MINUTES OF THE FORTY SEVENTH MEETING HELD AT 9.00AM ON 21 FEBRUARY 2012 AT CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY

Council Members present: Michael Sterling (Chairman)  
Gill Ball  
Martin Barstow  
Marshall Davies  
Julia Goodfellow  
Mike Healy  
Peter Knight  
James Stirling  
Ian Taylor  
Will Whitehorn  
John Womersley

Dept Business, Innovation & Skills (BIS): Jeremy Clayton

In Attendance: Gordon Stewart (Director, Corporate Affairs & Executive Secretary to Council)  
Jane Tirard (Finance Director)  
Tony Ryan (Chair, Science Board)  
Sharon Cosgrove (Director, Strategy)  
Mark Foster (Council Secretariat)  
Hina Padhiar (Minutes Secretary)

Apologies: Richard Wade (Chief Operating Officer)

1. WELCOME AND INTRODUCTION

1.1. Council was preceded by a dinner on the previous evening with members of Cambridge University senior staff. The Chairman thanked James Stirling for organising the event.

1.2. The Chairman welcomed members to the meeting, including Jeremy Clayton attending his first STFC Council meeting and Sharon Cosgrove who was attending in Richard Wade’s absence.

2. CONFLICTS OF INTEREST AND REGISTER OF INTERESTS

2.1. The Chairman asked for any declarations of conflicts of interest and reminded members of the need to keep the Executive Secretary informed of any changes to their personal register of interests.

2.2. Martin Barstow wished to register that University of Leicester was a member of ISIC and he was involved in discussions about the Catapult Centre. Mike Healy declared that Astrium was a member of ISIC and in
discussions on the Catapult Centre. John Womersley noted that he Chairs the SKA Founding Board. Ian Taylor reminded Council that he was a member of the ESA Integrated Applications Programme Committee.

3. **MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING - STFC(2012)02**

3.1. The minutes of the last meeting were agreed to be a correct record by Council and signed by the Chairman. Council reconfirmed approval of the November 2011 minutes, previously approved at the January informal meeting.

3.2. The redacted minutes were also approved by Council.

4. **ACTIONS & MATTERS ARISING - STFC(2012)03**

4.1. The Chairman noted that the Actions List had progress updates against each item and asked for updates on the following:

*January 2011 6.2.16*: Jane Tirard reported that some background work was being done. The work was also partly reliant on outputs from SSC.

*July 2011 4.1*: Jane Tirard reported that all aspects of service were improving slowly. For 2010/11, financial planning was done outside SSC and as a result had not been badly impacted. The work on the Hyperion system was moving forward and financial management information now coming in more reliably.

*July 2011 11.2*: Gordon Stewart reported that the China IP Report was available to Council on the Council extranet.

*September 2011 10.3*: The ECOAB revised membership was an agenda item for discussion at this meeting.

*September 2011 17.3*: This was reported in a previous Operations Report and there was no further change to report.

*November 2011 6.5*: This would be covered in the ECOAB Report item for this meeting.

5. **ECOAB PROPOSED MEMBERSHIP – STFC(2012)04**

5.1. Martin Barstow presented the main points of the report on Proposed Membership of ECOAB, which had previously been presented by Terry O’Connor to the November 2011 Council.

5.2. Martin reminded Council that it had previously agreed a review of STFC’s public engagement, proposed by Science Board, would mostly appropriately be assigned to ECOAB. At present there was no direct reporting link between Science Board and ECOAB. John Womersley agreed that the various reporting lines needed to be reviewed once the
new membership was agreed.

5.3. Marshall Davies declared a conflict for this item, as he is a Trustee of the Science Media Centre. Marshall suggested it was necessary to define the aims and objectives of ECOAB so that members understood the aims of the Board and their remit. Martin Barstow acknowledged that although Terms of Reference were available, they needed to be revisited once the new membership was agreed.

5.4. Julia Goodfellow declared a conflict for this item, as Chair of the British Science Association. In response to Julia’s question on commitment, Martin Barstow explained that, bearing in mind conflicting schedules, the proposal was to increase the membership to allow for a viable number of members to be present at meetings.

5.5. James Stirling noted that not all proposed members had a research background so would need to be brought up to speed very quickly on STFC areas of research. The Chairman asked if there might be other names to suggest from Council and Council agreed that suggestions would be forwarded to Martin Barstow within one week.

Action: Council members

5.6. It was also noted that ECOAB had a three year term for members and other Council committees had two years. It was agreed that ECOAB would also have a two year term in future. It was also agreed that Council needed to clarify and revise where necessary the relationship between committees.

5.7. Council agreed the proposed membership in principle, subject to any other names that may be put forward by members. Martin Barstow would circulate the revised list to members for agreement.

Action: Martin Barstow

6. COUNCIL MEETINGS 2012-13 - STFC(2012)05

6.1. Gordon Stewart presented the proposed new schedule for Council Meetings in 2012-13, and explained the background to the proposal. At least one stakeholder event is planned for the year, possibly to a European facility like CERN, although budgets and time factor were be considered.

6.2. Council approved the new schedule and format of meetings, however, requested that the July meeting be moved earlier if possible

Action: Council Secretariat

7. 12/13 BUDGET APPROVAL - STFC(2012)06- some references in this section have been redacted as commercial-in-confidence
7.1. Jane Tirard presented an update on the progress made to establish STFC’s 2012-13 Budget plan. Jane explained that the Drayson Principles meant that certain areas were ring fenced and in terms of balancing the books the focus was on the programme and administration areas (£190.5m resource).

7.2. Council noted the update.

8. **E-ELT UK PARTICIPATION – STFC(2012)07- some references in this section have been redacted as commercial-in-confidence**

8.1. John Womersley presented the main points of the E-ELT Report and explained that Council was being asked to agree the criteria that needed to be met in order for STFC to participate in the E-ELT Project. The Business Case and Construction Proposal had been made available to Council prior to the meeting. A General Counsel Note from Gordon Stewart, outlining a list of conditions that Council needed to consider placing on UK entry and to provide guidance as to the flexibility that may be allowed for negotiation, had also been issued with the Council paper. John drew Council’s attention to the fact that if UK insisted on the ability to withdraw, other countries would also be able to do so, potentially increasing costs to the UK, and it was necessary to balance that risk.

8.2. The Chairman asked Tony Ryan to confirm whether E-ELT was Science Board’s highest priority for astronomy on the basis that if the UK committed to the E-ELT project and STFC’s funding were reduced at a later date, the cost of E-ELT would have to be met from within the astronomy budget, potentially at the expense of other astronomy projects. Tony Ryan confirmed that whilst recognising the risks outlined by the Chairman, E-ELT was Science Board’s highest science priority for astronomy. He confirmed that Science Board were therefore alert to the need for strong budgetary and project controls in order minimise these risks. Tony also noted that the programmatic review will look at the breadth of programmes overall.

8.3. Ian Taylor reiterated the emphasis by Tony Ryan that whilst the E-ELT was one of the UK priorities, there were others as well. He recognised therefore that there may be a squeeze on other projects resulting in protests if priority was placed on E-ELT.

8.4. John Womersley clarified the process going forward. Council needed to agree the Business Case and Treasury would also need to be content the UK enter in to a long term commitment. He would then need to incorporate the outcomes from Council and Treasury discussions. Council would have the opportunity to review the position again before the next ESO Council meeting.

8.5. Mike Healy stated that robust project management was essential and quoted the example of ALMA, in minimising certain risks such as cost
escalation. Tony Ryan agreed and noted that Science Board were also very keen on robust project management. Tony Ryan stated that although the entire Astronomy community and not just Science Board agreed E-ELT was a high priority project, there would be consequences of escalating costs. Will Whitehorn proposed that Milestone was a better term than Review for the bi-annual project assessments, which was agreed.

9. SCIENCE BOARD REPORT – STFC(2012)08

9.1. Tony Ryan presented the highlight of the Science Board Report. He reported that the new Science Board structure was working very well. The Science Board meeting on 9-10 February had discussed the Programmatic Review, endorsed UK Associated membership of FAIR and received a report from the Fusion Advisory Board.

9.2. Science Board had considered: Statements of Interest for the first time, the outline business cases for new centres, and received reports from PPRP on Cerenkov Telescope Array and Direct Dark Matter Searches.

9.3. The Science Board meeting had been given a tour of ISIS. Tony Ryan gave Council a presentation on why ISIS was a world leading facility in neutron and muon research and gave examples of how research at ISIS had been used to develop specific products and attracted scientists from around the world. Science Board had looked at TS2 Phase 1 instruments. The researchers were keen to explain the impact of the science to society and Tony stressed the importance of this in future such visits by other parties. The major issue for ISIS was budgetary constraints and working with other Research Councils was very important so that they recognise the importance and value of its research.

9.4. Tony went on to briefly explain ISIS TS2 Phase 2 instruments, and the work being done at LHC and the ATLAS and CMS instruments. He also noted the popularity of the Stargazing Live programmes and stated that STFC's involvement with this needed to be better recognised.

9.5. The Chairman thanked Tony Ryan for the breadth of his presentation. Council noted the report in STFC(2012)08.

10. CAPITAL INVESTMENT PROJECT UPDATE

10.1. John Womersley reported to Council that plans were on track to spend the £55m 11/12 capital allocation including on the ICE-CSD Project, DiRAC and accelerator work at Daresbury, before March 31.

10.2. Council noted the update.

11. REDUNDANCY PLANNING UPDATE
11.1. John Womersley presented an update on STFC’s restructuring exercise. STFC continued to follow the process agreed with trade unions. John reported that there may be a small number of additional redundancies as a result of the senior restructuring exercise. In the current year there will have been a reduction of 73 posts and further reductions were not ruled out for the next year due to pressures going forward in certain areas. Ian Taylor reiterated the request that BIS consider allowing some restructuring allocation to be rolled into the next financial year given the difficult task at hand for the incoming Chief Executive.

11.2. Council noted the progress.

12. CHIEF EXECUTIVE REPORT – some references in this section have been redacted as commercial-in-confidence

12.1. John Womersley updated Council on progress with the new senior management structure and reported that interviews for the five Executive Directors were taking place this week. Council members confirmed that they were happy for John to make appointments for the five posts, in discussions with the Chairman of Council and Marshall Davies, who were also part of some of the interview panels (each panel consisted of 2 current or former Council members).

12.2. John outlined his recent staff and stakeholder engagement activities, and attendance at events, since the last Council meeting. John also outlined upcoming stakeholder engagement activities.

12.3. John reported on his CERN and Particle Physics activities. These included a visit to DOE and Fermilab in January, resulting in a MOU on collaboration in accelerator R&D. There had been an agreement with CERN to set up a iCERN business incubation centre in the Cockroft Institute building at Daresbury, which would be of reputational benefit to both CERN and STFC.

12.4. John reported on progress on the SKA Project. Site Selection recommendations had been received and these would first be discussed by the SKA Board of which John was Chair, on 22nd February. This discussion was likely to invoke a formal members meeting in early April, to consider the site recommendation. There was interest at the highest levels for the site selection and John was in discussion with BIS to agree the UK line.

12.5. Council noted the report.

13. OPERATIONS REPORT – STFC(2012)09

13.1. Sharon Cosgrove presented the highlights of the Operations Report which incorporated the Action Points from the Operating Plan, as previously agreed by Council in November. On this occasion, the whole list was included but in future Council will receive updates on quarterly
13.2. Sharon Cosgrove explained the progress on targets by quarter and observations on the 10% identified as not being fully on target. She stated that it was important to note the progress on the Scorecard which showed that all 17 objectives were on track for Year 1. On looking ahead at future years, it was encouraging to note that the majority of objectives were green and on target. The focus of the 2012/13 Operating Plan was also outlined.


14.1. John Womersley presented the highlights of the Capital Priorities Roadmap Report. RCUK intends to publish a Capital Investment Roadmap in autumn 2012, which will replace the existing Large Facilities Roadmap. The new Roadmap will enable Research Councils to make a case for capital investment alongside other priorities across Government as and when opportunities arise. A formal RCUK consultation with the community, research organisations, learned societies and industry was to take place to help develop the Roadmap.


15. CAMPUS UPDATE – STFC(2012)11 – some references in this section have been redacted as commercial-in-confidence

15.1. Gordon Stewart presented the highlights of the Campus Report prepared by Professor Colin Whitehouse.


16.1. Marshall Davies presented the Audit Committee Report. He noted that he had not attended a meeting of the Chairs of the Research Council Audit Committees, but had received a report from it. At that meeting, BIS had stressed the importance of laying accounts before Parliament on time this year although they had taken in to account the ongoing problems with SSC. Jane Tirard confirmed that this was an extremely challenging issue of timing and quality of information received from SSC but she was in ongoing negotiation with them to ensure they are working together to achieve the deadlines.


17. EIAB Report – some references in this section have been redacted as commercial-in-confidence
redacted as commercial-in-confidence

17.1 Will Whitehorn reported that EIAB had met on 9th February to discuss the Centres Proposals which had subsequently been discussed at Science Board on 9th and 10th February, without knowing the EIAB results.

17.1. Jane Tirard noted that there was very little headroom for these proposals and STFC needed to look at a process of how such bids could be taken. The Chairman agreed that an emphasis on creating headroom was an important issue going forward. Will Whitehorn stated that the funding issue had been raised to Executive Board via SIL and EIAB and an avenue for some of the proposals could be possible if more funding were to be made available to the Rainbow Seed Fund.

17.2. In noting the problem with some of the proposals, Mike Healy asked if EIAB could do anything to make the proposal criteria clearer. Will Whitehorn agreed that needed to be discussed with Science Board as some of the Amber marks could be converted to Green if the quality of the proposals were better.

17.3. Council noted the report.

18. E-VAL REPORT - STFC(2012)13 – some references in this section have been redacted as commercial-in-confidence

18.1. Sharon Cosgrove reported that following concerns and feedback from the research community, during the data collection from grant holders using the newly developed e-Val data collection tool during 2011, STFC carried out a lessons learned exercise. The review panel met in November 2011, to review the performance of the data collection tool and to make recommendations on how the system could be made easier for users. As a result of the review the data collection for this year had been deferred to rectify issues that had been identified and to deal with the list of actions with the e-Val developers Firmstep.


19. BIS REVIEW MEETING - STFC(2012)14 – some references in this section have been redacted as commercial-in-confidence

19.1. Sharon Cosgrove presented the highlights of the six month review meeting with BIS in October 2012. The meeting had two main aims: to review STFC’s achievements during the previous half year against the Delivery Plan and Scorecard, and to look at opportunities and issues arising during the rest of the financial year. Jeremy Clayton had chaired the meeting for the first time. The meeting was preceded by a bilateral with BIS on impact and evaluation issues.

19.2. Ian Taylor noted that the CRC Energy Efficiency charge issue had not
been on the agenda. Jeremy Clayton informed Council that this was on the ministerial agenda and active discussions were taking place as the issue affected a wide range of industries. John Womersley reported that there would be no relief from the tax for 2012/13 and Jane Tirard stated that part of STFC reserves would be used for this.


20. HEALTH & SAFETY REPORT Q3 – STFC(2012)15 – some references in this section have been redacted as commercial-in-confidence

20.1. John Womersley presented the main points of the Q3 Health and Safety report. He assured Council that health and safety matters continue to be taken very seriously by STFC.

20.2. John expressed his concern that there had been a decrease in the number of near misses as this could be due to a lack of reporting. Staff were being encouraged to continue to report near misses.

20.3. Marshall Davies pointed out a possible serious near miss incident involving a contractor involved in building refurbishment, which could have resulted in the potential collapse of the building.


21. ADDITIONAL BUSINESS

21.1. The Chairman made a presentation to Sir Peter Knight on behalf of Council, and thanked him for his commitment and guidance to STFC over the years of his tenure, firstly as Chair of Science Board and more recently as member of STFC Council. Sir Peter was presented with a mounted neodymium glass rod which was the lasing medium used in the Central Laser Facility’s Vulcan laser.

The meeting closed at 12:50pm and was followed by a lunch and poster exhibition by STFC-funded students at the Cavendish Laboratory.