



Rt Hon. Oliver Dowden CBE MP
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Rt Hon Greg Clark MP
Chair
Science, Innovation and Technology Committee
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9 June 2023

Dear Greg,

2023 UK BIOLOGICAL SECURITY STRATEGY

I am pleased to inform you that the Government will publish the 2023 Biological Security Strategy on 12 June. A Written Ministerial Statement and a Command Paper will be laid in both Houses.

The 2018 Biological Security Strategy provided, for the first time, an effective framework for collective UK action. The 2023 Strategy does not seek to reinvent that framework, but rather updates it to reflect the significantly changed risk context and, in particular, the lessons learned from the COVID-19 pandemic. The 2023 Strategy does improve upon the 2018 version by providing clarity on leadership and accountabilities within a robust governance structure.

The Strategy sets out our ambition to ensure that, by 2030, the UK is resilient to a spectrum of biological threats and a world leader in responsible innovation, making a positive impact on global health, economic and security outcomes. We will adopt a global-facing, UK-wide posture that strengthens resilience and deterrence, projects global leadership, and exploits opportunities for UK prosperity and science and technology advantage. The Strategy is based on:

- Four pillars - Understand, Prevent, Detect and Respond - that represent a comprehensive response to the biological risks facing the UK.
- Three cross-cutting enablers that will deliver effective governance, capitalise on the UK's science base, and deliver international leadership in the biosecurity space.
- Clear ownership at ministerial, official, and departmental levels to provide clear leadership.

The Strategy addresses a number of the recommendations made in the joint report by the Health and Social Care and Science and Technology Committees published in 2021. To ensure accountability, I will report to Parliament annually in my capacity as lead Minister for the Strategy. Alongside this, a new central Biosecurity Coordination Unit will be set up in the Cabinet Office to oversee the Government's response to biological risks. We will be running a dedicated programme of exercises to test our readiness to biosecurity threats and ensure that the lessons learnt from the COVID-19 pandemic are applied.

I have enclosed an embargoed copy of the Biological Security Strategy. My officials are in touch to arrange a briefing for you on the key commitments contained within the Strategy and specific threats that have informed its development.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Oliver Dowden', followed by a long horizontal flourish.

Rt Hon. Oliver Dowden CBE MP
Deputy Prime Minister