

MINUTES OF THE SIXTH MEETING HELD ON 19 OCTOBER 2007 AT THE RUTHERFORD APPLETON LABORATORY

Council Members present: Peter Warry (Chairman)
Keith Mason (CEO)
Marshall Davies
Mike Edmunds
Philip Greenish (*by phone*),
Philip Kaziewicz
Anneila Sargent (*by phone*)
Richard Wade
Colin Whitehouse

Dept Innovation, Universities, Skills Paul Williams

In Attendance: Jeff Down
Sir Peter Knight
Jim Sadlier
Jenny Thomas
Chris Thompson (*Council Secretary*)
John Womersley
Ruth Jeans (*Minute Secretary*)

Apologies Keith Burnett

1. WELCOME

1.1 The Chairman thanked members for attending at short notice, and welcomed Sir Peter Knight (Chairman, Science Board) and Jenny Thomas (Vice Chairman, Science Board), attending to report on the Science Board statement on the outcome of the Light Source Review.

2. 4 GLS

2.1 The Chairman invited Sir Peter Knight to report on the Science Board statement.

2.2 Sir Peter Knight stated that the Science Board had recently received advice from an independent panel of international experts, commissioned by the Council to advise on the UK's current access to light sources and proposals for the future. The Review Panel's view had been that the UK had a strong record in light source science of the highest quality, and in many respects the short term position for the UK light source community was excellent. However, looking longer term, there had been serious reservations regarding the proposed 4GLS and Sapphire

projects as currently defined. The Panel had not been convinced that the technically ambitious 4GLS proposal, as it had been developed so far, or the Sapphire project, would provide the optimum fourth generation light source for the UK. Considering the timescale and magnitude of the proposed investment, the Panel had recommended that STFC should first carry out a review of the scientific needs of the community, and refocus on developing a more sustainable, science-driven proposal, which takes into account recent advances in the field and specifically the likely developments in optical laser technology in the next five to ten years.

- 2.3 Sir Peter Knight stated that the Science Board had accepted the advice of the Review Panel; had endorsed its findings; and was recommending to Council that STFC should, as a first step, seek the views of the light source user communities to identify the key scientific drivers and the technology required for any future facility. The resources and milestones to develop a focussed, sustainable, science driven proposal should then be defined, leading to a fully worked up proposal ready for consideration by summer 2009.
- 2.4 Colin Whitehouse stated that he supported the review process and the decisions, but was concerned that the full report from the Review Panel had not been available to either advisory body. Paul Williams also expressed his concern that the full Light Source Review Report was not available for Council to assist it in its decision.
- 2.5 Sir Peter Knight pointed out that although only an Executive Summary and list of recommendations had been submitted so far, the Science Board had received a detailed presentation on the findings of the Review from the Review Co-ordinator, Robert Donovan, at its September meeting. Sir Peter Knight had also had discussions with the Chairman of the Review Panel, Murray Gibson, (Director Argonne National Laboratory), and one of its members Professor Wolfgang Sandner (The Max-Born Institut), to ensure that he was in possession of all the key arguments, particularly relating to 4 GLS and ERLP. The Board had then spent a major part of its two-day meeting in October debating the issues involved. As a result, Sir Peter Knight was confident that the Board had received sufficient information to gain an appropriate perspective and to be able to provide advice to Council.
- 2.6 Keith Mason stated that the deadline for submitting the list of project priorities for Large Facilities Capital Funding had required a decision to be made on whether the 4GLS and Sapphire projects were sufficiently advanced to be submitted. He had had to make a judgement based on all the advice received, and was forced to conclude that 4GLS and Sapphire should not be included on the STFC priority list at this stage. This decision had been scientifically, not financially driven, and did not relate in any way to the CSR outcome.
- 2.7 Colin Whitehouse advised Council that this decision could have an adverse effect on staff morale generally. He stressed the need to communicate sensitively with the staff involved, especially as it was understood that redundancy notices were about to be circulated to the Daresbury Laboratory staff in relation to the SRS closure. Key members of the ASTeC team were already considering their position which would have an adverse effect on future accelerator development if this team was allowed to disband.

- 2.8 At this point, the Chairman read out a letter received from Keith Burnett who had been unable to attend, but supported the conclusions.
- 2.9 Notwithstanding the concerns about the overall 4GLS project, Council noted the excellent technical progress achieved on the prototype ERLP programme, and the recommendation by Science Board that the potential to exploit the ERLP should be explored both for R&D and for a modest science programme, as recommended by the Light Source Review panel.
- 2.10 Council took note of the views of the Review Panel, the recommendations of the Science Board, and also the concerns expressed. Following discussion, Council unanimously endorsed the Science Board's recommendations subject to formal confirmation by the Board of its recommendations on receipt of the full panel report. The Council considered that it had sufficient information on which to make this decision and did not anticipate that it would change. It was important that staff should be informed at the earliest possible moment.
- 2.11 It was agreed that further work should be started quickly, beginning with workshops and information-gathering carried out to a tight timescale. The outcome of this would be handled through the normal STFC peer review process, and a fully developed new project submitted to Council by late summer 2009.
- 2.12 Council acknowledged that the action being taken, the first major decision taken by STFC, would be seen as highly significant. It was essential that any announcement would need to be very sensitively managed.
- 2.13 Council agreed that, in the interests of the staff and to ensure that momentum was not lost, that it should inform the staff involved in the 4GLS and Diamond Sapphire projects as soon as possible and make its decision public. Paul Williams said that he would inform Ministers of the decision taken, before Keith Mason talked to the 4GLS staff at DL on Wednesday 24 October 2007 as planned.
Action: K Mason/P Williams

2.14 In summary, Council:

- Accepted that the original decision to invest in 4GLS had been taken in good faith as the correct technical way forward at that time.
- Accepted that since then, new and more innovative means of achieving the same goals had been advanced, and STFC was required to balance these against each other in order to determine the best way forward;
- Understood the reasoning for not including 4GLS and Sapphire in the list of projects for LFCF funding;
- Endorsed the recommendations of the Science Board, recognising that those recommendations would still need to be ratified by the Board when the full report was received;
- Fully accepted the significance of the decisions made so far;

- Agreed that members should be briefed by the executive on the “lines to take” on the decision;
- Noted that the timetable for “going live” with the announcement would be Wednesday 24 October 2007, or very soon after, and once the Minister had been informed.

2.15 Jim Sadlier was asked to produce a communiqué based on Council’s discussions, including a Q & A document covering possible questions or scenarios likely to be raised, which should be copied to Ron Egginton (DIUS). **Action: J Sadlier**

3. STFC ALLOCATION FROM CSR2007

RESTRICTED ITEM