

STFC(200917)

**MINUTES OF THE NINETEENTH MEETING HELD ON 24 FEBRUARY 2009 AT
THE RUTHERFORD APPLETON LABORATORY**

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

DIUS: Paul Williams

Science Board: Jenny Thomas (chair)

In Attendance: Gordon Stewart (*Director Corporate Affairs*)
Terry O'Connor (*Executive Secretary*)
Jane Tirard (*Finance Director*)
Ruth Jeans (*Minute Secretary*)

Apologies: Philip Greenish
Anneila Sargent

WELCOME

The Chairman welcomed members and attendees to the meeting.

The Chairman announced that the Minister had approved the three candidates recommended by the interview panel for appointment to Council. It was agreed to re-order the agenda, taking item 6, Strategy Update, as the first substantive item.

1 MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 16 DECEMBER 2008

1.1 (2.2) 'Action Completed' should read 'Action In Hand'.

Action: Secretariat

1.2 Subject to this change being made, the minutes were agreed to be a correct record of the meeting, and were signed by the Chairman.

2 ACTIONS AND MATTERS ARISING

- 2.1 The outstanding actions were dealt with under agenda items, or were ongoing.

3 STFC STRATEGY

Strategy Process

- 3.1 Gordon Stewart reported on the strategy consultation phase currently under way, and summarised the next stages of the exercise up to April 2010. Council discussed the process of engaging with the scientific community on both the “upside” and “downside” funding options, and stressed the requirement to ensure extensive consultation on future prioritisation of the programme.
- 3.2 In particular Council thought that it was important to ascertain views on whether STFC should seek to maintain its current width of activities in the event that insufficient funding was available or whether it would be better to focus fuller funding on a more limited set of activities.
- 3.3 Work would be commencing soon on the drafting of a focussed version of the Strategy document, with publication at the end of April 2009 taking into account the consultation input. Inter alia this document would cover STFC’s approaches to both increases in funding and any shortfall in funding. Council noted the report and the progress being made to date.

4. INTERNATIONAL REVIEW OF FACILITIES

- 4.1 At its last meeting Council had agreed that an international review of the STFC facilities should be carried out at the earliest opportunity.
- 4.2 Richard Wade reported that he had had preliminary discussions on the review. Council discussed the basic remit and scope of the exercise, stressing the value of such a review.
- 4.3 Council asked Richard Wade and Keith Mason to develop specific questions for the Review to address, the terms of reference, and the proposed timescale for the review, and to report back to Council at the earliest opportunity.

Action: R Wade/K Mason

5 SSC MIGRATION REVIEW

- 5.1 Jane Tirard reported on progress of the migration to SSC. Jane would provide Council with a fuller assessment of the situation at its meeting in March.

6 ECONOMIC IMPACT REPORT

- 6.1 Philip Kaziewicz presented his report on the formation and the initial activities of the Economic Impact Advisory Board.
- 6.2 He pointed out some of the difficulties in accurately measuring economic impact, particularly related to the larger programmes, and he expected that assessments would be less quantitative than expected. However, a useful workshop had recently been held involving the Science Board and Strategy Board, to discuss the defining, measuring and promotion of economic impact.
- 6.3 Council approved the revised Terms of Reference for the Economic Impact Advisory Board, with the following amendments:
- **Item 2 to read:** "Provide Council with advice on criteria for selecting projects *and areas of science* based on their economic impact alongside their scientific impact".
 - Colin Whitehouse asked that the Terms of Reference should include a note that the Campuses should be a regular item for discussion on the Board's agenda.

Action: P Kaziewicz

- 6.4 Council **noted** the report, and **thanked the members** of the Board for their valuable input.
- 6.5 Jenny Thomas invited members to a series of talks on KE and Particle Physics, to be held at the IoP on 6 March.

7 SCIENCE AND SOCIETY

- 7.1 Mike Edmunds presented his report on the STFC Science in Society programme.
- 7.2 In particular, Mike pointed out that both the Small and Large Awards Schemes and the Science Centre Awards had been oversubscribed.
- 7.3 Colin Whitehouse mentioned that he had been analysing the demographic decline in scientific skills, and had discovered that the decline was particularly severe in the North West.
- 7.4 Mike and Colin agreed to discuss this issue off line.

Action: M Edmunds/C Whitehouse

8 FINANCE UPDATE

- 8.1 Jane Tirard updated Council on the current financial position. Council had agreed in April 2008 to proceed 'at risk' with budgetary pressures of £49 million. Pressures on the budget still remained over the 2009-2011 period, after taking into account planned cost reductions and expected underspends, and with no change in Treasury policy on EYF or exchange rates.

- 8.2 Directors had therefore agreed at the Operations Board on 23 February on £5 million short term savings in 2009-10 which would be addressed through internal processes. Recognising the potential need for additional £15m savings moving into the next SR period, further consultation would be undertaken throughout 2009/10 leading to a review of the budget in 2010/11 and beyond.
- 8.3 Richard Wade pointed out that as well as the recent cuts to grants and external projects, a third of the reductions had taken place within STFC. Staff numbers had been reduced and a 10% funding cut made 'across the board', with much of the effect still working through the system.
- 8.4 The recent headlines regarding a 25% cut to the particle physics programme was raised.
- 8.5 Although the situation was complex, it was pointed out that by 2010-11, the UK taxpayer would invest a total of £136M in particle physics experimentation, including £86M for the national subscription to CERN, and £30M for UK science exploitation primarily aimed at the Large Hadron Collider at CERN.
- 8.6 This compared with a total spend of £119M in 2005, of which £79M was for the CERN subscription, and £13M for science exploitation of the experiments running at that time. The increase in exploitation funding reflected a shift from construction to exploitation of the LHC.
- 8.7 Richard Wade agreed to provide a paper explaining the situation in full, to the next meeting of the Council. **Action: R Wade**

9. SRS CLOSURE AND DE-COMMISSIONING COSTS

- 9.1 Council noted the breakdown of costs for the de-commissioning of the Synchrotron Radiation Source.

10. ALICE PROGRESS REPORT

- 10.1 Council noted that the case for the development of ALICE would be discussed by the PALS Committee and the Science Board, and then be presented to Council.

11. ORGANISATIONAL REVIEW RESPONSE

- 11.1 Council had agreed in its response to the Organisational Review of STFC that it should publish a statement on its role, and its interactions with the Executive.
- 11.2 Council considered and approved the draft statement, and agreed that it should be published along with the announcement of the three new

Council members, and the change of status of Richard Wade and Colin Whitehouse, at the earliest opportunity.

- 11.3 Keith Mason reported that as a result of a recent appointment exercise, two new members for the Science Board had been selected, and Council was invited to approve the appointment of Neville Harnew (Oxford), and Neville Greaves (Aberystwyth) to the Board.
- 11.4 Council approved the appointment of Neville Harnew and Neville Greaves to the Science Board.

12 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

- 12.1 Colin Whitehouse reported that a meeting would be held at DIUS on Friday 27 February, to discuss the process for responding to the McKillop Review report.
- 12.2 Colin Whitehouse also announced that he had just received the draft report from the consultants who had been carrying out an appraisal of the options for the land and buildings on the Daresbury site, in relation to the JV. He would report on this more fully at the next meeting.
Action: C Whitehouse

The meeting closed at 16.45