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**Minutes:** AWERB summary minutes: PPL reviews meeting

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**Status:** FINAL

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**Meeting held:** Tuesday 2 August at 2pm via MS Teams

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**Present:**

10 plus 1 in attendance, 3 by invitation and 15 apologies

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1 **WELCOME**

A new external lay panel member was welcomed to her first AWERB meeting

2 **NEW PROJECT LICENCE APPLICATION DISCUSSION**

An application for a new project licence had been received to continue work that had started under an existing project licence which was due to expire. The aim was to provide further evidence that the process of neuromodulation, the alteration of an organ's function by targeted delivery of an electrical stimulation to a specific neurological site or nerve, could be an efficacious alternative, or addition, to pharmacotherapy to treat a broad range of diseases. Under the first project licence they had just completed the first clinical trial that had involved implantation in patients that had rheumatoid arthritis. For this new licence they were looking at other target diseases and organs and improving on what had already been done so that they could move into either intravascular access in different ways or look at other nerves that could be interacted with.

The project licence was discussed and the following comments were made by AWERB:

- Non Technical Summary (NTS): this was too scientific and cumbersome. It also needed to be proofread.
- The licence mentioned that the in-house statistician would be consulted to establish the correct parameters for power analysis and the minimum number of animals required to statistically prove the result. The statistician should however have already been consulted, as that information was needed to determine the animal numbers to be used.
- A query was raised about if no animal was expected to experience any suffering under one of the protocols, why the licence later on indicated that up to 5% of animals might suffer more than transient discomfort. It was explained that why they did not expect to have any adverse effects, however with the tightening up by the Home Office on condition 18 reporting, they still had to include any potential adverse effects, however unlikely to avoid the risk of animals having to be euthanised when they did not need to be. AWERB therefore recommended that the wording should be changed to stipulate that although extremely unlikely what the possible adverse events could be.
- Body weight loss section: information needed to be included about how frequently animals should be weighed to provide greater clarity. The information was there but in a different area.
- *Blood samples: a query was raised about how frequent would the blood samples be, and would there be any cumulative effects? Could there also be any adverse effects from having repeated general anaesthetics over a short period of time?* It was explained that any recovery surgeries would be a minimum of 14 days apart (unless immediate revision surgery was needed or it was a

terminal surgery). In terms of the physiological effect on the animals from the blood sampling, there should not be any effect, so long as the blood sampling was within the safe recommended blood volume removal percentages. With regards to the animal experience, the blood sampling was done under local anaesthesia.

- Estimated numbers of animals to be used: this section needed more detail to explain the reasoning behind the numbers of animals to be used.

The PPL Holder and his colleagues were thanked for attending the meeting. They were asked to address the questions raised and to recirculate a revised copy of the project licence for review.

After they had left the following points were made:

- In general, it was a well written licence
- Clarification was needed about weight and frequency of weighing, particularly as weight was used as one of the humane end points.

### 3 NEW PROJECT LICENCE DISCUSSION

The PPL Holder was welcomed to the meeting. She was applying for her first project licence. The PPL Holder explained that her training and background was in the area of neuroscience. This project licence would be building on that work. She was interested in multi sensory integration and how things like vision and tactile information and other sensory cues were processed both individually and also integrated in the brainstem and mid brain. She was also interested in the cerebellum and how the pathway was structured and how the information was transformed into a motor output. This project aimed to characterise sites in the cerebellum that received the visual and tactile signals to understand their role in translating sensory stimulation into fine motor control. The research would inform translational research on clinical conditions, neurodegenerative diseases and syndromes involving visuomotor dysfunction. A better understanding of the functional organisation of the cerebellum would aid researchers and clinicians in these fields.

As part of the general discussion the following points were made:

- The licence would involve birds. *For the bird handling: would any special training be provided for handling the birds to make it as less stressful for them as possible.* The PPL Holder advised that she was happy to work with the NVS on this, but the birds would be handled for less than a minute when undergoing the procedure.
- *Would the birds go through a period of acclimatisation or would they be used straight away?* For the electrophysiology experiments, the birds would be collected and then anaesthetised straight away. For birds that were bought in from external suppliers, they would have a week to get acclimatised to the aviary environment. They were social birds so would be housed together following Home Office guidelines.
- *How were the birds caught?* They were trapped either by a handheld net or by catching them.
- *As the birds being used were non-purpose bred, what steps would be taken to ensure that they were being obtained from the best possible breeder with high welfare standards?* A reputable supplier had been identified that was within an hour's journey. It was also added that when a new animal supplier was identified they had to go through a screening process, which included going to view the premises to see how they treated the animals and what access they had to veterinary care and provision.

The PPL Holder was thanked for attending the meeting. She was asked to address the comments that had been raised and to then resubmit her licence for a final AWERB review.

After the PPL Holder had left several further comments were made. The consensus was that this was a very clear, well-written application.

**4 MINUTES**

The minutes of the meeting held on 05 July 2022 were confirmed as an accurate record.

**5 MATTERS ARISING/ACTION LOG**

**5.1 Item 5.2: NVS report: fighting mice (5 July meeting)**

The study had now finished. There had been no recurrence of the fighting.

**5.2 Item 2.1: Reviewing of research policies (5 July meeting)**

There were just a couple of policies left that still needed a volunteer to review them.

**5.3 Item 2.3: Providing standard wording for housing, husbandry and health status for zebrafish (5 July meeting)**

The standard wording for housing, husbandry and health status for zebrafish document was approved.

**5.4 Item 2.4 BSU virtual tour storyboard (5 July 2022 meeting)**

The paper for senior management was still being written.

**6 DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

This was scheduled for 7 September 2022 at 2pm.