

**MINUTES OF THE FIFTEENTH MEETING HELD ON 23 SEPTEMBER
2008 AT THE COSENNERS HOUSE, ABINGDON, OXFORDSHIRE.**

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

DIUS Paul Williams

In Attendance: Graham Brooks
Jeff Down
Peter Knight
Gordon Stewart
Jenny Thomas
Liz Towns-Andrews
John Womersley
Catherine Ewart (*Executive Secretary*)
Ruth Jeans (*Minute Secretary*)

Apologies: Keith Burnett

WELCOME

The Chairman welcomed members and attendees to the meeting.

1. MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 1 July 2008

1.1 The minutes were accepted to be a correct record of the meeting and were signed by the Chairman.

2. ACTIONS AND MATTERS ARISING

- 2.1 **(Minute 2.2 - FAQs):** Council requested that the FAQs be circulated as soon as possible. **Action: G Stewart**
- 2.2 **(Minute 3.4 – establish stakeholder group):** Council agreed that the Science Board should be involved in establishing the stakeholder group which should be in place by the time Council next meets. Terry O'Connor and Peter Knight to take this action forward as a matter of urgency.
Action: T O'Connor/Peter Knight
- 2.3 Council **noted** the status of the remaining actions.

3 CHIEF EXECUTIVES REPORT

General items

- 3.1 Keith Mason announced that Terry O'Connor had taken up his post as Communications Director on 1 August. Recruitment action for a new Finance Director was continuing.
- 3.2 K Mason had recently had his first one-to-one meeting with Adrian Smith, the newly appointed DGRC. There had also been discussions between the Director General for Science & Research, and the Research Councils' Chief Executives on the issues relating to the next spending review, and the need to plan for maximising the bid for investing in science for the future. As part of this preparation exercise, it would be essential to have STFC's strategy in place by early next year.
- 3.3 Council **noted** a number of other activities that Keith had recently been involved in including: the launch of the LHC; the SRS closing ceremony; a visit to the UK by the Head of NASA, Mike Griffin, and attending (on behalf of the Minister, Ian Pearson), an informal meeting of space ministers in French Guiana.

ESA Aurora Programme

- 3.4 K Mason summarised the current Aurora Programme position, and the facts behind a call for increased subscriptions from the EU delegations to pay for an Enhanced ExoMars mission. Although the full case had not yet been presented to the Science Board, the paper gave Council an opportunity to comment on the issues involved, in advance of its consideration by Science Board and a full debate at the Council meeting on 24 October.
- 3.5 K Mason updated Council on the negotiating positions that were emerging - in particular that of Italy – although these were continuing to evolve very rapidly. A decision on the UK's subscription level, based on STFC's recommendation as the UK's funding authority for Aurora, would also be required before the ESA Ministerial takes place on 25/26 November.

- 3.6 Although the cost of the programme had risen, it was emphasised that this was the result of a re-evaluation of the original proposal and the Project Board selecting the Enhanced ExoMars option as the preferred approach. Although the cost would be approximately 1.6 times greater than the original estimate, it was pointed out that the payload would be a factor of 3 larger, as well as being more scientifically and technically robust. He also highlighted the agreement with ESA to cap the UK's annual contribution to the project, albeit extending the duration of the payments.
- 3.7 K Mason presented a number of UK subscription options, and the effect of each on the UK's science and technological goals for the mission.
- 3.8 In discussion, Council expressed concern at the large increase in costs at this early stage in the mission, and the possible effect on other planned programmes.
- 3.9 It was noted that the paper had been primarily about cost, and had not included much detail about the scientific and technological returns. It was agreed that as part of the debate, an attempt should be made to define the scientific/technological impact of continuing with the mission, (and the impact of not proceeding), as well as tensioning this programme against other planned programmes.
- Action: K Mason**
- 3.10 Peter Knight agreed to arrange a special meeting of the Science Board at the earliest opportunity to consider the options, and to report to Council at its meeting on 24 October, when Council would debate the issues more fully.

Action: P Knight

Accelerator research

- 3.11 K Mason outlined his vision for establishing a new national accelerator development centre at DSIC. With a critical mass of technical expertise now in place, (*particularly at the John Adams Institute and the Cockcroft Institute*), the UK was in a strong position to lead in a number of generic areas relating to accelerators.
- 3.12 A small team led by Jenny Thomas, had begun to examine the potential for accelerator research to address high priority national issues including environment, medicine, energy, security, and the paper described some of the applications identified in the emerging strategy.
- 3.13 Council **welcomed** this important initiative, and requested that a funding profile be developed. Council also agreed that it was essential that the experts at the Cockcroft and John Adams Institutes be involved in the development of the proposal.

Gateway Centres

- 3.14 John Womersley presented a report on the five proposed Gateway Centres, intended to provide access to expertise of benefit to UK scientific and industrial sectors. Funding from the Large Facilities Capital Fund had already been earmarked for three of the five Centres (*Detector Systems Centre; Hartree Centre; Imaging Solutions Centre*).
- 3.15 The next step in the development process would be the preparation of a science and business case for each of centres, as well as a procurement strategy, and the teams (*led by a 'champion' for each area*), were currently consulting with key stakeholders to assess their requirements.
- 3.16 J Womersley pointed out the importance of a viable business model being in place and the assurance of committed funding, before submissions were made to DIUS. STFC would only continue with the proposals if the success of the Centres could be assured, and that the business case, (which would have included an internal gateway process), was robust. It was also vitally important that a good relationship was maintained with the key stakeholders throughout the process.
- 3.17 Work was continuing on the development of plans for a Materials Centre and the case for a bid against the LFCF. It was likely that the Centre would be a joint initiative between STFC and at least one HEI partner and possibly an industrial partner.
- 3.18 The plans for an Imaging Centre were not so well developed and further workshops would be held in order to assess the requirements. It was suggested that options for the way forward should be discussed with Keith Burnett.

Action: J Womersley

- 3.19 Council welcomed the report on the Gateway Centre initiatives and the science and technological opportunities that they would bring. To ensure that stakeholders understood the role of the Centres and to avoid concern regarding competitiveness, Council also supported the workshop process as an effective means of engaging with the relevant communities.

4. OPERATIONS REPORT

- 4.1 Richard Wade presented his report on recent activities and items of interest to Council.

LHC

- 4.2 R Wade updated Council on the recent LHC incident, when one ton of liquid helium had leaked into the tunnel. Although the machine would not be fully operational before spring 2009, the decision had been taken

to continue with the launch event on 21 October. The report on the incident would be circulated to members when available.

Action: R Wade

ESS

- 4.3 R Wade reported that Sweden had been pressing for an EU Ministerial meeting to be held in December, to obtain agreement on the development of a European Spallation Source in Sweden. If this meeting goes ahead, the UK would be required to make a statement on its position, and the Minister would therefore require a clear directive from STFC within the next 2 months, on the line to take.
- 4.4 The indication from the neutron community at the recent Annual Neutron Users Meeting and during the Programmatic Review had been not to proceed with the ESS, but to concentrate on developing ISIS and ILL.
- 4.5 Council strongly supported this decision, providing that it was fully discussed by PALS, and that a Town Meeting was convened to formally secure the community's agreement for this strategy.

Action: J Womersley/R Wade

Diamond

- 4.6 Council welcomed the announcement that Lord Alec Broers had recently been appointed Chairman of DLS Ltd. It was agreed that a meeting should be arranged between STFC's Chairman and Chief Executive and the Chairman and Chief Executive of Diamond at the earliest opportunity.

Action: R Wade

VISTA

- 4.7 The VISTA telescope had been delivered to ESO Paranal at the end of August and the commissioning was progressing well. Negotiations would now commence on the financial issues.
- 4.8 The Council **noted** the delivery of the VISTA project.

Executive Structure

- 4.9 At its meeting in April, Council had requested that a report on the effectiveness of the new management structure be presented to Council after three months.
- 4.10 R Wade reported that the Operations Board, the Strategy Board, and Finance Committee were up and running, with their new terms of reference working well.
- 4.11 The Executive Board membership and terms of reference currently overlapped with the other Boards, and therefore did not have such a clearly defined role. It was proposed that the Executive Board's terms of reference and membership now needed to evolve, to take account of

the authority and responsibilities delegating to the other Boards. The Executive Board would now concentrate on strategic decision-making; discussing key issues for Council; and taking an overview of the work of the other Boards. The Board would therefore be a smaller body, involving just a subset of Directors.

4.12 Council **noted** the good progress being made by the Operations and Strategy Boards and Finance Committee, and **agreed** that the terms of reference and membership of the Executive Board should be re-examined.

4.13 R Wade would now discuss the plans with other members of the management team, and present the revised arrangements to Council at a future meeting. Consideration would also be given to the relationship between the executive and Council.

Action: R Wade

General Items

4.14 R Wade also highlighted a key milestone reached by the ISIS Second Target Station, when the first neutrons had been created in the fully engineered target-moderator-reflector system.

4.15 He also reported that following lengthy consultations with the community, the science case for the New Light Source had just been made available. Some improvements had been requested, and it would be reviewed further by the Photon Science governing body at the end of September.

4.16 The SRS had formally closed at the beginning of August, and a well attended SR Users meeting had been held at Daresbury on 11/12 September to focus on the future with ESRF; Diamond and the NLS.

4.17 Council **recognised** that bringing the Facility to closure had been a very stressful time for the SR staff at Daresbury, and asked Colin Whitehouse to convey Council's appreciation to Pat Ridley and his team for their outstanding work during a very difficult period.

Action: C Whitehouse

4.18 It was **noted** that if the UK wished to be a significant partner in FAIR, it may be required to become a shareholder. Council urged caution, stressing the need to examine the details of any involvement very closely, before the convention was signed later this year.

4.19 Council **noted** the remaining items in the Operations Report.

Health and Safety Report

4.20 Council **noted** the Health & Safety quarterly report.

4.21 Although not included in the report, (which had been submitted before the incident), a potentially serious accident had occurred in the Artemis laser facility, when a vacuum vessel was over-pressurised, causing a window to explode. The equipment, which belonged to the university

involved in the experiment, had not been fitted with a pressure release system.

4.22 Following an internal review, all experimental activities on the facility had been suspended till further notice. A number of lessons had already been learned from the incident - in particular it was clear that there needed to be a common set of rigorous protocols for the use of equipment across all facilities. An HSE investigation was now under way, and Council would be notified of its findings.

4.23 Council **noted** the incident with concern. The Chairman also stated that in future he should be notified of all serious incidents, immediately. The quarterly report should also be fully up to date before presenting to Council.

Action: P Hartley

4.24 It was also essential for Council to be clear where STFC's responsibilities lay - in particular relating to the use of experimenters own equipment. The Chairman requested a copy of the schedule of STFC's safety responsibilities relating to facilities to be included in the next quarterly report.

Action: P Hartley

5 KNOWLEDGE EXCHANGE AND ECONOMIC IMPACT REVIEW

5.1 Liz Towns-Andrews presented her report on a review of KE carried out to assess the fundamental issues affecting STFC's KE staff, activities and communities. She summarised the aims and changes that she now proposed for the KE programme and emphasised the importance of more clarity, and a new single approach to be developed.

5.2 She also explained the need to develop a wider Economic Impact strategy for STFC. EI as defined by the Treasury was wide ranging, and aligned closely to STFC's core mission and charter objectives, (KE being only one element). It was proposed that an Economic Impact Unit be established to implement new initiatives, as well as taking responsibility for major evaluation studies and methodology development, and the measurement and monitoring of EI.

5.3 There was a major opportunity for CLIK to play a more integrated role in assisting HEIs to commercialise IP, as well as getting involved in the commercialisation of opportunities within the European facilities. A sales team was also being successfully embedded within CLIK.

5.4 Council **noted** the review report and **welcomed** the steps being taken to meet the challenge of putting KE/EI at the centre of the organisation. Council **fully endorsed** the report's proposed recommendations and changes, pointing out the importance of including incentives for staff within the proposals.

Action: L Towns-Andrews

- 5.5 Jenny Thomas reported on a recent initiative which she had led within the particle physics community. A call had been made to the community to submit proposals to develop ideas and possible solutions to real world issues, for example in the fields of medicine, security and energy. The panel consisting of a wide range of experts, had reduced the 37 proposals received to 12, and mentors from within the panel were now assisting the proposers in developing these proposals.
- 5.6 Council warmly welcomed the initiative and requested a report on its outcome, when appropriate.

6. BLUEPRINT PROGRESS REPORT

- 6.1 Richard Wade updated Council on the progress being made in developing the Blueprint programme. The scope, contents and interdependencies of each of the eight projects would be submitted to the Project Board for its approval at its meeting on the 14 October, and then the detailed work would begin.
- 6.2 The Organisational Review panel had also requested a presentation on Blueprint, and it appeared to have been well received.
- 6.3 Council **noted** the progress so far, and **endorsed** the launch of the Blueprint Programme.

7. ORGANISATIONAL REVIEW.

- 7.1 Gordon Stewart updated Council on the STFC Organisational Review process, and presented the STFC self-assessment overview.
- 7.2 The external review panel had met with senior directors; Council members; the Chairman of the Science Board and representatives from academia and the Institute of Physics on 22 and 23 September, and the Panel's report was due to be published in late October/early November.
- 7.3 Council **noted** the update.

8. STFC STRATEGY – PROGRESS REPORT

- 8.1 Gordon Stewart updated Council on the progress being made in developing an STFC Strategy. Four theme teams had met during the summer to address a number of strategic themes and issues arising from the vision document, and to develop a set of corporate objectives, actions and measures.
- 8.2 A second workshop for managers was due to be held on 25 September. The workshop would provide input to the strategy outline document being prepared for use in discussions with STFC's key stakeholders and staff, prior to a formal consultation phase which will take place later in the year.

- 8.3 Council **noted** the progress being made so far in developing the STFC Strategy.
- 8.4 Peter Knight expressed concern that the Science Board had not been used to the maximum, in the development of the STFC strategy. Gordon Stewart agreed to find a way of improving engagement with the Board.

Action: G Stewart

9 DARESBURY CAMPUS JV

- 9.1 Colin Whitehouse presented an update on the latest developments at the Daresbury Science and Innovation Campus. The DSIC Board had agreed that despite the present difficult economic climate, the formation of the DSIC JV should be actively progressed.
- 9.2 Council discussed the progress being made by the McKillop/Mier Campus Review. There had been particular disappointment with the first draft of a report on a similar parallel review being carried out on the NWDA, which also specifically included the DSIC project. Steps had therefore been taken to ensure that STFC would be given copies of any developing drafts of the McKillop/Mier review of DSIC, in order to ensure factual correctness as the basis for any recommendations which might be made.
- 9.3 Council **expressed its concern** at the situation and requested that it be kept informed of developments.

Action: C Whitehouse

- 9.4 Council **noted** the remainder of the report.

10 BUSINESS RISK AND CONTINUITY

Finance Report

- 10.1 Council noted the Finance Report.

Contingency Planning

- 10.2 The paper provided an update on the plans being developed to produce detailed contingency measures, to be invoked should the planned savings not materialise.
- 10.3 Although the paper had stated that there would be little prospect of carrying forward EYF at the end of the year, there had now been a further change in the advice received from DIUS, and it appeared that this may not now be the case.

Audit Committee Report

- 10.4 Marshall Davies presented the reports on the Audit Committee meetings held on 12 June and 2 July.
- 10.5 He reported that there had been a robust discussion with the SSC Project team at a meeting of the Research Councils' Audit Chairmen in

July, when fundamental questions had been addressed, *(why had the original plan been unrealistic? Why had there been so many iterations of the plan; and was the new plan robust?)*

- 10.6 There was still serious concern regarding the SSC's ability to deliver the projected savings and to manage the transition process, and this would remain the subject of close scrutiny by the Audit Committee.
- 10.7 Council **noted** the reports on the Committee meetings, and the SSC issues in particular.

11 Q2 Scorecard Report

- 11.1 Gordon Stewart presented the Scorecard Report. Two deliverables were still marked Red, and eleven at Amber.
- 11.2 Council **noted** the report and the explanations for the Red and Amber items, but emphasised the need to have all the deliverables at Green as soon as possible. **Action: G Stewart**

11. DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS

- 11.1. It was agreed that the meeting on 24 October would be a half day meeting in two parts - a business meeting to discuss and agree a negotiating strategy on the UK's Aurora subscription, and a forum to debate and advise on Economic Impact, Knowledge Exchange and External Income issues.
- 11.2. Because of the ESA Ministerial meeting now taking place on 24 November, the Council Forum arranged for that date was now cancelled.
- 11.3. Council also agreed that the forum meeting in either January or February should be held at Imperial College. A meeting should also be held at Swindon Office in the near future. **Action: Secretariat**

12. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

- 12.1 There was no further business.

13. PAPERS FOR INFORMATION

- 13.1 Members were reminded to provide the secretariat with updates to the Register of Interests.
- 13.2 Council noted the PR Calendar.