

MINUTES OF THE FOURTH MEETING HELD ON 25 JULY 2007 AT THE RUTHERFORD APPLETON LABORATORY

Council Members present: Peter Warry (Chairman)
Keith Mason (CEO)
Marshall Davies
Mike Edmunds
Philip Greenish (*by phone, from item 3*)
Philip Kaziewicz
Anneila Sargent
Richard Wade
Colin Whitehouse

Science & Innovation Group Ron Egginton

In Attendance: Jeff Down
Andrew Taylor
Jenny Thomas (*Deputy Chair, Science Board*)
Chris Thompson (*Council Secretary*)
Ruth Jeans (*Minute Secretary*)

APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Keith Burnett and Paul Williams.

INTRODUCTION

The Chairman welcomed members to the meeting. He also welcomed Ron Egginton (S&IG) deputising for Paul Williams, and Jenny Thomas who attended to report on the first meeting of the Science Board.

ITEM 1: MINUTES OF THE SECOND MEETING HELD ON 24 APRIL 2007

STFC(2007)45

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

ITEM 2: ACTIONS AND MATTERS ARISING

STFC(2007)46

- 2.1 *International Advisory Committee/Science Board:* The relationship between the International Advisory Committee and the Science Board was as yet undefined. Richard Wade agreed to include an item on the next Science Board agenda to discuss the relevant roles, and report back to the October Council meeting.

Action: R Wade

- 2.2 *CLIK*: Council noted that the second CLIK presentation had been postponed until the September meeting of Council, to enable further discussions to take place at the next CLIK Board.
- 2.3 The Chairman reported that he and Keith Mason had met with Sir Keith O'Nions on 4 July 2007, and separately had attended a dinner with the other Research Council CEOs and Chairs at which the new Minister of State for Science & Innovation, Ian Pearson, and the Secretary of State for DIUS, John Denham, were present. The discussion with Sir Keith had emphasised the importance of developing the relationship with the Diamond executive and the Diamond Board. One route to achieve this would be to establish a Facilities Advisory Board including Diamond membership. Other topics addressed were the need to develop the STFC's Economic Impact programme, and establish an effective interface with the Technology Strategy Board.
- 2.4 Council also noted that a working group to develop links with the Technology Strategy Board across all Councils had been established. Colin Whitehouse and John Womersley would represent the STFC on the working group.
- 2.5 The remaining outstanding actions were noted.

ITEM 3: CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S REPORT

STFC(2007)47

- 3.1 Council noted Keith Mason's monthly report. To a question related to establishing an MOU with China (MOST), Keith Mason explained that being party to an MOU did not indicate a commitment, but an opportunity to open doors and legitimise dialogue on mutual areas of scientific interest. In this context he welcomed the opportunity to sign the MOU at the opening of the RCUK China Office in September. Council also noted that the primary reason for the visit of the Vice Minister of the Chinese Ministry of Science and Technology (MOST), to the UK was to visit the Culham Laboratory for discussions on its fusion programme.
- 3.2 Keith Mason described the new Ministerial structure resulting from the recent change of Government. The appointment of John Denham as the Secretary of State for the Department of Innovation, Universities and Skills (DIUS), and Ian Pearson as the Minister for Science had been welcomed by the science community. His impression was that Ministers and officials in DIUS were developing a close dialogue with the Research Councils.
- 3.3 Speaking for the Science & Innovation Group (S&IG), Ron Egginton reported that a close working relationship with Ministers was already developing, frequent meetings were taking place, and the Ministerial team had already been provided with copies of the draft Research Councils' Delivery Plans. There was confidence that the relationship between the various elements within DIUS (education, science, skills) would be an advantage and, although the industrial element came under a separate Ministry, both Departments were aware of the need for joined-up government.

3.4 Council welcomed the positive report on the Ministerial changes.

ITEM 4: CSR2007 BI-LATERAL

STFC(2007)48

- 4.1 Keith Mason provided Council with a preview of the presentation on STFC's draft Delivery Plan (2008-2012) which he would be presenting to Keith O'Nions and the S&IG team on Friday 27 July 2007. He commenced by emphasising the challenge of delivering on the aspirations that had created the STFC, against an inherited legacy problem of £40M and pointed out that it was imperative that STFC made an impact quickly.
- 4.2 He then summarised the predicted outcome for STFC against each of the four financial scenarios which the Research Council had been asked to consider. During discussion, Council noted that one possible outcome of the -5% scenario would be for STFC to withdraw from an area of science. Council emphasised the importance of clarity on the assumptions that had been made and the need to indicate how the prioritising had been managed. It was also agreed that the content of the slide on the +10% scenario needed to be more "high-impact".
- 4.3 Council went on to debate the relative priorities of the new opportunities versus the existing core programme. Whilst there was acknowledgment of the importance of including new opportunities such as the space exploration programme, Council suggested that the presentation would have more impact if presented in the context of an overall strategic framework for the Council, with the more specific Space Science example towards the end of the presentation. Reference should also be made to the breadth of activities that the STFC now had to address and the extent to which a significant proportion of its budget was "fixed" due to capital investment, international subscriptions and operational costs for Large Facilities. Council noted that the STFC's expenditure benefited all Research Councils and their researchers and business sectors across the UK.
- 4.4 Key headings proposed were: *Science and Technology; Facilities; Campuses; and People*; and text should include an indication of the strategic links with other national and international programmes (e.g. *HiPER links to the ITER project*). The presentation also needed to include some reference to the UK Large Facilities Roadmap prioritisation, and include nanoscience / nanotechnology in the list of cross-council priorities.
- 4.5 Council questioned the process by which the new opportunities had been prioritised. Keith Mason explained that these opportunities were still being developed. Once they were more clearly defined they would be submitted to due process as appropriate (i.e. *Science Board; Council*). He acknowledged that the timing on establishing a new advisory structure had not been helpful, and that other factors such as the Government 'grand challenges' had been taken into account.
- 4.6 In summary, the Chairman listed the concerns raised by Council:
 - STFC needed to address the key drivers and determine how it planned to meet them;

- There was a need to describe more fully how the assumptions had been made;
- The presentational slides required re-ordering to place the plans in context of a strategic framework;
- Clearly present the £52M for the National Space Technology Programme as a cross BNSC partnership activity;
- The need to present a more upbeat message.

4.7 Providing these concerns were noted, Council approved the Delivery Plan for presentation.

ITEM 5: REPORT FROM THE SCIENCE BOARD

oral

5.1 Jenny Thomas, deputy chair of the STFC Science Board, attended to present a report on the first meeting of the Science Board held on 12 July 2007 at Imperial College.

5.2 She stated that the Board was:

- fully signed up to developing a long-term vision and a set of scientific priorities across the STFC remit, and saw its role as issuing advice on all scientific decisions that the Council had to take;
- concerned about the potentially severe financial crisis facing STFC and the effect that this could have on the morale of the scientific community;
- carrying out a programmatic review of current projects and facilities to produce a long-term STFC scientific investment plan;
- available to advise the executive on some of the imminent decisions that needed to be made, (e.g FAIR; HiPER and Large Facilities Capital Fund).

5.3 In the short-term the Board would be familiarising itself with STFC's programmes and financial position, and agreeing on the division of responsibilities between the Board and the other key Committees and Groups.

5.4 In order to assist with this programme of work, the Board had requested input on the strategic and scientific plan for the two Campuses. It was agreed that Colin Whitehouse should make a presentation to the Science Board at the earliest opportunity.
Action: Colin Whitehouse

5.5 Council noted the report; agreed the importance of working closely with the Board and welcomed the sharing of information and advice on the way forward. Council also noted that the relationship between the Science Board and the Economic Impact Advisory Board needed to be clearly defined.

ITEM 6: FINANCE

STFC(2007)49/50

6.1 Council noted the finance progress reports.

6.2 Ron Eggington asked for assurance that STFC would still not need to make provision for potential penalties relating to VISTA. Keith Mason confirmed that

the latest situation indicated that although there was a slightly longer delay in delivery of the primary mirror, the risk element was diminishing. He did not believe that there was any need to take action at this stage. However the situation would be monitored closely over the next few months.

ITEM 7: BUSINESS RISK AND CONTINUITY

Audit Committee Report

STFC(2007)51

7.1 Marshall Davies presented his report on the Audit Committee meeting held on 17 July 2007. He highlighted the fact that STFC would be running two finance systems (ex-CCLRC and PPARC) until there was clarification on the system to be adopted by the Shared Services Centre. Although it was recognised that this was not an ideal situation it was accepted that, to avoid nugatory work, it would not be sensible to migrate to a new system before knowing which system the SSC would use. A decision on the preferred SSC System Integrator was expected within the next month and by that time it would be known which finance system would be used.

7.2 Council noted the report.

Quarterly Safety, Health and Environment Report

STFC(2007)52

7.3 Council noted the report and it was satisfied with the revised format including the proposed new categories. Council requested a summary of the random risk inspections that were carried out should also be included in the report. Council advised that ignoring the "working at heights" regulation should be a disciplinary offence, and in the case of contractors it should mean the contract being terminated. Council asked for the action on this risk to be revised to reflect its serious nature.

Action: Paul Hartley

7.4 The Chairman also expressed concern at the report on the hydrofluoric acid incident, and asked for a copy of the case to be sent to him. **Action: Paul Hartley**

ITEM 8: DIRECTORATE REPORTS

Science Programmes Office

8.1 Richard Wade reported that he had recently held a meeting with the Chief Executive of Diamond (Gerd Materlik) to consider ways of developing the relationship between DLS Ltd and STFC. It had been suggested that the September meeting of Council should be held at Diamond House including a tour of the facility for members. Council welcomed the opportunity to visit Diamond, and asked the Secretariat to make the necessary arrangements.

Action: Secretariat

8.2 Richard Wade agreed to present a paper on a proposed strategy for further developing the STFC/Diamond relationship, to the next meeting of Council. The paper would include clarification of Diamond's key links into the various STFC Directorates.

Action: Richard Wade

- 8.3 A paper proposing terms of reference for the Education and Publish Outreach Committee would be presented at the next meeting.

Action: Richard Wade/Mike Edmonds

- 8.4 Richard Wade announced that the two Science Director posts at Diamond had recently been advertised. The adverts included an explicit reference to the need to contribute to the development of the science programme on the Harwell Campus.

- 8.5 The Chairman asked that Council should receive a **written** report, which should also cover Diamond.

Action: Richard Wade

Facilities Development and Operations

- 8.6 Andrew Taylor reported that he had recently established a Laboratory Operations Board to oversee the day to day functions of the UKATC; DL; RAL and Chilbolton sites and report to the Keith Mason. Ron Egginton requested copies of relevant organograms on the governance and reporting structure of the various STFC Boards and Committees.

Action: Secretariat

Knowledge Exchange Directorate

- 8.8 In presenting his report, Colin Whitehouse drew attention to the fact that the Nuclear Decommissioning Authority (NDA) had given low priority to cleaning up approximately 18 hectares which fell within the Harwell Campus. A more detailed report on the situation would be made at the next meeting.

Action: Colin Whitehouse

- 8.9 Negotiations were continuing with the two short-listed bidding teams for the Harwell Science & Innovation Campus Joint Venture, and assessments were shortly to take place. Further detailed negotiations would commence at the end of July, and a more detailed report would be provided at the next meeting.

Action: Colin Whitehouse

- 8.10 Marshall Davies enquired whether the campus audit had been completed. Colin Whitehouse agreed to provide him with the completion date.

Action: Colin Whitehouse

Corporate Services Directorate

- 8.11 Following discussion on the Shared Services Centre activities, Council requested a presentation on the SSC by Raymond Prud'homme at the next meeting of Council.

Action: Jeff Down

ITEM 9: DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS

- 9.1 It was agreed that the next Council Away-Day would be held on the evening of 28 January 2008 and all day on 29 January. Further details to be circulated to members and to senior Directors.

Action: Secretariat

- 9.2 As both Richard Wade and Anneila Sargent would be involved in an international event on 17 November, a new date should be arranged for the November meeting.

Action: Secretariat

- 9.3 The universities of Cambridge and Cardiff were proposed as a possible venue for Council's visit to an HEI, although PPARC had visited both of these in the recent past. The Secretariat was asked to consider with Keith Mason other possible HEIs for a visit, and to decide which would be the most appropriate. The Secretariat should also identify a date in 2008 for a Council meeting to be held at Polaris House.

Action: Secretariat

ITEM 10: ANY OTHER BUSINESS

- 10.1 The Chairman emphasised the importance to members of keeping the Register of Interests up to date. He intended that the register should be circulated at every second Council meeting as a reminder of the need to inform the Secretariat of any changes to the entries. The Chairman congratulated Richard Wade on his appointment as Visiting Professor of Physics at Oxford University, as previously announced on the STFC web site. The details had been added to the Register. Future changes would be made to the register on the STFC website immediately the details were given to the Secretariat.

- 10.2 Referring to the Key Events paper, Ron Egginton mentioned that John Denham would be visiting Diamond on the 18 September 2007. Keith Mason was asked to consider including an additional facility for Mr Denham to visit on that date e.g. ISIS. Ron Egginton also mentioned that Keith Mason would be meeting with Lord Triesman, the Parliamentary Under Secretary for State, on 1 August.

Action: Keith Mason

- 10.3 The Chairman informed Council that the focus of the next meeting would be Economic Impact, and he invited members to consider topics for future meetings.

Action: All

ITEM 11: PAPERS FOR INFORMATION

- 11.1 The Delivery Plan for 2007-08 was noted. Council asked for clarification on why figures on pages 3 and 4 were different.

Action: Jeff Down

(Secretary's note: explanatory details were circulated to members in an email from Chris Thompson on 31 July 2007)

- 11.2 Ron Egginton also advised that the Delivery Plan should include more detail on interactions with the Technology Strategy Board; Diamond; & Implementation of the UK Roadmap.