Introduction

Following the recommendations and actions that emerged from the Vet Futures project (see Annex A), one of the five ambitions in the RCVS Strategic Plan 2017-2019 was ‘to become a Royal College with leadership and innovation at its heart, and support this creatively and with determination.’

The 2017-19 Strategic Plan outlined two key areas of work which will help to deliver this ambition (outlined below), however, it is important to recognise that leadership is a cross-cutting theme that permeates many of the actions in the Strategic Plan even when not explicitly stated. This three-year plan therefore seeks to provide further details as to the nature of the wider RCVS Leadership Programme, key work streams and projects.

Key leadership actions, RCVS 2017-19 Strategic Plan.

1. Identify and support the next generation of veterinary leaders and develop leadership opportunities across the veterinary and veterinary nursing professions, within all branches of the professions, at all levels - locally, nationally and internationally.

2. Through completion of our governance review, ensure that we are an effective and efficient organisation, better able to lead the profession and serve the needs of the public, including the carrying out of training and the provision of coaching for RCVS Council members who take, or are considering taking, leadership roles.

RCVS Leadership Programme Aims

For the next three years the RCVS Leadership Programme will focus on positioning leadership skills as an integral part of veterinary professionals' continuing education; making the RCVS an exemplar by supporting the leadership development of its Council, committee and staff members; and highlighting the diverse range of leadership development opportunities for veterinary surgeons and nurses, the roles and positions these could lead to, and the impact they could have on the future of the professions.

Resourcing

Amanda Boag is the Council sponsor for the RCVS Leadership Programme and Anthony Roberts is the staff lead. Dr Greer Wild, RCVS Policy Officer, is seconded part-time to support the development of the programme. Over time it is envisaged that a further staff support will be added to the Leadership and Innovation team.
Work streams
The first three years of the programme will comprise three work streams:

1. Leadership for everyone
   **Aim:** To promote the importance of self-reflection and the development of leadership skills as key aspects of veterinary professionals’ continuing education and to provide the resources to help support such development.

   This work stream seeks to gain acceptance for the idea that, whether they realise it or not, all veterinary professionals are leaders and face leadership challenges on a daily basis. Every day practitioners are making many clinical judgements, often based on imperfect information, and communicating with a wide variety of colleagues and clients. Leadership skills development helps provide veterinary professionals with the resources to work and thrive in such a complex and uncertain environment, and to take control of their own futures.

   Moreover, cultural change such as that envisioned in the Vet Futures initiative, demands the combined actions of many across the professions and cannot be delivered by the actions of those in traditional leadership positions alone.

   The key project within this work stream will be the development of a free massive open online course (or MOOC) in conjunction with the NHS Leadership Academy to help veterinary surgeons and veterinary nurses start their leadership development journey.

   The RCVS will also investigate how ‘experiential’ leadership development programmes could be developed and made accessible to veterinary and veterinary nurse students. This could build upon successful past programmes such as the RVC led Veterinary Team: Leadership and Professionalism programme and the Veterinary Leadership Experience in the United States.

   **Key stakeholders:** NHS Leadership Academy, Graduate Outcomes Working Party, vet students and recent graduates, veterinary schools, Vet Schools Council, veterinary nurses and practice managers.

2. Leading the profession
   **Aim:** To ensure that as an organisation the RCVS is an exemplar of leadership development and is fit to lead the professions.

   In 2018 a Legislative Reform Order is expected to be enacted, which will start a three-year transition process towards new governance arrangements that will improve the efficiency and accountability of our decision-making processes.

   This process provides an opportunity to review the training and coaching we provide to Council and committee members to ensure they are prepared for the leadership roles they fulfil. Governance reform will also bring new challenges in relation to ensuring that the smaller Council does not restrict the diversity of membership.
This work stream will involve close collaboration between the Leadership and Innovation and the Human Resources Team, with support from the Communications Department to develop appropriate training and support mechanisms for Council, Committee and staff members, and initiatives to foster diversity across leadership positions at the RCVS.

We will also seek to share our learning and approaches to leadership development to ensure the wider profession also benefits.

Finally, in seeking to make standing for Council a development opportunity we will create a cadre of people that can go on to take up leadership positions elsewhere in the professions after their time on Council.

**Key stakeholders:** Council, Committee members, RCVS Fellowship, RCVS Staff, HR and Communications Departments.

### 3. Tomorrow’s Leaders

**Aim:** To highlight the diverse range of leadership development opportunities for veterinary surgeons and nurses, the roles and positions these could lead to, and the impact they could have on the future of the professions.

This work stream will focus on signposting the multitude of leadership development opportunities and the programmes available to veterinary professionals that have emerged since the publication of the Vet Futures report.

Work will also be undertaken to assess where there may be gaps in the market or where intervention from the RCVS in the form of scholarships or bursaries may be appropriate to allow veterinary professionals to take advantage of the opportunities available.

Online resources will be developed to showcase the diverse leadership roles open to veterinary surgeons and the impact that veterinary professionals can have on the future of the professions, the delivery of veterinary services, and animal health and welfare. A key element of this will be a series of veterinary role models similar to the RIBA Role Models Campaign (https://www.architecture.com/RIBArolemodels)

**Key stakeholders:** Veterinary associations and private training providers, conference organisers, veterinary thought-leaders, RCVS Fellowship, major employers, business schools, external leadership programmes.
Key projects and campaigns

The following table outlines the key projects and campaigns in each of the three work streams during this initial three-year period. These have already been included in the leadership budget for 2018 this is indicated within the plan.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Work stream 1: Leadership for everyone</th>
<th>Project</th>
<th>Work packages</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Milestones / Key Events</th>
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|                                        | Development and launch of the veterinary leadership MOOC | Develop MOOC in conjunction with NHS Leadership Academy | 2018-20 | Spring 18 – taster materials and course overview ready for BSAVA Congress  
Summer 18 – Beta testing of course with small pilot group  
Autumn 18 – first cohort  
Autumn 18 onwards – review effectiveness of course and make revisions for future cohorts. |
|                                        | Promotion of MOOC through website, conferences and Vet Futures Student Ambassadors. | | 2018-20 | Spring 18 – BSAVA launch event  
Autumn 18 – web resources to support launch of MOOC  
Winter 18 – engage with Vet Futures Student Ambassadors  
Winter 18 – London Vet Show |
<p>|                                        | Graduate outcomes | To engage with the Graduate Outcomes Working Party to establish how best to embed leadership skills development in veterinary education and training. | 2018 | Spring 18 – Present to the meeting of the Graduate Outcomes Working Party. |
|                                        | Veterinary / Veterinary Nurse Student Leadership Training | To investigate developing or supporting an experiential leadership course for veterinary students. | 2018/19 | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Project</th>
<th>Work packages</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Milestones</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Governance Review</td>
<td>Completion and implementation of LRO</td>
<td>2018-2020</td>
<td>Spring/Summer 18 – preparation for new LRO including lay person appointments</td>
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<td>Summer 18 – commencement of LRO</td>
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<td>Summer 20 – completion of transition to new Council size and structure</td>
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<td>Autumn/Winter 20 – review impact of changes to Council</td>
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<td>Review of governance structures</td>
<td>2018</td>
<td>Spring/Summer 18 – review of governance and committee structures.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Council induction and training</td>
<td>Set up a cross-functional working group to review the programme for the induction of Council members and the training provided for those on Committees.</td>
<td>2018-19</td>
<td>Spring/Summer 18 – set up internal working group (including Comms HR and Exec Office) to review current procedures and best practice</td>
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<td>Spring 18 – develop a skills matrix for Council and committee members.</td>
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<td>Spring/Summer 18 – seek feedback from new Council members on induction processes (2017 intake)</td>
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<td>Summer 18 – implement new induction for Council members.</td>
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<td>Autumn/Winter 18 – seek feedback from new Council members on induction process (2018 intake)</td>
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<td>Autumn/Winter 18 – develop a skills matrix for Council and committee members.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Diversity on Council</td>
<td>Work with HR and Communications to ensure that changes to the size and structure of Council do not have a negative impact on diversity</td>
<td>2018-20</td>
<td>Autumn/Winter 18 – set up working group and review best practice</td>
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<td>Spring/Summer 19 – implement measure to ensure the 2019 election encourages participation representing diversity across the veterinary professions.</td>
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<td>Autumn/Winter 20 – review impact of changes to Council.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Senior Leadership Team</td>
<td>Senior Team to discuss and develop its leadership role and approach, and to identify training needs.</td>
<td>2018</td>
<td>Spring/Summer 18 – Discussions regarding the Senior Team leadership role and approach.</td>
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<td>Spring / Summer 18 – Work with HR to develop a programme to develop Senior Team’s leadership role.</td>
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| **Everyday leaders initiative** | Work in coloration with HR to build on the work at the 2017 Staff Away day to create a culture that fosters and supports the concept of everyday leadership. | 2018-19 | Spring/Summer 18 – develop proposals with HR
Summer 18 – present plan for feedback at 2018 Staff Away Day
Summer 18 – Summer July 19 – trial programme, seek feedback and review impact. |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Project</th>
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<th>Year</th>
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</tr>
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</table>
| Leadership development opportunities | Develop resources to showcase the multitude of leadership development courses, training and opportunities available to veterinary professionals.                                                                 | 2018-20      | Spring/Summer 18 - research market, gaps and how barriers to accessing such opportunities  
Summer 18 – develop website and other materials to highlight what is available  
Spring 19 – link leadership development opportunities to ‘Veterinary Role Models’ work and develop links to external projects such as the Vet Futures Careers Hub. |
| Veterinary Role Models          | Produce an interactive section of the RCVS website which can be used to highlight the diversity of leadership roles and opportunities in the veterinary professions.                                                   | 2018-20      | Autumn/Winter 18 – identify and film videos with first wave of role models.                                                                                                                                |
| Fellowship                      | Engage with the Fellowship Board to develop a vision of the future through/clinical leadership role of the Fellowship                                                                                       | 2018-19      | Summer 18 – initial meeting with Fellowship Board.                                                                                                                                                        |
| Scholarship and Bursaries        | Identify the barriers to veterinary surgeons and veterinary nurses accessing advanced level leadership development training and how bursaries or scholarships could be used to facilitate access.                                      | 2019         | Spring 19 - research the range of high-level leadership development training that is available and the barriers to accessing this  
Summer 19 – investigate whether a bursary fund supporting particular leadership programmes would be beneficial  
Autumn/Winter 19 – potentially launch such a programme                                                                                                  |
| Leadership Diversity            | Identify any sections of the profession where intervention from the RCVS would be helpful and ensure the diversity of the profession is reflected in leadership roles.                                          | 2019         | Autumn/Winter 18 – investigate veterinary leadership diversity and initiatives across the globe – e.g. the Women’s Veterinary Leadership Development Initiative (WVLDI) in the US.  
Spring 19 – develop proposals for the launch of inventions / initiatives in the UK.                                                                     |
Measuring success

Strategic plans need metrics against which success can be measured and programmes refined to meet better their aims and objectives. Such metrics are difficult to develop in relation to ‘soft’ and intangible outcomes such as changing attitudes to leadership development and the improvement of individuals’ skills, the following metrics, however, are proposed as acceptable proxies that could be used to assess the impact of the programme over the next three years. More detailed measures will be developed in relation to individual projects such as the MOOC.

- Percentage of CPD logged relating to leadership development per annum via sampling of records.
- Percentage of new graduates undertaking the new MOOC per annum.
- Percentage of major UK veterinary conferences with sessions dedicated to leadership per annum.
- Council and committee membership being representative of diversity within the professions and society.
Annex A

Vet Futures Report: summary of leadership ambitions and recommendations

- Encourage veterinary nurse leaders to develop a report and recommendations which are directly relevant to veterinary nurses and their future, and complementary to the Vet Futures report
- Explore options for bringing greater coherence to the support and representation of the veterinary profession
- Explore ways to develop the next generation of veterinary leaders including by identifying and nurturing talent, and providing them with the skills and opportunities to succeed
- Develop and communicate clear routes to a wide range of leadership roles
- Look to develop a proactive veterinary-led EU/global agenda where the UK can lead in public health, education, regulation and improving standards
- Develop lifelong learning in leadership, including mentoring and targeted leadership programmes, in particular for groups underrepresented in leadership (eg women and people from minority ethnic groups)

Vet Futures Action Plan

Veterinary leadership programme

Develop a veterinary leadership programme

The Vet Futures report suggested that, to date, the profession had given leadership insufficient focus – concerns had been raised over the number of vets and vet nurses stepping forward for leadership roles and the report found that mechanisms to identify tomorrow’s leaders were lacking.

Although there are events and short courses available, there is a requirement for a more sustained programme. The report set out an ambition for a diverse range of leadership opportunities to exist throughout the profession, from government, research, academia and politics to business and industry.

The Vet Futures Action Group recognises the benefits for every individual in developing leadership skills, whether they are in a formal leadership role or not. The Action Group therefore recommends that a veterinary leadership programme should be developed using the NHS Leadership Academy Healthcare Leadership Model, which describes leadership behaviours and helps users across a whole variety of roles to see how they can develop as a leader. The model helps users to understand how their leadership behaviours affect the culture and climate that they, their colleagues and teams work in.

The programme should also act as a catalyst for the development of other lifelong learning opportunities around leadership.
Next steps

- Draw on the example of the NHS Leadership Academy Healthcare Leadership Model to develop a fully worked up proposal for a programme for the veterinary professions (vets and vet nurses) that could be delivered easily, for example, via a MOOC
- Develop plans to recruit and support mentors
- Consider evaluating the ‘change capability’ of the profession to inform how the programme is developed and marketed
- Explore options to secure joint funding from key organisations and companies to set up the programme
- Explore options for exporting the programme to other countries (particularly English-speaking countries), for example, through achieving an internationally-recognised accreditation
- Consider how existing CPD in leadership and soft-skills training can complement the programme

Timescale
Scoping for the project proposal and requests for funding support to be undertaken during 2017, with a view to launching the programme during 2018.

Who?

BVA and the RCVS, working in particular with the RCVS Fellowship, to develop the project proposal in consultation with employers (across the whole profession – clinical practice, government, academia etc), external accrediting bodies and current CPD providers, and work with potential funders to assess the appetite for such a programme.

Evaluation

- Programme is successfully developed and attracts funders
- Attendance on the programme and at other leadership opportunities
- Feedback on the programme