

IN CONFIDENCE

Minutes of the Council meeting held on 12 October 2010.

Those attending:

Professor Sir Tom Blundell FRS (BBSRC Chair)
Professor D Kell (BBSRC Chief Executive)
Professor Sir David Baulcombe FRS
Professor J Coggins OBE FRSE
Professor A Dell CBE FRS
Professor P Fryer
Mr Jim Godfrey OBE
Professor P Grindrod CBE
Mr D Gregory
Professor K Lindsey
Professor Q McKellar FRSE
Professor C Pollock CBE
Dr J Stageman
Dr A Richards
Professor M Weir

Also present:

Mr S Visscher
Dr P Burrows
Dr C Caulcott
Mr P Gemmill
Mr D Parfrey
Mr J Neilson (BIS representative)
Dr A Game
Dr K Lewis (item 6 only)
Miss K Okonska
Miss J Rutherford

Courtesies

1. Apologies were received from Dr David Lawrence and Professor Janet Allen FRSE. Chair welcomed Dr Alf Game to the meeting who was deputising for Professor Allen.
2. Council offered its condolences to the family of Dr Alistair Penman following the sad news of his passing in August 2010. Dr Penman had previously been a BBSRC Council member, Chair of Audit Board and a member of the Estates and Equipment Board.
3. Chair asked members to check, and amend if necessary, their entries in the Council conflict of interest register.

ITEM 1: MINUTES OF THE COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON 7 JULY 2010 (BBSRC 29/2010)

4. The minutes from the last meeting were **AGREED**.

ITEM 2: MATTERS ARISING (BBSRC 36/2010)

5. Council **NOTED** the progress of actions since its last meeting.

ITEM 3: CHAIR BUSINESS (ORAL)

Retirement of Professor Martin Shirley CBE

6. Professor Martin Shirley, Director Institute for Animal Health, was due to retire at the end of October 2010. Council conveyed its thanks to Professor Shirley on his exceptional job as Director of the Institute in what, on occasions, had been an incredibly hard time.

Institute Governance

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

Strategic Workshop: 7 July 2010

8. Council **NOTED** the report from the Strategic Workshop held in July 2010 which had been circulated with the papers for the next Workshop scheduled to follow this Council meeting.
9. In addition an extra Council meeting had been arranged for 2 December 2010 where Council would be invited to sign-off the final version of the Delivery Plan before it was submitted to BIS.

Council Appointments

10. A call for applications to Council for appointments commencing in April 2011 would shortly be made. This time BBSRC was looking to appoint an academic in an animal science area and two industrialists in the areas of biotechnology/bioenergy or microbiology. As well as this expertise it had also been agreed that it would be beneficial if a member had experience in public engagement/communication. This would be reflected in the person specification for the posts.

CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S BUSINESS (ORAL)

11. Council **NOTED** the visits made by the Chief Executive since the last Council meeting.

ITEM 4: BOARD APPOINTMENTS (BBSRC 30/2010)

Remuneration Board

12. Council **NOTED** the current membership of the Board and **APPROVED** the reappointment of Professor Fryer, Council member from 1 September 2010 for a period of 2 years until 31 March 2012

Strategy Advisory Board

13. Council **NOTED** the current membership of the Board and **APPROVED** the appointment of Professor Moloney, Director of Rothamsted Research as the Institute Director Representative from 1 November 2010 to 31 October 2011.

ITEM 5: UPDATE FROM ISPG OUTLINE PANEL MEETING (ORAL)

14. *This item contains information relating to the running of an Institute and is therefore recorded separately.*

ITEM 6: THE BBSRC AND THE INNOVATION FRAMEWORK OF THE UK (ORAL)

15. *This item relates to work in progress and development of policy and this therefore recorded separately.*

ITEM 7: THE MANAGEMENT AND GOVERNANCE OF LARGE GRANTS AND CENTRES (BBSRC 31/2010)

16. Dr Game introduced this item which explored the range of management and governance structures required for large grants and centres and proposed a set of basic principles for determining the appropriate structures in future. The paper had been produced at the request of Council at its last meeting.
17. In discussion Council supported the principles as set out in the paper, especially their flexibility. It also asked that BBSRC continued to look at other organisations to maintain an overview of best practice. As proposed in the paper detailed guidance was required showing what BBSRC would expect for the management and governance of the grant alongside excellent science and the identification of impacts. The department holding the grant would need to ensure that the external advisory board was independent and that the sustainability of the grant was a factor in its governance role. The project leader should also identify where interactions with other groups are required and have the role of managing and assessing these interactions.
18. Council **AGREED** the basic principles for the minimum management requirements set out in the paper as follows:
 - a. The management and governance structures for a large project need to be tailored to the needs of the project and its sponsors and intended impacts.
 - b. They should be the minimum necessary to support delivery of its objectives without unnecessarily restricting scientific creativity or flexibility.
 - c. Large projects aimed at developing or exploring new scientific fields should be supported by an external scientific advisory board to guide changes and developments during the project.
 - d. Large projects which seek to deliver resources or results to a user community (academic, industrial or policy) should have a user group steering the direction of the project.
 - e. Large projects that involve the integration of significant numbers of separate activities in different teams, or that are highly dependent on the efficiency of large-scale research processes, require dedicated and appropriately qualified project management expertise on a scale appropriate to the complexity and risk associated with the project management.

- f. Multi-disciplinary projects require governance structures, including partnership agreements and financial arrangements, which secure the ongoing commitment of partners to the overall aims of the project and enable the project leader to retain leadership and control.
 - g. Where awards are conditional on significant long-term institutional commitments these need to be formalised with BBSRC at a high enough level to ensure they will be robust to short term changes in personnel.
19. Council also **AGREED** that determination of management requirements should form a separate stage from the science in the assessment.

ITEM 8: IMPROVING THE EFFICIENCY OF THE GRANT PROCESS (BBSRC 35/2010)

20. *This item relates to work in progress and development of policy and this therefore recorded separately.*

ITEM 9: MINUTES OF THE APPOINTMENTS BOARD MEETING HELD ON 30 SEPTEMBER 2010 (BBSRC 34/2010)

21. Professor Fryer introduced this item which provided Council with the draft minutes from Appointments Board meeting held on 30 September 2010. He thanked the Swindon Office for their excellent management of the process
22. During the discussion Professor Peter Fryer reported the concern voiced by the Board that there seemed to be no defined route to keep Council informed of progress with responsive mode funding, and suggested that Council receive an update of relevant figures (demand, success rate, commitment relative to budget). The office would look into taking this forward.
23. Council:
- (i) **NOTED** the draft minutes;
 - (ii) **APPROVED** the reappointment of Professor Russell Foster, University of Oxford, as Chair of the Healthy Organism Strategy Panel and to Strategy Advisory Board for a further year until 31 December 2011;
 - (iii) **APPROVED** reappointment of Professor Richard Oreffo, University of Southampton as Deputy Chair of the Healthy Organism Strategy Panel for a further year until 31 December 2011
 - (iv) **APPROVED** the reappointment of Professor Tim Benton, University of Leeds, as Deputy Chair of the Integrative and Systems Biology Strategy Panel for a further year until 31 December 2011
 - (v) **APPROVED** the reappointment of Professor Chris Gaskell, Royal Agricultural College, Cirencester as Chair of the Sustainable Agriculture Strategy Panel and to Strategy Advisory Board for a further year until 31 December 2011
 - (vi) **APPROVED** appointment of Professor Chris Rawlings, Rothamsted Research, as Chair of the Tools and Resources Strategy Panel and Strategy Advisory Board until 31 December 2013

- (vii) **APPROVED** the appointment of Professor Steve Homans, University of Leeds, as Deputy Chair of the Tools and Resources Strategy Panel until 31 December 2012
- (viii) **APPROVE** the appointment of Sir Roland Jackson, British Science Association, as Chair of the Bioscience for Society Panel and Strategy Advisory Board until 31 December 2011
- (ix) **APPROVED** the appointment of Professor David Boxer, Institute of Food Research, as Deputy Chair of the Bioscience Skills and Careers Strategy Panel until 31 December 2012.
- (x) **APPROVED** the appointment of Professor Nicholas Hartell, University of Leicester as Deputy Chair of Committee A for one year in the first instance from 1 January 2011.
- (xi) **APPROVED** the appointment of Professor Julian Burke, Genetix Ltd, as Deputy Chair of Committee C for one year in the first instance from 1 January 2011.

ITEM 10: RESEARCH COUNCIL'S PENSION SCHEME ACCOUNTS (BBSRC 32/2010)

- 24. Mr Parfrey introduced this item which presented Council with the 2009/10 Research Councils' Pension Schemes accounts preceded by a short commentary to summarise the Accounts. He said that agreement had recently been reached so that HM Treasury would continue to meet any gaps in the liability risk associated with the schemes. BIS had assisted BBSRC in reaching this agreement which was seen as a great success.
- 25. Council was informed that a cross-Research Council group would be looking into ways of making savings in the administration costs of running the schemes.
- 26. Council **NOTED** the 2009/10 Research Councils' Pension Schemes accounts.

ITEM 11: FINANCIAL REPORT (BBSRC 33/2010)

- 27. Mr Parfrey introduced this item which provided BBSRC financial report. He said that BBSRC was on course to meet its year-end financial targets.
- 28. Council **NOTED** the projected plan for 2010-11

NOTE OF THE STRATEGIC WORKSHOP HELD ON 12 OCTOBER 2010

- 29. *This item relates to work in progress and development of policy and this is therefore recorded separately.*

Council Secretariat
October 2010