

THE UNIVERSITY OF LEEDS

ANIMAL WELFARE AND ETHICAL REVIEW BODY

**Minutes of meeting held on 8 May 2024**

Eleven members attended the meeting, with five joining in attendance. Apologies were received from three individuals.

**Minutes of Previous Meeting**

23/130 The minutes of the Animal Welfare and Ethical Review Body held on 13 March 2024 (AWERB/23/31) were approved.

**Matters arising**

23/131 Minute 23/110 – As discussed at the previous meeting, in advance of the Home Office annual invoicing, a housekeeping exercise had been undertaken to revoke any personal licenses no longer in use.

**Establishment License (PEL) holder update**

23/132 Members received the PEL Holder's update (AWERB/23/32) and noted that:

- a) Following the receipt of successful facility screening results, a meeting had been scheduled with the PELh at the University of Bradford on 21 May, at which time establishment contractual issues, secondary availability ethical approvals and practical arrangements would be discussed;
- b) Having been identified as an issue within the Animals in Science Regulation Unit Facilities Audit Report, a provisional date of the 18 June had been set for the delivery of the repeat session of Severity Assessment training. The PEL Holder and Deputy Vice-Chancellor: Research & Innovation would send a joint email to all Project Licence Holders (PPLH) to make them aware of the mandatory training and requesting attendance.

**Named Veterinary Surgeon (NVS) update**

23/133 In introducing the report (AWERB/23/33), the Named Veterinary Surgeon reported:

- a) There were no major health or welfare concerns since the previous reporting period;
- b) Annual health screening had been undertaken within the CBS animal facility, with no new agents or pathogens being identified as per previous screens;
- c) Three Standard Condition 18 notifications (previously reported to the AWERB) had now been closed by the Home Office. Two further Standard Condition 18 notifications had been reported and a response was awaited.

**Animal Facility Manager's update**

23/134 Members noted the information contained within the Animal Facilities Manager's Report (AWERB/23/34).

23/135 As outlined by the PEL Holder above, plans were ongoing to move a significant portion of the higher health status activity to the University of Bradford, following the planned closer of the SBS facility on 31 August 2024. In the meantime work was underway to secure the appropriate licenses to enable to movement of animals to an alternative premises.

23/136 In response to a question, the Animal Facilities Manager confirmed that a full health screen of the Bradford unit (environmental and animals) had resulted in a low risk level, however further measures could be taken, if needed, to eradicate the potential

risk of contamination.

23/137 The feasibility of moving the SARRP equipment either to Epic, or an alternative space on campus, was currently being explored.

23/138 As agreed at the previous meeting, a subcommittee would be established at the appropriate time to consider and endorse secondary establishment protocols for ethical review prior to submission to ASPeL (Animals Scientific Procedures electronic Licensing). The Subcommittee would comprise the NVS, a NACWO, a Senior Academic (license holder) and a lay member of AWERB.

23/139 Members were reassured to hear that alternative establishments (Sheffield & York) could be explored as an alternative measure, including the option to outsource the work and services, albeit with the latter resulting in significant cost implications.

23/140 In addition to the SBS closure and CBS/SBS merger items above, the Group were also updated on routine disruptions to the steam supply, impacting the University campus and St James facilities. Whilst the Named Animal Care and Welfare Officers were confident there had been no welfare issues as a result of the disruptions, the Animal Facilities Manager assured colleagues that they would continue to work closely with Estate Services to mitigate any potential impact on the facilities and animals. Longer term, the Group noted the University's ambition to move away from supplying steam, and as such, plans were underway to adapt or replace the cage wash and autoclave in CBS with electrical generated systems.

#### **Building Management System options for the CBS facility**

23/141 Further to the discussion at the previous meeting, University's Smart Buildings Manager joined the meeting to discuss replacement and upgrade options for the Building Management System (BMS) in the CBS facility.

23/142 Colleagues noted that the system controls were now obsolete, and whilst the BMS could be repaired as an interim measure, Estate Services advised that upgrading the BMS sooner, rather than later, would minimise the risk of vulnerability and system failure.

23/143 During discussion, members discussed arrangements for the animals, whilst the proposed works were undertaken. One likely scenario being that - subject to the assessment of noise disruption and any other issues - the animals could be housed in one-half of the facility, whilst works were undertaken, before being transferred to the upgraded area to complete the remaining works.

23/144 Recognising the significant cost to the project (circa £1M), the Executive Deans of the Faculties of Biological Sciences and Medicine & Health would be required to submit a proposal and costings to the University Executive Group for endorsement.

#### **Named Animal Care and Welfare Officers' (NACWO) Report**

23/145 In presenting their report (AWERB/23/35), the NACWOs reported that:

- a) With the closure of SBS approaching, it was decided to cease the breeding of the in-house C57BL/6J colony with effect from 29 April. Plans were also in place to cease the breeding of the transgenic colony to avoid any wastage or unplanned litters;
- b) Following advice from the University Named Veterinary Surgeon and Home Office Inspector, the use of perspex barrier screens between cages had been implemented for all procedures to reduce the stress of rodents. This initial trial had been undertaken within the SBS facility, and was planned to be extended across all procedures rooms.
- c) Colleagues welcomed the Culture of Care poster which had been developed with the aim of reminding users to think about the impact of their movements and

behaviors whilst using the procedural areas, and to refine their processes with the animals in mind. The poster would be rolled out to all procedural areas.

### **CBS Facility User Group Report**

- 23/146 In receiving the CBS Facility User Group Report (AWERB/23/36), colleagues noted:
- a) The CBS User Group wished to make clear that – where the presence of any existing pathogens would not pose a threat to animal welfare or scientific integrity – the use the CBS facility for higher health status work was encouraged;
  - b) Issues with the TRAC costing facility were actively being addressed by the Facilities Manager who advised that accurate budget/expenditure reports would become available to users on a monthly basis (starting 1 June).

23/147 In response to a question, the Animal Facilities Manager confirmed that there were no planned changes to the building infrastructure over the coming 12-month period which would impact the housing of pigs or birds.

23/148 The PEL Holder drew members' attention to the University's Campus Reimagined Plan; a project looking at the portfolio of activities through which a campus of the future will be created to support the University over the next 50 years. Colleagues noted that the animal facilities had been raised as part of the Executive's discussions around the project and the PEL Holder encouraged the Animal Facilities Manager to liaise with the Director of Campus Development and Innovation on the matter at the appropriate time.

23/149 Members reflected on discussions held at a previous meeting in which it had been agreed to convene a Group of interested parties to explore the financial modelling of larger animal work. This action would be progressed outside of the meeting.

### **Annual review of training for 2023-24**

23/150 The Annual Training Report as set out in AWERB/23/37 was noted by the Committee.

### **Review of environmental enrichment**

23/151 The NACWO provided a brief overview of the environment enrichment measures outlined in the report AWERB/23/38. A further update and videos would be presented at the next meeting.

### **Project License (PPL) application**

23/152 Members of the Committee received a PPL renewal application (AWERB/23/39) which was supported by a short presentation from the applicant who had dialed into the meeting to address questions.

23/153 In considering all of the information provided – and noting the significant progress achieved to date – the renewal protocol was approved, pending the inclusion of the Committee's comments which would be shared outside of the meeting.

### **Project License (PPL) changes – secondary availability**

23/154 The Committee received – and approved – two PPL applications for secondary availability (AWERB/23/40 and AWERB/23/41).

### **Proposals for non-regulated work**

23/155 The Named Veterinary Surgeon provided a brief overview of the four proposals to undertake non-regulated scientific work on animals (AWERB/23/42, AWERB/23/43, AWERB/23/44 and AWERB/23/45). Members agreed that there were no ethical or welfare concerns and the applications were approved.

23/156 Following the discussion at the 30 January meeting (minute 23/102), colleagues noted that the revised form – focusing only on the animal aspects of non-regulated

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work – was awaited.

**External meetings**

23/157 Two further members of staff within the SBC facility would undertake the Accredited Assessor's course in May to improve in-house training and assessment.

23/158 Two technicians attended a 3H's webinar in March (emphasising the importance of Housing, Handling and Habituation to welfare). Noting that improvements could be made in the areas of handling and habituation to procedures, it had been agreed to bring a '3H's' Report to the next meeting for further discussion.

**Date of next meeting**

23/159 The next meeting of the Animal Welfare and Ethical Review Body will be held at 14.00-16.00 on 23 July, via MS Teams.