MINUTES OF THE 2nd MEETING OF STFC COUNCIL HELD ON
17 JULY 2018 AT RUTHERFORD APPLETON LABORATORY

Attendees

Council Members:
Mark Thomson (Executive Chair)
Richard Kenway (Senior Independent member)
Mike Dunne
Anu Ojha
Sheila Rowan
David Rugg

Apologies:
Isabelle Baraffe
Dick Elsy
Karen Holford
David Price
Tony Ryan
Frances Saunders

In Attendance:
Zena Davis (Council Secretary)
Sean Freeman (Chair, Science Board) – items 5 & 6
Karen Stevens (Head of HR) – item 3
Sharon Cosgrove (Executive Director, Strategy, Planning and Communications) – item 6
Philip Amison (Strategy, Planning and Communications) – item 6
Janet Seed (Strategy, Planning and Communications) – item 6
Emily Swaine (Strategy, Planning and Communications) - item 6
1. **WELCOME AND OPENING COMMENTS**

1.1 Mark Thomson welcomed everyone to the second meeting of STFC Council.

1.2 Apologies were received from Isabelle Baraffe, Dick Elsy, Karen Holford David Price, Tony Ryan and Frances Saunders. The Council Secretary advised that despite the large number of absentees, the meeting was quorate.

1.3 Mark reminded Council members that they are required to keep the Secretary informed of any changes to their personal register of interests as they arise. The Chair confirmed that there were no potential conflicts of interest for the items that were scheduled for discussion at this meeting.

**Chair, Richard Kenway**

2. **Report from Executive Chair – Presentation and discussion**

Mark Thomson gave a presentation updating Council in recent activities in STFC and UKRI.

2.1 **UKRI Transformation**

UKRI Transformation was a major topic at the recent joint UKRI ExCo / Board meeting. The transformation covers common corporate services such as Finance, HR, Legal, Communications and a common grants system. There were some concerns that HR and Finance are moving very quickly which has the potential to impact on STFC’s ability to operate effectively. Transformation of culture is moving more slowly and UKRI is likely to bring in some consultancy function to look at how to transform the organisation. Council expressed some concern that the end-point for transformation of culture appears to be unclear. The plan for STFC is to proceed with internal organisational changes and not wait for UKRI transformation plan.

2.2 **New Funding Opportunities**

There are a number of new funding opportunities:

- Industrial Strategy Challenge Fund (ISCF)
- Global Challenges Research Fund (GCRF)
- Strategic Priorities Fund (SPF)
- Talent Fund
- Commercialisation Fund
- Strength in Places Fund
- Fund for International Collaboration

Sheila Rowan informed Council that there is a UK CSA meeting today at
which CSAs are being asked to work more closely with the Councils for future bids of this kind. Sheila has asked for a briefing from this meeting.

Mark Thomson informed Council that STFC is consulting with its science community asking them to come up with ideas for projects that would be appropriate to these kind of funding opportunities. This will enable STFC to act more quickly when these funding opportunities arise. The consultation is being carried out under the title: Delivering a World Class Research Programme and the results will be shared with Council.

2.3 Organisational update
The splitting of STFC’s National Laboratories into “NL: Facilities” & “NL: Technology” has been communicated to staff. The recruitment of a replacement Executive Director for Business and Innovation is underway and an advert for a Chief Operating Officer is due to go out soon. The recruitment exercise for an Executive Director for NL Facilities and an Executive Director for NL Technology will begin at the end of July. Council agreed that in principal the proposed reorganisation could be very positive for STFC.

2.4 CERN impact
TEXT FROM THIS SECTION HAS BEEN REDACTED: OFFICIAL SENSITIVE

2.5 STFC Annual Report and Accounts 2017/18
The Accounts are going through a final audit and will be submitted to Parliament at the end of July. This follows approval of the accounts by the STFC Audit Committee and STFC Legacy Council.

2.6 Brexit
Brexit remains a significant corporate risk for STFC and UKRI, however the messages from Government are positive. A joint report envisages full UK participation in Horizon 2020 for the duration of the project and the Government has agreed to underwrite Horizon 2020 payments, even where specific projects continue after the UK’s departure from the EU.

2.7 Sci-tech Daresbury
Sci-Tech Daresbury has received planning permission for its next phase of development (Project Violet), the construction of three new buildings at the gateway of the Campus on Innovation Way.

2.8 UKATC: Higgs opening
The Higgs Centre for Innovation was officially opened at the Royal Observatory Edinburgh on 25 May.

3. Pay Flexibility and Recruitment

3.1 Karen Stevens joined the meeting and introduced a paper which set out some options for HR-related measures that could support affordability of pay increases under the pay flexibility arrangements and also explores options for further targeting reward policy to improve recruitment and
3.2 Mark Thomson wrote to Alex Chisholm, Permanent Under-Secretary of State following his inquiry after the STEM skill session called by the House of Commons Public Accounts Committee and, in particular, his discussion with Layla Moran MP regarding the recruitment and retention of design engineers at the Harwell campus. Karen confirmed that UKRI are aware of the difficulties that STFC is having with the recruitment and retention of STEM staff.

3.3 Karen explained the plans outlined in the paper had been prepared in the event that STFC receives permission and funding to tackle the recruitment and retention issues. STFC Executive Board had discussed the options and agreed to focus on the ‘big wins’. Council agreed with this approach.

3.4 Council discussed the performance management and Voluntary Exit options outlined in the paper. Council advised that these types of activities need to be planned very carefully with an explicit focus on the future health of the workforce, and to avoid approaches that inappropriately or exclusively focus on poor performance. David Rugg explained that this can be extremely divisive and demoralising.

**Action: Karen Stevens to bring a progress response to the November Council meeting.**

4. **STFC Advisory Bodies - Presentation**

Mark Thomson gave a presentation on STFC’s advisory boards’ structure, outlining proposed changes.

4.1 Council agreed that Science Board should be retained and agreed to the formation of a Finance and Governance Committee. The membership will be made of 3 Council members, one of whom would act as chair with an option for 2 independent members. The 3 Council members will also be members of the Remuneration Committee.

4.2 Council agreed that the Skills Engagement Advisory Board (SEAB) and the Innovation Advisory Board (IAB) would discontinue in their current forms and the Education Training and Careers Committee (ETCC) and Advisory Panel on Public Engagement (APPE) would continue in their current mode of operation but report to Council. One or more designated Council members will attend ETCC & APPE meetings as ex-officio members.

4.3 Council agreed that the ED&I implementation group will continue and report to the Executive Board. Council agreed that it would like to see a more ED&I policy type-body that reports to Council, giving the message from the top down.

4.4 It was agreed that designated Council members will meet with National Lab Directors, plus the chairs of ETCC and APPE twice a year to discuss skills issues. Council advised the creation of an Industrial Partners Board
in a similar vein to ETCC and APPE, but for National Labs. David Rugg agreed to assist in the development of terms of reference for this board. Anu Ojha agreed to develop the current terms of reference for ETCC and APPE.

Actions:
- David Rugg to assist in development of terms of reference for a new Industrial Partners Board.
- Anu Ojha to develop the current terms of reference for ETCC and APPE

4.5 Council agreed that it would be beneficial to further develop STFC’s relationship with Innovate UK and this might be achieved through Mark Thomson’s attendance at an Innovate UK Council meeting. Additionally, an Innovate UK/STFC group, with members from both Councils, could be created. Mark agreed to discuss this with the Innovate UK Executive Chair.

Action: Mark Thomson to discuss with Innovate UK Executive Chair the possibility of attending an Innovate UK Council meeting and the creation of an Innovate UK/STFC Sub-group of Council.

4.6 Council discussed the idea of the creation of an Engineering and Technology apprenticeship/graduate training scheme. Such a scheme could be funded by partners and potentially through the ISCF. The concept would be to provide training for ~100 people over 2-3 years. A task force will be formed to develop this idea and Council members are invited to join this task force to help develop ideas for input to a Business Case that will go to UKRI. Mark will email Council with more detail and seek their input.

Action: Mark will email Council with more detail and seek their input.

Chair, Mark Thomson

5. Report from Science Board and discussion

5.1 Sean Freeman, Chair of Science Board, gave a presentation on the 20/21 June Science Board meeting and recent science highlights.

5.2 Along with regular updates on STFC activities, Science Board discussed the following:
- Updating PPAN Science Challenges.
- Progress with the Programme Evaluations.
- Update on “Delivering Our World Class Research Programme”.
- Update on the Research Infrastructures Roadmap.
- Progress on the Detectors and Instrumentation Strategic Review.

5.3 Sean informed Council that the next meeting of Science Board will be on the 11th October in London. This is an extraordinary meeting to discuss community responses to the “Delivering a World Class Research Programme” Consultation.
5.4 Council agreed that for future meetings, as well as a presentation, it would like a short written report of matters discussed at Science Board along with any issues.

5.5 Sean’s term as chair of Science Board is due to end and Jayne Lawrence, currently deputy chair of Science Board, will take over as chair. Council thanked Sean for all his excellent work and wished him well for the future.

6. **Strategic Delivery Plan (SDP)**

6.1 Sharon Cosgrove, Philip Amison, Janet Seed and Emily Swaine joined the meeting to present this item.

6.2 Sharon explained that it is a requirement for each Council to produce a Strategic Delivery Plan which replaces the existing Corporate Strategy. The plan will act as a forward look of what activities STFC will undertake in order to deliver its mission. There are two main components – a forward look (5-10 year vision) and a shorter-term delivery plan (‘19/20). UKRI would like iterations to be with them during October 2018 and January 2019 for the UKRI Board to sign-off in February 2019. The Plan will be published in April 2019.

6.3 Council observed that the overarching parameters which aid in guiding STFC’s strategy have changed over the last few years from where it started and the SDP should make a bold statement on how STFC’s knowledge is helping to solve problems/answer questions on problems of our age.

6.4 Sharon thanked Council for its input which would be incorporated into the development of the SDP and the plan will be brought back for further discussion at the September Council meeting.

7. **Council 24/25 September 2018**

7.1 Council discussed its next meeting which will take place over two days, 24/25 September, at the Daresbury Laboratory. The Council will hold its regular meeting on 24th September. There will be a strategy discussion on 25th September along with tours of some of the facilities at Daresbury.

8. **Minutes of the last meeting (22 May 2018)**

8.1 Council approved the minutes of the last meeting.

9. **2019 Council meeting dates**

9.1 Council agreed the meeting dates for 2019.

10. **ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

10.1 No other business was raised
10.2 The Executive Chair thanked everyone for their contributions to the meeting and reminded them that the next meeting will be held 24/25 September 2018.