

MINUTES of the Council meeting held on 7 July 2011.

BBSRC 28/2011

Those attending:

Professor Sir Tom Blundell FRS (BBSRC Chair)
Professor D Kell FSB (BBSRC Chief Executive and Deputy Chair)
Professor Sir David Baulcombe FRS
Professor J Coggins OBE FRSE
Professor A Dell CBE FRS
Professor R Foster FRS
Professor P Fryer
Mr J Godfrey OBE
Dr M Goosey
Professor P Grindrod CBE
Dr D Lawrence
Professor K Lindsey
Dr A Richards
Dr J Stageman
Dr W West

Also Present:

Mr S Visscher
Mr J Clayton
Professor P Holmes OBE FRSE (item 5 only)
Professor J Allen FRSE
Dr P Burrows
Mr P Gemmill FSB
Mr D Parfrey
Miss K Okonska
Miss J Rutherford (secretary)

Courtesies:

1. Apologies were received from Mr David Gregory, Professor Chris Pollock, Dr Celia Caulcott and Mr Peter Swinburne. Professor Pollock had submitted comments to the papers which would be taken into account during discussions.
2. Chair welcomed Dr Will West to his first Council meeting following his appointment in April 2011. He also welcomed Mr Jeremy Clayton to his first meeting. Mr Clayton would be the BIS representative at BBSRC Council meetings.
3. On behalf of Council Chair offered its congratulations to the following who had received awards in the Queen's Birthday Honours 2011:

Commanders of the Order of the British Empire

Professor Joe Brownlie - Chair of Corporate Trustee Team, Institute for Animal Health

Professor William Davies – current BBSRC grant holder

Officers of the Order of the British Empire

Professor Ian Kimber –co-investigator on BBSRC grant

4. Chair also offered Council's condolences to the family of Lady Noreen Elizabeth Murray CBE FRS FRSE, a previous member from 1994 -1998, who passed away on 12 May 2011.
5. Chair asked members to check, and amend if necessary, their entries in the Council conflicts of interest register. He also asked that they raise any conflicts that may arise during the course of discussion.

ITEM 1: MINUTES OF THE COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON 6 APRIL 2011 (BBSRC 19/2011)

6. The minutes of the meeting held on 6 April 2011 were **AGREED** subject to the inclusion of Professor Peter Fryer in the list of attendees.

ITEM 2: MATTERS ARISING (BBSRC 27/2011)

Opportunities for Funding Translational Research in Agriculture and Food (paragraph 15 of the 6 April 2011 minutes)

7. At the last Council meeting it was agreed that a working group, consisting of Council members and led by Dr Andy Richards, would look into understanding the opportunities for funding of translational research in agriculture and food and to explore different potential interventions and solutions. Due to time constraints Council **NOTED** that the formation of this group would be delayed until the Babraham Research Campus project had finished.

Council Member Links with Institutes (paragraph 15 of the 6 April 2011 minutes)

8. At the last meeting Council had agreed that it needed to be more connected to the science strategy within the Institutes, however, this was not possible within the timescales available at Council meetings. It was therefore suggested that individual Council members be appointed to act as links to Institutes and to work alongside the BBSRC Executive member that would be an observer on Institutes' Governing Bodies. Council members were invited to inform Miss Rutherford if they were interested in involvement in this area.

Babraham Research Campus

9. Council was informed that this project was progressing well and a draft business case had been submitted to BIS. A further update would be provided at the next meeting.

Institute Strategic Programme Grants

10. It was apparent that some Institutes were restructuring based on changes resulting from new ISPGs. These had not yet been reviewed. This was proving unsettling for staff, but the timing was being driven by the institute's financial sustainability. Council was informed that a review of the process for

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ISPGs would be undertaken so the next round would be completed in a quicker timescale.

Review of Council and Strategy Advisory Board

11. Following previous Council discussions (and in the light of the new Strategic Plan) the Executive has been considering the process through which Council and the Executive receive their high-level strategic advice and, in particular, the role of Strategy Advisory Board (SAB). Having done some preliminary work the Executive was now proposing the formation of a time-limited and task-specific subgroup of Council to continue the workstream. . The subgroup would initially clarify the formal role and duties of Council and the Executive before considering in more detail whether (and if so how) a body such as SAB fits into the overall scheme. The subgroup will also make recommendations on whether Council's working practices should be changed so as to allow the Council and Executive to better fulfil their roles and duties. .
12. Council **AGREED** to form a subgroup as proposed, and also **ASKED** that the Group consider:
 - the structure of Council meetings, with a possibility to increase networking opportunities.
 - how Council members could be better used outside of meetings to input to the development of new BBSRC strategy and policy.
 - how to best develop an interface between Council and Committee Chairs to ensure BBSRC strategy and priorities were considered when awarding grants. There should be also an opportunity for Council to meet with Committee Chairs.
 - ensuring Council regularly received updated grant funding analysis which had originally been prepared for Delivery Plan discussions.
 - the timing of SAB meetings so it could feed into Council, in a timely manner, with options for discussion and agreement.
13. The membership of the Subgroup was **AGREED** as:

Dr David Lawrence (Chair)
Professor Anne Dell CBE FRS
Professor Russell Foster FRS
Dr John Stageman
Mr Steve Visscher
Professor Janet Allen
Dr Paul Burrows
Dr Celia Caulcott
Miss Ksymena Okonska (secretary)
14. An intermediate report by the subgroup would be presented in October 2011 and the final report in December 2011. In the meantime other members of Council not on the Subgroup were invited to contact Dr Burrows with their thoughts and comments.
15. It was **NOTED** that BIS was likely to redraft its management statement shortly which would reiterate what it expected from Councils and their range of duties.

The Genome Analysis Centre

16. *This paragraph relates to information deemed protect: management and is therefore recorded separately.*

ITEM 3: CHAIR AND CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S BUSINESS (ORAL)

Chair's Business

17. Chair updated Council with recent visits which included the opening of the Easter Bush Research Centre (EBRC) on 29 June at the Roslin Institute, where he had also taken the opportunity to meet with Institute staff including the Director, Professor David Hume. The Centre had been a jointly funded project between BBSRC, the University of Edinburgh, the Scottish Government and the Scottish Agricultural College.
18. On 27 June Chair, the Chair, Dr Andy Richards and Dr Celia Caulcott had met with Dr Hermann Hauser to discuss the Babraham Research Campus. This had been a successful meeting and, as Council had already been informed, work was progressing well on this project.

Chief Executive's Business

Global Food Security Champion

19. Council was informed that an offer had been made for the BBSRC's Global Food Security Champion post. It was hoped that further details on this appointment would be announced shortly.

Report on E-Infrastructure

20. The Chief Executive was the Champion for the RCUK Research Group's Large Facilities Projects. He had represented the Research Councils on the e-infrastructure advisory group that had prepared a report for Sir Adrian Smith, Director General Knowledge and Innovation, BIS, on e-infrastructure. This would be made available in the future. [Now available at <http://www.rcuk.ac.uk/research/xrcprogrammes/eInfrastructure/Pages/home.aspx>.]

Institute Governance

21. The changes to the governance models of Institute were nearing completion and David Willetts, Minister of State for Universities and Science, had signed-off the models regarding pensions and staff terms and conditions. The 1 October 2011 was targeted for the implementation of the changes at which point Institutes, apart from IAH, would be employers of their own staff.

Treasury Master Agreement

22. "The Council considered the terms of a Treasury Master Agreement dated as of 18 May 2011 (which was tabled at the meeting) to be entered into between the Research Council and Lloyds TSB Bank plc ("Lloyds") including (but not limited to) transactions relating to or involving the purchase, sale, exchange, payment or setting off of sums of money determined by reference to present

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or future interest or currency exchange rates including (without limitation) interest rate swaps, caps and floors, forward foreign exchange contracts and options on any such transactions.

23. It was resolved that the Treasury Master Agreement was “hereby approved and that any one of Professor Sir Tom Blundell and Dr Andrew Richards be and is hereby authorised to sign the same on the Research Council’s behalf.
24. This resolution does not in any way limit or affect instructions to Lloyds contained in the Resolutions of the Research Council constituting the Research Council’s bank mandate.”
25. Further details of visits undertaken by the Chief Executive could be found in his blog at <http://blogs.bbsrc.ac.uk/>

ITEM 4: BOARD APPOINTMENTS (BBSRC 20/2011)

26. Council:
 - (i) **NOTED** the membership of the Appointments Board;
 - (ii) **NOTED** the biography of Professor Rod Hubbard;
 - (iii) **APPROVED** the appointment of Professor Rod Hubbard, the University of York, as a member of the Appointments Board from 1 August 2011 for a period 3 years

ITEM 5: RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE COUNCIL-SUB GROUP ON AVIAN FACILITIES (BBSRC 21/2011)

27. *This item relates to information deemed protect: policy and is therefore recorded separately.*

ITEM 6: OVERVIEW ON THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE NORWICH RESEARCH PARK (BBSRC 22/2011)

28. Mr Visscher gave a brief overview of the development of the Norwich Research Park (NRP). Two Boards had been established, one to look at science and one to consider innovation and both Boards would make recommendations on how interest and investment could be increased in the Park. These recommendations would come back to October Council for discussion and agreement on the way forward.
29. Council **NOTED** the update. It also **AGREED** that once the development of both NRP and the Babraham Research Campus had been implemented the model was used elsewhere such as EBRC and IBERS.

ITEM 7: MINUTES OF THE AUDIT BOARD MEETING HELD ON 24 JUNE 2011 (BBSRC 25/2011)

30. Mr Parfrey introduced this item which provided Council with the minutes from the Audit board meeting held on 24 June 2011. The Board had discussed the finalisation of the BBSRC Annual Statutory Accounts for 2010-11 and the

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Research Council Pension Schemes Accounts 2011-11. An update on the progress of these two sets of accounts followed in the next two items.

31. Council had previously agreed to the formation of a Strategic Opportunities Fund (SOF) which could be used to respond quickly to new funding opportunities and so avoid top-slicing from other budgets. Audit Board had agreed the proposals for the governance and the management of this budget line. All bids to the SOF would be agreed by the BBSRC Executive Group and Council would receive a summary of commitments from the Fund at each meeting.
32. Audit Board had also been provided with a paper showing the procurement savings made so far for the Councils using the RCUK SSC Ltd. The Board would look at these savings in depth at its next meeting. Council was informed that any issues regarding RCUK SSC Ltd raised directly with them should be redirected to Mr Parfrey who would take these forward.
33. Council **NOTED** the minutes from the Audit Board meeting held in 24 June 2011.

ITEM 8: DRAFT BBSRC ACCOUNTS 2010/11 AND FINANCIAL REPORT (BBSRC 23/2011)

34. Mr Parfrey introduced this item which provided an update on the position regarding BBSRC's 2010-11 statutory accounts and annual report. He said that the NAO had undertaken its audit of the BBSRC Accounts 2010-11, however, the wash-up meeting had been postponed and rearranged for later in the summer. Therefore the outcome of the audit was not yet known, including the possibility of a recommendation from NAO that these Accounts should again be consolidated with the Accounts of two BBSRC Institutes. Council was informed that no questions had been received regarding the qualification of the 2009-10 Accounts following BBSRC's decision to not consolidate.
35. The Accounts would be laid before Parliament after the summer recess. This had traditionally been before the recess, however, this was not a legal requirement and other Councils would be laying their Accounts in September too.
36. Council **NOTED** the planned timetable for the production of the 2010-11 annual report and statutory accounts and that BBSRC was forecasting to meet its targets for year-end outturn for 2010-11.

ITEM 9: DRAFT RESEARCH COUNCIL PENSION SCHEMES ACCOUNTS 2010/11 (BBSRC 24/2011)

37. *This item relates to information deemed protect: management and is therefore recorded separately.*

ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Strategic LoLa Committee Meeting: 30 June 2011

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38. Council was informed that the last Strategic LoLa Committee assessed 11 proposals with four of these approved for funding totalling £14M. The abstracts for the four agreed proposals would come to the next Council meeting to note as they were each above £2M. In the meantime Council **AGREED** that the Principal Investigator for these grants could be informed that their proposal had been agreed for funding. Although there had been a good spread of science within the proposals considered by the Committee there was a lack of grants within bio-energy/biotechnology. Council was informed that there would be a specific call in this area during the next round with the aim that 50% of the Strategic LoLa budget would be used. However, as always the quality of the science would be the overriding factor
39. Professor Allen was to look into the timetable for Strategic LoLas so the Committee would have sight of outlines within the required deadlines.

Council Secretariat
July 2011