office or plant based. The new contracts would be rolled out on a phased basis; York and home-based staff, then London staff, followed by Cardiff and Belfast.
 - ii. To support more flexible working we were putting in place a network of advice and guidance as detailed in the paper.
 - iii. While the delivery of the IT strategy sat with another programme, we required the infrastructure and tools to be in place and to be reliable.
 - iv. Finally, we would be moving out of our office location in London by February 2018 so we were planning that move and to successfully vacate Aviation House along with our tenants. The new office space would be designed to cater for the FSA's requirements for the next ten years. To summarise, we were currently delivering to plan with the appropriate resource and governance.
28. In response to a question from Rosie Glazebrook about measuring the impact of the programme on staff, Maria said we were focusing on key questions within the staff survey and we would also be carrying out pulse surveys along the way as it was very important that we landed the programme with staff in the right way.
29. In response to a question from Paul Williams about lessons learned from phase 1 for phase 2, Maria said phase 1 had shown us the appetite staff had for flexible working. We had been able to identify eight key enablers that allowed staff to excel in their working life. With regard the physical space, we had learned what we could afford and that it needed to be collaborative space so that when staff did get together it added value.
30. In response to a question from Colm McKenna, Maria said we had parameters around the number of each contract type based on what staff had told us during phase 1. However, we would not know how many of each contract there would be until staff had made their choice in discussion with their line manager and in consideration of business need.
31. Catherine Brown said offering three types of contract would contribute to making new posts in the Agency as attractive as possible at a time when there was intense competition for shortage skills. In terms of the financial implications of different permutations of different contract types, we were clear on how we were controlling the financial risks and were ensuring a level of flexibility in the contract arrangements to accommodate potential changes in future years.

ANY OTHER BUSINESS

32. 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

33. The next meeting of the open Business Committee would take place on Wednesday 21 June 2017 in Liverpool.