Background

The terms of reference of the Physical Science and Engineering Advisory Panel (PS&EAP) requires it to "consult and interact with the community to ensure its views are canvassed and there is an appropriate and effective route for communication with STFC on strategic programmatic issues". With this in mind the Physical Science and Engineering Advisory Panel User Community Consultation sub-committee was established.

The sub-committee members are: Chair-Howard Stone (University of Cambridge); Colin Danson (AWE); Mike Fitzpatrick (Coventry University); Sue Kilcoyne (University of Huddersfield); Konstantin Kamenev (University of Edinburgh).

Actions

The initial action plan for the sub-committee is shown below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Action</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>June</td>
<td>Commence discussions and define likely scenarios.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21/07/2016</td>
<td>Submit 1 page briefing document to DL outlining how the sub-committee believes the PS&amp;EAP can best deliver on its consultation obligations, as defined in the sub-committee’s principal remit.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25/07/2016</td>
<td>DL to present deliberations from sub-committee to meeting with CF Directors.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28/07/2016</td>
<td>DL to provide feedback to sub-committee on outcomes from meeting with CF Directors.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19/08/16</td>
<td>Sub-committee to advise PS&amp;EAP whether a consultation exercise should be conducted this year. If &quot;yes&quot;, sub-committee to advise on structure and format of consultation exercise. If &quot;no&quot;, sub-committee to inform PS&amp;EAP of context for decision and to advise on how AP should report to Science Board in 2017.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>January 2017</td>
<td>AP annual gathering and preparation of documentation that describes the main outcomes/activities of 2016.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>February 2017</td>
<td>PS&amp;EAP Chair to meet with Science Board.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Outcomes

1. The briefing document requested in action point 1 was written in July 2016 and is presented in full in Appendix I. The minutes of the Facility Advisory Panel Chairs & STFC National Facility Directors Meeting held on Monday 25 July 2016 are given in Appendix II and David Lennon’s presentation to this meeting in Appendix III (action point 2)

2. The outcome of the Facility Advisory Panel Chairs & STFC National Facility Directors Meeting can be summarized as follows:
   - The PS&EAP do not need to run a consultation exercise in 2016. (The PS&EAP await guidance and instruction in this matter from Science Board)
   - The next stage of consultation could take place in 2017 on a biannual basis; it will be coordinated with STFC, SB and the three CFs (ISIS, Diamond, CLF).
   - PS&EAP could consider the format and nature of that consultation in the next face-to-face meeting (early 2017).
   - It is possible that the next face-to-face meeting will take place at the Rutherford Appleton Laboratory and could include a meeting with all three Facility Directors as well as a brief tour of the facilities.
Appendices

I. SubCommitteeBrief_July2016.docx

II. Minutes for the FD meeting (laura-minutes-310716-Note of meeting_FD and APchairs_25July16_draft.docx)

III. dl-briefing-psandeap-community-consultation-240716b.pdf
Appendix I

Physical Science and Engineering Advisory Panel User Community Consultation Sub-Committee

Briefing note on how the PS&EAP can best deliver its consultation obligations (July 2016)

Background

The terms of reference of the Physical Science and Engineering Advisory Panel (PS&EAP) requires it to "consult and interact with the community to ensure its views are canvassed and there is an appropriate and effective route for communication with STFC on strategic programmatic issues". At present this is achieved through web-form based consultation questionnaires to CF users and through PS & EAP panel members acting as advocates for the research areas they cover. To address how this may be improved, the PS & EAP has established a sub-committee to review how the 2015 consultation exercise could be improved upon.

Current status

- **The value of consultation**
  The 2014 central facilities users consultation provided very useful feedback, which enabled the PS & EAP to provide the Science Board (SB) with briefing documents on the benefits of maintaining STFC capability for ISIS and ILL as well Diamond and the ESRF. This highlighted the value of consultation with the user community.

- **Continuous consultation by the PS&EAP**
  Following the 2014 central facilities users consultation, the PS & EAP operates a portal through the STFC website ([http://www.stfc.ac.uk/about-us/how-we-are-governed/advisory-boards-panels-committees/physical-sciences-and-engineering-advisory-panel/](http://www.stfc.ac.uk/about-us/how-we-are-governed/advisory-boards-panels-committees/physical-sciences-and-engineering-advisory-panel/)) that allows CF users to provide feedback on their experience, aims and aspirations for large-scale facilities and responses are reviewed on a biannual basis. In Sep 2015 the CF Directors were asked to circulate a request for responses through this portal. However, the number of responses received was modest and varied significantly between the different CFs depending upon the effectiveness of their chosen communication.

- **Other consultation mechanisms**
  All of the CFs currently gather user feedback through experiment exit questionnaires and/or annual surveys. Whilst of direct value to the CFs, the outputs of these consultations are currently not provided to the PS&EAP. In addition, as many of the questions posed are similar to those asked through PS&EAP consultations, this risks both replication of the requests made of CF users and poor response rates as a result of consultation overload.

Future consultation options

- **Continued use of the PS & EAP portal on the STFC website**
  This mechanism offers the advantage of users being able to provide feedback directly back to their advocates on the PS & EAP. It may also be rapidly and flexibly tailored to other consultations on specific topics if required. However, to be effective, the CFs must be prepared to assist the PS & EAP in contacting their user communities. This may take the form of email lists supplied by the CFs or by the CFs reliably emailing their users on PS & EAP’s behalf.
• **Frequency of consultation**
  The frequency of consultations should be set to ensure that the user communities are not over-consulted. It is noted that the CFs typically undertake annual user surveys. As such, a biennial PS & EAP consultation cycle has been suggested, timed to avoid overlap with the annual CF user surveys.

• **Access to CF consultation data**
  The PS & EAP may benefit from the access to the user feedback data already being gathered by the CFs. It is recognised that only a subset of the data currently being gathered may be of direct relevance to the PS & EAP and, as such, discussions are required to ascertain what information may be supplied to the PS & EAP.

• **Incorporation of PS & EAP consultation requests into CF consultations**
  It is possible that questions addressing the consultation needs of the PS & EAP may be incorporated into the CF annual user surveys. This would require the buy-in and support of the CFs to be successful. However, it is not clear that users would perceive this as being an independent channel to communicate with the PS & EAP.

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**Sub-Committee members**

Howard Stone (Chairperson) – University of Cambridge;

Colin Danson – AWE;

Mike Fitzpatrick – Coventry University;

Sue Kilcoyne – University of Huddersfield;

Konstantin Kamenev – University of Edinburgh
Facility Advisory Panel Chairs & STFC National Facility Directors Meeting
Monday 25 July 2016

Note of Meeting

Interaction with Advisory Panels: Science Board currently provides the reporting link between the facilities and the APs; it was agreed that the link between the facilities and the APs requires improvement, while ensuring the independence of the APs isn’t compromised and recognising that the remit of the APs is wider than just issues relevant to the UK facilities. Suggestions to improve the interaction included:

- Providing the facility directors with the AP reports where possible after they have reported to Science Board (it was also requested that the reports on international facilities should be made available to UK facility directors);
- An AP representative from each panel attending the Diamond / ISIS / CLF / RCaH SACs (perhaps just once a year);
- Establishing a mechanism for the facilities to feedback to the AP how any suggestions were addressed, and explanations if they weren’t; this mechanism must include Science Board;
- A facility tour for AP members; suggested that their next meetings could be held at RAL with a tour after.

Community consultations: issues with previous consultations were noted, and the need for a dialogue between the various bodies to avoid duplication acknowledged. A possible joint consultation every 2 years using the facility mailing lists was suggested, although the independence of the APs would need to be maintained. The consultation may also require coordination with the LFIG refresh of science requirements.

Terms of Reference: agreed that the terms of reference for the APs’ should be amended to remove the requirement for developing a technology roadmap (sections 2.3 and 6). A further suggestion was to add a section on the relationship with the national facilities, noting that the independence of the APs would need to be clear and that the reporting to Science Board has not changed.

Global Challenges Research Fund: an update on the GCRF was given, with an RCUK call for capability/capacity building likely in August/September. A PhD training programme was one suggestion where the facilities programme could benefit.

An enhanced strategic conversation between the facilities and the STFC GCRF lead would be welcome to build on the workshop held recently at RAL.
Appendix III

Presentation by David Lennon at the Facility Advisory Panel Chairs & STFC National Facility Directors Meeting (25 July 2016)

5. Community consultation: Activities to date in this area

STFC Physical Sciences and Engineering Advisory Panel

Terms of Reference (August 2014)

Remit 2.4
“Consult and interact with the community to ensure its views are canvassed and there is an appropriate and effective route for communication with STFC on strategic programmatic issues”

Timeline -2014/2015

- **February 2014**
  STFC Science Board requested PS&EAP to undertake a general consultation exercise

- **September 2014**
  Consultation exercise conducted via PS&EAP webpages. Central Facilities initially broached some objection but, following interactions from the STFC Secretariat, the CFs disseminated PS&EAP’s request for engagement via their user databases.

  Modest response; concerns from AP of over-consultation but, nevertheless, the quality of feedback was really quite good.
  (DL:- committed users)

- **February 2015**
  Report submitted to Science Board (stimulated certain activities)
Timeline -2015/2016

- **September/October 2015**
  Repeated survey via PS&EAP website.
  Uneven dissemination of request for engagement from users
  from the three CFs.
  Significant IT problems.
  Modest but high quality response.

- **February 2016**
  Report submitted to Science Board
  (DL: useful exercise)

*Discussions during AP annual presentation to Science Board that
  instigated today’s meeting with CF Directors.*

Overview

- PS&EAP needs to be connected to the CF users within its remit.

- Thus far, the surveys have been inefficient and have delivered modest
  response from community. However, that response has been
  informative.

- Can we develop a framework by which AP consults with their
  designated communities but in a manner that doesn’t infringe CF-
  managed outreach activities?

- PS&EAP could have a specific consultation period (e.g. 1 month) in the
  Autumn once every two years, plus open access to website for general
  user feedback.

- Request for user engagement to be sent out by CF from their user
  databases but as a single defined item within an email dispatch, which
  is additionally supported by a prominent link on the CF front webpage
  for, say, 4 weeks.

In the background

- PS&EAP sub-committee presently considering how best
  to proceed.

- DL to provide feedback from today’s meeting to assist
  the sub-committee in their on-going deliberations.

- PS&EAP want to be useful and effective but not to
  impede progress in the day-to-day running of CFs.