

STFC Programmatic Review

STFC runs a managed programme of activities including grant-funded research, STFC-run facilities and departments, and international subscriptions. To enable the UK to remain at the forefront of the science that STFC supports, we consider it necessary to regularly consider the quality, effectiveness, and impact of STFC's programmes.

This latest review, attached to this document, was undertaken by STFC's Science Board starting in mid-2012 to:

- Assess the quality of STFC's programmes in terms of science, operational effectiveness, and impact;
- Inform STFC's future strategic and financial planning; and
- Define appropriate research areas and recommend a research portfolio and planning timeline for STFC support to those research areas.

The Programmatic Review was thus designed to inform STFC's planning decisions and to help optimise excellent science and impact in any financial scenario (positive, negative or neutral), on the clear understanding that the level and timing of funding for any project or area may be affected by a number of other factors and the overall funding available.

STFC Council and Executive wishes to warmly thank the members of Science Board, its Advisory Panels and sub-groups, members of our research communities, and the very many STFC staff, who contributed to the latest Programmatic Review throughout 2012 and 2013.

In consultation with Science Board, we decided in mid-2013 to defer the release of the Programmatic Review report pending the finalisation of the Government's budget allocations for 2015-16. We did so for two reasons: firstly that we intended using the Review as direct input to our confidential budget negotiations with Government, and; secondly that the full report included recommendations on specific projects and programme elements which might be affected by the final budgetary outcome.

We informed our research communities of the reasons for the delay, and provided regular updates on the likely timing of the Spending Review allocations throughout the negotiations with Government - including at a full Town Meeting in mid-October.

Readers of the Programmatic Review report will note that Science Board deliberately structured the Review around a number of financial scenarios: +10%, flat cash, and -10%, as well as an "optimum" programme. Now that our allocation for 2015-16 is known, we are beginning work to translate the budget into a programme based on the Review's recommendations, while also taking into account other relevant considerations.

It is important to recognise that while the Government has provided a spending allocation for only one year - to provide certainty of funding until after the General Election scheduled for May 2015 - the Programmatic Review is designed to guide our programme over a 10-year period.

We will construct a programme for this single roll-over year, with the target of taking it to our May Council for approval. Bearing this in mind, we would welcome any comments you may have on the Review – please email us at review@stfc.ac.uk. In the longer term, we will continue to use this Review to guide our plans including the Spending Review to be undertaken by the next Government.

We welcome the care with which Science Board prepared its recommendations, and we share Science Board's concern over the impact on the PPAN programme of four years of flat cash since 2010, coming as they did after earlier cutbacks.

Our research portfolio seeks to understand the Universe from the largest astronomical scales to the tiniest constituents of matter, yet creates impact on a very tangible, human scale. This breadth of programme, from discovery science to direct industrial application, is an enormous strength. It allows us to translate into direct economic and societal benefit the world-class science outcomes and skills arising from our National Laboratories and the research programme we fund and deliver through the universities and institutes. From cancer treatment to airport security, high-tech jobs to hydrogen-powered cars, energy generation to accident-scene emergency care, STFC's impact is significant and felt within and beyond the UK in many aspects of daily life. At this time of financial constraint, it is imperative that the UK's science base continues to be clearly seen to contribute directly to our national economic well-being and we welcome Science Board's recommendation on developing further ways of demonstrating the impact of our dedicated impact programmes.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "W. John Womersley". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long horizontal flourish at the end.

**Professor John Womersley,
Chief Executive Officer, Science & Technology Facilities Council**