Minutes of the Council meeting held on 9 December 2008.

Those attending:
Dr P S Ringrose (Chair)
Professor D B Kell FIBiol (Chief Executive) (agenda items 1-8 and 10-13 only)
Dr D K Brightman FIBiol
Professor J Coggins OBE FRSE
Professor A Dell FRS
Professor P J Fryer FREng FIChemE FIEST
Professor A J Hunter
Dr D K Lawrence
Professor Q A McKellar FIBiol FRAgS FRSE
Professor C Pollock CBE
Dr A Richards
Professor Dame Nancy Rothwell FRS (agenda items 1-8 and 10-11 only)
Dr J Stageman

Also present:
S Visscher
J Neilson (DIUS representative, agenda items 1-2 only)
P Backway (DIUS representative, agenda items 3-13 only)
Professor J Allen FRSE
Dr C Caulcott
P Gemmill
D Parfrey
P Swinburne
Dr P Burrows
J Juillerat
Dr M Winstanley OBE
Dr C M Miles (agenda item 2 only)
Dr K Turton
K Okonska (agenda items 3-13 only)
Professor T Kirkwood (agenda item 2 only)
Professor H Westerhoff (agenda item 2 only)

Courtesies

1. Apologies for absence were received from Professors Gilligan, Watson and Weir.

2. Chair introduced Mr David Parfrey (Director of Finance, BBSRC) and welcomed him to his first Council meeting.

3. Council noted that this was the last Council meeting for Professor Rothwell. On behalf of Council, Chair thanked Dame Nancy for all her hard work during her appointment to Council, including her contribution to the former Strategy Board and Remuneration Board.

MINUTES OF THE COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON 7 OCTOBER 2008 (BBSRC 70/2008)

4. The minutes were **AGREED** as a correct record of the meeting.

MATTERS ARISING

Council Appointments 2009

5. Council **NOTED** that the process to appoint new members to BBSRC Council from 1 April 2009 was ongoing. A formal announcement would be made by the Secretary of State in March 2009.

CHAIR AND CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S BUSINESS

Biotechnology Young Entrepreneurs' Scheme (YES)

6. Dr Ringrose had attended the 2008 Final of the Biotechnology YES on 8 December 2008, as Chair of the judging panel. This year had seen a total of 330 participants in 73 teams from across the UK, with a total of 14 teams in the competition final. The overall winners were "Ovega" from the University of Reading. A press release and video had been issued.

BIG-T Bioscience Review

7. Council noted that the report from the BIG-T review of bioscience, led by Sir David Cooksey, was due to be published in the New Year (January 2009).

BBRSC Roadshows: "Excellence with Impact"

8. Professor Kell thanked Council members for supporting the recent series of BBSRC roadshows on excellence with impact, including the definition of research and policy priorities and the new committee structures for responsive mode grants. Council noted that feedback from the community on the roadshows had been positive.

Institute Strategic Programme Grants (ISPGs)

9. Council noted that Institute Strategic Programme Grants (ISPGs) had now been submitted for all the BBSRC sponsored institutes. A light-touch review of the ISPGs is ongoing.

The Genome Analysis Centre

10. Council noted that the East of England Development Agency (EEDA) had agreed to co-fund phase one of the Genome Analysis Centre; a response was awaited on phase two. A formal announcement would be made in the New Year.

11. In considering new genomics and bioinformatics technologies, Council suggested that it might be useful to devote some time at a future meeting to discussion of this area of activity.

Meetings with the Chief Scientific Advisor

12. Professor Kell updated Council on his recent meeting with the Chief Scientific Advisor (Professor John Beddington). Topics for discussion had included the Institute for Animal Health, food security, big data and digital organisms.

Chief Executive's Blog

13. Professor Kell said that he had initiated a Chief Executive's blog on the BBSRC website. It was anticipated that the blog would provide a more informal route for public communications. The blog may be found at: http://blogs.bbsrc.ac.uk/

Bioscience for Society Strategy Panel

14. Council noted that Professor A C Grayling (Professor of Philosophy, Birkbeck College) had been invited to attend and give a presentation at the next meeting of BBSRC's Bioscience for Society Strategy Panel to discuss epistemology.

Branding and BBSRC Logo

15. Mr Gemmill said that BBSRC was working to increase visibility of BBSRC funding at centres and universities. An updated logo was being developed that could be used more easily by partners to raise awareness of BBSRC-funded science.

16. Council **ADVISED** BBSRC to work with designers to produce a logo with a strapline linked to the new BBSRC Strategic Plan 2009-2014.

INSTITUTE FOR ANIMAL HEALTH: UPDATE (BBSRC 66/2008)

17. *This item relates to business related to the running of BBSRC-sponsored institutes and is recorded separately.*

PROGRESS ON CENTRES FOR INTEGRATIVE SYSTEMS BIOLOGY (CISB) INITIATIVE GRANTS (BBSRC 67/2008)

18. *This item relates to work in progress and is recorded separately.*

FRAMEWORK FOR BBSRC'S NEW STRATEGIC PLAN 2009-2014 (BBSRC 68/2008)

19. *This item relates to work in progress and is recorded separately.*

BBSRC STRATEGIC REVIEWS (BBSRC 69/2008)

20. Dr Burrows introduced this paper, which provided advice from the Strategy Advisory Board (SAB) on implementing the recommendations of the Review of BBSRC Research Relevant to Environmental Change. He said that SAB had welcomed the report and endorsed its recommendations, noting comments from the Strategy Panels and Directors of the BBSRC-sponsored institutes. SAB would provide further advice in due course on translation of research into practice and maximising economic and social impact.

21. Council was broadly supportive of the proposal to appoint a coordinator to take forward the issues addressed in the report. It recommended that the role of the coordinator should be similar to that of a Programme Manager and be a time-limited appointment.

22. Finally, Council asked SAB to monitor progress in this area, with assistance and advice from the Strategy Panels.

23. Council **NOTED** the advice from SAB and comments from Institute Directors and **NOTED** that further advice would be provided in due course in relation to the translation of research into practice and maximising economic and social impact.

24. Council **ENDORSED** the proposal to appoint a BBSRC coordinator for environmental change research and **AGREED** the next steps, as outlined in the paper.

BOARD APPOINTMENTS (BBSRC 71/2008)

Appointments Board

25. Council **NOTED** the current membership of the Appointments Board and **APPROVED** the extension of Dr Malcolm Skingle's appointment to the Board until 31 December 2009, in line with his appointment as Chair of the Bioscience for Industry Strategy Panel.

Institute Board

26. Council **NOTED** the current membership of the Institute Board and **APPROVED** the appointments of Mrs Frances Green and Mr Mike Phipps to the Board until 31 March 2011.

Strategy Advisory Board

27. Council **NOTED** the current membership of the Strategy Advisory Board and **APPROVED** the extension of Dr Malcolm Skingle's appointment to the Board until 31 December 2009 in line with his appointment as Chair of the Bioscience for Industry Strategy Panel.

LOLA RESPONSIVE MODE GRANTS (BBSRC 72/2008)

28. *This item relates to applications for BBSRC funding and is recorded separately.*

MINUTES OF THE AUDIT BOARD MEETING HELD ON 4 NOVEMBER 2008 (BBSRC 73/2008)

29. Council **NOTED** the draft minutes.

MINUTES OF THE STRATEGY ADVISORY BOARD MEETING HELD ON 24 AND 25 NOVEMBER 2008 (BBSRC 74/2008)

30. Council **NOTED** the draft minutes.

STRATEGY ADVISORY BOARD (BBSRC 75/2008)

31. This item covered two papers relating to the Strategy Advisory Board (SAB). The first set out SAB's position as a principal advisory board to Council and the Executive on higher-level strategy and its delegated authority; the second provided a draft outline workplan for SAB.

32. Council noted that the draft workplan for SAB included a large number of priority issues and recommended that the list should be reduced to five or six issues to be considered over the coming year. Some activities were to be delegated to the Strategy Panels and sub-groups of the Board for action.

33. Council **NOTED** SAB's position as an advisory board and its delegated authority.

34. Council **NOTED** and **COMMENTED** on the proposed issues for SAB.

APPROVAL OF SIGNATORIES (BBSRC 76/2008)

35. Council **APPROVED** the amended list of second authorised signatories.

ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Governance of the Institute of Food Research

36. Council **NOTED** that a letter had been received from the Trade Union at the Institute of Food Research (IFR). Mr Visscher reported on the discussions that were ongoing with UEA and the lines of communication with staff at IFR. An announcement on the appointment of a new Director for the Institute was to be made shortly.

ANNEX 3

FRAMEWORK FOR BBSRC'S NEW STRATEGIC PLAN 2009-2014 (BBSRC 68/2008)

66. Dr Burrows introduced this paper, which set out a draft framework for the new BBSRC Strategic Plan to cover the period 2009-2014.

67. In discussion, Council considered the overarching theme of the document – excellence with impact – and suggested that there should be greater focus on excellence with impact from the biosciences. A visionary statement, setting out BBSRC's position in the science community and examples of how bioscience underpins every day life would send out a strong message.

68. On specific areas of science, the following points were raised:
    - food security should be the highest priority, with livestock included and demonstrating continuity from the current sustainable agriculture priority
    - non-infectious diseases should be included alongside infectious diseases
    - water and land availability should be highlighted, with soil science and biological control of weeds
    - the digital human is a long term vision; the initial focus should be on developing the necessary methodology and studying a crop plant or bacterium to demonstrate future benefits
    - microbial science and mycology should be included in the Plan
    - research on whole organisms and populations should also be highlighted

69. On partnerships, Council recommended that more should be made of links with the commercial sector and the other funding bodies. International collaborations on data management and bioinformatics should also be highlighted to demonstrate the impact of BBSRC-funded research.

70. Overall, Council expressed support for the overarching, top level themes. It recommended that BBSRC should identify its grand challenges for the next ten years; Dr Burrows said that this would be the focus of discussion at the next Strategy Advisory Board meeting in March 2009.

71. In summary, Chair thanked Council for its comments and said that the office would develop the Strategic Plan further and bring it back to Council for approval in July 2009.

72. Council **DISCUSSED** and **AGREED** the framework and headline content for the new BBSRC Strategic Plan 2009-2014.

73. Council **NOTED** the advice provided by the Strategy Advisory Board on the content and structure of the plan and **NOTED** the anticipated timing and launch.