

University of Leeds

Animal Welfare and Ethical Review Committee

Minutes of meeting of 12 September 2022

Eleven members of the Committee joined the meeting (two for part of the meeting) with one person in attendance. Since the new Chair was only available for part of the meeting the Establishment Licence (PEL) holder had agreed to chair on this occasion.

Minutes

22/1 The minutes of the meeting held on 27 July 2022 were received and approved.

Matters arising

22/2 A paper presenting options for streamlining the work of the Committee including options for consideration of project licence (PPL) applications and reviews (min 21/145 and min 21/158) would be brought to the meeting in November. Members were reminded to send any suggestions to the Named Information Officer (NIO).

ACTION: All.

PEL holder and Named Veterinary Surgeon (NVS) update

(Received paper AWERC/22/01)

22/3 The Named Veterinary Surgeon (NVS) reported that no new Standard Condition 18 (SC18) reports had been submitted to the Animals in Science Regulation Unit (ASRU) during the period since the last meeting. The SC18 report submitted to ASRU in January and referred to the ASRU Enforcement Team in February had finally been resolved without any further action being required. Two new PPL applications submitted to ASRU were being assessed, one PPL had been granted and another was still pending along with two amendments.

22/4 The Committee was told that agreement had been reached with the NVS to facilitate handover to his successor full-time until the end of November followed by provision for part time cover from this date for one year. The Committee welcomed the news that backup would be provided along with the benefit of retaining the outgoing NVS's experience during this time.

Named Animal Care and Welfare Officers' (NACWO) Report

(Received paper AWERC/22/02)

22/5 There were no environmental or animal welfare issues to report. A burst pipe had occurred on the morning of the meeting but fortunately due to the location of the leak no animals had been affected.

22/6 Following discussions at the last meeting concerning cover for staff during the summer the PEL holder had been in contact with the Faculties and been given

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assurances that these matters were known and would tie in with the recruitment of a new manager. The Committee recognized the importance of these roles and would continue to do what it could, particularly within the groups in which members operate. The support of the Committee was acknowledged by the NACWO.

22/7 It was noted that difficulties increased when staff were unexpectedly off sick, that animal welfare would continue to be covered as a priority but there may not be sufficient staff to cover procedural work. The NACWOs were asked to monitor the situation, as Covid infections appeared to be increasing, and to contact the PEL holder direct if necessary.

ULBSC Report

22/8 The Committee received a verbal update on the ongoing discussions regarding the planned merger of facilities. No final decisions had been made concerning the date of closure of the facility at REDACTED or where and how equipment and work would move. Concerns expressed included how individual users, equipment, animals and work would be affected; when the merger would take place; and the budget for movement of animals and equipment to enable researchers to be able to plan ahead. It was acknowledged that the relocation of some equipment would be a significant undertaking and requiring financial commitment. A joint meeting of user groups had been arranged for researchers to receive an update on the proposals. Possibilities to optimize and streamline facilities had been recognised.

22/9 Discussions following the report were concerned with the risk of causing delays to grant applications which would affect income; a perceived lack of wider operational understanding of the complexities of animal research and regulatory requirements that apply. The Committee noted discussions the NVS had been having with another licensed establishment regarding support for specific work and the possibility of an increase of working collaboratively in the future to develop a centre of excellence. The risk of not having sufficient space to accommodate everything expected was reported and the REDACTED and subsequent PEL holder's commitment, when signing off on any application to the Home Office, to provide the facilities required for the work under a PPL was acknowledged.

Approved areas

(Received paper AWERC/22/03)

22/10 The Committee received full details of the approved areas registered for animal use at the University. The NVS and a NACWO would be visiting all registered rooms outside the main animal facilities to establish which of these were still needed. ASRU's preference was that all animal housing and research falling under ASPA should be located within an animal facility. Some University rooms had been authorised outside of the core facilities for non-sterile procedures but if the University sought registration of further rooms outside the facility it was

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anticipated that these may not be considered sympathetically. The NVS confirmed that all the rooms included on the Establishment Licence were reviewed at least annually. In view of the planned merger the Committee agreed to review capacity and whether this would continue to be appropriate in relation to the number of registered NACWOs. The NVS agreed to inspect the rooms with his successor and to report to the Committee

ACTION: NVS

Draft annual report to Council

(Received paper AWERC/22/04)

22/11 Members received the revised draft Annual AWERB report to Council and were invited to comment. Since animal tissues were used for educational purposes a member asked for this to be added to the report. The NIO agreed to amend the introduction and the circulation deadline was noted.

ACTION: NIO

Project licence applications

A381(2)

22/12 The NVS introduced the PPL application which had been amended following comments at an earlier meeting of the Committee. The application had been improved but some points still needed to be addressed to alleviate discrepancies. One consideration which had led to a delay in resubmission had been whether the facilities would be available for the work. The signature of the REDACTED to give an undertaking that the research would be supported had been received.

22/13 The applicant joined the meeting to present the work. Discussions then focused on what had changed since the last review and were concerned with the use of in-vitro work to test hypotheses and identify the work which would progress in-vivo; the protocols, severity and number of animals requested; administration of drugs and single housing of animals to monitor uptake; doses, determined from in-vitro studies; sampling after humane killing after an animal had been confirmed dead; the 3Rs including intervention points which had been discussed with the HO inspector previously; and when the applicant was hoping to commence work. Concern was expressed over the complexity of the application and it was acknowledged that ASRU could request simplification or ask for the application to be split. The NACWO reported that the previous licence had been complex but the team had been very good and receptive to advice and help with welfare aspects of the work.

22/14 The Committee was pleased to note that when the PPL was granted, work was expected to begin once funding was in place and when facilities would be available REDACTED. The endorsement of REDACTED was noted. Some equipment would need to be moved, and some would have to be purchased in discussion with vet and NACWOs. The PEL holder reminded the Committee that signing off a PPL application included warranting that suitable facilities would be available for the duration of the project. The need to make sure that there is adequate support in the facility was also essential.

22/15 The applicant was asked to include information and data taken from similar studies that could inform the work, along with references, in the application. It was suggested that

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the applicant should consider tailoring the welfare scoring sheets to each protocol, as appropriate, to help the technicians to apply each and to act in a timely manner. The NVS agreed to have a final look at the amended application before its submission to the HO.

ACTION: NVS

A389

22/16 The NVS introduced the application for a dietary study which would fall under the Act's regulation because blood samples would have to be taken. The applicant presented and explained the need for the licence to study bolstered diet in maternal feed and test whether these would show signs of key compounds in amniotic fluid and milk transfer to the young which would overcome the reluctance of animals to eat after weaning.

22/17 Details of sampling and time points were received and during discussion questions related to the calculation for power analysis and how animals would be allocated to study groups; the decision to conduct the work at a POLE site so that it would be commercially relevant; the potential appointment of a NACWO at the site although there is no legal requirement to have one; and the potential start date for the work once the PPL was granted.

22/18 The PEL holder welcomed the insight into the work and the NVS advised that a steady stream of work could be anticipated at the POLE site along with non-regulated work to be done within a commercial setting. The Committee agreed that with minor amendments the application could be submitted to ASRU.

Schedule of business

(Received AWERC/22/05)

22/19 The updated schedule of business was received for information. The NIO was asked to add external meetings as a regular item for future meetings.

ACTION: NIO

Other business

22/20 Members were reminded of upcoming external AWERB meetings, details of which had been circulated. The NIO and NVS would be attending the upcoming Laboratory Animal Science Association (LASA) Home Office Liaison, Training and Information Forum meeting in October and the LASA Annual Conference in November. The PEL holder would be attending the LASA PEL holders' Forum, also in November.

22/21 The University had received two FOI requests relating to ASPA work and responded within the response time. One request had been concerning use of the forced swim test (fst) despite responses to previous requests confirming that the fst is not being used at the University.

Date of next meeting

22/22 The next meeting would be held on Monday 7 November from 1400 to 1600 via MS Teams.