



MINUTES OF THE TWENTY FIRST MEETING HELD ON 28 APRIL 2009 AT THE UNIVERSITY OF SHEFFIELD

Council Members present: Peter Warry (*Chairman*)
Martin Barstow
Keith Burnett
Marshall Davies
Mike Edmunds
Philip Greenish
Philip Kaziewicz
Peter Knight
Keith Mason
James Stirling

DIUS: Paul Williams

In Attendance: Terry O'Connor (*Executive Secretary*)
Jane Tirard (*Finance Director*)
Jenny Thomas (*Chair, Science Board*)
Richard Wade (*Chief Operating Officer*)
Colin Whitehouse (*Director, Campuses*)
Ruth Jeans (*Minute Secretary*)

WELCOME

The Chairman welcomed members and attendees to the meeting, and warmly thanked Keith Burnett and his team for hosting Council's visit to Sheffield, their kind hospitality, and the very useful tour to selected parts of the Campus.

Concern had been expressed by Council at the continued late circulation of some Council papers. The Chairman announced that the Secretariat would determine a schedule for the drafting of papers and, in future, any late paper would not be accepted without approval from the Chief Executive who would apply to the Chairman for his agreement. Details of the process would be circulated to the relevant members of staff at the earliest opportunity.

Action: Secretariat

1 MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 24 MARCH 2009

- 1.1 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 **(7.2) Manchester Independent Economic Review of Daresbury Campus:** Colin Whitehouse agreed to circulate the final report and the government's response to it, as a matter of urgency. Colin summarised the three key recommendations, and reported that it had been the view of the DSIC Board that action had already been initiated in all the key areas highlighted by the recommendations, prior to the Review report having been made available.
Action: C Whitehouse
- 2.2 **(5.1 Feb meeting) – SSC Migration:** As there were no plans for a Council meeting in July, it was agreed that Jane would circulate her report on progress toward the September migration and recommendations electronically, for member's comment.
Action: J Tirard
- 2.2.1 **(8.5 Feb. meeting) - PPD 5-year budgets:** Richard Wade agreed to circulate a comprehensive note on the particle physics programme budgets over 5 years.
Action : R Wade
- 2.2.2 **1.7 Dec meeting) – HSIC Business Plan:** Colin Whitehouse confirmed that the Business Plan had now been completed and approved by the JV Board, and had been circulated to Council members for their information.
Action: Completed
- 2.3 The remaining outstanding actions had been dealt with under agenda items, or were ongoing.

3. CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S REPORT

- 3.1 Keith Mason provided an oral update on a number of recent items of interest.
- 3.2 He was pleased to announce that despite a difficult Budget, the Science Vote had remained intact, with the Government acknowledging that the research base would be part of the solution to the current economic problems.
- 3.3 Prior to the Budget announcement, the Chief Executives of the Research Councils had met on 6 April at the Royal Society, to present their vision for the future of UK research, and to demonstrate how each of their programmes would meet the ongoing economic challenges. In particular, the individual Council's new initiatives would include a strong fiscal stimulus element, as well as the essential scientific return. The initiatives had been well received by Government.
- 3.4 It had been made clear that there would still be a requirement on the Research Councils to make considerable efficiency savings. However, some savings would be achieved by the establishment of the Research Councils' Shared Services Centre.
- 3.5 DIUS had recently chosen the SSC as its shared services supplier. Paul Williams stated that the DIUS service would be managed centrally, not through the Research Councils unit, and he confirmed that DIUS would not

place additional requirements on the SSC, but accept the services already offered by SSC.

- 3.6 Professor Mason reported on the very positive visit to the Daresbury Laboratory by the Secretary of State, John Denham, on the 26 March 2009 which included the formal launch of a £30M Knowledge Centre for Materials Chemistry, bringing together advanced materials modelling capabilities at DL and a number of universities, to support major companies in the North West and beyond.
- 3.7 There had also been a very useful visit by the Duke of York to RAL, (*in his capacity as the UK's Trade and Investment special ambassador*), on 16 April. The Duke had clearly been impressed with the areas that he had visited, and had been particularly enthusiastic about the campus model being implemented. As a direct result of these discussions, he had proposed that STFC should lead an event next year in Central London, to promote the work and scope of the campuses.
- 3.8 Finally, he briefly reported on the National Astronomy Meeting, held at the University of Hertfordshire, Hatfield on 20-23 April.

4 OPERATIONS REPORT

Facilities Boards and Reviews

- 4.1 Richard Wade presented draft Terms of Reference and a proposed timetable for the International Facilities Review, requested by Council at its January meeting.
- 4.2 In addition, he presented the Terms of Reference for the Facility Boards, to highlight the degree of possible overlap between the responsibilities of the Boards and the Review.
- 4.3 Council fully considered the objectives and scope of the International Review, as well as those of the Facility Boards, (*in particular the areas of overlap*).
- 4.4 Following discussion, Council had agreed that:

Facility Boards

- The Facility Boards should focus on the performance and value of the individual facilities;
- The Facility Boards should also be commissioned to carry out as much as possible of the preparatory work for the International Facility Review.

International Facility Review

- The International Facility Review should be a light-touch, high-level review of the PALS facilities that STFC currently invested in, (*ISIS; CLF; DLS; ILL; ESRF*);
- The Review Panel should include in its evidence-gathering the utilisation rates of all the facilities and their available capacity; the outcome of other individual reviews of facilities; and any international comparators available;

- The Review Panel should be constituted and the Review conducted at the earliest possibility;
- 4.5 Keith Mason and Richard Wade agreed to a) be responsible for defining the process, and b) include the chair of PALS plus Jenny Thomas and the Science Board in initiating the Review procedures, and c) inform Council of the finalised process. **Action: K Mason/R Wade**

General operational matters

- 4.6 Richard Wade went on to present the details of the internal financial controls, which had recently been imposed. The restrictions would remain in place until the final financial plan had been agreed, and would then be reviewed
- 4.7 Richard brought Council's attention to the Accelerator Vision workshop being led by the Chair of Science Board, Jenny Thomas, in early June, which would explore ideas for the novel interdisciplinary applications of accelerators.
- 4.8 Council commended the Communications team for the continued improvement and more professional quality of its output.
- 4.9 Council also congratulated the ISIS team for completing the Second Target Station project on time, on budget and to the approved specification.
- 4.10 Council discussed the transfer of the earth-climate aspects of the Ground-Based Solar Terrestrial Physics programme from STFC to NERC. Council believed funding for exploitation of ground-based STP facilities for climate research should be provided from the NERC programme. **Action: K Mason/ R Wade**

Blueprint

- 4.11 Richard Wade gave an oral presentation on the background and current status of the Blueprint project.
- 4.12 Blueprint, which had been adopted as STFC's change management vehicle, consisted of eight core work streams. The programme would be required to deliver strong and clear leadership; a 'fit for purpose' organisational structure; efficient management processes; a service-oriented support infrastructure, and; an effective stakeholders' communication plan.
- 4.13 Council noted the status of the Blueprint project, and recommended that in order to inform more widely, details of the Blueprint framework should be published on the STFC's external website. **Action: T O'Connor**
- 4.14 Richard also agreed to circulate his presentation to members. **Action: R Wade**

5. FINANCE REPORT

- 5.1 Jane Tirard advised that the financial picture for 2009/10 was not as challenging as had appeared at the time of the March Council meeting. DIUS had been able to provide some additional allocation following their original March guidance. However, the medium and longer-term financial challenges should not be underestimated.

- 5.2 Council agreed the budget of £491 million was a welcome and significant investment by Government in our science and technology, especially given the tough economic climate and the severe restrictions being imposed elsewhere in the public sector. Council noted that STFC's budget included additional funding to compensate the Council for the effect of international exchange rate movements on large international subscriptions.
- 5.3 Council agreed the allocation would enable STFC to continue to deliver a major science and technology programme, and specifically noted the budget would allow STFC to maintain funding for standard and rolling grants at the level previously forecast for 2009-10.
- 5.4 Council acknowledged that the impact of the global downturn would, nonetheless, however require STFC to adjust its programme in 2009-10, and that there was also a need to urgently examine the balance of its programme from 2010-11 onward in light of the national Budget's forecasts of medium-term UK government expenditure.
- 5.5 Council therefore agreed that the 2009-10 programme should include targeted programme slippages and delays, reductions in facility operations, and reductions in support for a small proportion of STFC's specific projects.
- 5.6 Council noted that management had already identified a range of internal savings, including reductions in staffing numbers achieved through restrictions on recruitment, and restrictions on travel, and would continue to examine options for additional savings.
- 5.7 Council stressed that as transparency was essential, discussions on specific issues would first take place with the relevant communities, before final decisions were made. **Action: R Wade**
- 5.8 The Science Board would be notified about the proposed course of action, and when the process had been completed, the Board would consider the final recommendations. **Action: R Wade**
- 5.9 Council also stated that for future budgetary discussions, it would be essential for clear 'impact statements' to be included against each project line, to enable full debate.

6. STRATEGY REPORT

Status report

- 6.1 Council noted the Strategy status report.

Strategy consultation

- 6.2 Council noted the report on the Strategy consultation exercise.

Strategy document

- 6.3 Council considered the draft Strategy document, and proposed some minor amendments.

- 6.4 Council agreed that once the amendments had been made and the final document submitted to the Secretary of State for his information, it should be published at the earliest opportunity. **Action: K Mason**

7 CAMPUS REPORT

- 7.1 Colin Whitehouse updated Council on the status of the HSIC and DSIC campuses.
- 7.2 Despite the current economic downturn, and the postponement of a number of major initiatives, there continued to be significant public and private sector interest in both campuses, including the continuing interest generated by the planned location of the ESA Centre on the Harwell campus, and the Technology Gateway Centres at both DSIC and HSIC.
- 7.3 Colin reported on the progress of the DSIC Joint Venture. The Board had recently appointed a highly experienced Project Director, Graham Haywood, who had already made significant progress. Colin then provided further commercially sensitive information on the preparations for the JV.
- 7.4 Colin also reported on very positive developments involving the establishment of a much stronger relationship between SEEDA, NWDA and STFC regarding the ongoing coherent development of the DSIC-HSIC campus dipole.
- 7.5 Finally, Colin notified Council that Lord Drayson now planned to visit DL on 15 May, and it was intended that he would open a new Med-Tec centre, which would facilitate physics to move into the medical arena.
- 7.6 Council noted the report, and welcomed the very positive developments at both the HSIC and DSIC campuses.

8. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

- 8.1 Keith Mason announced that there would be an opening ceremony for the ESA Centre on 22 July, and he also mentioned that a number of international aerospace companies had already expressed an interest in moving to the Harwell Campus as a result.
- 8.2 It had been agreed that the final STFC Delivery Plan would be delivered to DIUS in May, after first being circulated by email to members for their comments. **Action: R Wade**
- 8.3 It was agreed that the next meeting of Council, to be held on Tuesday 23 June at the Daresbury Laboratory, would start at 10.30 with a tour of the facilities, and the business meeting of Council would start at 2pm.

The meeting closed at 4.45pm