

**Minutes**  
**Cross-Party Group on Life Sciences**  
**Tuesday 25<sup>th</sup> of February 2020, Committee Room 5**  
**Ivan McKee MSP, Dr Mark Bustard and Dr Paul Hudman**

**MSPs Present:**

Kenneth Gibson MSP; Convener  
Graham Simpson MSP; Vice Convener  
Tom Mason MSP  
Ivan McKee MSP, Minister for Trade, Investment and Innovation

**Apologies:**

Miles Briggs MSP  
Willie Rennie MSP

**Opening, Welcome and Introductions**

The Convener, Kenneth Gibson MSP, welcomed everyone to the first meeting of the Cross-Party Group (CPG) in 2020 and outlined the agenda for the evening.

**Minutes of the previous meeting (8<sup>th</sup> October 2019)**

The minutes of the previous meeting were proposed by Tom Mason MSP, accepted by the group, and seconded by Graham Simpson MSP.

**Ivan McKee MSP, Minister for Trade, Innovation and Investment**

- Ivan McKee MSP outlined recent visits he had undertaken as part of his brief, including one to SGS Vitrology in Clydebank which followed an initial visit to their HQ in Switzerland.
- The Minister explained that the sector is in good health with the latest turnover numbers showing over a £1bn increase with Scottish life sciences businesses turning over £6.5bn in 2017.
- As a whole the sector is set to meet the £8bn turnover target that was previously set out in the Life Sciences Strategy three years ago.
- The strength of the sector was evident in recent life sciences and biotech conferences in Edinburgh and Aberdeen respectively. These conferences not only provide a forum for debate and networking, but also underline the diversity of businesses operating within the sector across Scotland.
- The Minister cited recent investments including £9.5 million funding to support the Precision Medicine Scotland Innovation Centre as well as two current Strength In Places Bids for Precision Medicine and Industrial Biotech.
- The Minister explained work to grow exports whilst simultaneously attracting additional foreign direct investment (FDI). Outside of London, Scotland is the most popular destination for FDI within the UK.
- Life Sciences features predominantly within the Scottish Government's plans for increasing investment as the sector is not only globally competitive but has substantial room to grow. The Minister outlined the ongoing analysis undertaken and the publication of the FDI Growth Plan due in May 2020.
- The Minister reiterated the importance of making company visits and open to suggestions.

### *Key points from the Q and A with Ivan McKee MSP*

- *Mr. McKee explained that whilst a full breakdown of the growth figures are not yet available, he expected the increase in turnover to be spread across the whole life sciences ecosystem.*
- *Joyce Tait asked about what was being done to support the uptake of innovation within the public sector and whether the Minister was able to take learnings from work within NHS England to operationalise innovation. The Minister explained that the Government was keen to support the NHS, not only an early adopter of innovation, but also an innovator in their own right.*
- *Data was once again raised as an area where Scotland can secure a competitive advantage and the Minister mentioned progress creating Data Loch's which can enable information to be stored and used securely.*
- *In response to a question about where the next turnover target will be set, the Minister explained that the ILG would have a role to play in not only setting the target, but how this can be reached.*

### **Dr Mark Bustard, IBioIC,**

- **Dr Mark Bustard explained the importance of industrial biotechnology and his role at IBioIC following his appointment as Chief Executive at the start of February.**
- **IBioIC is a national innovation centre that aims to link academia, business and government.**
- **The need for linkages in this sector is clear according to Dr Bustard, and IBioIC aims to not only drive Scotland's bioeconomy but also to deliver sustainable manufacturing at the same time.**
- **As a result, the sector has set ambitious targets to increase turnover, GVA and double the number of employees by 2025. These targets are achievable and IBioIC has around 120 members and Dr Bustard explained some of the success stories which include CuanTec which takes waste shellfish and transforms it into sustainable packaging.**
- **However, for Scotland to become a hub for biotechnology there is a need to provide smart and sustainable manufacturing and IBioIC has applied for a capital grant from the UK Government's "Strength in Places" fund.**
- **According to Dr Bustard there needs to be a change in mindset where good ideas are not produced in isolation but conceived with a route towards commercialisation.**
- **IBioIC also provides a platform for smaller companies to pitch ideas to larger firms who have the resources to see conception through to commercialisation.**

### *Key points from the Q and A with Dr Mark Bustard*

- *Dr Bustard was assisted in the Q and A by his colleague Ian Archer (Technical Director at IBioIC) and Iain Hunter (past interim CEO at IBioIC).*
- *When asked about whether IBioIC's focus had moved from academia to industry, Dr Bustard explained that whilst IBioIC is home to a large number of SME's, each project is acted out through an institution. His colleague, Iain Hunter, explained that the model has changed slightly with industry now pitching problems to academia rather than the other way around.*
- *Frank Gunn-Moore raised issues around communication and connectivity and believes that this disconnect still exists despite the creation of IBioIC.*
- *When responding to questions about what is required for Scotland to become a hub of industrial biotechnology it was explained that the UK as a whole lags behind other western European countries and this is due to a lack of manufacturing plants, refineries and scale-up facilities.*

- *In response to a question on what countries Scotland should borrow best practice from, Dr Bustard explained that Nordic countries offer the most realistic comparison for Scotland but stressed that having a significant manufacturing footprint was of critical importance if the GVA targets set out in Scotland’s National Plan for IB.*

### **Dr Paul Hudman, 3F Bio**

- Dr Hudman explained that the dynamics of a growing global population combined with unease over the carbon footprint associated with traditional protein farming will see manufactured protein food take on increasing importance.
- As a result, growth in demand for plant-based protein will grow by 100m tonnes by 2030.
- This growth will need to be met from sustainable sources and Abunda is a mycoprotein that can not only replace traditional animal food sources but can be produced sustainably.
- Abunda is produced using the biorefinery concept where waste effluent is reused, and water is shared with a bio-ethanol plant.
- According to Dr Hudman, 3F Bio are currently towards creating scaled production in the Netherlands and have secured an important biorefinery partner.
- 3F Bio employ around 10 people in Glasgow and depending on the success of production in the Netherlands they would like to bring manufacturing to Scotland if open access facilities can be found.

### **Key points from the Q and A with Dr Paul Hudman**

- *Dr Hudman was asked about the difference between their product and Quorn and explained that the biorefinery process and the sustainability of reusing waste products is key, but their model is Business-to-Business and they would look to supply companies like Quorn.*
- *When asked about the future, Dr Hudman explained that their aim is for Abunda to achieve price parity with soya, enabling consumers to have an additional high-quality protein option available at a low price.*
- *In explaining the decision to locate their scale-up facility in the EU, Dr Hudman stated that there is only one ethanol refinery plant in the UK which narrowed their partner options in order to create a closed loop manufacturing facility.*
- *Dr Hudman described how their model saves water and called for a global public awareness campaign to increase consumption of sustainable sources of protein, like Abunda.*

## **7. Closing Remarks**

The Convener thanked the contributors for their presentations and members of the CPG who submitted suggestions for upcoming meetings, explaining that these will be carefully considered. Kenneth also suggest that the CPG should look to pursue a “Members Debate” in the Scottish Parliament in line with other CPGs who have used parliamentary time to progress key issues.

Alison Culpan, group secretariat, confirmed the agenda for the forthcoming June meeting, which will take an extended look at healthcare data and some of the innovative projects operating across the country.

**Non-MSP attendees:**

Alison Culpan (ABPI), Claire Headspeath (ABPI), Graeme Rose (ABPI), George Davison (GSK), Frank Gunn-Moore (SULSA), Mark Bustard (IBiolC), Paul Hudman (3FBIO Ltd), Iain Hunter (IBiolC), George Davidson (GSK), David Bowie (Consultant), Jennie Hampson (Kyowa Kirin), Heather Baxter (Lilly), Robert Crawford (Novartis), Erin McKee (University of Glasgow), Yalinu Poya (University of Glasgow), Maggie Clark (Novartis), Joyce Tait (University of Edinburgh), Gemma Gillespie (University of Glasgow), Tasha Quinn (University of Glasgow), Amanda Dutton (Scottish Government), Alison Morrish (Scottish Government).

**Non-MSP apologies:**

Professor Andrew Tobin (University of Glasgow), Professor Andrew Morrison (University of Edinburgh), Professor David Littlejohn (University of Strathclyde), Sir Harry Burns (University of Strathclyde), Mr Adrian Gillespie (University of Strathclyde), Barbara Adams (Servdee), Barbara Blaney (The University of Edinburgh), Jen Ferguson (Private Consultant), Mark Cook (Medtronic), John McKenzie (Roslin Institute), Andrew Dempsey (Celgene), Lorna Patrick (BMS), Sinclair Dunlop (Epidarex), Sally Hughes (Tevauk), Henning Steinhagen (Epidarex), Clive Badman (University of Strathclyde), Sandra Auld (Healthcare Public Affairs), Fiona Hamill (Jansen), Jacqui Young (Roche), Greg Stevenson (Roche).