



“sciencewise” NEWS

May 2008

New resource centre opens helping science policy makers talk to the public

Engaging and talking with the public about the potential impacts of new and emerging science and technologies will be made easier for policy makers from now on with the launch of the new Sciencewise Expert Resource Centre for Public Dialogue in Science and Innovation (ERC).

The new centre, launched 29 May, will provide a comprehensive range of online and offline services to assist policy makers and others in how, when, where, and why to carry out dialogue with the public on new and emerging science and technologies. Its overall aim is to help senior officials make more informed decisions and better policy.

Confidence in science

The Sciencewise-ERC was unveiled in London by Baroness Delyth Morgan, Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State at the Department for Innovation, Universities & Skills (DIUS). She said the resource would be an invaluable tool in helping Ministers and officials understand public views and concerns on complex and potentially controversial scientific issues.



“The creation of the ERC is an important step in our pledge to involve the public much more directly in the decision-making process”, she said. “For the first time a wide range of information, advice and guidance will be available from the same source. We’ll be able to gather and share valuable learning in how best to interact with all sections of society. For example, the recent dialogue by the Human Fertility and Embryology Authority on hybrid and chimera embryos sought the opinions of a very wide range of the public, and these were taken into account by the Authority when it made its recommendations to Government.”

“ Science is constantly revealing challenging new areas for research. It’s vitally important that we find out what people think about these before we commit to one policy direction or another. ”

Baroness Delyth Morgan

The services available through the Sciencewise-ERC will be targeted primarily at all those who have a responsibility for national policy making in science and technology. It will also provide information and advice to other stakeholders and the public.

The Sciencewise-ERC was welcomed by Ian Pearson, Minister for Science & Innovation. He said: “Our aim is for a society which is scientifically literate, where people can talk to and question scientists on equal terms. Their views will be taken into account and they can have confidence that the policies being developed on their behalf will benefit society as a whole.

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New resource centre opens helping science policy makers talk to the public

The Sciencewise-ERC is funded by DIUS as part of its overarching work in bringing science and society more closely together. The work of the centre will be guided by a Steering Group headed by the leading science communicator and broadcaster, Kathy Sykes, Professor of Sciences and Society at the University of Bristol.

“We know from the experience gained through Sciencewise over the past four years, that public dialogue really does work”, said Kathy Sykes. “When handled well, it can give a real insight into whether people are likely to accept or reject new areas of science and technology.

“The ERC is an exciting initiative which will be an invaluable tool for policy makers and we hope will make a real difference to how Government interacts with the public on policy issues,” she added.

“The public are very able to engage with complex issues and provide policy makers with meaningful insights.”

sciencehorizons

A comprehensive resource...

The Sciencewise-ERC will act as a single port of call for anyone interested in science and technology public dialogue. As well as specifically targeting policy makers, it will also provide information and advice for other key stakeholders including scientists, business and industry, delivery organisations and the public.

ERC objectives include:

- Raise awareness and promote the value of public dialogue
- Provide a ‘one-stop shop’ of information, advice and guidance
- Develop and spread good practice
- Establish networks to share knowledge and experience
- Build the capacity of Government to carry out dialogue
- Embed the principles of good dialogue into policy making

ERC services include:

- One-to-one mentoring
- Interactive online web portal and searchable databank
- Helpline
- Monthly ‘drop-in’ sessions for policymakers
- Dialogue training workshops
- Quarterly newsletters
- Development of practitioner networks
- Events and exhibitions
- Annual stakeholder event

Knowledge hub

Many of the information resources will be provided through an interactive online portal, www.sciencewise-erc.org.uk. It includes case studies and best practice guidelines together with regular news and updates on training and events. The portal will also signpost to other relevant sources of information and engagement initiatives being undertaken more widely across Government.

Other ERC services include a helpline, training workshops, newsletters and events and opportunities for networking to share learning and experiences. Information will also be provided to help other stakeholders understand and gain access to public dialogue processes.



Specialist dialogue advice

A key feature of the Sciencewise-ERC is a team of Dialogue and Engagement Specialists (DES team), comprising of individual dialogue facilitators and others drawn from leading organisations around the UK which have expertise in delivering dialogue projects. Using their wealth of past experience, members of the team will be able to provide high quality and trusted ‘in-depth’ one-to-one advice and support to policy makers, both strategically and operationally.

Our DES team is exploring a number of areas which present barriers to good dialogue being carried out, with a view to developing recommendations for how those barriers can be overcome. On a more practical level, members of the DES team will be available to guide individual policy makers through the whole process of developing a project. This includes helping to frame the dialogue, developing a detailed project specification and commissioning a delivery contractor.

The DES team can be contacted via the website www.sciencewise-erc.org.uk or via the Helpline on 0870 190 6324

Funding for new projects

The ERC has a new funding stream for a further phase of Sciencewise projects over the next twelve months. Co-funding will be available to Government departments and agencies. As well as DES team support in the commissioning process, a team member will subsequently monitor the resulting activity to ensure it aligns with the Government’s Guiding Principles on Public Dialogue in Science and Technology.

Potential projects already identified as being of interest or concern to the public include aviation and climate change, GM technology, synthetic biology, humanised embryos and robotics.

Lord Robert Winston to ‘champion’ the Sciencewise-ERC

The new Sciencewise-ERC has been given a major boost with the agreement by leading UK scientist and broadcaster, Lord Robert Winston, to act as the centre’s figurehead and leading ambassador.

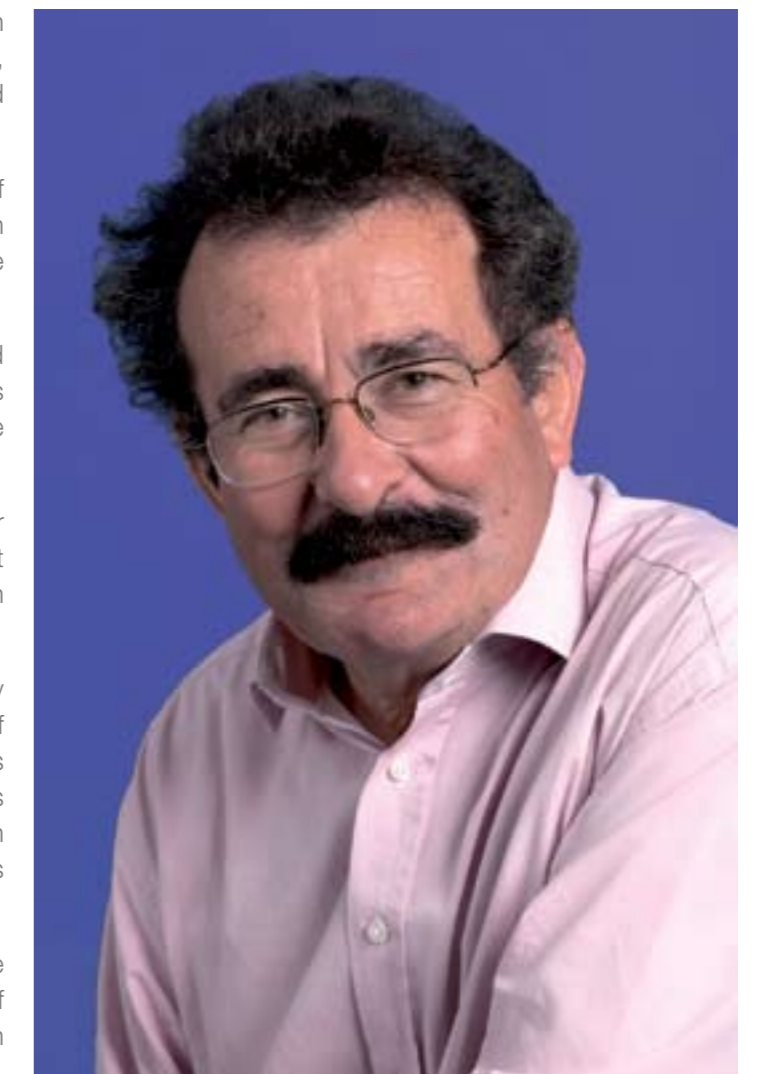
Lord Winston, who was recently appointed the first Professor of Science and Society at Imperial College, London, will champion the work of the resource centre to politicians, members of the scientific community and the public.

“I firmly believe that public engagement with science is vital,” said Lord Winston. “Scientific knowledge has huge promise but its possible misuse means it’s important that society has adequate control of what is done in its name.

“The new Sciencewise-ERC will be a valuable resource for developing two-way conversation with the public and, most importantly, will help to build greater confidence and trust between Government, scientists and society as a whole,” he added.

Lord Winston is internationally acclaimed for his long and highly successful research career in reproductive medicine. A pioneer of IVF treatment in the UK, over recent years Lord Winston has focused on exploring innovative ways of introducing new genes into stem cells with the long-term aim of improving human transplantation to combat serious degenerative diseases such as cystic fibrosis.

As Emeritus Professor of Fertility Studies at Imperial College, he currently leads a research programme in the Institute of Reproductive and Developmental Biology on improvements in transgenic technology in animal models. **Continued on page 4...**



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Lord Robert Winston to 'champion' the Sciencewise-ERC

In addition to his academic work, Lord Winston is a well-known face on television having written and presented a number of highly successful and popular television series on science and medicine for the BBC's main channel and Discovery networks. These include five series of the groundbreaking 'Your Life in Their Hands', 'Making Babies', 'The Human Body', which won three BAFTA awards and an Emmy nomination, and 'Child of Our Time'.

Parliamentary role

Among his many other activities, Lord Winston is a board member and Vice-chairman of the Parliamentary Office of Science and Technology. He is a prominent member of the House of Lords where he regularly speaks in debates on science, medicine, education and the arts.

The Minister for Science and Innovation, Ian Pearson, welcomed Lord Winston's ambassador role.

He said: "Robert Winston is a highly-regarded public figure who commands the respect of politicians and public alike. His experience and understanding of science and how to engage the public will be of enormous benefit to the Sciencewise-ERC. We're delighted he's accepted our invitation to champion the new ERC and we welcome him on board."

“ Scientists must listen to public fears and respond to the concerns of ordinary people. We must behave responsibly, ensuring our work has the highest ethical standards. ”

Lord Robert Winston

What does the ERC offer you?



The new Sciencewise Expert Resource Centre comprises a comprehensive bank of information and guidance in a variety of formats.

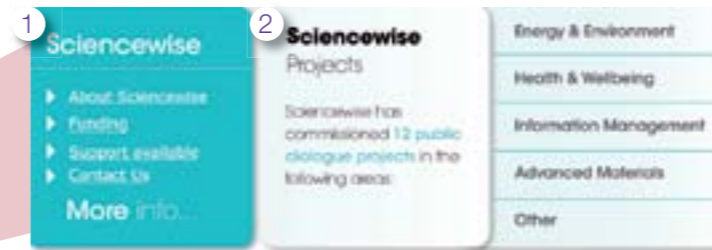
The online resource is an opportunity for members of the public, policy makers, scientists and science communicators to access the information they need to help understand and carry out good dialogue. These include case studies, reports, events and a plethora of multimedia resources.

These pages give a preview of what is available on the website www.sciencewise-erc.org.uk



This area of the site is your opportunity to log in and access the knowledge hub within the Expert Resource Centre. The knowledge hub is the core section of the site where all resources for all users will be stored.

The information bank is searchable by keywords and many of the resources are accessible from a number of different pages. The interactive icons are easily available throughout the site.



(1) Enter 'Sciencewise' to find out more about the programme, the support available, contact details and the organisations behind the Sciencewise-ERC.

(2) Enter here to see previous and current Sciencewise projects, learn from their experience and see their impact.



See Top Tips and quotes on public dialogue on the home page. The interactive calendar makes it possible to view national dialogue activities and events as well as training and information workshop details.

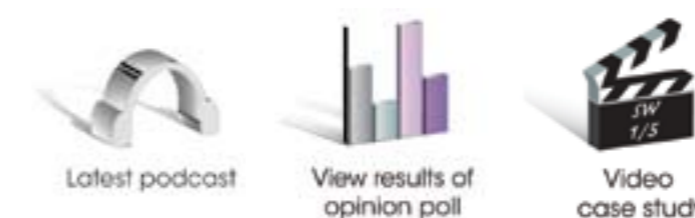
The home page will be regularly updated with news on science and technology issues and will highlight key Government consultations and White Papers.



The new site includes sections targeted at three different audiences.

- Policy makers
- Science community
- Society as a whole

These areas will have information for each audience on public dialogue – e.g. What is it? Why? How? – as well as links through to the information bank for further relevant resources.



By clicking on the resource centre from the home page you will be able to access our multimedia facilities, ranging from podcasts and video case studies to full-length reports. This is also where it is possible to read evaluations of a variety of dialogue methods.

A key feature of the site will be our new DVD 'Dialogue In Action', presented by Kathy Sykes, which gives insights into dialogue projects from participants, policy makers and project deliverers.



Science and Society Strategy

Since the last newsletter in March, DIUS has been doing more work on developing a Science and Society Strategy for the UK. We asked the Science and Innovation Minister, Ian Pearson, for an update on progress.

Sciencewise What do you want to achieve with this work?

Ian Pearson It's really about helping us to meet the challenges we face both as a country and globally. Science improves the quality of daily life, underpins prosperity and increases our readiness to face the challenges of the future. The UK population is a big consumer of the products and benefits of science and technology, and we can see that the future economic success of the UK is more and more dependent on the successful exploitation of science and technology. The potential for science to contribute to good policy-making and sound government, in areas such as climate change and human disease, has never been greater.

Sciencewise How do you think you can make that happen?

Ian Pearson Our ambition is to find ways to meet these challenges by delivering our vision for a society that is excited about science, values its importance to our social and economic wellbeing; feels confident in its use; and supports a representative well-qualified scientific workforce.

Sciencewise So how will this strategy help?

Ian Pearson Our ambition is to stimulate significant improvements in key relationships across science and society, building a more mature relationship between society, policy makers and the science community, including business, so that each understands the others' objectives, ways of achieving them, aspirations and concerns.

Department for Innovation, Universities & Skills

Our approach will be to work with individuals and organisations in each of these three groups to develop a strategy and implementation plan that achieves the vision and brings coherence to the science and society landscape. We are also looking to better clarify the Government's role and enable others to work with us better.

Sciencewise Can you tell us yet what is in the strategy?

Ian Pearson The strategy itself won't be developed until the Autumn, but we will shortly be publishing a consultation document that will help us to ensure the strategy has taken on board the needs of these groups. This consultation sets out why science and society is important, with a short account of the current position, and the challenges we think need to be addressed. There are three central sections focusing on the key issues – public engagement, STEM workforce pipeline and public confidence in the use of science - which raise questions we'd like to explore during the consultation.

We've also made a start with identifying solutions, such as a key role for Government, and the wider science and society community, to bring clarity and coherence to the complex landscape of activities and initiatives. This focuses on how we could improve delivery mechanisms and test the effectiveness of any possible interventions.

Sciencewise What happens now?

Ian Pearson We'll shortly be publishing this consultation document on the DIUS website and arranging online and face to face opportunities, with others in the community, to get people involved in this consultation. I believe this will provide the level of stimulation and challenge to allow everyone to respond so that we, in partnership with our stakeholders, can develop a robust strategy that meets Government's main science and society objectives.

www.dius.gov.uk/consultations/index.html

Online resource for people and participation

People and Participation.net is a resource set up by the citizen empowerment organisation Involve, and funded by the department for Communities and Local Government, the Ministry of Justice and the Sustainable Development Commission.

It aims to help people across the UK influence Government decision-making and features:

- an interactive tool which helps those seeking to engage with the public to select participatory methods based on their specific circumstances
- a comprehensive methods database, covering over 30 traditional and innovative approaches to public participation from around the world
- a selection of case studies, showcasing good practice and allowing site users to post their own success stories to inspire others
- a section for site users to post their questions about participation. Involve staff will respond to these questions and thereby create an ever growing knowledge bank of answers to common queries
- news and events information from the UK and beyond
- a comprehensive library of written and web-based resources from around the world to help site users make sense of public participation

- The resource complements the work of Sciencewise and the new Expert Resource Centre for Public Dialogue in Science and Innovation, which will focus on policy-making in science and technology. Both initiatives will work together to signpost people to the most useful and relevant sources of information and support

“ We are continually getting calls about amazing projects from across the country where citizens are working with Government in new and imaginative ways that lead to impressive results. People and Participation.net has been designed to provide a platform to showcase all these new citizen empowerment initiatives across the UK. To demonstrate that change not only is possible, but is happening right now! ”

Involve's Director, Richard Wilson

To find out more visit the website at www.peopleandparticipation.net

Power to the people

A new Empowerment White Paper due out this summer is to propose handing over more power over decisions on local issues back to those who are affected by them – local communities.

Along with giving people a greater voice in shaping national policies, community empowerment is now a Government priority and moving this agenda forward is the responsibility of CLG, the department for Communities and Local Government.

Announcing the White Paper earlier this month (15 May 2008) the Communities Secretary, Hazel Blears, said: “There isn't a single service or development in Britain which hasn't been

improved by actively involving local people. There's more common sense on the average street or estate than in all of the think tanks and seminars put together.”

“ I want to encourage active citizenship and to enable people to connect with their local leaders. I want to see people getting out there, getting involved, changing the things that matter to them and having their opinions heard. ”

Hazel Blears
Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government.

The White Paper puts forward a range of proposals aimed at redefining the way that Government connects with citizens. In particular, it sets out changes which will give people more influence, control and ownership of local services such as employment, health, education and transport. It will focus on:

- how to encourage active citizenship and revive civic and local democracy
- improving local public services
- how to improve deprived areas through regeneration and promoting work and enterprise
- strengthening local accountability

The announcement has been welcomed by people involved in empowerment, including Alison Seabrooke, Chief Executive of the Community Development Foundation (CDF). The CDF is the

'arms length' body that helps guide CLG's strategy and provides a leading source of intelligence, guidance and delivery on community development across the UK.

“There has been a sea change in the way community empowerment is perceived – and delivered – in the past five to ten years”, said Alison. “There is now a recognition that empowerment isn't just ‘good’ because it lets people have a say in the decisions that affect their lives. It also delivers positive outcomes. Services become better. Decisions are sounder. Initiatives are more sustainable. Public money is better used.”

The Empowerment White Paper will be open for comment by individuals as well as local organisations. For further details see <http://www.communities.gov.uk/corporate/newsroom/speechesstatements>

The Forensic Use of Genetic Information: progress of the Citizens' Inquiry

The National DNA Database (NDNAD) is used by police to search for matches to DNA found at crime scenes and to trace and identify suspects. In 2002, the Human Genetics Commission (HGC) made a number of recommendations in the report Inside Information, including that the database should be subject to independent oversight. In the Commission's view, the growth and development of the database has never been subjected to adequate debate. Such a debate, the Commission believes, should be had in public, and by the public, because the database affects all UK citizens. Furthermore, the debate should be had now, before the rapid expansion of sampling and database use becomes a fait accompli.

The Citizens' Inquiry was commissioned in collaboration with Sciencewise, the ESRC Genomics Policy and Research Forum and the Policy, Ethics And Life Sciences (PEALS) Research Centre, with additional funding from the Wellcome Trust. Each of these partners brought a different kind of support, a distinct perspective and complementary expertise to the commissioning group. From the outset, the group agreed that the shape of the project should be determined to a large extent by the participants: by their information needs, by the nature of their concerns, and by their preferred ways of engaging with the issues and with each other. Whilst the precise focus of the Inquiry was to be determined by the participants, the Commissioning group was interested in issues around the NDNAD.

“The process was very panel led. This meant learning was done far more freely and much more beneficial. We only used facilitators for a bit of advice and guidance.”

Inquiry participant

Vis-à-Vis Research Consultancy were commissioned to facilitate the Inquiry. They produced an exciting and innovative proposal, linking two panels in Birmingham and Glasgow by video (which was important because the English and Scottish forensic databases are set on different footings). The panels represented a mix of experience, age, interest and backgrounds, which added immense value to the debate and enriched the dynamics of the Inquiry. Over a five-week period, a range of experts attended weekly Inquiry sessions, putting forward their own perspectives on and around the NDNAD. The sessions provided an opportunity for the panels to interact with interest groups, the police, database governance bodies, forensic scientists and journalists. Groups and individuals from across the UK were

“We want to hear the public's views on whether storing the DNA profiles of victims and suspects who are not charged or are subsequently acquitted is justified by the need to fight crime.”

John Sulston, HGC Acting Chair

also able to participate in the Inquiry sessions as audience members, bringing different perspectives and adding flavour to the debate.

In early March, the Glasgow panel visited the Scottish Parliament and demonstrated their acquired expertise in questioning politicians from the main political parties about the database ahead of an important parliamentary debate. Meanwhile, the Birmingham panel paid a visit to a community centre in the London Borough of Hackney to hear from a number of people with first-hand experience of having the police take biological samples for the database.

In March, the two panels came together for the first time to discuss their experiences of the process, and to begin drawing together their conclusions. The Inquiry involved a range of engagement strategies to support participants and encourage ownership of the process by the panellists; through agenda setting dialogue, role-play, mind-maps, systems thinking models and group discussions the panellists grew in knowledge and confidence throughout the process. Panellists also had the opportunity to meet representatives of the funding organisations and questioned them on their reasons for commissioning the inquiry and its potential outcomes.

For the HGC, the key aims of the project were to create, firstly, an environment in which people from diverse backgrounds could come together as a group and develop their understanding of the main issues and, secondly, to create opportunities for genuine engagement between those whose voices are rarely heard and easily drowned out, and those who advise governments and set the public policy agenda. On 13 May, the panellists travelled to London to meet the HGC at its 32nd plenary meeting, to present their deliberations. Following this, the participants will finalise their conclusions, which will be launched formally in the early Summer, along with a report drawing out lessons from the process. The results of the Inquiry will feed into the HGC's report to Government on forensic use of DNA expected in early 2009.

For further information log onto www.HGC.gov.uk

Seeking projects in priority areas

The Sciencewise-ERC is able to offer co-funding for projects that feature public dialogue in science and innovation policy decision-making. Grants are available to Government departments and agencies for projects that adhere to Sciencewise's Guiding Principles for Public Dialogue in Science and Technology. The Guiding Principles are available at www.sciencewise-erc.org.uk

What is public dialogue?

Public dialogue is a deliberative form of public engagement. In the context of science and innovation policy-making it will involve scientists, stakeholders, and policy makers with an interest in the subject as well as members of the public. Public dialogue is an important part of any public engagement activity, sitting alongside a range of other information, consultation, involvement and feedback techniques.

Projects are commissioned directly with policy makers in line with priority areas for engagement in science and innovation. Grants are awarded to 'commissioning agents' i.e. Government departments and agencies, to procure and manage their own dialogue and engagement projects, with support and guidance from the ERC. Grants are provided for a proportion of the total project cost and there must be a financial contribution from the commissioning department.

Grant funding is available until the end of March 2009 and projects are expected to fall into the following categories:

- Large-scale projects with Sciencewise funding of £200k - £300k, lasting for a minimum of 12 months.
- Medium-sized projects with Sciencewise funding of £100k - £200k, lasting up to 12 months.
- Smaller-scale projects with Sciencewise funding of £30k - £100k, lasting up to six months.

Funds will be allocated to projects on a case-by-case basis in line with DIUS priorities, and after consideration of a business case, prepared in consultation with the Sciencewise-ERC.

We would like to hear from you if you have any suggestions for projects in priority areas or would like to discuss your ideas for dialogue projects. Please contact Sarah Young, Sciencewise Projects Manager on 0870 190 8194 or through the ERC Helpline at:

enquiries@sciencewise-erc.org.uk

Priority areas:

A number of areas for potential dialogue projects have been identified. These include:

- Air travel in connection with climate change
- Space exploration
- Waste management
- Drugs
- Privacy and data protection issues
- Energy technologies in the home and personal responsibility for combating climate change
- Well-being and the so-called 'Golden Years'
- GM technologies and the benefits of developing these





Professor Kathy Sykes

takes leading role on Sciencewise-ERC Steering Group

Professor Kathy Sykes is to Chair the Government Steering Group, which will provide strategic direction to the Sciencewise-ERC. She is currently Professor of Sciences and Society at Bristol University and is a member of the Council for Science and Technology (CST), the UK Government's top-level advisory body on science and technology policy issues.

She writes:

“ I am delighted that the ERC is being launched this month to encourage and support policy makers to use good practice in public dialogue. Sciencewise has already been assisting policy-makers for four years, and has worked closely with them to understand how the ERC might best support them. It has strong backing from the Secretary of State for DIUS, John Denham, and the Minister for Science and Innovation, Ian Pearson. There is a sterling array on the Steering Group of people representing science, business, social sciences and science engagement, a group of dialogue and engagement specialists giving expert advice and Lord Winston as the ERC's high-profile champion.

Sciencewise began in 2004 asking groups to bid to undertake dialogue around issues that the then Science Minister, Lord Sainsbury, identified, including nanotechnologies, climate change and animal experiments. This was a good start, but there were no policy makers wanting specific questions addressed, and no guarantee dialogue would inform any decision-making.

With advice from the Sciencewise Strategy Group, which I chaired (and to whom I am grateful, for insight and challenge) Sciencewise moved to working proactively to understand the needs of different departments and agencies; helping them commission public dialogue to tackle specific issues in timeframes that meant it could inform the decisions being made. The participants involved also got feedback about the impact of their deliberations.

The work Sciencewise did with the HFEA on hybrid embryos is one example. Two groups of scientists applied to the HFEA for a licence to create animal human hybrid embryos. Initially the HFEA was inclined to reject these applications. Sciencewise worked with the Authority in various ways to engage the public, involving over 3,000 people. Small groups came together to become informed and to question scientists, religious leaders, journalists and other stakeholders and experts. There was also a large open meeting. After hearing the public's views, the HFEA gave the requested licences. A clear message from the public was 'this kind of work needs tight regulation, and should happen when the scientists can show the work is needed and may help improve human health'.

But for the ERC to develop the 'corporate memory' that the Council for Science and Technology asked for in 2005, a few examples of good dialogue are not enough. Good practice is needed for many thorny issues that face society. How do we produce energy, while still having a future on this planet? How do we give equitable access to health-care, when the State cannot afford to fund all available treatments?

So one challenge is getting good practice in public dialogue used across Government for really big issues. Not every science issue needs dialogue. 'Good practice' also means sometimes not doing it, for example after a decision has been made, or when there is insufficient time to do it effectively. But when the issue is difficult and political, and policy-makers are somewhat reluctant to 'open a can of worms', dialogue often matters most. And politicians who've braved this, for example, John Hutton on dialogue around pensions, have said it's helped them think through the issues more deeply, write a White Paper and be courageous about decisions.

The ERC needs a high profile, so policy makers know that it's THEIR resource. But the science community also needs to hear more about its findings, to understand the views of the public better. And the public should know about the ERC too. When key figures in the Catholic Church used phrases like 'Frankenstein proportions' about hybrid embryo research, Sciencewise should have been saying in the media that 'after time to consider the science and the ethics the public felt the benefits outweighed the risks'.

With the launch of the ERC, the public's views made during dialogue processes will now have a greater 'voice'. These considered reflections should not only merely inform policy-makers, but also the wider science community; and, through the media, society in general. ”

Photograph courtesy of Dave Pratt

Our thanks...

Since it began in 2004, Sciencewise has been nurtured and guided by a Strategy Group and assisted in commissioning projects by a panel of scientists and dialogue experts from around the UK.

DIUS and the Sciencewise programme team would like to put on record our grateful thanks to all the members of the Strategy Group and Panel for their commitment to the projects and for their invaluable help in developing the concept of the Sciencewise-ERC.

In particular, thanks are due to the Strategy Group Chair, Kathy Sykes, and her Deputy, Richard Wilson, who have led working groups and written discussion papers, and to Sheila Anderson, formerly of the Natural Environment Research Council who acted as Deputy Chair of the wider Sciencewise Panel.

Members will continue to play an important role in the new Sciencewise-ERC as part of a pool of experts supporting the development of resources and providing expertise to policy makers who commission dialogue projects. Details of their new role can be found on the website at www.sciencewise-erc.org.uk

Drop in for Dialogue

The Sciencewise-ERC is to hold monthly 'drop in' sessions to help policy makers carry out better, more appropriately timed dialogue. These sessions will be an ideal opportunity to:

- learn from practitioners about current best practice in dialogue
- hear from others about what has and hasn't worked
- get specific advice from an ERC Dialogue and Engagement Specialist.

The sessions will be held at Futurefocus. This is a purpose built resource at 1 Victoria Street, London, open to everyone in the Department for Business, Enterprise & Regulatory Reform (BERR), the Department for Innovation, Universities & Skills (DIUS), the Department for Children, Schools & Families (DCSF), and other Government Departments and businesses.

Each drop in session will run from 12:00 until 14:30 and will include lunch. The sessions will be in two parts and either one or both can be attended.

Please book in advance by visiting www.sciencewise-erc.org.uk or via the ERC Helpline on 0870 190 6324

Topics in forthcoming drop in sessions:

- June 23: **What can public dialogue do for policy makers?** Presented by Ian Christie
- July 21: **Feeding into policy – a Case Study.** Presented by Helen Richens from the HFEA
- Aug 18: **Evaluation Masterclass and Mentoring.** Presented by Diane Warburton

The sessions will consist of:

- Part 1: A talk and discussion on a particular issue of interest to policy makers
- Part 2: A dialogue clinic where anybody within Government can come and talk to us about their live projects
- One-to-one mentoring – pre-booked slots to discuss particular issues.

Sciencewise on screen

In March this year Sciencewise held a celebration event to showcase all the work from the projects it has supported and to put forward the future of the Sciencewise-ERC. The event was used as a platform to create a series of video downloads that give people an insight into the Sciencewise-ERC and its exciting new future.

The video provides an overview of the programme and gives real examples of projects and people who have been involved in public dialogue. It also explains what public dialogue is, what the value is to policy makers, participants and science and technology communities and what the key lessons have been so far.

The short video downloads look at some of the projects that Sciencewise has funded in the past. The participants and deliverers give an overview of the project with key aims, lessons learned and the experience gained from using public dialogue. The video aims to inspire and encourage greater use of public dialogue.

The full DVD will be available at the Sciencewise-ERC launch on 29 May at Altitude in London. It will also be available to download, together with the short project videos, from the Sciencewise-ERC website:

www.sciencewise-erc.org.uk

What's on this summer



Department for
**Innovation,
Universities &
Skills**

Cheltenham Science Festival 4–8 June 2008

This week of wonders in Cheltenham has earned a remarkable reputation in recent years. Lord Robert Winston had this to say about it: 'I go to many science festivals around the world and the Cheltenham Science Festival is the best one. It is setting the example.' The Sciencewise team will be bringing along its exhibition stand, so join us and the likes of Richard Dawkins, Jonathan Porritt, Steven Pinker, Kathy Sykes, Richard Hammond and the Mr Men for five days of debate, talks, experiments and fun. www.cheltenhamfestivals.com

Bristol Festival of Nature 7–8 June 2008

Come along for the fifth and biggest festival yet! Bristol Festival of Nature is the UK's biggest celebration of the natural world. The Festival is an imaginative weekend of films, animal encounters, exhibitions, walks, talks, workshops and competitions for all ages and interests. The Festival also includes a very popular food market, with genuine and healthy produce from the South West and beyond.

www.festivalofnature.org

Science and the Public Conference 21–22 June 2008

Following successful meetings at Imperial College London in 2006 and 2007, the annual Science and the Public Conference has an expanded two-day format and a new home in Manchester. Sciencewise will be giving a presentation at the conference.

To register contact
David Kirby at david.kirby@manchester.ac.uk

Royal Society Summer Science Exhibition 30 June–3 July 2008

The Royal Society's annual Summer Science Exhibition in London offers a fantastic opportunity to discover the best of the UK's science and technology research. With exhibits from all over the UK, visitors will get the chance to meet and talk to the researchers behind the work on show.

www.summerscience.org.uk/08/

Wellcome Trust Grants Workshops 9 July 2008 in Bristol

Engaging Science is a grants programme offering over £3 million per year to support projects that engage the public with biomedical science and its social contexts. The Wellcome Trust is offering free grants workshops for those interested in applying. The workshop is free, but you need to book in advance.

www.wellcome.ac.uk/engagingscience

IAP2 27–29 August 2008

The International Association for Public Participation will have its conference in Glasgow this year. The conference will attract internationally renowned speakers, those with citizen engagement experience and those people who are spearheading research, policy development and practice in public engagement. Sciencewise will be there. www.iap2.org

Sciencewise Expert Resource Centre (ERC)

The Sciencewise-ERC, funded by the Department for Innovation, Universities and Skills (DIUS) helps policy makers commission and use public dialogue to inform policy decisions in emerging areas of science and technology. It consists of a comprehensive online resource of information, advice and guidance, together with a wide range of support services aimed at policy makers and all the different stakeholders involved in science and technology policy making, including the public. The Sciencewise-ERC also provides co-funding to Government departments and agencies to develop and commission public dialogue activities.

Contact details

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