

Minutes of the Council meeting held on 14 April 2010.

Those attending:

Professor Sir Tom Blundell FRS (BBSRC Chair)
Professor D B Kell (Chief Executive and Deputy Chair)
Professor Sir David Baulcombe FRS
Professor Anne Dell CBE FRS
J Godfrey CBE
D Gregory
Professor P Grindrod CBE
Dr D Lawrence
Professor K Lindsey
Professor Q A McKellar FRSE
Professor C Pollock CBE
Dr A Richards
Professor M P Weir

Also present:

S Visscher
Professor J Allen
Dr P Burrows
Dr C Caulcott
P Gemmill
R Louth (BIS representative)
J Rutherford
C Peers

Courtesies

1. Apologies were received from Professor John Coggins, Professor Peter Fryer, Dr John Stageman, Mr John Neilson, Dr Kate Turton and Miss Ksymena Okonska.
2. Chair welcomed Mr David Gregory and Professor Keith Lindsey to their first Council since taking up their appointments on 1 April 2010. He also welcomed Mr Roger Louth to the meeting who was representing BIS in the absence of Mr Neilson.

MINUTES OF THE COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON 9 FEBRUARY 2010 (BBSRC 12/2010)

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

MATTERS ARISING (ORAL)

4. There were none.

CHAIR BUSINESS (ORAL)

Innovator of the Year 2010

5. The Innovator of the Year 2010 awards ceremony had taken place on 18 March 2010 with the winners named as follows:
 - **Overall winner:** Professor Shankar Balasubramanian, University of Cambridge
 - **Commercial innovator:** Professor Shankar Balasubramanian, University of Cambridge
 - **Social innovator:** Professor Dave Goulson, University of Stirling
 - **Most promising innovator:** Dr Michael McArthur, John Innes Centre
6. The event had been a success and the addition of awards in other areas of innovation would be something that was continued for next year's scheme.

Visits

7. Chair said that he was undergoing a series of visits to BBSRC-sponsored Institutes and recently had been to the Norwich Research Park which housed IFR, JIC and TGAC.
8. He had also visited a number of science companies in the UK who also had sites in Europe to gain an idea of issues facing the bioscience industry and where BBSRC could offer assistance.
9. He had also made a number of overseas visits to various organisations to build relationships which should be of beneficial use in the future.

Presentation at Prospect/BBSRC Annual Delegate Conference

10. As informed at the last Council meeting, Chair had spoken at the annual Prospect meeting on 17 February 2010 on his vision for "Life Sciences, BBSRC and the UK Knowledge-Based Economy". As expected he had received a number of questions regarding redundancies at HRi and IBERS in the outskirts of the conference.

Scottish Universities Life Sciences Alliance

11. Chair said that he was involved in the Scottish Universities Life Sciences Alliance (SULSA) as the Chair of its International Advisory Board. SULSA had been established in 2007 as a research pooling partnership between the Universities of Aberdeen, Dundee, Edinburgh, Glasgow, St Andrews and Strathclyde as was supported by the Scottish Funding Council.

CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S BUSINESS (ORAL)

General Election

12. Professor Kell informed Council that leading up to the General Election BBSRC was working under a period of "purdah" where it, along with other

Government departments, was required to maintain, and be seen to maintain, impartiality and to avoid any criticism of any political party. This meant that BBSRC press-releases, announcements of awards or new funding schemes and statements from the BBSRC and its Institutes were either on hold or had to be carefully thought-out so as not to benefit any one political party.

13. The purdah period commenced at the day the General Election was announced, and the dissolution of Parliament, and would last until the new Government was formed.

John Innes Centre

14. The appointment of a new Director for the John Innes Centre had been announced. Professor Dale Saunders, currently the Head of the Department of Biology at the University of York, would assume the duties of his post from 1 September 2010.

Launch of Global Food Security

15. A reception had taken place on 11 March 2010 which launched the Global Food Security programme. Professor John Beddington, the Government's Chief Scientific Advisor, had spoken at the event. BBSRC is leading the GFS programme on behalf of RCUK and other Agencies.

Biofuels

16. A meeting had recently been held with members from the Energy Technologies Institute on the role of biofuels in the future. Professor Kell and other members of the Executive had also recently visited British Sugar's factory in Wissington which, as part of its other productions, produced bioethanol.
17. The Chief Scientific Adviser to the Department for Transport, Professor Brian Collins, recognised that biofuels could help ease problems caused by the decrease of other sources of fuel, and BBSRC was in the process of considering what it could do in this area.

FINANCIAL REPORT (BBSRC 13/2010)

18. Mr Visscher introduced this paper which provided Council with an update to the financial report presented at its meeting in February 2010. It gave the latest position on BBSRC's forecast outturn for 2009-10 which was in line with previous plans and discussions with BIS.
19. Council **NOTED** the report.

BOARD APPOINTMENTS (BBSRC 14/2010)

20. Chair introduced this paper which invited Council to approve the reappointment of Professor Jane Hurst to the Appointments Board from 1 September 2010 until 31 August 2013.
21. Council **APPROVED** the reappointment.

UPDATE FROM DAY 1 (ORAL)

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

VISIT TO CENTRE FOR PLANT INTEGRATIVE BIOLOGY, NOTTINGHAM: PROGRESS REPORT (BBSRC 15/2010)

23. *This item relates to work in progress as is recorded separately.*

STRATEGY ADVISORY BOARD ACTIVITIES AND FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS (BBSRC 16/2010)

24. Dr Paul Burrows introduced this item which provided Council with an update on the activities of Strategy Advisory Board (SAB) over the past 18 months. It also highlighted some strategic areas that had been proposed by the Board as candidates for inclusion on the agenda of future SAB meeting. These areas would be taken forward in a variety of ways including SAB sub-groups, the Strategy Panels and the Executive.
25. Council considered whether there were any particular issues upon which it would like advice or to have further discussion, and mentioned the following:
- Opportunity to consider BBSRC's position in Synthetic Biology
 - A response to a particular article in *Nature* on challenges with biological complexity.
 - The resulting challenges and opportunities for BBSRC with regard to changes to the awarding of research grants at the Wellcome Trust
26. The role of the Board was to provide advice to both Council and the BBSRC Executive and so minutes from its meeting would reflect this. Where appropriate Council would receive a set of options so it could make informed decisions.
27. Council **SUPPORTED** the approach outlined in the paper.

BBSRC POLICY ON KNOWLEDGE EXCHANGE AND COMMERCIALISATION (BBSRC 17/2010)

28. At its December 2009 meeting Council had discussed overall plans to develop a BBSRC strategy and policy for Knowledge Exchange and Commercialisation. Following extensive consultation involving relevant stakeholders, Strategy Panels and BIS a BBSRC Policy for Knowledge Exchange and Commercialisation had been developed which was now presented to Council for note. Plans to ensure effective implementation of this policy would be established in the coming months.
29. Council **NOTED** the Policy.

MINUTES OF THE STRATEGY ADVISORY BOARD HELD ON 9 AND 10 MARCH 2010 (BBSRC 18/2010)

30. The minutes from the SAB meeting held on 9 and 10 March 2010 had not yet been finalised but would be circulated to Council members shortly.

ANY OTHER BUSINESS (ORAL)

Operation of Council and Future Agenda Items

31. Council members were given the opportunity to discuss the operation of Council, to suggest any improvements and request future agenda items.
32. In discussion:
- Council wished to increase its interactions with the BBSRC family and **ASKED** that consideration was given to setting a programme of presentations at Council meetings from those with responsibility for spending BBSRC money, i.e. Institute Directors, Strategy Panel Chairs and Committee Chairs.
 - Council **AGREED** that it was essential that BBSRC realised the significant opportunities it had regarding the impact agenda, and that activities that enabled its user focus (industry, business, policy etc) in the UK and overseas were therefore extremely important. These activities would also enable collaborative research another key activity.
 - Council **ASKED** that a paper on the current terms and conditions for BBSRC staff, including redundancy terms and pension scheme came to its next meeting.
 - Council **ASKED** that where appropriate a number of options, with back-up data, for it to consider be made available in meeting papers so it could make informed and judged decisions.
 - Council **NOTED** that regular updates would be provided, under Matters Arising, at its meetings of where and how BBSRC had taken forward its decisions/comments.