



Council Meeting Minutes

Meeting held during the 2017 Mid-Year Meeting

Geneva - Thursday 6th April 2017

Approved by Council Co-Chairs, 2nd May 2017

Council Members

Julie Brown	Authors & Co-Chair
María Ximena Rojas Reyes	Authors
Elizabeth Stovold	Cochrane Information Specialists (CISs)
Rene Spijker	Cochrane Information Specialists (CISs)
Graziella Filippini	Co-ordinating Editors (Co-Eds)
Fergus Macbeth	Co-ordinating Editors (Co-Eds) & Co-Chair
Anne Lyddiatt	Consumers
Joy Oliver	Consumers
Celeste Naude	Fields
Susan Wieland	Fields
Lotty Hooft	Geographically-orientated Groups
Erik von Elm	Geographically-orientated Groups
Gail Quinn	Managing Editors (MEs)
Jordi Pardo Pardo	Managing Editors (MEs)
Miranda Langendam	Methods
Yemisi Takwoingi	Methods
Other attendees:	Central Executive Team (CET) support staff
Miranda Cumpston	Head of Learning & Support
Elaine Carman	EA to the CEO

Apologies

None.

1. Welcome, Apologies, Declarations of interest and Approval of the Agenda

Welcome by interim Co-Chairs, Erik von Elm and Celeste Naude.

Introductions then given by each member.

No apologies.

The agenda for the meeting was approved.

2. & 5: Setting the directions of the Cochrane Council and Process matters

These two items were considered together. Members considered the role and operations of the Council, and reviewed the draft terms of reference.

Membership of the Council

It was noted that all members would be asked to make a Declaration of Interests and that these would be made available on the Cochrane Community website when the relevant electronic forms had been made available.

ACTION: CET to ensure that electronic DoI forms for the Council are established.

No changes were made to the current membership of the Council, although it was noted that not all parts of the world were well represented, and in particular Asia. It was noted in the Terms of Reference that geographic diversity should be considered by all Groups in future when selecting representatives.

It was affirmed that, in line with the draft Terms of Reference, the operation and membership of the Council would be reviewed 18 months after its establishment.

The following additional changes were made to the Terms of References:

- MEs and CISs seconded to the CET in Group support roles (including ME Support and CIS Support) would be eligible to stand as Council representatives for their communities.
- The normal length of term for Council members will be two years, although Groups may make exceptions, for example to ensure staggered retirement of members, to allow greater continuity. Members may serve for a maximum of six consecutive years, following which they must step down for a gap of at least one term before serving again.
- If Board and Council elections are held simultaneously, individuals may not stand for both positions. Sitting Council members may stand for Board elections, but must step down from the Council if successful. Sitting members of the Board may not stand for selection to the Council.
- If questions come to the Council requiring specific expertise and knowledge, it was agreed that Council members could co-opt people and invite them to attend the Council meeting for discussion of the specific area.

ACTION: The operations and membership of the Council to be reviewed after 18 months.

Co-Chairs of the Council

Members agreed that there should be two equal Co-Chairs, with a term of two years, ideally with a staggered approach to their start/end of terms.

Council Meetings

In addition to its annual face to face meeting at the Cochrane Governance Meetings (formerly Mid-Year meetings) it was agreed to have teleconference meetings approximately every 2 months for 90 minutes and, because of varying time zones, to rotate the start times for fairness.

It was agreed there should be no fixed quorum for Council meetings, as it is not a formal decision-making body, and that if members are unable to attend a scheduled meeting, it will be at the discretion of the Co-Chairs if a meeting proceeds. Meeting agendas and papers circulated before the meetings, and minutes circulated afterwards, will ensure that all members are informed of the planned discussions and outcomes of the meetings.

It was clarified that travel expenses are covered under the CET travel expenses policy.

ACTION: Elaine Carman to set up next few meetings in diaries ahead of mid-year meeting in Lisbon in March 2018.

ACTION: The co-chairs will decide after first 3 teleconferences have taken place whether the meetings should be more or less often.

ACTION: Miranda Cumpston to clarify the relationship and differences between the Group Executive and Council budget arrangements and report back to affected members.

Who can refer issues to the Council?

It was agreed that the Council should be open as widely as possible to referrals from any source. Issues referred to the Council for consideration should be high-level matters that are widely relevant to the various Cochrane communities.

ACTION: The CET to work with the Co-Chairs to establish a process for prioritizing all issues referred for discussion. All Council members would be advised of all issues referred, but not every issue would be chosen for detailed consideration.

ACTION: The CET to work with the Co-Chairs to establish a communications plan to ensure that information on the activities of the Council and on how to approach the Council is easily available to the Cochrane communities. All members to ensure that their communities are informed about the activities of the Council, and that opportunities to consult are made available where appropriate.

- ACTION:** The Author representatives to work with the CET to establish a communications plan for authors, who are not represented by an Executive and do not have formal communication channels in place (such as the Digests disseminated to Cochrane Groups).
- ACTION:** CET to ensure that Council agendas, papers and minutes are made available for dissemination to the communities as appropriate.
- ACTION:** CET to set up and maintain a Dropbox folder to allow Council members access to shared documents.

The Council approved the Terms of Reference as amended. They will now be sent to the Board for formal approval.

- ACTION:** CET to finalise the amended Terms of Reference and forward to the Governing Board for formal sign off.

2.3 Election of co-chairs

Fergus Macbeth and Julie Brown were elected by the Council as Co-Chairs. Members thanked Eric and Celeste for volunteering to act as interim Co-Chairs to enable this first meeting of the Council to proceed.

3. Report back from Executive meetings

Those members of the Council representing Group Executives were invited to give a brief update of their work areas and on any current concerns. A number of cross-cutting issues were identified for possible discussion at future meetings of the Council.

4. Review of Board agenda

The Council reviewed the agenda of the Board meeting in Geneva and discussed the various issues arising.

- ACTION:** CET to circulate Governing Board agenda and papers directly to the Council as soon as available for future meetings.

NOTE: After lunch, the newly appointed co-chairs took over chairing of the meeting.

6. Cochrane Membership

Julie Wood outlined the proposed thresholds for attaining and retaining membership through different categories of contribution to Cochrane under the new system to be introduced in 2017. There was a discussion around the difficulties of quantifying and comparing different kinds of activities.

Julie clarified that many in the Archie system will be automatically transferred to membership status, and that everyone currently in the Archie system will be contacted wherever possible and given a fair period of time to attain or retain membership. Those who do not maintain a level of contribution over time will lose membership status, but remain within the community as supporters. There was flexibility in the system for those who may have extenuating circumstances preventing them from being fully active during the period.

The Council suggested that the peer review threshold of 5 reviews per year was too high, as many Groups would deliberately avoid using individual referees so frequently, and could be lowered to 2. They also suggested additional clarity on whether the threshold counted the number of reviews worked on, or the number of rounds of comments (which could be several substantive rounds per review).

7. Consumer Network Statement of Principles

Anne Lyddiatt briefly talked about the paper submitted to the Council, seeking Council support and endorsement of the document, which sets out principles for Cochrane's commitment to engage consumers in all areas of its work. This is a framework document to be followed by a series of papers looking at specific areas of consumer engagement.

Council members expressed their thanks to Anne and agreed to endorse the Statement. The Statement will now be presented to the Board for formal adoption.

As the Consumer Network and CET consider paths towards implementing these principles in practice, the Council advised that they should be mindful of the impact of practical implementation on the workload of Groups, and explicitly consider the choices arising between these and other competing activities and priorities. They also noted the importance of training and support tools to enable the engagement of consumers to be expanded

Miranda noted that some training resources for consumers are available on the Cochrane Training website, and that a current project ('ACTIVE') was developing training resources for author teams on how to engage consumers in reviews, but that further training & support would be needed to align with any implementation priorities arising from the next stages of the work by the Consumer Network Executive.

8. Cochrane Governance Matters

8.1. Board and Council Elections

Miranda Cumpston outlined the issues discussed in the paper on election procedure to be considered by the Board at their meeting in Geneva. The Council discussed the complexity of the proposed policy on candidates promoting their own candidacy through official Cochrane channels, and endorsement by Cochrane Groups or leaders. They requested further clarification on who is covered by the policy and the official channels (including Group newsletters) that should not be used to promote individual candidates.

ACTION: Miranda to communicate request for clarification when election procedure is discussed by the Board at their meeting.

8.2. Role of Executives

Miranda advised that the Board has a Governance Working Group led by Denise Thomson, which will be reviewing the roles of the Group Executives in 2017. The Council is asked to begin considering these roles, and will likely be asked to have input into the project as it proceeds.

9. Preparation for joint session with Board and any other business

The Council discussed what the Board and Council's vision is for the Council and their role.

10. Meeting wrap up and plans for future meetings

10.1 Topics for future discussion

The Council considered additional items for future meeting agendas.

- Managing review titles that fall between the scope of existing CRGs
- How Methods Groups and methodologists continue to support and collaborate with other Groups
- Clarifying the requirements in skills and experience for new author teams, to support equitable decision-making and clear expectations
- New CRG Networks
- Author Experience
- Vision for the Council

ACTION: Co-Chairs to ensure that these are added to the agendas for future meetings.

10.2 Teleconference/videoconference

There should ideally be 2 meetings, most likely in June and August, before the deadline for Governing Board papers for the Global Evidence Summit in Cape Town, Sept 11-15 Sept 2017.

10.3 Cochrane Governance Meetings in Lisbon: 19-23 March 2018

It was discussed and agreed that the Council meeting should fall on the first day of the Governing Board meeting.

11. Joint session with Governing Board

Members of the Governing Board joined the meeting at this point for a joint session. All members were introduced. The Board Co-Chairs gave a brief overview of why the Board exists, to set policy, be strategic and its financial responsibility, and its operation.

Vision: It was hoped that the Board and Council had a shared vision for the Council. The Council had originally been proposed during the Governance Reform project, completed in 2016, to allow representatives from each community area to have a voice and provide a consultation point to provide advice to the Board. The Council summarised the key amendments made to the draft Terms of References, and noted the important fact that the Council is the only Cochrane leadership group where authors are represented.

Where the Council has matters to raise with the Board, they will submit papers using the existing processes and timelines, which will be included in the Board agenda as appropriate. Council members may attend the Board when needed to present these items. Likewise, the Board will refer matters to the Council where it wishes to receive their input. Informal communications and, if needed, teleconferences between the Council and Board Co-Chairs will facilitate communication and planning.

The Governance Reform Group confirmed that it would like to draw on input from the Council about their review of the role of Cochrane's Group Executives and would welcome interest from Council members who would like to be involved in the working group.

ACTION: Council members to volunteer to be involved in the Board Governance Reform Group review of Group Execs.

The Board doesn't want to dictate Council priorities but suggested strategic items such as the KT strategy and review of the role of Execs would be good to add.

ACTION: Council Co-Chairs to consider these items for future agendas.

The Council requested further information on the reasons why Board papers can be marked as restricted rather than open access. The Board and CET advised that common reasons include commercial-in-confidence items and discussions at a premature stage that may not proceed as outlined in the paper.

ACTION: CET to provide a list of reasons for restriction of Board papers and make available via the Cochrane website.

It was agreed that the first meeting was a positive start for the Council.

---MEETING END---

Summary of Actions requested during the meeting

Agenda Item	Action
2 & 5	1. CET to ensure that electronic DoI forms for the Council are established.
2 & 5	2. The operations and membership of the Council to be reviewed after 18 months.
2 & 5	3. Elaine Carman to set up next few meetings in diaries ahead of mid-year meeting in Lisbon in March 2018.
2 & 5	4. The co-chairs will review after first 3 teleconferences have taken place, to determine if frequency needs to be adjusted.
2 & 5	5. Miranda Cumpston to clarify the relationship and differences between the Exec and Council budget arrangements and report back to affected members.
2 & 5	6. The CET to work with the Co-Chairs to establish a process for prioritizing issues referred. All Council members would be advised of all issues referred, but not every issue would be selected for detailed consideration.
2 & 5	7. The CET to work with the Co-Chairs to establish a communications plan to ensure that information on the activities of the Council and on how to approach the Council is easily available to the Cochrane communities. All members to ensure that their communities are informed about the activities of the Council, and that opportunities to consult made available where appropriate.
2 & 5	8. The Author representatives to work with the CET to establish a communications plan for authors, who are not represented by an Executive and do not have formal communication channels in place (such as the Digests disseminated to Cochrane Groups).
2 & 5	9. CET to ensure that Council agendas, papers and minutes are made available for dissemination to the communities as appropriate.
2 & 5	10. CET to set up and maintain a Dropbox folder to allow Council members access to shared documents.

2 & 5	11. CET to finalise the amended Terms of Reference and forward to the Governing Board for formal sign off.
4	13. CET to circulate Governing Board agenda and papers for future meetings directly to the Council as soon as available.
8.1	14. Miranda to communicate request on Elections paper to Board when this item is discussed at their meeting.
10.1	15. Co-Chairs to ensure that the agreed topics for future discussion are added to the agenda for future meetings.
11	16. Council members to volunteer to be involved in the Board Governance Reform Group review of Group Execs.
11	17. Council Co-Chairs to consider these items for future agendas.
11	18. CET to provide a list of reasons for restriction of Board papers and make this available via the Cochrane website.
