

## **Defra Science Advisory Council (SAC)**

### **Social Science Sub-Group (SAC-SOC)**

## **Social Research in Defra**

### **Final Report**

**Paper: SAC (07) 33**

**Author: SAC Secretariat, 01/11/07**

**Confidentiality status: For information**

For members' use only- do not show to or discuss with anyone else  
Not for publication- may be discussed with colleagues on a confidential basis  
**For information- may be shown freely or discussed with anyone**

### **Purpose**

This is the SAC report to Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) Chief Scientific Advisor (CSA), on the capacity and use of social research within core Defra to inform and assist policy development in areas of the Department's remit. The report has been prepared by the SAC Social Science Sub-Group (SAC-SOC).

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Social research, alongside other key skills in Defra including those in natural and physical sciences, has a significant contribution to make to the Department's evidence-base for policy-making and research strategy. Social research covers a wide range of disciplines including sociology, psychology, and anthropology; and for the purposes of this report is considered separately from economics and statistics, both numerically strong within the Department.

It is clear that social research has an increasingly important role within Defra, given the challenging context in which the Department operates. The Department continues to undergo a significant transformation as it shifts away from a largely regulatory role to a more enabling one. The main challenges facing the Department are increasingly linked to providing environmental leadership and promoting changes in attitude and behaviour, both amongst key stakeholders and the wider public, particularly in relation to response and adaptation to climate change and the need to put sustainable development into practice. Many of the challenges facing Defra cut across departmental, national and international boundaries.

This report focuses on the uptake and capacity of social research within core<sup>1</sup> Defra, although the findings will have relevance to the wider Defra network, other government departments, the Devolved Administrations and beyond.

The sub-group found that the small central team of social researchers in core Defra were doing excellent work but were clearly overstretched. Where the professional social researchers had been involved there were good examples of the effective use of social research to develop and implement policy and research. However the sub-group found that, with a few exceptions, the potential contributions social research could make to effective policy development were generally not well understood within the Department's policy and research groups. Social research was often narrowly defined, for example, as engagement or consultation. Furthermore, the sub-group's investigations highlighted that social research was not always accorded equivalent status to other contributions, such as that from the natural sciences, to the evidence base for the policy cycle and research strategy. When advice from Defra's professional social researchers was not sought by the instigators of research, it seems probable that social research questions had often been poorly framed or not asked in the first place; resulting policy and associated research may not then have been fit for purpose (insofar as that purpose / those purposes had been fully articulated in all respects originally).

---

<sup>1</sup> That is central Defra, excluding the wider Defra "family" or network, which includes Executive Agencies, Non-Departmental Public Bodies and other delivery bodies.

The sub-group's investigations suggested that the current professional social research capacity within core Defra was not sufficient to meet the needs of existing or future Departmental policy objectives. It lacked status within the hierarchy and sufficient personnel to provide the service needed. Defra did not as yet have enough social scientists, at the right levels, to enable them to form a critical capacity that can routinely inform and develop all relevant aspects of the Department's work. This is likely to have an adverse impact on Defra's ability to access effectively appropriate external social research resources, and to communicate intelligently across government, with other stakeholders (howsoever defined), and internationally.

Many of the key policy challenges for which Defra is responsible lie at the intersection of social and technical, or social and ecological issues. These call for interdisciplinary engagement, that effectively combine social, natural science and other professional, such as engineering, inputs. Defra is well placed to pioneer an integrated and flexible approach to the use of different sources of professional expertise in providing the evidence base for policy.

In order to address these issues the sub-group made a number of key recommendations in the following areas:

Defra needs to develop and articulate a clear strategy and vision for building social research capacity in-house that is paced to reflect increased uptake across the Department. The number of in-house social researchers should be increased but this must be tied to clear terms of reference and aligned to a sustainable business plan, supported across Defra's different programme areas.

Social research inputs should be included at all key stages of the policy cycle. Social researchers in the Department must be integrated into policy and research development alongside other key professional groups including natural scientists and economists, from the outset.

Defra must improve the status, visibility, and professional identity of social researchers in the Department, in order to raise awareness and increase the uptake of social research. Critically, this should include social research leadership and representation at senior management levels.

Project Officers<sup>2</sup> have a key role in linking evidence and policy (previously identified in the SAC Governance sub-group End to End Review of Science into Policy in Defra [SAC-G(06)14]). This evidence should also include social research as part of the evidence base. Project Officers within Defra need to be drawn from all professional groups including social research in order to develop a genuine multi-disciplinary approach and build in-house capacity in social research skills.

---

<sup>2</sup> Project Officers are the people directly responsible for project managing Defra science projects through from commissioning to delivery. They also play a key role in interfacing between customers and researchers.

Social researchers within core Defra require a particular and wide-ranging understanding of the potential contributions of different disciplines within social research. As capacity increases, their role is not only to provide particular perspectives and advice but also to provide access to additional specialist social research skills through an effective external network with partner organisations, both within the Defra network and beyond. It is clear that, as in the natural and physical sciences, the Department will not develop, and should not seek to achieve, comprehensive internal social research expertise. Defra needs the capacity to access external expertise as an informed customer. In the short term this is likely to involve working with partners with existing large networks such as the ESRC or major foundations.

Changes to the Defra organisational and management framework, being developed under the Departmental “Renew” programme, offer a significant opportunity to develop more effective and efficient processes that recognise all contributions to the evidence base, including social research, and ensure access to existing knowledge.

## **SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS**

### ***Recommendation 1***

**Defra senior management need to articulate a clear strategy and vision for social research. This should recognise the need for a significant shift in culture and attitude towards the role and value of social research in contributing to the evidence base at all key stages in policy making and research strategy development. Defra senior management need to raise awareness, understanding, and uptake of social research across all programme areas within core Defra, and to challenge negative attitudes where these exist.**

### ***Recommendation 2***

**The increased importance of social research inputs to the policy cycle and research strategy should be reflected in the seniority and status of social research leadership within Defra. This will help to build wider credibility and uptake amongst other professional groups in the Department.**

### ***Recommendation 3***

**Management, organisational and project structures should encourage interdisciplinary working between professional groups. The Departmental reorganisation (“Defra Renew”) offers the opportunity to embed this approach at the project and programme level in a more consistent and coordinated way.**

### ***Recommendation 4***

**The number of in-house social researchers should be increased to meet increasing demand for social research based inputs to the policy cycle. They were currently below “critical capacity” to enable an integrated approach across the Department. Expansion of capacity should be paced so as to keep in step with demand for social research inputs. This should be part of a coherent, sustainable strategy to improve the number and the balance between social researchers and other professional groups.**

### ***Recommendation 5***

**In-house professional social researchers in Defra fulfil a vital role, via their broad understanding of social research disciplines and how they align to Departmental policy and research needs. They act as key contact points to external networks of more specialised social research expertise. This approach should be continued as capacity expands, supported by access to training and continuing professional development.**

***Recommendation 6***

Project Officers also play a critical role in linking professional groups, linking the evidence base with policy. Project Officers should, with appropriate training, be cognisant of both natural and social research and the relevance of these disciplines to policy and research strategy. Project Officers should also include individuals from across all relevant professional groups, including social research. This would help to promote genuine multi-disciplinary team working and, through a process of focussed recruitment, address the need to increase in-house social research capacity.

***Recommendation 7***

Defra should seek to build on and expand its existing connections with the external social science community, making use of not only of its own network but those of other central government departments, the Devolved Administrations and elsewhere, in order to enable greater access to appropriate expertise as well as to learn and share best practice.

***Recommendation 8***

Defra should examine the lessons learned from the Rural Evidence Research Centre (RERC) project in creating a sound basis for the proposed Research Centre on Sustainable Behaviours (RCSB) project.

***Recommendation 9***

Effective public and stakeholder engagement is a key part of the social research input to all relevant stages of policy and research development. This requires clear shared understandings of the nature, types and identity of stakeholders across the board, and should include the use of innovative, interactive and deliberative approaches to engagement.

***Recommendation 10***

Quality assurance procedures should not distinguish between natural or social sciences and both must be subject to rigorous appraisal and review.

***Recommendation 11***

The Department should ensure that effective knowledge management systems and corporate memory of social research activities are developed. There should also be a requirement on those engendering research proposals to become aware early on of already (externally) available social research information and data about any given situation or context.

## **SUB-GROUP MEMBERSHIP**

This included the following SAC members:

<b>Professor Chris Gaskell</b>	(Chair) Principal, Royal Agricultural College, Cirencester
<b>Ms Hilary Burrage</b>	Independent consultant in strategic policy
<b>Professor Ian Diamond</b>	Chief Executive, Economic & Social Research Council (ESRC)
<b>Professor Peter Guthrie OBE FrEng</b>	Professor in Engineering for Sustainable Development, University of Cambridge
<b>Professor Philip Lowe OBE</b>	Director of the Rural Economy and Land Use (RELU) Programme

In addition the following was co-opted on to the subgroup:

<b>Professor Sir John Marsh CBE</b>	Emeritus Professor, Agriculture and Food Economics, University of Reading and former Vice Chair of SAC.
-------------------------------------	---

In addition the following was invited to attend the first two subgroup meetings:

<b>Janet Gawn (SAC invitee)</b>	Defra Head of Social Research
---------------------------------	-------------------------------

### **Secretariat**

Paul McCloghrie (from July 2007)  
Amar Sangha (January - July 2007)  
Dr Bill Eason (Independent Secretary)

### **Vote of Thanks**

The sub-group and SAC Secretariat wish to thank all the individuals from Defra and elsewhere for their help and willingness to share information and experiences of social research. Their help and assistance have greatly assisted the sub-group achieve its objectives. Details of all those who provided information to the sub-group are given in Annexes 1 and 2.

## **TERMS OF REFERENCE**

In order to advise and make recommendations to Defra's Chief Scientific Adviser, the Science Advisory Council Social Science Sub-Group have undertaken the following work:

- To understand the current perceptions of the role of social research in the development of advice and policy within Defra, as part of the capacity of the Department to act as an informed customer and user of science.
- To establish a clearer picture of the Department's current capacity and capability to access, analyse and use social research in current policy making and identify where demand is not being met.
- To evaluate the Department's capability for strategic planning and investment in its future needs, including the effectiveness of different delivery models for social research capability and advice delivery.
- To assess the need for partnerships in social research between Defra, other government departments and external organisations and to examine the effectiveness of present mechanisms in meeting this requirement.

# DEFRA SCIENCE ADVISORY COUNCIL SOCIAL SCIENCE SUB-GROUP (SAC-SOC)

## SOCIAL RESEARCH IN DEFRA

### FINAL REPORT AND RECOMMENDATIONS

#### DEFINITIONS

##### What is social science?

1. Social science is, in its broadest sense, the study of society and the manner in which people behave and impact on the world around them. Social scientists deploy a range of approaches to gathering evidence, from the collection and analysis of statistics, to the collation of responses to questionnaires, interviews, and the systematic observation of human behaviour.
2. Social science covers a wide range of disciplines including sociology, psychology, anthropology and politics as well as economics and statistics.

##### What is social research?

3. Within government the term “social research”, the focus of this study, encompasses non-economic aspects of social science. Social science expertise is institutionalised in a distinctive way, with economics separately organised from social research.
4. Government economists, as well as focussing on economic policy, also play a key role in analysing the efficiency of resource allocation by government and evaluating the impact of government policy. Government social researchers investigate social problems and public attitudes, and inform policy development and implementation on how social groups and institutions respond to different possible forms of intervention.

##### Definitions used in this report

5. To ensure the advice of the Science Advisory Council (SAC) sub-group is clear and understandable within Defra, the sub-group agreed to use the term **social science** to encompass the broad range of disciplines, whereas the term **social research** refers to non-economic social science disciplines. The main focus of the sub-group is on social research within core Defra.

## **SCOPE OF REVIEW: SOCIAL RESEARCH IN CORE DEFRA**

6. The sub-group decided that given the level of resources available to it, it would not be possible to include, in any significant detail, the extended Defra network<sup>3</sup> or “family” in this review. It was agreed that the sub-group would therefore necessarily focus on social research needs and capacity in core Defra.
7. None-the-less, the sub-group recognised the importance of the potential contribution to Defra social research from the wider Defra network (as well as the need members of the network have for to conduct social research internally). Although it was not possible to examine this in detail, comment was invited from selected elements of the network (see paragraph 9).

## **SUMMARY OF WORKPLAN AND INFORMATION REVIEWED**

8. The starting point for the sub-group’s discussions was the scoping paper on social research in Defra, commissioned by SAC, and prepared by SAC member Philip Lowe with support from other SAC members and Defra social researchers (SAC(06)42). Following this the sub-group have held three meetings with invited attendees, from within Defra and from external organisations, providing information on social research within their areas of responsibility.
9. Outside of the meetings, information has also been gathered from a variety of sources. Devolved Administrations provided feedback and comment based on a framework of questions agreed by the sub-group (SAC-SOC(07)12). A selection of organisations from within the Defra network were also invited to comment on their social research activities (SAC-SOC(07)11). These included the Defra Laboratory Agencies and the Defra Non-Departmental Public Bodies (NDPBs) with a significant scientific advisory capacity.
10. Examples of projects which had successfully incorporated social research are cited as examples of good practice. Examples were provided by Ian Diamond (Chief Executive of ESRC<sup>4</sup>), Janet Gawn (Defra Head of Social Research) and Sue Antonelli (Defra Flood Defence Team Manager) and these are given in full in SAC-SOC(07)14.
11. Information on Defra’s approaches to consumer and stakeholder engagement were also sought. This included a secretariat and sub-group member meetings with relevant Defra staff (SAC-SOC(07)10).

---

<sup>3</sup> The Defra network refers to the Departments Executive Agencies, Non-Departmental Public Bodies and other delivery bodies: <http://www.defra.gov.uk/corporate/delivery/landscape/index.htm>

<sup>4</sup> Economic and Social Research Council: <http://www.esrcsocietytoday.ac.uk/ESRCInfoCentre/index.aspx>

12. For full details of those attending the meetings and information reviewed by the subgroup see Annexes 1 and 2.

## INTRODUCTION

### Impact of social research in Defra

13. Defra has an annual science budget in excess of £300 million covering a wide range of policy areas. The budget includes both research and monitoring activities. At any one time Defra is directly funding approximately 1000 science projects most of which are intended to support the development of departmental and government policy.
14. Social research, like economic and natural sciences, has a contribution to make to the Department's policy making process in a number of ways.

#### ***Potential impact of social research on decision making processes in Defra***

**Strategic direction** – understanding of where, why and how, in relation to policy development

**Policy need** – identifying key drivers across the spectrum of contextual and socio-economic factors, including attitudes, which provide the context for policy development

**Policy formulation** – evidence on potential impacts of policy changes through understanding behaviours and responses to policy changes

**Policy implementation** – engagement with key stakeholders/public during implementation

**Policy evaluation** – assessing policy impact and effectiveness

*Adapted from SAC(06)42*

15. It is clear that social research has and will continue to have an increasingly important role within Defra, particularly given the changing social, environmental and political context in which the Department operates. The Department continues to undergo a important transformation as it shifts away from its significant regulatory role to a more enabling one, where the main challenges facing the Department are increasingly linked to changes in attitude and behaviour, both amongst stakeholders and the wider public. The Defra Five Year Strategy (2004-2009)<sup>5</sup> sets out clear objectives in the areas of environmental leadership and putting sustainable development into practice. Many of the key challenges facing Defra cut across different government departments including the major issues of climate change and sustainable development; these translate to specific policy areas ranging from waste strategy to supporting sustainable rural communities.

---

<sup>5</sup> For details of Defra's five year strategy: <http://www.defra.gov.uk/corporate/5year-strategy/index.htm>

## ***Delivering the Essentials of Life: Defra's Five Year Strategy***

### **New initiatives in Defra's Five Year Strategy**

#### **Environmental leadership**

- Improving the local environment
- Changing behaviours
- Meeting the challenge of climate change

#### **Putting sustainable development into practice**

- In rural communities
- Protecting natural resources
- Farming, food and animal welfare

*From Defra's Five Year Strategy: <http://www.defra.gov.uk/corporate/5year-strategy/index.htm>*

16. Forming policies to address the key challenges facing Defra is likely to depend on an understanding of, and expertise in, social research, in addition to the natural sciences and economics. This is clear when considering Defra's main policy objectives including: combating and adapting to climate change; managing food, farming and environmental risks, stimulating energy and water efficiency and waste recycling and promoting sustainable agriculture.
17. In some areas the key challenge facing Defra is not extending the science evidence base, but rather producing policies which respond in a socially acceptable and effective way. The 2007 Defra Departmental Report<sup>6</sup> stressed that the overarching challenge for Defra was to help everyone to live within their environmental means. An integral part of achieving this is to produce policies which enjoy public support, and influence people towards sustainable living. Social research has a key role in achieving these aims through better engagement and consultation with key stakeholders and the wider public at all stages of the policy cycle from initiation through to implementation.
18. There is however another sense in which social research must be integral to Defra's research and understandings. The social sciences inform policy-making by providing evidence on the social impacts of such policy. The success of government policies on, for example, the environment and food production depend on societal factors, and an understanding of these is essential in developing policy in such areas. Such perspectives may not be represented through stakeholders or those who have established themselves as representatives of stakeholders, and social research provides crucial assistance to policy makers in this area.

---

<sup>6</sup> 2007 Defra Departmental Report: <http://www.defra.gov.uk/corporate/depdep/2007/index.htm>

### **Previous SAC advice in relation to social research**

19. Whilst commenting on specific issues, SAC and its sub-groups have made a number of recommendations relating to the potential added value of social research in the policy making process. This has included the need for more open framing of policy issues; improved understanding of governance issues; a fuller analysis of human behaviour; more transparent evaluation techniques and improved engagement strategies.

#### ***Previous SAC recommendations relating to social research***

##### **SAC-TB review of research on bovine tuberculosis (bTB)**

Stressed the need to include socio-economic aspects relevant to effective implementation of control measures.

##### **SAC-ED review of avian influenza contingency plans**

Recommended that Defra should examine the role of social research in identifying different perceptions of risk; improving understanding of the structure of the poultry industry, and human behaviour, in order to improve risk analysis and strengthen the evidence base for policy decisions.

##### **SAC-G end-to-end review of science into Defra policy**

Recommended that Defra should ensure that social science considerations are fully integrated into science programmes from the beginning in order to better inform strategic direction and policy development.

##### **SAC-S review on Defra's Evidence and Innovation Strategy**

Stressed the need for effective public engagement to run in parallel with development of strategy.

*From Annex 6 to SAC(06)42. Reports of all SAC sub-groups are available on the Defra SAC website: <http://www.defra.gov.uk/science/how/advisory.htm>*

### **Social science capacity and organisation in Defra**

20. The review paper by Philip Lowe (SAC(06)42) set out some of the history behind the current situation with regard to social research in Defra.
21. The establishment of Defra in 2001 brought together the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food (MAFF) and certain divisions of the former Department of the Environment, Transport and Regions (DETR). It provided an opportunity to establish different priorities and to pursue more 'joined-up' solutions to longstanding problems, with a shift in emphasis from a production-driven logic to one more oriented to the consumer and the social and environmental aspects of primary production, the management of natural resources and environmental protection.

22. MAFF's research strengths reflected its former objectives which, under the Chief Scientist, were oriented toward agronomy and the biological sciences. In addition, under its Chief Economist, there was expertise in production and welfare economics which was applied to studies of business and sectoral efficiency, and the evaluation of policy measures. The divisions transferred from the DETR brought important expertise and a tradition of research support in areas such as ecology and environmental sciences.
23. MAFF had no non-economics social science research in relation to its remit (the exception being the National Food Survey) whereas the former DETR had strong traditions of conducting social science research but noticeably not in the divisions moved to Defra. Overall, the net result was a gap in social research in the newly formed Defra. Rural and environmental social research is well established outside Defra, funded by the Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC) and other independent organisations, which could act as a source for evidence-based research to potentially cover some of the gaps identified above. However, as set out in SAC(06)42, Defra was hampered by its lack of in-house social science expertise (other than economists) to fully exploit these opportunities. Without an informed customer in-house for externally commissioned social research, and without the capacity to provide a rapid response to policy questions, the quality of Defra's evidence base is likely to be compromised. The first social researcher was appointed to Defra towards the end of 2003, and over the following four years the numbers have risen to five.
24. The most recent information available indicated that there are over eight hundred social researchers within Government, as part of the Government Social Research (GSR) network. GSR members contribute evidence to support policy design, implementation and evaluation. In addition, there are just over a thousand economists employed as part of the Government Economic Service (GES). Relative figures for Government Social Research (GSR), Government Economic Service (GES), Government Statistical Service (GSS) and Government Operational Research Service (GORS) staff across government (Table 1) highlight the low numbers of GSR staff in Defra but also indicate a significant variation across departments.

**TABLE 1: Analysts in Government by department and profession, 2006-07**

Department	Total	GES	GSR	GSS	GORS	Scientist/ engineer
Cabinet Office	28	15	2	6	5	-
CLG	154	33	62	59	-	27
DCA	28	6	7	12	3	-

DCMS	13	5	3	5	-	-
DfES	207	38	40	94	35	-
DEFRA	120	66	5	45	4	295
DfID	118	94	-	24	-	106
DfT	105	44	15	38	8	210
DWP	472	139	95	141	97	-
DH	152	43	8	53	48	-
DTI	176	104	18	44	10	170
FCO	21	21	-	-	-	100
FSA	16	5	1	5	5	680
HSE	33	7	8	18	-	750
HMRC	286	72	22	113	79	-
HMT	173	144	5	22	2	-
HO	299	21	184	40	54	-
MOD/DASA	77	11	-	66	-	13,000
ONS	473	18	243	212	-	-
Scottish Exec	243	61	83	99	-	-
WAG	123	8	66	49	-	-
Other	260	109	7	102	34	-
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>3,577</b>	<b>1,064</b>	<b>874</b>	<b>1,247</b>	<b>384</b>	<b>*</b>

Source: Management information provided by the Professional Support Teams for each of the analytical professions.

Note: Departmental totals may overestimate the total number of analysts as a result of double counting – some individuals are members of more than one professional group.

These figures pre-date the recent Machinery of Government changes involving the Home Office, DfES and DTI

Scientists and engineers have been excluded from the overall totals because of uncertainty over numbers.

25. Within core Defra, at the time of this report there were five full-time social researchers including a small team of three in Defra's Central Analytical Directorate (CAD), reporting to the Defra Director General, Strategy and Evidence Group (SEG) through Defra's Chief Economist. It is CAD that is currently responsible for catalysing the development of a social research capacity in core Defra that supports evidence based policy making. The other two social researchers work within the Sustainable Consumption and Production Programme, part of the Defra Climate Change Group.
26. This compares to 66 economists (excludes those located in the Office of Climate Change<sup>7</sup>) and 45 statisticians, and approximately 300 natural and physical scientists dispersed throughout the Department in core Defra.

<sup>7</sup> Details of Office of Climate Change: <http://www.defra.gov.uk/news/2006/060922b.htm>

27. Philip Lowe [in SAC(06)42] observed that where CAD social researchers had been involved in policy and research development this had led to effective inputs to the evidence base. The efforts of Defra's Head of Social Research supported by the Chief Scientific Advisor to build up long-term capacity were acknowledged. He concluded, however, that establishing a social research culture throughout a department was no easy task and that Defra faced significant institutional and resource challenges in realising the appropriate roles and potential of social research.

***Examples of social research commissioned by Defra***

Understanding and modelling behaviour and motivations of farmers in responding to policy changes.

Managing the risk of exotic animal diseases in the UK. Focused on influencing the behaviour of key stakeholders. Literature review with consultation.

Wellbeing and sustainable development. A series of projects to gain a better understanding of wellbeing. Mostly literature reviews.

Sustainable consumption and production. A number of projects including influencing behaviour towards sustainable consumption.

Air quality. A Citizen's Jury approach to deepening the qualitative evidence to inform policy.

Waste. A number of projects some of which are focused around social enterprises and behaviour change.

Rural policy. On-going broad programme or rural social research, including issues such as access to services, rural disadvantage and housing.

Most of the above projects involved CAD in-house social researchers in a coordinating or advisory capacity. See Annex 3 of SAC(06)42 for more details:

## **FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **Strategy and Vision for Social Research in Core Defra**

28. The sub-group welcomed the recognition by most senior management within Defra who were consulted during the course of this enquiry, that to tackle the policy and research challenges facing the Department more effectively there needed to be an improvement in capacity and uptake of social research. However it was also clear that this was not universally understood or accepted across all programme areas within the Department. An essential precursor to implementing any changes was the need for a clearly articulated strategy and vision for social research from Defra senior management.
29. The sub-group recognised that the management and staff reorganisation that Defra was undertaking through the “Defra Renew” programme, offered a potential opportunity to improve arrangements to include social research inputs at key stages in the policy cycle.
30. Many of the problems highlighted by the sub-group can only be effectively addressed as part of a long-term strategy to increase capacity and uptake of social research within core Defra. This will require sustained support by the Management Board and senior managers across all sectors of the Department. This must be underpinned by a model of support that facilitates the development of an increased skill base in this area.

### **Perception, understanding and status of social research in Defra**

31. In its meeting with senior Defra staff on 31 May the sub-group discussed how social research had been used within the Department (SAC(07)07).
32. There was a general perception amongst Defra staff that having greater access to social research would change the policy and research questions being asked as understanding increased. There was a general recognition that existing in-house social research capacity, although of a high quality, could not meet demand.
33. The sub-group was concerned by the sometimes naïve perception from some sectors within core Defra about the role and potential contribution of social research. Social research was often defined by Defra staff as a “bolt on”, end of cycle activity existing within the narrow areas of consumer and stakeholder engagement.

34. Social research was not always regarded by Defra policy makers and those who develop research frameworks as equal to other disciplines (including natural sciences and/or economics) in the contribution it could make to the evidence base.
35. The sub-group was concerned that in some cases those who had used professional social research in the past and had valued it highly, did not always appear to learn the lessons from the experience and apply it to other areas of policy development.
36. There was a perception, expressed by some senior staff within core Defra, that anyone could be sufficiently expert at social research. This suggested to the sub-group a lack of understanding of the wide range of distinct disciplines within social science and the value of specialist expertise in social research.
37. Negative perceptions of the role and/or value of social research may have been the result of a naïve understanding or misconception, sometimes combined with an inherent resistance to what was regarded by senior Defra staff as a less important contributor to the evidence base. These negative cultural attitudes were, perhaps, not surprising given the overwhelming focus on the natural science and economics evidence base in policy making in some parts of core Defra.
38. Where social research inputs are not included in policy and research development, in the view of the sub-group, this can result in significant problems with implementation, effectiveness and public acceptance of policy decisions.

***Foot and mouth disease outbreak (2001)***

The failure to understand properly the social geography of sheep farming may have resulted in less effective disease control. There was also a failure to recognise the impact on the wider rural community and economy in relation to aspects of policy implementation including the use of pyres and the closure of public footpaths.

This example illustrates the importance of social research inputs at all stages of the policy cycle from initial planning through to implementation.

39. Although not examined in the same detail, information supplied from some of the Defra Agencies and Delivery Bodies to the sub-group appeared to show that uptake of social research was possibly more advanced in parts of the wider Defra network than the core Department (see SAC(07)11). This appeared to reflect the recommendations of recent Science Audits<sup>8</sup> of the Laboratory Agencies which had encouraged greater appreciation of a social science perspective.
40. It was the view of the sub-group that before significant progress could be made in the wider uptake of social research, much more needed to be done to improve the basic understanding of the potential benefits of social research, particularly among technically-based groups.

### **Integration of social research input to the policy cycle**

41. To make the most effective use of social research requires an iterative process where social research input is sought early in the process of policy development. As the assumptions around priorities are established, contributions or new inputs from both social and natural science disciplines should be re-considered periodically throughout the cycle as understanding of the research challenges, the context, and of stakeholders and customers, develops.
42. The case studies reviewed by the sub-group (SAC-SOC(07)14) show that early dialogue between natural scientists and social researchers, and between policy makers and social researchers was vital to successful use of social research.

---

<sup>8</sup>Defra Agency Science Audits-Further details:  
<http://www.defra.gov.uk/science/how/agencyScienceAudits.htm>

## Case Study 1

### ***Biological Alternatives to Chemical Pesticide Inputs in the Food Chain: An Assessment of Environmental and Regulatory Sustainability***

This inter-disciplinary Rural Economy and Land Use (RELU) funded project, led by a political scientist and involving biologists and environmental scientists, has succeeded in opening up a new dialogue among a range of stakeholders from regulators through manufacturers, consultants and retailers to growers, and is helping to prime the emergence of a new industrial sector around bio-pesticides.

The project has emphasised active engagement with a range of stakeholders from its outset and has contributed to the recognition and resolution of the regulatory challenges faced by a new and innovative high-tech industry that is capable of making a significant contribution to sustainability by providing natural alternatives to conventional chemical pesticides. It has also helped, through workshops, to open up dialogue between manufacturers and environmentalists.

This case study illustrates the importance of:

***Use of a social researcher at a high level***  
***Early dialogue with stakeholders when framing research***  
***Social and natural science integrated from outset***  
***Strong element of communication to stakeholders***

*From SAC-SOC(07)14*

### ***Recommendation 1***

**Defra senior management need to articulate a clear strategy and vision for social research. This should recognise the need for a significant shift in culture and attitude towards the role and value of social research in contributing to the evidence base at all key stages in policy making and research strategy development. Defra senior management need to raise awareness, understanding, and uptake of social research across all programme areas within core Defra, and to challenge negative attitudes where these exist.**

### **Seniority of social research leadership**

43. The sub-group felt strongly that the need to increase the status, visibility, and professional identity of social researchers should be reflected in the seniority of the leadership position for social research in core Defra. Without this it would be difficult to build capacity, status and uptake of social research across the Department. A senior appointment could effectively champion social research inputs to the policy cycle on a par with other professional groups including economists and natural scientists.

## **Case Study 2**

### ***Catchment hydrology, resources, economics and management: integrated modelling of Water Framework Directive impacts on rural land use and farm incomes***

This RELU project, led by an economist, is developing a hydrological-economic model to assess the costs and benefits of changing farming practices in order to produce a healthy river environment with good amenity value. The work has involved cross-disciplinary learning which has enabled the whole team to collaborate in development of methodology for the model. Novel approaches to public and stakeholder engagement including the use of virtual reality facilities have been used. Meetings were held between researchers and policy officials from Defra and the Environment Agency who are responsible for implementation of the Water Framework Directive.

This case study illustrates the importance of:

***Use of social scientist at a high level***

***Early dialogue with policy makers and stakeholders when framing research***

***Social and natural science integrated from outset***

***Effective engagement with stakeholders and public***

*From SAC-SOC(07)14*

## **Recommendation 2**

**The increased importance of social research inputs to the policy cycle and research strategy should be reflected in the seniority status of social research leadership within Defra. This will help to build wider credibility and uptake amongst other professional groups in the Department.**

### **Integration of professional groups: a multidisciplinary approach**

44. The central social research group, located in Defra's Central Analytical Directorate (CAD), were, in the estimation of the sub-group, working to a high standard and were clearly valued by Defra staff. However it was evident that, in general, communication across professional groups (e.g. between social and natural scientists) was often poorly developed. This was largely a result of the small in-house capacity combined with an often naïve understanding of social research within policy and research groups.

45. Evidence from other organisations suggested that there needed to be a more effective strategy to integrate natural and social scientists who should work closely with policy makers (see Social Research in the Scottish Executive, below). Effective integration of professional groups is only likely to occur when procedures are in place that systematically provide forums for communication to take place. Experience from other organisations suggested that to achieve effective evidence-based policy making, policy makers and all contributors to the evidence base must have an integrated multidisciplinary approach. Although elements of this approach have been developed in core Defra (CAD economists and social researchers sit [although do not work] alongside each other, and some social researchers are embedded in policy groups) some lessons from other organisations could help inform the development of a more consistent integrated approach.

### ***Social research in Scottish Executive***

#### **Effective top-down leadership and support from senior management resulting in:**

- A culture which recognised the value of social research inputs to evidence base
- Social research input to policy from outset

#### **Effective coordination, integration and communication between professional groups including:**

- Co-location of analytical disciplines (economics; social research; statistics)
- Co-location of natural scientists and policy groups
- Close working between analysts and policy leads-reciprocal open invitations to meetings on strategy and analysis at all seniority levels

*From minutes of 2<sup>nd</sup> sub-group meeting [See SAC(07)06]*

46. As reported in the scoping paper by Philip Lowe [SAC(06)42] the process for embedding a culture of social research within what are predominantly natural science groups, needed to occur in tandem with the development of “intelligent” (perhaps better described as “informed”) policy customers who appreciate the potential benefits and limits of social research. In addition in house social researchers should also gain an appreciation of the impact of their work on policy and therefore, society at large. This should form a solid foundation for a sustained increase in capacity paced to increased demand (Recommendation 4).

47. There was an opportunity with the current Departmental reorganisation (the “Defra Renew” programme) to embed a more interdisciplinary approach to projects and programmes in all professional groups (social, natural, and physical researchers, and policy professionals). The move to a project and programme-based system for management of research under the Renew programme should facilitate the embedding of social research inputs in a more coordinated and consistent way. At each stage of the project planning process there should be a consideration of social research input.

***Recommendation 3***

**Management, organisational and project structures should encourage interdisciplinary working between professional groups. The Departmental reorganisation (“Defra Renew”) offers the opportunity to embed this approach at the project and programme level in a more consistent and coordinated way.**

**Social research expertise capacity in core Defra**

48. The sub-group was impressed with the quality and expertise of the in-house social research staff. They played a key role in facilitating the input of social research expertise across the range of Defra’s portfolio. In particular the sub-group wished to highlight the strong and forward looking leadership of the team.
49. In the view of the sub-group, the small number of social researchers (five, at the time of the report) in core Defra was not sufficient to meet the existing level of demand. There was a gross imbalance between social researchers and other professional groups. Their numbers were below “critical capacity” and too low for an integrated approach across the Department. In the future it is likely that demand for social research will increase significantly, a view reflected in comments from a number of senior Defra staff the sub-group met.
50. As highlighted in SAC (06)42, the majority of social research in Defra was contracted out, but in its specification, commissioning and subsequent use there appeared to be little direct input from recognised social research staff, primarily because there is insufficient resource available. This raised concerns about whether such research was always fit for purpose and/or whether the Department was currently adequately equipped to be able to interpret and evaluate the results.

51. Consultation with social researchers within Defra and from the departments with similar responsibility within the Devolved Administrations (SAC-SOC(07)12) highlighted a danger that without enough in-house capacity, project proposals would not be reviewed by informed professional social researchers and as a consequence, instances where social research could provide valuable insights would be missed.
52. Individual research groups have adopted different approaches to address the deficiency in in-house social research capacity. There was not a clear picture of how and what type of social research was being used within the Department, reflecting concerns by the sub-group for the need for more strategic oversight. Some groups appeared to have little or no systematic recourse to social research.
53. A small part of any increase in social research capacity could be met through the recruitment of non-permanent staff. Use of fellowships, secondments, contractors *etc.* allow capacity to be increased flexibly and responsively. However, this is at best only a partial substitute for permanent, policy-informed in-house research staff.
54. It was the view of the sub-group that Defra senior management should consider how to allocate resources to increase the permanent in-house capacity of professional social researchers over the medium to long-term to ensure that there was an adequate and sustainable critical capacity of professional social researchers.
55. The sub-group agreed that any increase in capacity must be carefully paced to ensure that that growth follows increases in demand, addressing gaps in coverage as part of a coherent, sustainable strategy.

#### ***Recommendation 4***

**The number of in-house social researchers should be increased to meet increasing demand for social research based inputs to the policy cycle. They were currently below “critical capacity” to enable an integrated approach across the Department. Expansion of capacity should be paced so as to keep in step with demand for social research inputs. This should be part of a coherent, sustainable strategy to improve the number and the balance between social researchers and other professional groups.**

### **The role of in-house professional social researchers in core Defra**

56. It is not a practical or sensible option to attempt to provide coverage of all social research expertise in-house. This would be difficult to achieve, be costly and lack flexibility and responsiveness. It was the view of the sub-group that the main role of a professional social researcher in Defra was to have a broad, but expert understanding of the range of social research disciplines allied to an understanding of Defra's policy and research requirements. In this way they can effectively identify where social research inputs to policy and/or research would have the most impact. They would also serve as key contact points to networks of external, more specialised expertise from a range of sources including the wider Defra network and beyond.
57. To achieve this strategic role and the equivalent treatment referred to above, it is important to increase the status and professional identity of in-house social researchers. This must be supported by access to appropriate training and continuing professional development.

#### ***Recommendation 5***

**In-house professional social researchers in Defra fulfil a vital role, via their broad understanding of social research disciplines and how they align to Departmental policy and research needs. They act as key contact points to external networks of more specialised social research expertise. This approach should be continued as capacity expands, supported by access to training and continuing professional development.**

58. The sub-group also wished to highlight the critical role of the Project Officer (previously identified in the SAC Governance sub-group End to End Review of Science into Policy in Defra [SAC-G(06)14]) linking evidence and policy. In effect Project Officers are sophisticated "gatekeepers" between the key professional groups within the Department. There is a need for Project Officers who are not normally themselves social scientists to be cognisant of social research and provide the link between professional social researchers and core Defra policy and research teams. The converse of course also applies where Project Officers are social scientists; for them the requirement is to be fully aware of the natural science issues under examination.

59. Project Officers often have a natural science background. It will be important that adequate training be provided to Project Officers in post to ensure effective engagement between the different professional groups is facilitated. The sub-group also felt that, through the process of turnover and recruitment, the goal should be pursued of making Project Officers as a group more representative of the range of disciplines that Defra needed to draw on, including social research. This would further demonstrate and encourage genuine multi-disciplinary team working and over the medium to long-term could also help address the need to increase the capacity of in-house social research skills. It also potentially offers solutions to address shortages in a range of key skills in other professional groups (e.g. engineers) which may also be under-represented in the Department.

***Recommendation 6***

**Project Officers also play a critical role in linking professional groups, linking the evidence base with policy. Project Officers should, with appropriate training, be cognisant of both natural and social research and the relevance of these disciplines to policy and research strategy. Project Officers should also include individuals from across all relevant professional groups, including social research. This would help to promote genuine multi-disciplinary team working and, through a process of focussed recruitment, address the need to increase in-house social research capacity.**

**External social research expertise including the wider Defra network**

60. Access to the range of skills offered by social science must be developed through effective external networks. However, recourse to external sources that is not guided by in-house social research professionals may lead to reliance on a limited number and very specific group of experts. The consequences could be naïve commissioning of research, including research questions not being framed correctly and inefficient or ineffectual research being funded.
61. The role of the in-house social researcher and Project Officers as sophisticated “gatekeepers”, able on the one hand to recognise where inputs are needed in the policy cycle and on the other who can act as an informed customer for external skills, is pivotal (see Recommendations 5 and 6).

62. The sub-group welcomed and supported the work already underway to establish effective collaborations with external experts/groups as a necessity for Defra social research, whilst recognising that further development of effective networks needed to be linked to the expansion of in-house capacity (see Recommendation 4). The sub-group recognised that in the short term this was likely to require in-house Defra researchers working with partners with existing large networks such as the ESRC or major foundations. This was not only because of the need to work with social scientists with established records in areas of Defra's interest but because of the potential need to link in with world class social scientists in associated fields.

***Examples of existing social research links with core Defra led by social researchers in core Defra***

ESRC studentships and fellowships

Cross-departmental working with Institute for Fiscal Studies English Longitudinal Study on Ageing [ELSA] [<http://www.ifs.org.uk/elsa/>]. Includes working with the US National Institute on Ageing.

Cross-departmental working on UK Household Longitudinal Study (UKHLS). Involves working with ESRC and The Institute for Social and Economic Research [ISER] at the University of Essex (ISER) [<http://www.iser.essex.ac.uk/ukhls/>] and potential high profile work representing Whitehall departments on the Advisory Board.

Collaborative work with Devolved Administrations, the Environment Agency and ESRC to set up a jointly-funded Research Centre on Sustainable Behaviours.

Central role in the GSR network, linking directly with social researchers in other government departments and with representation on the GSR Strategic Board.

Direct links with the Scottish Executive on Defra-relevant policy issues (also to a lesser extent with WAG and NI).

Membership of the cross-departmental liaison group on longitudinal data sets.

*Personal communication (Janet Gawn; Defra Head of Social Research)*

63. The sub-group felt that there were parallels with natural scientists in core Defra and a similar approach needed to be adopted in linking to external expertise which should be drawn from a wide range of sources including academia and industry from the UK and overseas.

64. Defra should also seek advice from others on how to further develop effective external networks. For example ESRC can draw on successful models of building capacity within government departments and help Defra establish its relationships with the external social science community.
65. Core Defra social research staff must work closely with parts of the wider Defra network (including Laboratory Agencies and relevant Delivery Bodies) who have or are establishing a social research base and associated networks to external expertise. The sub-group's limited coverage of social science capacity within the Defra network revealed an appetite amongst parts of the network, who supply much of the external expertise to Defra, to expand their own internal capacity to include social science expertise. In its sponsorship and contracting relationships with the network, a positive signal from Defra could be highly influential in catalysing this development, thus increasing strategically the sophistication of these key suppliers to Defra in their coverage of the social dimension of their work. Core Defra could benefit by tapping into these networks as well as directly sub-contracting out some social research.
66. Many of the key challenges facing Defra cut across different government departments and the Devolved Administrations including issues such as minimising waste; promoting sustainable rural communities; and responding to environmental and climate change. Within government opportunities will arise for productive secondments and transfers of social research expertise.

#### ***Recommendation 7***

**Defra should seek to build on and expand its existing connections with the external social science community, making use of not only of its own network but those of other central government departments, the Devolved Administrations and elsewhere, in order to enable greater access to appropriate expertise as well as to learn and share best practice.**

#### **Building external social research capability**

67. Where gaps in external expertise, capacity and capability are identified it might be possible for Defra to address this directly through specific initiatives. There were examples where Defra had done this for natural sciences (e.g. the Veterinary Training Research Initiative addressed the market failure in supply of veterinary epidemiologists and is linked to the skills requirements for Defra's strategy in animal disease; <http://www.defra.gov.uk/animalh/vtri/>).

68. The Rural Evidence Research Centre (RERC), Defra's only significant attempt to build up an external social research capacity to date, was not raised in discussion when the sub-group met with senior Defra staff at their second meeting (SAC(07)06).
69. The sub-group had a number of concerns about the report on the Defra-sponsored RERC (SAC(07)13). This was established in 2003, prior to the introduction of professional social research expertise in core Defra, to provide a "source of rural evidence". The report made it clear however that although RERC had produced a large body of work that this did not always align well with Defra policy requirements – indeed it suggested that there was a disengagement between research and policy teams.
70. Whilst the sub-group supported the proposal for a Research Centre on Sustainable Behaviours (RCSB) (SAC(07)13), it was particularly important that lessons should be learnt from the commission and management of the RERC. This episode seemed to the sub-group to illustrate Defra's naïvety as a social research contractor. It was also disappointed that Defra had not taken a more open and technical approach to lessons learned. The success of any contract with an external supplier must be based on a shared agenda between external researchers and policy makers. The bases of collaboration and shared understandings need to be incorporated into the project's formal documentation, along with relevant key performance indicators.
71. The RCSB would focus on the research challenges of moving towards more sustainable patterns of consumption and ways of living, and of achieving more effective pro-environmental behaviour. The sub-group was strongly supportive of this collaborative approach in which Defra was in discussion with the ESRC, the Devolved Administrations and other partners. For the RCSB to be a success however the sub-group stressed the importance of ensuring that current levels of shared ownership of, and expectations from, the research agenda between external researchers and Defra policy makers are maintained. Mechanisms should be put in place to ensure there was an on-going dialogue throughout the life of the project.

***Recommendation 8***

**Defra should examine the lessons learned from the Rural Evidence Research Centre (RERC) project in creating a sound basis for the proposed Research Centre on Pro-Environmental Behaviour (RCPEB) project.**

## **Public and stakeholder engagement**

72. Many of the examples of social research cited by Defra staff in meetings with the sub-group were narrowly defined as engagement and consultation exercises with the public and stakeholders.
73. Although the sub-group recognised the importance of these approaches as a key part of the social research input to the policy cycle, it was important that such activities were not seen either as the main type of social research input or only as a “bolt on” end-of-cycle activity. Policy and research development should be informed by a range of social research inputs including engagement and consultation at all relevant stages.
74. The sub-group was impressed with the efforts and novel approaches to engagement made in some areas within the Department. This included consumer engagement panels and Citizens’ Juries which were helping to identify issues of public concern as well as building trust and understanding of the Department (see SAC(07)10 for more details).
75. The sub-group agreed with comments from some senior Defra staff that standard consultations, in which comments were invited on sometimes lengthy documents, often lacked this kind of innovative, interactive and more deliberative approach to engagement. The sub-group noted the work undertaken across the Research Councils to establish evidence-based good practice in public engagement and urged Defra to engage with the RCUK Science in Society group in this area.
76. The sub-group also recognised the need for a developing understanding of the perspectives, requirements and relative roles of the commissioners of research, stakeholders, those who establish themselves as representing stakeholders, customers of particular policies, and society in general. It is important in considering a ‘stakeholder perspective’ to be aware that the real stakeholder group often encompass a far wider range of people than those primarily involved in policies, and indeed those who may actually be involved in the commissioning of a specific piece of research. This area warrants further examination.

### ***Recommendation 9***

**Effective public and stakeholder engagement is a key part of the social research input to all relevant stages of policy and research development. This requires clear shared understandings of the nature, types and identity of stakeholders across the board, and should include the use of innovative, interactive and deliberative approaches to engagement.**

## **Quality assurance and knowledge management of social research**

77. The sub-group felt it was vital that social research should be quality assured to the same degree as natural science research. The SAC Governance sub-group (SAC-G) has previously made recommendations on the quality assurance of natural science research projects commissioned by Defra (SAC(05)24) and these should apply to all R&D commissioned by Defra including social research. Commissioning costs for social research are often below that for other research inputs (e.g. compared to the costs involved in natural science research projects). However lower costs should not result in lower standards when initially selecting contractors or assessing the quality of outputs.

### ***Recommendation 10***

**Quality assurance procedures should not distinguish between natural or social sciences and both must be subject to rigorous appraisal and review.**

78. The sub-group noted that it was important that in order for lessons to be learnt from previous experience of social research that effective knowledge management systems be used to ensure the Department retained a corporate memory in this area.

### ***Recommendation 11***

**The Department should ensure that effective knowledge management systems and corporate memory of social research activities are developed. There should also be a requirement on those engendering research proposals to become aware early on of already (externally) available social research information and data about any given situation or context.**

## CONCLUDING REMARKS

79. Members are sensitive to the severe financial pressures facing Defra. However, the organisational changes that are currently being put in place in Defra under the Renew programme represent an opportune moment for the Department to take forward the key recommendations in relation to social research. Social research is low-cost compared with most scientific evidence so a small re-profiling of existing spending would give rise to a considerable broadening of the evidence base.
80. The priority for the Department should be to increase the status and seniority of social research as a contributor to the evidence base, building in-house capacity which can tap into effective external networks. In this way Defra will have the right framework and skills for social research to begin to have a much greater impact on policy and research.

### ***Framework for social research in Defra***

**Build in-house capacity of social researchers, addressing balance with other professional groups, aligned to a clear strategy aimed to:**

**Raise awareness and understanding as an informed customer for social research from policy and research groups**

**Raise seniority of social research leadership, overall professional identity of social research and status of social research inputs**

**Recognise the pivotal role of Project Officers (POs) as sophisticated “gatekeepers” between professional groups and include individual POs from all disciplinary groups including social research**

**Develop management structures in “Defra Renew” that recognise and seek social research inputs to policy and research development**

**Expand and develop existing networks to increase further the access to specialist external expertise from academia, across government and elsewhere.**

## **Annex 1: Meetings attended by sub-group members**

15-03-2007 First sub-group meeting\*

[http://www.defra.gov.uk/science/documents/papers/2007/SAC-SOC\(07\)03.pdf](http://www.defra.gov.uk/science/documents/papers/2007/SAC-SOC(07)03.pdf)

31-05-2007 Second sub-group meeting\*

[http://www.defra.gov.uk/science/documents/papers/2007/SAC-SOC\(07\)07.pdf](http://www.defra.gov.uk/science/documents/papers/2007/SAC-SOC(07)07.pdf)

21-06-2007 Hilary Burrage attended –  
Consumer Representatives Training Session  
(see also SAC(07)22)

21-06-2007 Hilary Burrage attended –  
Twenty fourth meeting of Foodaware: the Consumers Food Group  
<http://www.foodaware.org.uk/food/>

26-06-2007 Hilary Burrage attended –  
Seventh meeting of consumer representatives and membership organisations  
with the Chief Veterinary Officer  
(see also SAC(07)22)

05-09-2007 Chris Gaskell attended –  
Code Of Practice for Scientific Advisory Committees (COPSAC) Consultation  
Workshop  
(see also SAC(07)22)

17-09-2007 Third sub-group meeting\*

[http://www.defra.gov.uk/science/documents/papers/2007/SAC-SOC\(07\)10???.pdf](http://www.defra.gov.uk/science/documents/papers/2007/SAC-SOC(07)10???.pdf)

\*Minutes of sub-group meetings are confidential as they include details relating to particular individuals or groups. In addition to the sub-group they have been circulated to all participants to check for factual accuracy.

### **Those attending meetings with the sub-group and/or the secretariat**

i) Defra staff

15-03-2007 First sub-group meeting

Janet Gawn-Head of Social Research

(It was agreed by the sub-group that Janet Gawn should attend all future sub-group meetings and continue to advise the sub-group on its work throughout)

31-05-2007 Second sub-group meeting

Peter Stevenson –Head of Veterinary Science Team

Alison Reeves - Exotic Disease Policy

David Cooper – R&D programme manager, Food and Farming Group

Simon Harding – Deputy Director for Economics and Statistics

Nafees Meah – Deputy Director, Food and Farming Group  
Peter Costigan - Science Coordinator, Natural Environment Group  
Paul Leonard – Head of Marine Environment Science Unit  
Rachel Muckle – Research Manager, Climate Change Group

26-06-2007 Chair teleconference  
Martin Williams - Head of Air and Environment Quality Division  
(SAC-SOC(07)07)

10-07-2007 Secretariat meeting  
Ann Davison - Consumer and stakeholder engagement consultant, Food and Farming Group  
(SAC-SOC(07)10)

17-09-2007 Third sub-group meeting  
Richard Price - Chief Economist, Director of Economics and Statistics  
Bill Stow - Director General, Strategy and Evidence Group

ii) Non-Defra staff

31/05/2007 Second sub-group meeting  
Colette Backwell - Head of Social Research, Scottish Executive Environment and Rural Affairs Department (SEERAD)

17-09-2007 Third sub-group meeting  
Sue Duncan - Government Chief Social Researcher

## **Annex 2: Other information reviewed by the subgroup**

15-12-2006 Initial scoping study by SAC Member Philip Lowe – set out in paper: “Increasing the capacity and uptake of social research in Defra”  
SAC (06) 42 <http://www.defra.gov.uk/science/how/advisory06.htm>

01-03-2007 House of Commons Science and Technology Committee report - “Scientific Advice, Risk and Evidence-based Policy Making”  
<http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm200506/cmselect/cmsctech/900/900-i.pdf>

26-06-2007 Citizens’ Jury report - Air and Environment Quality  
SAC-SOC (07)10

17-08-2007 Consumer Engagement in Defra  
(SAC-SOC(07)10)

Responses from the Defra network on the use of social research  
(SAC-SOC(07)11)

Responses from the Devolved Administrations on the use of social research  
(SAC-SOC(07)12)

Notes on Defra funded Research Centres  
(SAC-SOC(07)13)

Case Studies of the effective use of Social Research  
(SAC-SOC(07)14)