Minutes of the Council meeting held on 9 February 2010.

Those attending:

Professor Sir Tom Blundell FRS FMedSci (BBSRC Chair) (agenda items 1-9, 11-13 only)
Professor D B Kell FSB (Chief Executive and Deputy Chair) (agenda items 1-4, 7-13 only)
Professor Sir David Baulcombe FRS
Professor J Coggins OBE FRSE
Professor Anne Dell CBE FRS (agenda items 1-4, 7-13 only)
Professor P J Fryer FREng
Mr J Godfrey CBE
Professor P Grindrod CBE (agenda items 1-3, 5 & 6 only)
Professor A J Hunter (agenda items 4, 7-13 only)
Dr D Lawrence (agenda items 1-4, 7-13 only)
Professor Q A McKellar FRSE (agenda items 1-4, 7-13 only)
Professor C Pollock CBE
Dr A Richards
Dr J Stageman (agenda items 1-4, 7-13 only)
Professor M P Weir (agenda items 1-4, 7-13 only)

Also present:

S Visscher
Professor J Allen FRSE
Dr P Burrows
Dr C Caulcott (agenda items 7-13 only)
P Gemmill
J Neilson (BIS representative)
Dr K Turton
K Okonska
Dr C Miles (agenda items 1-3, 5 & 6 only)

Courtesies

1. Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting and introduced Dr Colin Miles (Head of Molecular and Cell Biology, BBSRC), who was attending for the discussion of systems biology investments.

2. As this was to be her last meeting of Council, Chair thanked Professor Jackie Hunter for her contribution to BBSRC business as a Council member over the past six years.

MINUTES OF THE COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON 7 DECEMBER 2010 (BBSRC 01/2010)

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

MATTERS ARISING

4. There was none.

CHAIR'S BUSINESS

John Innes Centre Centenary Celebrations

5. Chair had attended the John Innes Centre centenary celebration event at the House of Lords on 26 January 2010. The John Innes Horticultural Institution, as it was originally known, was established in 1910. A brochure highlighting the economic impacts of research carried out at JIC over the past 100 years had been published and is available to download from the JIC website: http://www.jic.ac.uk/corporate/about/publications/EconomicImpact.pdf

Presentation at Prospect/BBSRC Annual Delegate Conference

6. Council noted that the Chair had accepted an invitation to present his vision for "Life Sciences, BBSRC and the UK Knowledge-Based Economy" at the annual Prospect/BBSRC Delegate Conference on 17 February 2010.

CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S BUSINESS

Launch of BBSRC's Strategic Plan 2010-2015

7. Council noted the launch of BBSRC's new Strategic Plan on 28 January 2010: http://www.bbsrc.ac.uk/media/releases/2010/100128-launch-strategic-plan.aspx. The document, entitled "The Age of Bioscience", details how BBSRC will support UK bioscience to meet the challenges facing society and the opportunities for bioscience to benefit society and the UK economy.

New Director Appointed at Rothamsted Research

8. Professor Kell said that BBSRC had appointed Professor Maurice Moloney (currently, Chief Scientific Officer of SemBioSys Genetics Inc.) as the new Director and Chief Executive for Rothamsted Research. Professor Moloney will take up his appointment from 15 April 2010.

Food Security

9. Council noted that a reception was planned for 11 March 2010 to launch a national research programme for global food security. BBSRC is leading this programme on behalf of the partners, which include all the relevant Research Councils and Government Departments.

BOARD APPOINTMENTS (BBSRC 03/2010)

Audit Board

10. Council **NOTED** the current membership of the Audit Board and **APPROVED** the re-appointment of Professor Anne Dell (BBSRC Council member) to the Board from 1 April 2010 for a period of four years.

Remuneration Board

11. Council **NOTED** the current membership of the Remuneration Board and **APPROVED** the appointment of Dr David Lawrence (BBSRC Council member) to the Board from 1 April 2010 for a period of two years.

Strategy Advisory Board

12. Council **NOTED** the current membership of the Board and **APPROVED** the following appointments to the Board:

    - Mr Phil New (BP Biofuels) as an independent member from 1 March 2010 for a period of three years

    - Dr Bill Angus (Limagrain) as an independent member from 1 March 2010 for a period of three years

    - Professor Sir David Baulcombe FRS (BBSRC Council member) from 1 April 2010 for a period of three years

REPORT AND PRESENTATION FROM THE MANCHESTER CENTRE FOR INTEGRATIVE SYSTEMS BIOLOGY (BBSRC 04/2010)

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

SYSTEMS BIOLOGY INVESTMENTS (BBSRC 05/2010)

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

INSTITUTE UPDATE (BBSRC 02/2010)

15. *This item relates to the business of running an institute and is recorded separately.*

REVIEW OF APPROACHES TO FUND NEW BBSRC CENTRES (BBSRC 06/2010)

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

COUNCIL ANNUAL APPRAISAL (BBSRC 07/2010)

17. This paper reported on the appraisal of Council's performance over the past year. It was based on the results of a questionnaire seeking members' views on: Council's overall effectiveness; the quality of information provided by the Executive; leadership of the BBSRC Chair and Chief Executive; and Council's relationship with the Executive.

18. In discussion, some members said that the scope of the questions had been too narrow and suggested that, by asking more open-ended questions, the Secretariat could gather broader views on Council's performance and activity.

19. Whilst the outcome of the appraisal exercise was generally positive, several issues were raised for further consideration by the Executive:
    - Council should interact more proactively with Strategy Advisory Board, utilising the Board for the provision of advice in key strategic areas as well as for discussion of ideas and issues emerging from the research community
    - Council members' individual expertise could be utilised more between meetings (for example, in leading sub-groups or by providing advice in strategic areas of activity)
    - Council meetings should include opportunities for members to develop stronger working relationships with each other and the Executive (for example, through informal discussion)
    - In respect of decision-making responsibilities, clarity is needed on the Delegated Authority between Council, Boards and the Executive
    - The Chair of each Board and Council sub-group should be invited to present a short report to Council each year

20. Council **NOTED** and **COMMENTED** on the points raised.

LARGE RESPONSIVE MODE GRANT (BBSRC 08/2010)

21. This item relates to the peer review of applications for BBSRC funding and is recorded separately.

THE GENOME ANALYSIS CENTRE TRUSTEES (BBSRC 09/2010)

22. Council **NOTED** the list of Trustees (including Professor Sir Alex Markham, University of Leeds, as Chair) appointed to serve on The Genome Analysis Centre (TGAC) Board and **ADVISED** BBSRC to seek clarity from the two university partners at the outset of the grant on their translation strategy for the outcomes of this research project.

MINUTES OF THE AUDIT BOARD MEETING HELD ON 21 JANUARY 2010 (BBSRC 10/2010)

23. Council **NOTED** the draft minutes of the Audit Board meeting held on 21 January 2010 and the oral update from Professor McKellar.

24. As Chair of the Audit Board, Professor McKellar had taken on the role of official contact for BBSRC's whistle-blowing procedures. A confidential email account (whistleblowing@bbsrc.ac.uk) had been set up for this purpose.

FINANCIAL OUTTURN FOR 2009-10 (BBSRC 11/2010)

25. Council **NOTED** the forecast outturn for 2009-10 and **ASKED** the Audit Board to consider depreciation costs and the economic lifespan of buildings on the BBSRC estate alongside a breakdown of BBSRC's capital expenditure.

Council Secretariat
February 2010