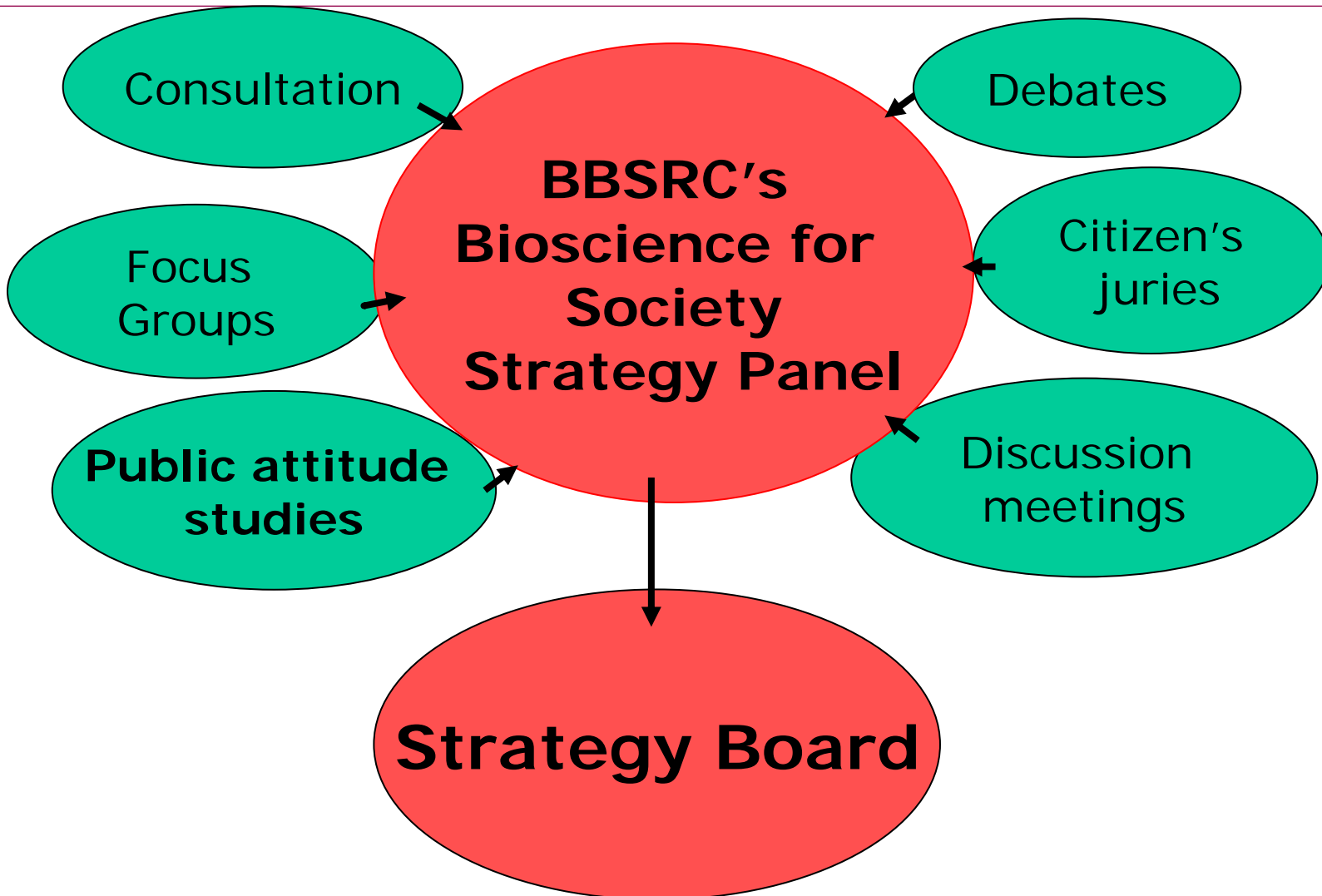


# Alan Irwin

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Strategy Panel

# Why conduct public attitude studies?



# Using the information from these studies

Research Councils should:

- Listen respectfully and self-critically to public assessments, acknowledging methodological limitations
- Be sensitive to different problem 'framings'
- Accept that there is no single blueprint or toolkit
- Apply and develop learning from social science community
- Reflect upon and evaluate activities

# Outputs

Negative view of ageing (age-related problems not life process)

*'There is nothing good about it'*

*'I look in the mirror and realise I am old'*



But

*'People in their 90s don't seem to be that old'*

Important that science doesn't simply reinforce negative stereotypes.

# Outputs

Low awareness of research in this context

Paradox regarding pace of research: Too fast and too slow?



*"It could be valuable. Yeah, I don't think the research is wrong. But I do think that this whole taking out bits of genetics and changing genetics, I think that we have been evolved this way."*

*"Scientists need to think more"*

# Outputs

Sceptical about commercial involvement

Preference for a balance of funders

Emphasis on public benefit/strong 'social' ethic

# Outputs

- People expect a level of public involvement and want to engage
- But mixed/balanced discussion

'not necessarily me' 'listen respectfully'

"Public opinion is important but do they have access to the information?"

"I'm not qualified to say what are the technical possibilities but can give my priorities"

# Results should be used, considered, debated and shared

- Not a single 'one to one' set of policy implications
- Learning should be shared round the research councils, with other funders, policymakers and interested parties
- Report will also go to strategy panels at BBSRC and at MRC
- Report will be considered at MRC Open Council meeting tomorrow
- BBSRC will publish a response