



National DNA Database Strategy Board

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Open Minutes of Meeting

18th September 2014

10:30 – 13:00

Private Dining Room 1, Home Office, 2 Marsham Street, London, SW1P 3DF

Present:

Name	Organisation
Jo Ashworth (JA)	East Midlands Police
Simon Bramble (SB)	Interim Forensic Science Regulator
Mick Carling (MC)	Home Office
Kenny Chigbo	Home Office
Andy Derwent (AD) (secretary)	Home Office
Fiona Douglas (FD)	Scottish Police Authority
Ann Fairweather (AF)	Home Office
Kirsty Faulkner (KF)	Home Office
Brandon Langley (BL)	West Midlands Police
Graham Kissock (GK)	Police Service of Northern Ireland (PSNI)
Shaun Mallinson (SM)	Home Office
Meagan Mirza (MM)	Information Commissioners Office
Katherine Mitchinson (KM)	Office of the Biometrics Commissioner (OBC)
Alan Pratt (AP)	Home Office
Gary Pugh (GP)	Metropolitan Police Service (MPS)
Chris Sims (CS) (in the chair)	Association of Chief Police Officers (ACPO)

Apologies:

Name	Organisation
Mark Hamilton	Police Service of Northern Ireland (PSNI)
Tyson Hepple	Home Office
Barrie Sheldon	Association of Police and Crime Commissioners
Anthony Harbinson	Northern Ireland Department of Justice

1.0 Welcome and Introduction

1.1 CS welcomed everyone to the meeting and asked them to introduce themselves.

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2.0 Apologies

2.1 Apologies are noted above.

3.0 Previous Minutes

a. Strategy Board Minutes

3.1 CS asked if there were any corrections to the previous minutes. JA said that she worked for East Midlands Police and not the Home Office.

b. Operations Group Minutes

3.2 A copy of the minutes from the DNA Operations Group was attached. JA [chair of the Operations Group] had nothing from the meeting that she wished to raise with the Board.

4.0 Action Register and Matters Arising

a. Action Register and Matters Arising

4.1 KF presented the Action Sheet (Paper 4.0) to the Board. She said that five of the 20 actions were outstanding. She reported that adding the profiles of those who had been buried at sea to the Missing Persons DNA Database was being progressed through the Missing Persons Bureau.

4.2 She said that one key area that the National DNA Database Delivery Unit (NDU) was focussing on was the automated removal of crime scene records where a full Second Generation Multiplex Plus (SGM-plus) crime scene to subject match had been made.

4.3 KF said that progress was also being made with the development of the Central Elimination Database. CH urged that an evidence based approach to retention was taken.

4.4 She said that pilots of the Centralised Elimination Database had been carried out in Nottinghamshire and Lancashire. SB said that we need to be robust in order to meet any legal challenges we might face and KF added that we should keep this item open for the next year. She said that she had carried out some gap analysis with June Guinness from the Forensic Science Regulation Unit on the project. JA advised caution. . It was possible that police staff might be challenged for making national rather than regional checks. CS asked if the Police Federation had been consulted on the pilot and KF confirmed that they had.

4.5 KF said that she was supporting the Biometrics Commissioner (Alastair MacGregor) in carrying out checks regarding deletions of DNA samples, profiles and fingerprints. She said that that the United Kingdom Accreditation Service (UKAS) and NDU had conducted out a scoping exercise with a Forensic Science Provider to check how they had gone about implementing PoFA. The key thing was to ensure the data retained under PoFA was removed from other business processes such as those relating to disaster recovery processes. She went on to say that the other FSPs would be reviewed too.

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b. Draft Annual Report

- 4.6 MC presented a draft of the National DNA Database Strategy Board's Annual Report for 2013-14 (Paper 4.1) to the Board. He thanked Carl Jennings for his hard work on the report. He said that this was the first report since the implementation of PoFA. The proportion of profiles from innocent people had fallen from 50% to 3%. He reported that the number of profiles on the database had fallen from 7.2 million to five million but that the match rate had in fact risen slightly from 59% to 62%. He had checked this with KF and they could not find any errors with the figures. JA said that the increase in match rate was not expected; in fact, a decrease had been anticipated. She asked if the number of crime scene profiles had reduced. MC said that the report would be published as soon as the Board were content. CS added that it was good that we were near publication.
- 4.7 CS asked if we had got the chronology on the deletion of samples correct and MC confirmed that we had. Batches of deletions took place in fairly short timescales (for example over a weekend). CS said that we needed a proper review of PoFA implementation and MC added that any analysis of implementation must be independent and not carried out by the police or the Home Office. CH added that such a review would need ministers' co-operation as well as funding and an appropriate experimental design. AP said that the scientific design committee could input into any such review.

Action Point 1: CS to write to Ministers to request that research be carried out into the effectiveness of PoFA.

- 4.8 MC said that Alastair MacGregor had been in discussion with academics at the Universities of Northumbria and Durham regarding the possibility of research being conducted into the effectiveness and proportionality of the new regime established by PoFA, and this had been raised in the past. It was noted that his budget did not include funds for conducting independent research.
- 4.9 MC said that the annual report included, for the first time for many years, information on error rates. The most recent figure was 0.15% for crime scene profiles. CH added that the Ethics Group has discussed error rates at its latest meeting and was concerned at the lack of a systematic review of error. It would be good to see an end-to-end review of error rates and he would probably write to Ministers to recommend this.
- 4.10 GP said that the report was well laid out but that he did have a number of comments to make. On page 10, he said that there was a mix of percentages and whole numbers which was confusing. Page 13 also needed to be clearer; it mentioned detection rates but we needed to be mindful of the fact that there was more than one way of defining the detection rate. MC clarified that the 63% figure was detections made following the uploading of a profile.
- 4.11 It was suggested that the report should include information on the anticipated impact of DNA-17 so that it was clear that discordance was another source of error; however it was recognised that this was a rare event and should be considered as another point of failure within the whole DNA process.

Action Point 2: Board Members to feed back in the next fortnight if they have any further comments. Once completed, a final draft would be circulated to Board Members. [Update: No further comments have been received from Board Members. However, the Biometrics Commissioner had made a number of comments on the report which we were considering]

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c. High Court Cases – crime scene DNA & Gaughran

- 4.12 MC presented a summary of two court cases involving the use of DNA obtained in relation to criminal investigations (Paper 4.2) to the Board.
- 4.13 The first of the cases was that of ‘Z’. In July, the Family Division of the High Court ruled that a crime scene profile could be used to determine paternity. Both the Home Office and the Metropolitan police are appealing the ruling and the Metropolitan Police Service have asked for a stay of proceedings though we do not yet have a date for the Court of Appeal hearing. The actual decision on who should have custody of the children in this case was decided without reference to DNA. [Update: we now have a date; the case will be heard on the 8th & 9th December.]
- 4.14 MC went on to explain the details of the case. He said that two parts of the Police and Criminal Evidence Act 1984 were relevant to the case. Part V covered questioning by the police and the taking of samples of DNA. It did not allow DNA samples to be used for non-criminal matters (e.g. paternity testing). However, Part II covered crime scene profiles and did not have the same prohibition against use as Part V. The judge had ruled that, although the profile on the database (taken under Part V) could not be used, the same prohibition did not apply to the crime scene profile (as this was taken under Part II). However, the crime scene (part II) profile had been compared with the Part V profile so should arguably be treated with the same protections.
- 4.15 MM said that she could provide a supporting letter. She asked if it would be possible to see the legal statements and arguments. GP said that he was happy to share them with her. The impression given by the judge in the case was that this was a rare circumstance but he said that he could recall a number of local authorities who had sought access to DNA from crime scenes in order to determine paternity. He thought it was likely that if the ruling stood, a number of local authorities would approach the police to obtain access to crime scene profiles.
- 4.16 The second case was that of Gaughran. This was an appeal against a ruling by the Northern Ireland High Court which was being heard by the Supreme Court. The Police Service of Northern Ireland (PSNI) was the respondent, and the Home Office the intervener, in the case. The appellant was arguing that indefinite retention breached his rights under Article 8 of the European Convention on Human Rights because the offence he had been convicted of (excess alcohol) was minor. However, the Home Office had evidence to show that fifteen individuals whose DNA had been taken for excess alcohol later went on to commit murder, manslaughter or rape hence there was a good argument for retaining Mr Gaughran’s profile.
- 4.17 MC added that fingerprint records were accessed very frequently (around 2,000 times a month). The Home Office were also aware of comments made by the Council of Europe and the Joint Committee on Human Rights which showed support for the current retention framework. He said that there was a difference between indefinite and long retention of fingerprints and DNA. Should the Court ruling go against the PSNI, changing the retention framework for DNA would simply be a matter of reprogramming NDNAD and would be minor in nature. However, amending the rules on the retention of fingerprints would be more problematic because of the many hard copies in existence. Changes to the retention of photographs would be very difficult indeed because they were held on many different systems.
- 4.18 MM thought the case was interesting. She queried whether drink driving was really such a minor offence. She did, however, take issue with the indefinite retention of cautions. CH asked if the Home Office had looked at the circumstances of each of the cases held indefinitely. CS said that, given that legislators had specified under PoFA that retention should be indefinite, it would be a bold move for the Supreme Court to

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go against that. If we won, it was his view that the case would then go to Strasbourg [i.e. the European Court Of Human Rights].

d. Letter from Police and Crime Commissioner

4.19 CS reported that Alun Michael, the Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) for South Wales, had written to AD to explain that PCCs would no longer be attending Board meetings but that they would be happy to have an officer from the Association of Police and Crime Commissioners (APCC) attend instead. PCCs had taken this decision because, in their view, the Board was operational in nature rather than strategic. CH said that he could see the argument that some of what the Board considered was operational in nature but he pointed out that it did also cover many strategic issues. CS pointed out that in any case, there was already a group that considered operational matters [the DNA Operations Group].

4.20 CS said that, whilst he partially agreed with the decision of PCCs, it did destroy the notion of the Board being a tripartite group. He didn't think that the absence of PCCs would harm the programme of work that the Board was undertaking but he did feel that it undermined its legitimacy. He felt that there was a problem with the APCC's ability to represent PCCs. He stated that membership of the Board was a political matter and that Home Secretary might wish to redefine the Board's membership to take account of the position of PCCs.

Action Point 3: CS to write to the Home Secretary to ask what her position was on the membership of the Board. [Update: CS instead wrote to Mary Calam, the Director-General of the Crime and Policing Group, to ask for her opinion. A draft response, to both CS and Alun Michael, is currently with the Director of Policing, David Lamberti.]

5.0 Protection of Freedoms Act

a. P of A Implementation Project Update

5.1 MC presented a verbal update on the Implementation Project to the Board. He said that stage 6 of the Police National Computer (PNC) update would be carried out this weekend and that this would then complete the implementation of PoFA. He said that 1.7 million profiles had been deleted from the National DNA Database (NDNAD) on time and to the schedule set by Lord Taylor, the previous minister with responsibility for DNA retention. Destruction had proved very difficult and he thanked everyone who had taken part, especially David Spence, Riz Sharrif and Jess Khetani [the project manager and project support officers]. He added that, once a profile had been deleted, it could not be 'undeleted'.

5.2 MC added that there had been three issues with deletion:

1. PNC records can never be instantaneously updated therefore there is a time lag between the decision to acquit or take no further action and the updating of the records on NDNAD, IDENT1 and PNC.
2. Dealing with proceedings which had been stayed or discontinued. It was not always clear whether a case had been stayed or abandoned. A compromise had been agreed by all parties.
3. Dealing with 'wanted/missing' markers. If a person is wanted or missing, their biometrics may be retained. However, some sub-categories of these markers are used to gather information and may not be sufficient for retention.

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He added that we relied on the Lawful Match guidance that CS had issued in order to ensure that the right profiles were retained.

5.3 CS said that PoFA had been implemented but only at an enormous cost and that implementation had resulted in stagnation in developing other areas of forensic science.

b. Review of Samples Retained Under CPIA

5.4 KF presented a summary report on sample retention under the Criminal Procedures Investigation Act (Paper 5.0) to the Board. She had spoken to the Biometrics Commissioner about the issue. He had queried why voluntary and elimination samples had been retained and the issue had been discussed at the Operations Group.

5.5 MM asked what happened to elimination samples. KF said we needed to work out what forces were doing and work out a solution other than just wholesale retention of samples. KM said that the Biometrics Commissioner was concerned that different forces seemed to have different approaches to whether samples could or should be retained as 'casework' under CPIA, and that this was causing uncertainty. She added that the OBC had been told that forces were not finding the guidance issued by the Home Office very clear and she suggested that it be reviewed or that perhaps a conference could be held to discuss it.

c. Subject Sampling Kits – Consent Wording

5.6 KF provided a verbal update on this item to the Board. She said that, following discussions with the Biometrics Commissioner, the Home Office was revising the wording on the consent forms. She hoped that it would be completed by the next meeting [due to be held on 4th December].

d. Guidance on the Deletion of Records from National Police Systems

5.7 KF presented draft guidance on the Deletion of Records from National Police Systems (Paper 5.1) to the Board on behalf of Shaun Beresford. This guidance combined the Exceptional Case Procedure and the Early Deletion Guidance. She said that roughly 2,000 requests for early deletion had been received under the previous Exceptional Case Procedure. The Association of Chief Police Officers Criminal Records Office (ACRO) had processed 367 of these. A further 57 had been received under the Early Deletion Guidance.

5.8 KF added that ACRO had committed funding to establish a central unit to manage requests for early deletion. She asked the Board to agree the new guidance (which might also need Cabinet Office approval) and suggested that it be launched on 1st January 2015. CS asked if, by "Cabinet Office", KF meant approval by ACPO Council. CS asked if ACRO would also be looking at refusals and KF confirmed that they wouldn't. CS added that the final decision on whether or not to grant a request for early deletion lay with the holding force.

5.9 KM expressed concern that the new guidelines indicated that they replaced statutory guidance. MC explained that section 63AB(2) of the Police and Criminal Evidence Act 1984 (PACE) as inserted by section 24 of PoFA required the Board to issue guidance on exceptional deletion but that there was nothing to stop such guidance from being revised and reissued at a later point.

5.10 CS suggested that forces could be asked for data on the number of applications they had declined. MM informed the Board that an applicant whose data the police refused to delete could refer their application to the ICO but that she had not seen any applications. She asked whether, where the biometrics **were** deleted,

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the PNC record would be deleted as well and CS said that it would be. However, MC said that in fact, the police were entitled to keep the PNC record if they wished. He suggested that ACRO wait until December before releasing the updated guidance to allow the Board to sign it off at its December meeting. KF agreed. MM asked if the terminology used (e.g. Early Deletion Guidance, Exceptional Cases Procedure, Record Deletion Guidance etc.) could be clarified and KF agreed that it could.

Action Point 4: Board Members to make any further comments they have on the guidance for sign off at the December Board with the guidance launched in January.

e. Biometrics Commissioner Update

- 5.11 The Biometrics Commissioner, Alastair MacGregor, had given his apologies. KM said that she would provide an update in his absence. She said that, since commencement, they had received 91 applications under section 63G [of PACE], all but three of which had come from the Met; however, he expected the number of applications from other forces to rise.
- 5.12 KM said that Alastair had raised a number of issues with the PNC at the last Board meeting. The problems were being addressed by PNC and he understood that they would be resolved by the end of the year. In terms of the wanted/missing marker issue, she said that Dave Low [from the Met Police] was working on this and was confident that the figures he had on the number of affected profiles were largely accurate. CS said that the changes identified by Alastair would be given priority; however, he was unsure how quickly they could be resolved.
- 5.13 KM said that the issues concerning CPIA had already been covered [see paragraphs 5.4 & 5.5 above].
- 5.14 KM said that Alastair had looked into three cases where issues had arisen concerning international exchange of biometric information which had been referred to him by the National Crime Agency, and had expressed his views on them. He had also had enquiries from two forces concerning the ability to retain hard copy fingerprints where the electronic records had been deleted under PoFA.
- 5.15 The Met had raised an issue over the ability to retain biometric information relating to individuals who had been convicted of offences abroad. This had arisen in the context of a Met case relating to a Romanian individual who had previously been convicted of several burglaries in Romania, but whose biometrics they were unable to retain or re-take. Alastair was in discussion with Home Office colleagues concerning this.
- 5.16 KM went on to discuss sample failure rate. She said that the OBC had been told that around 2-4% of samples failed to generate a profile but KF said that the National DNA Database Delivery Unit (NDU) did not keep figures on this. She was concerned that these were not being speculatively searched against the NDNAD. She asked if there was a similar failure rate for crime scene profiles.
- 5.18 GP said that in the future, the Met would no longer have a dedicated team looking at retention under section 63G so it might be that the number of applications from them would not continue at the current rate. However, he did not feel that the current volume of applications justified maintaining a team. CS agreed that the volume of applications was likely to tail off.
- 5.19 GP said that he was still concerned about the premature deletion of fingerprints before a speculative search had been completed. He had been in discussion with MC about the issue.

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6.0 Ethics Group Update

- 6.1 CH presented a verbal update on the work of the Ethics Group to the Board. He said that the last meeting of the Group had considered the issue of the error rate.
- 6.2 The Group had also considered its relationship with the Strategy Board, for example in terms of the timing of meetings of the Group and the Board, to see if issues with an ethical slant could be given better consideration.
- 6.3 CH said that the Group had considered the use of 24 loci technology and Y-chromosome linked Short Tandem Repeats (Y-STRs) and had decided that their use did not raise any significant ethical issues. The Group would consider a final paper on both issues at its next meeting.
- 6.4 Finally, the Group had considered the ethical issues arising from the use of emerging technologies.
- 6.5 CH added that he was unsure when the triennial review would be completed; it might possibly be around March.

7.0 Multiplex Upgrade Project (MUP)

a. DNA-17 Project Progress Report

- 7.1 KF presented a progress report on DNA-17 (Paper 7.0) to the Board. She said that DNA-17 had gone live on 24th July. This was a significant change and she thanked everyone for their support.
- 7.2 KF went on to report that in August, 28,000 profiles had been loaded using DNA-17 which accounted for 50% of the profiles uploaded that month. She added that there had been three discordant events; two between DNA-17 and SGM-Plus and one between SGM-Plus and the Next Generation Multiplex (NGM) due to a slight change in one of the primers. She said that this was in line with expectations.
- 7.3 She said that Bernard Silverman, the Home Office Chief Scientist, had met with the Lord Chief Justice, Lord Thomas, and representatives from the Crown Prosecution Service to discuss the introduction of DNA-17. Lord Thomas had expressed a concern that the use of multiple different chemistries could lead to discordance and he had requested that NDU go back to using a single chemistry. However, Bernard had explained that that was not possible. CH added that he was not sure that Lord Thomas had understood all of the issues. It would clearly not be practical to analyse every sample using both SGM Plus and DNA-17.
- 7.4 GP noted that there had been more DNA than fingerprint matches in August.
- 7.5 KF said that the minimum load criteria for a partial crime scene profile had been four loci but that this had now been increased to eight with the introduction of DNA-17. NDU would be closely monitoring implementation over the next six months.
- 7.6 CH commented that the introduction of DNA-17 had been listed as a red risk in the risk register. He asked for more details on the risks and how well they had been managed. JA added that there was an issue with how we dealt with the risk of disclosure of using DNA-17 and the concerns raised by the Lord Chief Justice by reporting matches through a Streamlined Forensic Reporting (SFR) process with an agreed set of words. She said that Ian Elkins was assisting with this.

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7.7 GK informed the Board that Forensic Science Northern Ireland had been using DNA-17 since last December. He said that he could not initially see any benefits to moving to DNA-17; in fact he was concerned that it would make the interpretation process more complex because of DNA mixtures.

7.8 FD reported that DNA-24 had been accredited for use in Scotland and would be rolled out in a few weeks time.

b. DNA-20+ Project Progress Report

7.9 KF presented a verbal update on DNA-20+ to the Board. NDU would be holding a meeting on 3rd October to consider what approach to take to the adoption of DNA-20+ as well as the changes that would arise as a result of next generation sequencing. She suggested that she provide a further update at the December Board meeting. SB said that it was good to have a view on the technology but said that we shouldn't be driven by it.

Action Point 5: KF to provide an update to the December Board Meeting.

8.0 Strategic Risk Register – Outcomes/Updates

a. NDU Highlight Summary Report/NDU MI Summary Report

8.1 KF presented the Strategic Risk Register (Paper 8.0) and the NDU Highlight Summary to the Board (Paper 8.1) to the Board. She said that the PoFA risk could be closed once the Project was formally wound-up. However, she recommended that a further risk be added around the funding of NDNAD.

8.2 KF added that she was reducing the seriousness of the risk on science and innovation (STRAT03). She said that work was progressing in terms of the risk on race and diversity (STRAT05); however, it was likely to come to public prominence and we needed to be aware of it. GK noted that ethnicity was a factor in the Gaughran case (see paragraphs 4.8 – 4.14 above). SB asked if the concern over failure rates should be on the risk register.

8.3 MM reminded the Board of the risk related to the Information Commissioners Office. She said that this was ongoing. KF said that NDU would be being assessed by the ICO for compliance with the Data Protection Act in January. MM said that NDU would need to be ready to respond should any issues be identified during the visit.

8.4 KF reported that an FSP had approached NDU to ask permission to establish a small Y-STR database. The database would consist only of crime scene profiles. She would find out more about what the FSP were proposing and inform the next Board.

Action Point 6: KF to provide an update to the December Board Meeting.

8.5 MC reported that a survey of profiles held had revealed that one belonging to a nine year old had been listed on the database under Police Scotland. FD said she would look into it.

b. Rapid DNA Technology Update

8.6 JA presented a verbal update on the Rapid DNA Technology Project to the Board. She said that the Centre for Applied Science and Technology (CAST) were overseeing the project of which she was the chair. She noted that the project had applications beyond policing. She said that it was important that we didn't have a

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proliferation of projects all covering the same area. The project would consider the challenges and benefits of the new technology, including the potential impact on the forensics market place. A progress report had been drafted but had not been widely circulated.

8.7 JA went on to mention the Para-DNA project that Richard Small was currently leading. She said that Para-DNA consisted of a screening application to tell if DNA was present. Leicestershire Police had bought the device and were using it to support their decision making process on whether or not a sample should be submitted to a FSP. UKAS would be visiting the East Midlands Special Operations Unit in October to carry out a review of the extension of their ISO17025 accreditation to include Para-DNA screening. GP said that the Met had discounted using Para-DNA, for what they felt were valid reasons, and had halted testing.

8.8 She added that West Midlands Police were also piloting Rapid-DNA. Their project had more of a scientific design to it with an aim and hypothesis. The project would be commencing next week and would be independently evaluated by CAST. CH said that he had written to JA to mention a number of problems he had identified with the project and asked if she had seen his note. JA assured CH that his concerns would be taken account of.

8.9 JA then went on to talk about “Rapid Hit”. This was a key product based on the traditional chemistries which looked at crime scenes. Lancashire Constabulary and the East Midlands Special Operations Unit were both bidding for funding to carry out a pilot of it and GP added that the Met were also piloting it for custody cases.

8.10 CS said that he was more comfortable with the science behind the development of Rapid DNA than with the business model that was driving its development. AP added that we needed to ensure that it provided a business benefit. Manufacturers needed to demonstrate that that the science was good enough. The Home Office also had a part to play and it was important that we had input into the scientific decisions. CS added that we didn’t need to take what manufacturers said at face value because we had evidence of the reliability of the technique from the Met and the interim Forensic Science Regulator was also able to give a view.

8.11 JA said that the product produced by Key Forensics [i.e. Rapid DNA] was currently being accredited. She would ensure that scientists were present throughout the evaluation. CS said he thought an individual evaluation of a product was a waste of time. JA clarified that she was referring to the pilot project. CS asked if the Regulator was involved and JA confirmed that he was. CS said that we should keep this item on the agenda as a standing item.

Decision 1: The Board resolved that this should be a standing item on the agenda.

c. Centralised Elimination Database Update

8.12 KF said that this item had already been covered under item 4.1.

9.0 DNA Database and Future Development Plan

a. International Developments

9.1 AF presented a verbal update on international issues to the Board. She asked if GP could send her profiles to test the Canadian profile searching process which was akin to the approach taken by the United States of America. She would also be looking for profiles to test with the Interpol DNA matcher process.

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- 9.2 She said that the G8 project was progressing and hoped to report back on progress at the December Board Meeting. She said that Canada was already signed up and that Australia hoped to join. No objections had been raised by the Minister, the Federal Bureau of Investigation or the Royal Canadian Mounted Police and she had the annexes ready for signature. It was also noted that Canada had joined the database to database mechanism for international exchange.
- 9.3 AF said that a full business case for entry into Prüm would be completed by September next year and we would need to make a decision on whether or not we wanted to join Prüm by the end of next year. She said that the Met were doing test searches which would feed into a business case on Prüm. The project, which was being led by Brendan Creen's team, would report on progress to the Home Secretary in January. Information from the Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency would feed in information on vehicle registrations into the project. CS asked if GP would be invited to sit on the project board and AF confirmed that he would. GP reported that he had met with the Home Secretary and she had said that Prüm was an effective method of sharing information. CS asked that the Board be kept up-to-date on progress on the project.

Action Point 7: AF to continue to provide updates on the project to the Board.

b. Scientific Horizon Scanning

- 9.4 SM provided a verbal update on Horizon Scanning to the Board. He mentioned that the small business research initiative had launched a competition to look for innovative ways of locating DNA at the scene using portable devices. He said that the competition ended at the end of the year. He added that CAST were looking at the benefits of different scientific innovations to decide whether or not they should be funded.
- 9.5 SM said that, in the medium-term, a consortium of European universities were planning to launch a bid for Horizon 2020 funding to develop methods of investigating especially hazardous crime scenes, for example by using robots. The EU had a funding stream to support next generation sequencing and to get more out of the interpretation of DNA mixtures and complex profiles.
- 9.6 He said that in the longer term, we would want to start looking at next generation sequencing as well as possible further automation of the process. It was possible that we might be able to obtain European Union funding for this work.
- 9.7 CS thanked SM for his report. He noted that SM was always pushed for time because his item was listed at the end of the agenda and asked that it be moved up the agenda. He also asked that the Forensic and Biometric Strategy be discussed at the next Board.

Decision 2: The item on Scientific Horizon Scanning to be moved up the agenda.

Decision 3: The Forensic and Biometric Strategy to be discussed at the next Board Meeting.

c. FSR Update

- 9.8 SB provided a verbal update to the Board on his role as the interim Forensic Science Regulator. He reported that the DNA Appendix which supported the Codes of Practice had been published on the website.



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11.0 Any Other Business

11.1 There was none.

11.2 The next meeting was scheduled to take place on **Thursday 4th December** from **10:30 to 13:00** in **Conference Room 3a** at the **Home Office**. [To note that the room had now been changed to the Recreation Room because Ministers needed the Conference Room.]