



Natural
Environment
Research Council

Minutes of the 22nd meeting of NERC Council in UK Research and Innovation (redacted)

NATURAL ENVIRONMENT RESEARCH COUNCIL

Twenty-second meeting of NERC Council in UK Research and Innovation held on the RRS *Sir David Attenborough*, Rosyth, Edinburgh on Thursday, 21 September 2023.

Members present:

Professor Peter Liss (Interim Executive Chair), Rashik Parmar (Senior Independent Member), Judith Batchelar, Dr Rebecca Heaton, Dr Matthew Harwood, Professor Sir Stephen Holgate, Professor Mike Kendall, Michael Lewis, Clare Matterson, Gordon McGregor, Professor John Pyle (via Zoom), Professor Gideon Henderson, CSA, Defra, Professor David Hannah, Chair, Science Committee, Charlie McNichol-Fardon, Chair, Future Leaders Council

NERC/UKRI Directors (Head Office): Nigel Bird (Director, Major Projects), Alison Robinson (Deputy Executive Chair and Director, Business Delivery and Insight), Professor Susan Waldron (Director, Research and Skills), Dr Iain Williams (Director, Strategic Partnerships)

Apologies: Professor Hannah Cloke

Other attendees: Professor Alison Park, Item 3, Tim Bianek (UKRI, Chief Operating Officer) (via Zoom), Item 10

Secretariat: Helen Page, Katrina Lewis

Introductory items

1. Executive Chair's welcome, unconfirmed minutes of the 21st meeting of NERC Council and Decisions and Actions (Oral)

1.1 Peter Liss welcomed members to the twenty-second meeting of NERC Council which was his first meeting as Chair.

1.2 Peter Liss asked members to ensure their declared interests were kept updated via the self-service portal and asked if there were any vested interests in any of the items being discussed today. None were declared.

1.3 Peter Liss congratulated those in the environmental science community who had been honoured in the King's Birthday Honours as well as those who had recently been made Fellows of the Royal Society:

- **DBE:** Professor Eleanor Jane Milner-Gulland, Tasso Leventis Chair in Biodiversity, Oxford University for services to International Conservation
- **OBE:** Professor Mark Bailey, former Executive Director, UKCEH for services to Microbial Ecology and to scientific leadership
- **OBE:** Professor Jane Hill, Professor of Ecology, University of York for services to Conservation Ecology

- **OBE:** Professor Nicola Milner FBA, Professor of Archaeology, University of York for services to archaeology
- **OBE:** Professor Stuart Rogers, lately marine scientist, Cefas for services to Oceanography
- **MBE:** Dr Shubha Sathyendranath, merit scientist, remote sensing, Plymouth Marine Laboratory for services to oceanography

New Royal Society Fellows 2023

- **Professor Myles Allen CBE**, Professor of Geosystem Science, University of Oxford
- **Professor Michael Depledge CBE**, Emeritus Professor of Environment and Human Health, University of Exeter Medical School
- **Professor Louise Heathwaite CBE**, Lancaster Environment Centre and Pro-Vice-Chancellor Research and Enterprise, Lancaster University
- **Professor John Hutchinson**, Professor of Evolutionary Biomechanics, Royal Veterinary College
- **Professor Christopher Jiggins**, Professor of Evolutionary Biology, University of Cambridge
- **Professor Loeske Kruuk**, Royal Society Research Professor, Institute of Ecology and Evolution, University of Edinburgh
- **Professor Simon L Lewis**, Chair, Global Change Science, University College London and University of Leeds
- **Professor Jane Memmott OBE**, Professor of Ecology, University of Bristol
- **Professor William Sutherland CBE**, Miriam Rothschild Chair of Conservation Biology, University of Cambridge
- **Professor Derek Vance**, Professor of Geochemistry, ETH Zurich (formerly University of Bristol)

1.4 Peter Liss congratulated Professor David Hannah who had recently been elected as a fellow of the American Geophysical Union (AGU).

1.5 Peter Liss asked members for any amendments and matters arising from the minutes of the previous meeting. No amendments were made, and the minutes of the twenty-first meeting were confirmed as a good record.

1.6 Peter Liss advised that the actions from the previous meeting had been completed, adding that a response was awaited from the Environment Agency on whether they might join Council in March 2024.

2. Executive Chair's update (Oral)

2.1 Peter Liss gave an oral update on some of the key activities since the previous Council meeting.

a) Introductory meetings

Peter Liss informed Council that he had held a series of introductory meetings following his appointment as the NERC Interim Executive Chair which had included two meetings with NERC Head Office. He added that he had visited Exeter to attend the British Science Festival, where Professor Dame Jane Francis, the incoming President of the British Science Association, had given a presidential address.

Peter Liss informed Council that Iain Williams and colleagues from the British Antarctic Survey (BAS) had recently attended the House of Commons Environmental Audit Committee to discuss NERC priorities in polar science.

Peter Liss commented that a new programme had recently been launched between Defra/NERC/Innovate UK on Innovation in Environmental Sensors.

b) Horizon Europe

Peter Liss welcomed the recent news that the UK would now associate with Horizon Europe. He added that, as a consequence, the UK planned alternative, the Pioneer programme, was now on hold which included the 'moonshot' ideas. He added that it might be possible for some of these ideas to form part of the next Spending Review bid.

Peter Liss commented that it would be important for participation in Horizon Europe to return to, or surpass, previous levels.

c) Pay remit

Peter Liss informed Council that the pay increase for UKRI staff had now been agreed, adding that there were now varying pay scales for STEM and non-STEM employees.

d) PhD students/Stipends

Peter Liss reminded Council that the intention was to create a UKRI wide scheme for studentships and fellowships. He added that a decision had been taken to progress a NERC scheme in the interim whilst the UKRI scheme remained in the planning stages.

e) Spending Review

Peter Liss commented that the next Spending Review was likely to take place in Autumn 2024 and emphasised the importance of highlighting the success of NERC science when bidding for funding for scientific research.

f) UKRI Operating Model

Peter Liss reminded Council that UKRI was currently developing its Operating Model, noting that Tim Bianek would provide an update later in the meeting.

Council commented that other Government departments, such as the Environment Agency, were under similar constraints and asked whether NERC had considered development opportunities, such as secondments between Government departments, to help to address this issue. Alison Robinson informed Council that secondments between NERC and Defra were already in place. Nigel Bird added that a staff interchange scheme was being considered, as part of the Ways of Working programme, to make it easier for NERC staff to interchange with partner organisations which would help to develop a cohort of environmental professionals.

g) RAAC concrete

Peter Liss informed Council that the NERC estate had now been checked for RAAC and only a small amount had been discovered at BGS which was not currently a cause for concern.

h) NERC Executive Chair

Peter Liss informed Council that the outcome on the appointment of the substantive NERC Executive Chair was still awaited.

He added that, in the interim, it had been decided to continue to drive forward new ideas for NERC research and informed Council that NERC was organising a 'Big Ideas' workshop at the Rutherford Appleton Laboratory in October to generate ideas for new projects and agreed to provide feedback on the outcomes of the workshop at the next Council meeting.

i) International

Peter Liss commented that it had been decided to add international collaboration as a topic for discussion at the retreat in 2024 to discuss how this might be developed further.

j) Joint session with BBSRC

Peter Liss informed Council that a joint session with BBSRC in September 2024 focusing on 'soil' was in the planning stages. Council highlighted the importance of ensuring a

joined-up approach given that there were various organisations with an interest in soil.

Council commented that MRC now had a substantive Executive Chair, Professor Patrick Chinnery. It was agreed that this was a welcome appointment which would help to facilitate more co-working between MRC and NERC in the future.

k) Building a Green Future

Peter Liss commented that progress under this NERC-led theme was being made, adding that this was a good example of where UKRI might help drive interdisciplinary working. Alison Robinson added that, following the joint session with MRC in December 2022, a joint programme with the Department of Health had recently been announced under this theme.

l) NERC Council recruitment

Peter Liss reminded Council that UKRI was currently recruiting new members to its Councils, including NERC, and that the campaign was being run by a search agency.

m) NERC Impact Awards

Peter Liss reminded Council that they had received invitations to attend the NERC Impact Award ceremony at the Natural History Museum on 29 November 2023.

2.2 Peter Liss thanked the NERC Directors for their support since he had assumed the role of Interim Executive Chair. He also extended his thanks to all of those involved in facilitating the meeting on the RRS *Sir David Attenborough* including the secretariat for all of their assistance in ensuring Council ran smoothly.

2.3 Council asked whether there were any plans to refresh the Infrastructure Roadmap. Iain Williams commented that the roadmap was held at a UKRI level and that there was an intention to review it but no detail at the moment. He added that NERC routinely reviewed and evolved the ideas and suggested this might be a useful discussion topic for Council retreat. David Hannah added that Science Committee reviewed ideas from the community, which, together with the infrastructure pipeline, helped to identify any gaps.

2.4 Council commented that the NERC Impact Awards would provide an ideal opportunity to raise the profile of environmental science. Alison Robinson responded that there was an intention to produce a series of videos alongside the impact awards and that NERC was working closely with the NHM to inform a potential activity using NERC impact case studies.

2.5 Council observed that, when considering new members for Council, it might be useful to consider international representation, particularly given the recent association to Horizon Europe.

3. UKRI Strategic Theme: creating opportunities, improving outcomes (Oral) Slides, item 3

3.1 Peter Liss welcomed Professor Alison Park, Deputy Executive Chair, ESRC, to NERC Council and reminded Council that it had been decided to invite each of the UKRI Strategic Theme leads to provide an overview of the themes they were leading on.

3.2 Alison Park presented slides which provided an overview of the UKRI Strategic Theme: Creating Opportunities, Improving Outcomes. She added that the theme focused on understanding place-based disparities and identifying actionable solutions. Its aim was to co-ordinate, amplify and fill any gaps identified from existing UKRI investments and activities.

3.3 Alison Park explained that there were four key components to the theme:

- economic growth and innovation
- health inequalities
- community connectedness
- cross-cutting activities

Alison Park outlined some of the current investments within each component.

3.4 Alison Park commented on the funding breakdown of the current portfolio and explained that there was an unallocated, ringfenced strategic fund to ensure there was responsiveness to current issues, such as the economic crisis and natural disasters and to help identify gaps and opportunities for collaboration.

3.5 Alison Park outlined three examples of programmes funded under this theme:

- UK Resilient Coastal Seas and Communities Programme and Network Plus
- Local Policy Innovation Partnerships
- Mobilising Community Assets to Tackle Health Inequalities

Alison Park explained that it would be important to maximise the connections between the investments through both formal and informal connections.

3.6 Council thanked Alison Park for an interesting and valuable overview and commented that it would be important to work closely with local authorities who were best able to identify community priorities. Alison Park agreed that it was important to engage with local authorities and the local community to identify issues and that the Local Policy Innovation Partnerships (LPIP) were key to this aspect as they were working directly with local authorities across the UK.

3.7 Council commented on the difficulties in establishing local research partnerships in some parts of the UK. Alison Park agreed that this was difficult, especially when a community was not located near to a research university.

3.8 Charlie McNichol-Fardon commented that it would be important to find the feedback loops and suggested that network mapping might be useful and Alison Park confirmed this was being considered but it was currently at an early stage.

3.9 Council asked whether the issue of turning science into innovation was included in this theme, noting that the UK was not currently at the forefront of this activity globally. Alison Park agreed this required consideration, noting that it was wider than just this theme.

3.10 Council commented that consideration should be given under this theme to criminal activity which can create 'no-go zones' and depressed communities.

3.11 Council commented that business was also considering supporting similar activity in local areas and asked how there might be better connectivity to avoid duplication. Alison Park agreed that there was scope for possible co-funding and would consider how best to address this.

3.12 Susan Waldron informed Council that one of the NERC Strategic Research Investments, Resilient Coastal Seas and Communities, discussed at the June Council meeting, was being funded under this theme.

[Gideon Henderson joined the meeting]

Items for discussion

4. Impact of UKRI research grant payment method harmonisation on research centres (NERC 23/22)

- 4.1 Peter Liss introduced this item, explaining that UKRI had taken a decision to harmonise the payment mechanism for research grants which would result in a change to the way in which NERC paid its National Capability partners in future.
- 4.2 Nigel Bird informed Council that UKRI uses a dual support system whereby 80% of a research activity was paid on an individual grant with the remaining 20% paid as block funding to Higher Education Institutions using the Quality-Research (QR) formula.
- 4.3 Nigel Bird added that some of the NERC research centres (British Antarctic Survey (BAS), British Geological Survey (BGS), UK Centre for Ecology and Hydrology (UKCEH), National Oceanographic Centre (NOC) and Plymouth Marine Laboratory (PML) were not eligible for QR funding as they were not higher education providers. He explained that, historically, NERC had funded 90% of the research activity cost directly on a research grant and a small amount via block funding, called Institutional Funding (IF). NERC was now being asked to harmonise to the UKRI dual support system. This change in payment methodology would not change the overall amount paid as the amount reduced on each grant would be transferred to IF, to mirror the QR system. This change in mechanism would require the transfer of funding, in equal parts from Discovery Science and Strategic Research and Innovation to the National Capability funding line.
- 4.4 Council asked whether this would be an ongoing commitment given the opportunities for the independent research centres to generate additional funding. Nigel Bird explained that NERC wanted to ensure all of its research partners were in receipt of sustainable financial payments.
- 4.5 In response to a query about whether consideration had been given to provide 100% funding across UKRI, Peter Liss confirmed that this approach was considered but not accepted.
- 4.6 Nigel Bird commented that the approach outlined in the paper would apply to NERC activity only and that any funding received via the UKRI Strategic Themes would be paid at 80%.

DECISION: Council agreed to transfer funding to National Capability from Discovery Science and Strategic Research and Innovation in equal proportion, noting the revised approach would start from 1 April 2024.

5. Financial sustainability of research centres (Oral) Slides, item 5

- 5.1 Nigel Bird introduced this item and presented slides, reminding Council that it had previously discussed the possible impact of changes to STEM pay in February 2023.
- 5.2 Nigel Bird provided an illustration of the cost of the uplift.
- 5.3 Iain Williams outlined the scientific implications for National Capability activity under three headings:
 - global and decadal science
 - science for the community/public good
 - infrastructure and facilities

Council noted the interdependence of the three areas of activity and the importance of ensuring all three activities remained. Iain Williams remarked that Council would have the opportunity to discuss this further as part of the National Capability discussion at the Council

meeting scheduled for June 2024.

- 5.4 Gideon Henderson queried whether employees based at Head Office, Swindon were considered non-STEM and Nigel Bird confirmed that all HO staff were non-STEM. Gideon Henderson added that it would be important to work collaboratively, given that science funding across Government was on an upward trajectory and other Government departments also funded National Capability.
- 5.5 In summary, Peter Liss confirmed it would be important to continue to fund excellent science, adding that a two-way interaction to agree the way forward with BAS and BGS once the business plans were received would be required.

6. Update from CSA, Defra (Oral)

- 6.1 Gideon Henderson provided an update under the following headings:

6.2 International

Gideon Henderson welcomed the announcement that the UK would associate with both Horizon Europe and Copernicus, noting that Defra was the UK nominated lead for Horizon Europe Cluster 6 (food, bioeconomy, natural resources, agriculture and environment).

Gideon Henderson advised that the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity (IPBES) had published its report on Invasive Alien Species in September.

Gideon Henderson added that a climate summit was being held this week in New York attended by world leaders and the United Nations General Assembly.

Gideon Henderson informed Council that there was currently an activity to look at agreements in science and medicine on sharing biological samples and standards internationally as there was some concern regarding the risks of this activity.

6.3 Department for Science, Innovation and Technology (DSIT)

Gideon Henderson commented that the National Science and Technology Council (NSTC) had held two meetings recently, one of which had a focus on EngBio which had included a description of EngBio as consisting of five categories: human and animal health; agriculture and food; chemicals and materials; waste and environment; renewable fuel. The second NSTC meeting had discussed the overall Research and Development (R&D) spend within Government, producing a summary document of all public spending, which showed that R&D funding was on an upward trajectory. He highlighted the importance of working collaboratively with other Government departments, particularly given the smaller increases in the UKRI budget.

6.4 Publications

Gideon Henderson informed Council of some recent Government publications: the Biosecurity Strategy published in June 2023; the National Adaptation Plan published in July 2023 and the National Risk Register published in August 2023.

6.5 Funding

Gideon Henderson commented that a programme on Land Use for Net Zero was being jointly funded by UKRI/Defra with the first set of bids assessed earlier that week. He added that the programme was led by BBSRC with involvement from other research councils and all four devolved Governments.

He commented on two other programmes: the Innovation in environmental monitoring

programme (joint NERC/Defra) and the National Adaptation Programme (joint Defra/UKRI).

6.6 People

Gideon Henderson commented that Defra planned to launch a fellowship programme whereby applicants would spend 6-12 months working in Defra. He added that Defra were currently recruiting a Senior Civil Service role, a Deputy Director in International Science.

6.7 Council observed that the overall Government R&D budget was increasing. Gideon Henderson responded that the R&D budget covered a range of other departments, for example, the National Institute for Health and Care Research (NIHR), UK Space Agency, Ministry of Defence, the Met Office and a range of Government laboratories.

7. **National Capability and Strategic Research international atmospheric research initiative (NERC 23/23) Slides, item 7**

7.1 Susan Waldron introduced this item and presented slides.

7.2 Susan Waldron explained that Council was being asked to discuss the proposed strategic research programme and agree that it was an appropriate investment to support NERC's strategic ambitions.

7.3 Susan Waldron informed Council that the investment would be an international programme, collecting data in partnership to drive improvements to weather and climate prediction. She added that the programme would utilise facilities, including the Facility for Airborne Atmospheric Measurements (FAAM) aircraft, provided by NCAS and that there was a high potential for world-class impact due to the Met office partnership.

7.4 Council was supportive of the proposal, noting that it was a time-bound opportunity which would lead to more accurate forecasting. Council added that it was also important that the data collected would feed into the testing of the new Met Office model, Momentum.

DECISION: Council agreed this was an appropriate investment to support NERC's strategic ambitions

8. **NERC estates investment strategy to meet net zero (Oral) Slides, item 8**

8.1 Nigel Bird introduced this item and presented slides to provide Council with an overview of the NERC estate and the principles and options to help NERC meet net zero. He reminded Council that 'oversight, development and management of institutes, facilities and major investments' was one of its responsibilities under the NERC Council Terms of Reference.

8.2 Nigel Bird explained that NERC retained an historical responsibility for ensuring its estate was safe and fit for purpose and that there was an intention to transfer the estate back to the research centres at some point.

8.3 Nigel Bird provided an overview of the UK estate, its condition and current assumptions.

8.4 Nigel Bird updated Council on progress so far with achieving net zero at the research centres including the forward trajectory to 2029/30.

8.5 Council asked whether NERC had a biodiversity target for its estate and Nigel Bird responded that there was a biodiversity action plan rather than a target. It was agreed to ask the Future Leaders Council (FLC) to consider this.

ACTION: Nigel Bird to discuss setting a biodiversity target with the FLC Chair, Charlie McNichol-Fardon

- 8.6 Council commented that the slide illustrating progress to date on net zero was useful and asked whether a similar slide might be produced detailing the 'cost' of what needed to be done to achieve it. Nigel Bird confirmed that this was under consideration.
- 8.7 Council highlighted the importance and value of these buildings for the community. Charlie McNichol-Fardon added that it would be important to consider the social value element of the buildings and how behavioural change in the community which was using the buildings might help in reducing carbon emissions.
- 8.8 Council asked whether there would be carbon budgets for the estate and whether the estate included the NERC HO in Swindon. Nigel Bird confirmed that UKRI did not own the building in Swindon, adding that there was an intention to publish information on the carbon footprint of the research centres. Alison Robinson added that Susan Simon, MRC Director of Capital and Estates, was responsible for setting carbon budgets for the whole of UKRI, including infrastructure.
- 8.9 Council endorsed the approach to ensuring NERC estate was fit for the future.

9. NERC Council: outcome of annual self-assessment (NERC 23/24)

- 9.1 Rashik Parmar introduced this item to report on the outcome of this year's annual self-assessment exercise.
- 9.2 Rashik Parmar highlighted the continued importance of Council leadership in the NERC Strategic Delivery Plan. He added that he would welcome the views of Council on the suggestion to provide 'buddies' from the NERC Executive and any ideas on how the role of ambassador might be better facilitated.
- 9.3 Council commented that it would welcome the provision of content from NERC which they could share with their networks to enhance their role as ambassadors. Council added that it would also be useful to be provided with content to aid discussion with the more challenging stories.
- 9.4 Council agreed, following discussion, that, rather than a formal buddy system, it might be more useful to have an informal agreement. It was agreed that Council members might contact Directors at any time and that this should be a two-way arrangement.
- 9.5 Alison Robinson explained that Council had an important role in the formulation of the Strategic Delivery Plan and that this would become more evident towards the next Spending Review. She added that the FLC would be helping to develop the NERC public engagement strategy and any volunteers from NERC Council to help with this would be welcome.
- 9.6 Alison Robinson reminded Council that communication was now a UKRI level responsibility and NERC no longer had its own comms team. She added that she would endeavour to provide Council with additional content to help in its role as ambassadors.

ACTION: NERC to provide Council members with relevant content to aid their role as ambassadors

- 9.7 Council observed that there was still progress to be made in developing the relationship with UKRI and determining whether UKRI was successful in championing the importance of research.
- 9.8 Council commented that there was limited discussion at Council meetings about the university sector. Peter Liss confirmed that the substantive NERC Executive Chair, once appointed, would resume the regular university visits and the Executive would consider how to feedback to Council on these visits. Council suggested that it would also be useful to visit

universities for future meetings of NERC Council.

10. Update on the UKRI Operating Model (Oral) Slides, item 10

10.1 Tim Bianek introduced this item to update Council on progress with the UKRI Operating Model and wider UKRI organisational change.

10.2 Tim Bianek advised that there were six objectives, outlined on the slide, under Objective 6 of the UKRI Strategy to ensure 'UKRI is the most efficient, effective and agile organisation that it can be.'

10.3 Tim Bianek explained that the aim of UKRI's organisation change was to:

- integrate and harmonise processes
- increase collaboration and reduce duplication
- simplify and automate process

10.4 Tim Bianek added that it was important to acknowledge that UKRI was one integrated organisation with a range of pan-UKRI functions, adding that changes had already been made across the organisation to better enable collaborative working.

10.5 Peter Liss asked whether there were sufficient new ideas generated and whether the mechanisms were in place to feed these in to UKRI. Tim Bianek commented that one of the mechanisms to generate good ideas and develop investment cases were the UKRI Strategic Themes.

10.6 Susan Waldron asked whether Tim could provide more information on how UKRI supported sustainability of the university sector. Tim Bianek explained that it was a priority for UKRI to recognise the importance of sustainability and ensure it was adequately resourced, drawing from expertise from across the organisation.

[Gordon McGregor left the meeting]

[Michael Lewis left the meeting]

11. Science Committee recruitment campaign: outcome (Oral)

11.1 David Hannah updated Council on the recent recruitment campaign for Science Committee which had sought to recruit seven new members. He expressed his thanks to the panel and the NERC head office for their excellent support throughout the campaign.

11.2 David Hannah informed Council that 29 applications had been received with 12 applicants being interviewed. He added that two of the new members, Professor David Topping and Dr Glen Watts, had commenced their tenures in September 2023 whilst the remaining five new members (Professor Marian Scott, Professor Ian Main, Professor Anna Hogg, Professor Daniela Schmidt, Dr Andrew Manning) would start in January 2024. He thanked those who were stepping down from the committee for their contributions.

11.3 David Hannah informed Council that Science Committee was due to have their next meeting in October 2023 at the UK Met Office where they planned to discuss Highlight Topics, Digital Ambitions and Strategic Research Investments.

12. Agenda and unconfirmed minutes of the Future Leaders Council (NERC 23/25)

12.1 Charlie McNichol-Fardon introduced this item to provide an update on the first meeting of the Future Leaders Council (FLC).

12.2 Charlie McNichol-Fardon expressed her thanks to NERC HO for their assistance in organising the first meeting which had taken place at the National Centre for Earth Observation in Leicester in June 2023. She reminded Council that the purpose of the FLC was to provide independent advice and challenge to NERC and to help broaden the talent pool in the NERC governance system. She added that she had been keen to ensure a psychological safe space was created at the meeting for people to feel confident in sharing their views.

12.3 Charlie McNichol-Fardon outlined some of the items discussed at the first meeting: NERC dashboard; Diversity and Inclusion funding line; the plan to extend Research Community engagement funding to 2023/24; the approach for scoping a role modelling investment for a call launching in summer 2024; NERC low carbon fuel trials and mentoring and training.

12.4 Charlie McNichol-Fardon informed Council that the second meeting of the FLC would take place at NOC, Southampton in November with items for discussion including: NERC dashboard; estate de-carbonisation; BAS future fellowships; annual report outline; public engagement and digital strategy. She added that the next meeting would also include a session on action learning sets and commented that the FLC were interested in hearing from guest speakers at their meetings, asking any interested Council members to contact her.

12.5 Council congratulated Charlie McNichol-Fardon on progress so far with the FLC.

13. Rolling programme of business (NERC 23/26)

13.1 Helen Page reminded Council members that this item provided an opportunity to raise items for discussion at future Council meetings and that items for discussion might also be submitted to her at any point.

13.2 Helen Page highlighted that there was a change of meeting date for 2024 (from 18/19 September to 25/26 September) to facilitate a joint session with BBSRC and that diary entries would be updated shortly.

13.3 In response to a query on when the definition of National Capability would be discussed, Iain Williams confirmed National Capability funding was on the rolling programme for June 2024 and this would be subject to confirmation once the NERC Executive Chair was in post.

14. Any Other Business (Oral)

14.1 There was no further business.