

## Meeting Note: Policy Forum 13<sup>th</sup> September 2022

### Attendees:

Jane Banks SC (Staff & Chair)  
 Ryan Mercer SC (Staff)  
 Lawrence Ambrose RCPod  
 Lorenzo Casarosa IMarEST  
 Sean Edmunds IPEM  
 Frances Evans ASE  
 Stephen French IFST  
 Sarah Garry BSSS  
 Dan Korbelt RSC

Joseph Lewis IES  
 Robert Massey RAS  
 Arianne Matlin RSB  
 Megan O'Donnell GSL  
 Andy Smith BASES  
 Rachel Stonehouse IOM3  
 David Wells IBMS

### Apologies:

Arthur Nicholas IST  
 Laura Marshall RSB  
 Tanya Sheridan RSC

## 1) Welcome

- **Jane Banks** opened the meeting.
- **Ryan Mercer** outlined changes to the Policy Forum for 2023:
  - The changes were agreed in the Policy Advisory Committee and include:
    - Meetings to be bi-monthly, to better ensure live topics such as current consultations are captured by the meetings.
    - The three link members of the Policy Forum on the Policy Advisory Committee, to become co-chairs of the Policy Forum.
  - The changes to the Policy Forum are intended to increase engagement with member organisations and create a sense of member ownership of the Forum.
- **Ryan Mercer** highlighted that the agenda for the meeting is short principally due to the absence of a science minister over the summer with few new policy developments, and the Science Council's own focus on its Climate Conference.

## 2) Current consultations/engagement

### *HoC S&T Committee - My Science Inquiry*

- **Ryan Mercer** explained that the Science Council had made a short submission to the My Science Inquiry, run by the House of Commons Science and Technology Select Committee, to encourage them to undertake an inquiry into professional registration in Science.

### *COVID-19 pandemic public enquiry*

- **David Wells** highlighted that the IBMS had been attempting to engage with the COVID-19 public inquiry, having applied unsuccessfully for core participant status in Module 1, which looks at the preparedness of the UK ahead of the pandemic.
- Other member organisations are keen to engage with this inquiry as it develops, both with their individual areas of expertise but also potentially in collaboration.

- Policy Forum members will continue to monitor the progress of the inquiry and identify opportunities for engagement.

#### *HoC S&T Committee – Inquiry into Delivering Nuclear Power*

- **Megan O'Donnell** noted that GSL are submitting evidence to the House of Commons Science and Technology Committee Inquiry into Delivering Nuclear Power.

### 3) Political Changes and Civil Service cuts

#### *Civil Service cuts*

- **Ryan Mercer** explained that at the previous meeting of the Policy Forum the Science Council as asked to explore with contacts in the civil service the possible impacts of proposed cuts to the headcount of the civil service on the Government's access to scientific advice.
- The Science Council and several member organisations had attempted to engage on this topic with Government but found that the proposed cuts were placed on hold due to the resignation of Boris Johnson as prime minister and the Conservative leadership election.
- It is expected that the cuts will be progressed now that the leadership election has concluded.
- The Science Council will contact policy forum members once more information is available to explore opportunities to influence the process and ensure the Government retains access to high quality scientific advice.

#### *New Government*

- It was noted that Liz Truss has been appointed as Prime Minister and has appointed Jacob Rees-Mogg as Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS).
- At the time of the Policy Forum a science minister had yet to be appointed, Ryan Mercer noted that the Science Council will write to the minister once they are in post to invite them to meet with the CEO forum.
- Policy forum members discussed the changes and noted the following:
  - The new BEIS secretary has previously expressed a skepticism around the UK's net-zero targets.
  - It will be important for member organisations to continue to highlight a number of priorities including:
    - maintaining of Britain's association with Horizon Europe;
    - reaching the the 2.4% of GDP for R&D target;
    - and ensuring the Government maintains high quality science advice mechanisms which are listened to in forming policy.

### 4) COP-27 Egypt

- Sarah Garry introduced the topic, noting that COP-27 is coming up and that the BSSS is planning a range of public engagement and other activity to coincide with the conference.
- Member organisations were asked what their plans were around COP-27:
  - Member organisations are largely not planning to send delegations to Egypt for the conference.
  - IES planning public facing activities.
  - RSC planning online events on sustainable chemistry, food science and technology, and hydrogen technologies.
  - Geological Society is not attending but planning to send delegates to COP-28.
  - NI may have young members participating in the conference.
  - BSSS is planning activities around soil biodiversity.
- The Science Council will communicate with interested member organisations to enable sharing and collaboration around these activities.

## 5) Science Council Climate Conference

- Following the main meeting there was a briefing session on the Science Council's Climate Conference.