



**AGREED MINUTES OF THE TWENTY-EIGHTH MEETING OF STFC COUNCIL
HELD BY VIDEOCONFERENCE
15th NOVEMBER 2022**

Attendees	
Council Members:	Mark Thomson (chair) (MAT) Sheila Rowan (Co-chair) (SR) Maggie Aderin-Pocock (MAP) Jon Butterworth (JB) Mike Dunne (MD) Patricia Hodgson (PH) Anu Ojha (AO) Ben Olivier (BO) Angeli Moeller (AM) Hiranya Peiris (HP) Andy Schofield (AJS) Hitesh Thakrar (HT) Pam Thomas (PT) Maya Riddle (MR), Private Secretary Janice Masone (JM), Minutes Secretary
Apologies:	
In Attendance:	
	Ruth Elliot (RE), UKRI deputy CFO Paul Monks (PM), BEIS CSA Tara Shears (TS), Chair of Science Board
Invited Guests:	
	Ottoline Leyser (OL), UKRI CEO – Item 5 Philip Amison (PA), Associate Director Strategy – item 3 & 9 Rosanna Greenop (RG), Head of Strategy - Item 3 & 9 Neil Geddes (NB) Exec Director National Labs Science & Tech – items 3, 7 & 9 Alan Partridge (AP), Exec Director National Labs Facilities – item 3, 7 & 9 Grahame Blair (GB), Exec Director Programmes - items 3, 9 & 10 Mark Affonso (MA), Finance Director – item 6 Chris Ball (CB) UKRI – Item 7 Joanne Brown (JB) STFC Business Partner- Items 7 and 8 Peter Thompson (PT)- STFC Head of HR Item 7 Ailidh Woodcock (AW), Head of Infrastructure Strategy – Item 9 Liz Fellman (LF), Exec Director Strategy, Planning & Comms – items 9 & 10

Chair, Mark Thomson		
1. Welcome and opening comments		
1.1	Mark Thomson (MAT) welcomed everyone to the twenty-eighth meeting of STFC Council, which was held by videoconference.	
1.2	No apologies were noted for this meeting.	
1.3	MAT reminded Council members that they are required to keep the Secretary informed of any changes to their personal register of interests as they arise. At this meeting the following conflicts were declared: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Sheila Rowan declared a direct conflict, Hiranya Peiris and Tara Shears declared a minor conflict due to affiliations with various groups who are bidding on Wave 3 Preliminary Cases for the UKRI Infrastructure Fund 	
2. Minutes, Actions and Matters Arising and Actions from the meeting held on 8th March 2022 – STFC (UKRI) 22/32		
2.1	<u>Minutes</u> Subject to some minor corrections, Council approved the minutes as an accurate record of the meeting held on 14 th July 2022.	
2.2	<u>Actions</u> The actions from previous meetings were reviewed and were either complete or in progress. More detail on progress can be found in the Action Register which is an annex to these minutes	
2.3	<u>Matters Arising</u> There were no matters arising from the minutes or actions of the meeting held on 14 th July 2022.	
3. Rationalising Council's reporting structures- STFC (UKRI) 22/33		
3.1	Council welcomed Rosanna Greenop (RG), Grahame Blair (GB), Neil Geddes (NG) and Philip Amison (PA) to the meeting for this discussion, Council received an overview of the background to the proposed changes to STFC's advisory structure which is designed to improve effectiveness and address several in the existing structure. The discussion focused mainly on the future composition and roles of Science Board and TAAB.	
3.2	To improve the effectiveness of Science Board on providing advice on the academic facing core programme, Science Board would now focus on providing advice and prioritisation of the PPAN programme. The composition of new Science Board will be drawn from the PPAN community alone, providing increased breadth and depth of experience. This change will also address one of the main recommendations of the PP Strategic Review, with the prioritised PP roadmap being developed through Science Board, rather than a new committee.	
3.3	TAAB will act as an overarching advisory body for the technology, accelerators, and large-scale multi-disciplinary facilities (national and international). This change would address several gaps identified by the executive directors of the large-scale facilities	

3.3	<p>The advice from Science Board and TAAB would come together at Council, who will take an overall strategic view of the programme across all STFC's activities. Actions and decisions arising from discussion at Council:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ii. Council asked for an update on the plans to merge the Innovation Board and the Industry and Business Partnership Board. iii. Council was strongly supportive of the changes to the roles of Science Board and TAAB and agreed to make this change. iv. The naming of the Science Board and TAAB will be reviewed to ensure that the new incarnation of TAAB is not viewed as being less important. One option that was raised would be something along the lines of Science Board panel A (PPAN) and Science Board panel B (facilities, accelerators and technology). v. It was agreed that the TOR for the new boards will be reviewed by the FGC in January before being brought back to Council in February. vi. Council supported a rapid implementation of the new structure. If practical, the implementation of the new structure would start in April 2023. vii. The impact on current membership of Science Board and TAAB was discussed. It was confirmed that all current SB and TAAB members would be kept on until the end of their term but there would be movement between the two Boards. viii. There will be a need to increase the membership of Science Board (PPAN). Council discussed the potential negative EDI impact of a too short process. To make the change on the desired timescale, the new recruitment process would need to start soon with a generous time window for applications. ix. Council noted that a clear communication plan will need to be put in place rapidly, taking into account what might happen to the sub-boards supporting Science Board and TAAB. There is an urgency to the initial communications in order to be able to launch a recruitment process rapidly. x. Arrangements for APPE and ETCC will be discussed in February. xi. Council agreed that FGC and EDI Board should continue to report directly to Council
3.4	<p>Council expressed strong support for this significant change to STFC's advisory structure and felt that it will have a positive impact on STFC and its communities. The TORs will be updated to reflect discussions at Council before being reviewed by FGC in January 2023 and will return to Council in Feb 2023 for final discussion/approval before implementation</p>
Chair: Sheila Rowan	
4. Executive Chair Update (presentation)	
4.1	<p>Sheila Rowan (SR) invited Mark Thomson (MAT) to present his update to Council. The main discussion points are noted below</p>
4.2	<p>Corporate Update</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Council members were pleased to note that STFC has successfully recruited Georgia Giatras as the new COO. She will be starting with STFC in January 2023.

		<p>ii. Council members welcomed the news that the STEM pay case has been submitted and is currently under consideration at government level. If the case is successful, it is hoped that it will address some of the long-standing recruitment and retention issues.</p> <p>iii. There are longer term aims to introduce a competency-based framework to address the lack of pay progression within bands. Council members advised ensuring there is clear communication with staff on how this will work once the details are finalised.</p>
4.3	<u>Live Issues</u>	<p>i. MAT reported that he and colleagues are engaged in early discussions with BIES on the possibility of hosting new International Facility in the UK. There are clear benefits to the UK economy and hosting attracts new talent and is shown to boost the host country's technical capabilities. However, careful consideration is needed, the facility needs to be the right one for the UK community.</p> <p>ii. There is a meeting planned for December to consider the future strategic direction of the Boulby Facility. The facility is well placed to contribute to the UK's global ambitions around Dark Matter. Other UKRI councils are working with STFC on this. This news was particularly welcomed by the BEIS CSA who felt it will protect the UK's overall science capability and attract the international community.</p> <p>iii. MAT reported some of the challenges that STFC and Diamond Light Source are currently working to address, including the appointment of a new CEO, Diamond II upgrade and better integration with STFC/UKRI. Council noted the issues and concerns and urged consideration of a plan to mitigate some of the risks.</p> <p>iv. For STFC, the biggest challenges currently are around inflation an energy costs and internationals subscriptions. A more detailed report will be given at the next Council meeting on how the international subscriptions will be managed.</p> <p>v. MAT and colleagues continue to work with UKRI on the Operating Model. There is a level of unquantified risk and a need to focus on priority areas to deliver the new operating model.</p>
5.	Update from UKRI CEO (presentation)	
	Chair: Mark Thomson	
5.2	Council members were delighted to welcome Ottoline Leyser (OL), the UKRI CEO to the meeting.	
5.3	<p>OL's presentation focused on the recently published UKRI Strategy and Council Delivery Plans and some of the key challenges facing UKRI. OL was keen to hear the views of Council and to highlight opportunities for Council members to work more closely with UKRI/Council leadership in addressing the issues.</p> <p>i. OL outlined some of the key issues for UKRI and welcomed the views of Council members. There will be ongoing engagement between UKRI and Councils' Councils on these issues.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meeting government Opex targets chiefly through the introduction of the new UKRI Operating Model and ERP system 	

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communication. Building trust and confidence with researchers/academic and industry stakeholders. • Providing input to UKRI's Strategic Themes to maximise the impact of any additional funds that may become available <p>ii. Council members discussed the challenges of clearly communicating UKRI's role and mission and benefits to a diverse range of stakeholders from the public through to government, academia, and industry, OL felt that Council members had an important role in helping UKRI define and communicate with these stakeholders to build trust and understanding.</p> <p>iii. Council encouraged OL to emphasise areas where UKRI had added value in bringing together the Research Councils. There was strong appreciation for some of the cross-Council initiatives introduced by UKRI, for example, Quantum Technologies for Fundamental Physics (QTFP) which Council members felt would have been much harder to achieve without UKRI.</p> <p>iv. Council felt that UKRI could benefit from working closely with Councils to have a stronger voice in the science community for early careers. Decisions regarding PhDs, Fellowships and studentships should always be made in consultation with Councils who understand the needs of their community.</p> <p>v. Council members thanked OL for taking the time to come to the meeting, it had been useful to hear her perspective and they looked forward to having more opportunities to work with UKRI in future.</p>
6. Inflationary pressures – (presentation)		
	6.1	Council welcomed Mark Affonso (MA) who gave a presentation on the Inflationary pressures currently facing STFC.
	6.2	In 2023/24 it is expected that the residual amount for STFC to absorb is around £24m. If inflation falls more slowly than expected this could end up being a larger number, and energy prices may fall back in even slower time. MA flagged that this does not take into account the Pay Flexibility Case- it is assumed that UKRI will fund that initially. The plan is to address this through a combination of project reprofiling, continuing to buy-forward international subscriptions and targeted savings.
	6.3	Given that STFC is not able to carry forward or invest cash balances Council considered this issue and agreed the proposed approach was the right one, it could in practice take several years for inflation to return to 2%. A further update on this issue will come to the next meeting.
7. STFC Embedded HR model – STFC (UKRI) 22/34		
	7.1	Chris Ball (CB), Peter Thompson (PT), Joanne Brown (JB) Alan Partridge (AP), Neil Geddes (NG) joined the meeting for this discussion
	7.2	This paper is the result of ongoing discussions, which it was agreed have been constructive and helpful, between senior colleagues in UKRI and STFC. At the dawn of UKRI, HR was largely centralised at corporate level, and, for STFC particularly this has resulted in many critical gaps. This has been acknowledged by UKRI and the Embedded HR model proposes to address this. .

7.3	<p>At this early stage, design principles have been agreed which will allow STFC to realign some key functions internally. Council was invited to comment on the draft model. The main points are noted here:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Council members felt that the fact STFC employs three times the number of scientific staff than all the other Councils combined is an important and powerful point. STFC requires HR support based on the same sites as these staff, and who understand the environment. ii. Chris Ball (CB) confirmed that he and MAT have frequently discussed these matters in a constructive and helpful way and UKRI understands these unique qualities. Details such as accountability for delivering the new model, KPIs and mapping on to UKRI processes are still in development. iii. Council members were heartened to see these developments and felt the approach was a pragmatic one, even at this early stage, and will address many of the current challenges facing STFC. Council strongly supported STFC in seeking approval for this HR model and wished them every success. iv. Council thanked the team and Chris Ball for joining the meeting, it had been a helpful discussion. Council looked forward to hearing a positive update in due course.
8.	<u>STFC EDI action plan STFC(UKRI) 22/35</u>
8.1	<p>Maya Riddle (MR) presented the STFC EDI Action Plan which was developed following input from Council on STFC's case for EDI. The main areas identified for further improvements were to clarify the links between EDI and recruitment and retention, prioritise the actions and develop KPIs</p>
8.2	<p>The EDI action plan and overarching case has been updated accordingly and includes feedback from Council, Executive Board and a recent "pulse survey" undertaken with STFC staff. Council was asked to comment on the draft EDI action plan. Key points are noted below:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Resourcing is a key risk to delivering the action plan. All STFC staff involved in developing and delivering the EDI action plan have full time jobs and are dedicating their own time to taking this forward because they believe in it. Council felt that such a key activity should not have to run on goodwill and advised allocating a dedicated resource as a matter of priority, although it is understood in the current climate this may not be immediately possible. Council also advised ensuring the organisation recognises these staff for their efforts. ii. Council discussed how to further embed EDI into the organisational culture and mission so that everyone has a responsibility for EDI. Council also advised adding a section on EDI implications to the cover paper template for EB and Council papers. MR and colleagues will consider how to take this forward. iii. Council advised expanding on STFC's role as a grant-giving organisation. External policies in academia, including internationally, can present challenges if they are not aligned to STFC/UKRI's EDI policies. However, Council also recognised this was an area where UKRI should take a lead. When applying for grants it should be clear from the outset that breaches of code of conduct will not be tolerated. Discrimination has consequences.

		<p>iv. Council welcomed the news that whilst STFC is hoping to be part of the UKRI trial for 10,000 Black Interns. STFC is considering running its own trial activity to attract more people of colour to apply for internships, they are currently very underrepresented.</p> <p>v. The STFC EDI Advisory Board will have a role in further developing and refining the KPIs/success criteria for the action plan.</p> <p>vi. Overall, Council was very supportive of the action plan and encouraged MR and the team to continue to plan for publication internally and externally before the seasonal break.</p> <p>vii. Council noted that the report on KPIs will be completed in 2023 via STFC EDI Advisory Board. The forward plan will be refined during Spring/Summer 2023 to include 2024 and outcomes from some of the major actions, which are likely to produce follow-on activities.</p>
9.	Wave 3 Preliminary Cases for the UKRI Infrastructure Fund-STFC (UKRI) 22/36	
	9.1	Council welcomed Ailidh Woodcock (AW), Rehemat Bhatia (RB), Philip Amison (PA), Rosanna Greenop (RG), Grahame Blair (GB) and Neil Geddes (NG) for this discussion
	9.3	Council was asked to consider the advice and recommendations from Science Board and TAAB and agree recommendations on which proposals STFC should put forward for the Wave 3 Preliminary Activity Process. In considering its recommendations, Council was requested to focus on the strategic drivers and to consider the proposed projects as a portfolio alongside each other and existing funded Infrastructure Fund projects.
	9.4	<p>Council engaged in a detailed discussion of each of the four proposals and gave detailed feedback to the team which will be included in the paper that goes to Executive Board.</p> <p>i. 10 Meter Spectroscopic Survey Telescope: Science Board and TAAB were generally supportive, but Council felt the ultimate aim of this project was not well defined.</p> <p>ii. UK ELT: The design work for the next generation of the Extremely Large Telescope (ELT) is a high strategic priority and supported by a well-articulated case that is a good fit with the Infrastructure Fund programme.</p> <p>iii. Next Generation Gravitational Wave observatory network: Sheila Rowan was not present for this discussion. Council strongly supported this proposal and felt there was a need to support the community in this new field for exploitation which will help assure UK scientific leadership.</p> <p>iv. Storage-ring Electric Dipole Moment and Charged Lepton Flavour Violation Experiment (EDM): Council felt this proposal could potentially be explored through other routes such as the recently launched Visions process.</p>
	9.5	Council recommended that the ELT and Next Generation Gravitational Waves preliminary proposals should be treated as joint top priorities. Council recommended the preliminary proposal for EDM could potentially be explored through other routes such as the Visions process.

10.	Science Board Update- STFC (UKRI) 38	
	10.1	Grahame Blair (GB) and Liz Fellman (LF) joined Tara Shears (TS) for the update from the most recent meeting of Science Board. This included highlights of some of the excellent science made possible by STFC facilities and the key issues and concerns according to Science Board.
	10.2	<p>Issues Science Board wished to highlight the following issues to Council</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Studentships: The impact on science caused by any reduction in studentship numbers. ii. Open Access: Concerns about UKRI's new open access policy which limits the journals that many communities can now publish in. Recognising the impact this has on the science community, Council members hoped that ongoing talks between UKRI and APS will resolve these issues. Council asked to be kept up to date on the outcomes of these discussions. iii. CERN Industrial Return: the need to increase investment to improve industrial return from international facilities. Council will have the opportunity to learn more about this issue at the next meeting, which is taking place at CERN. iv. Cherenkov Telescope Array (CTA): Council noted Science Board's concerns around the strength of the technical work on CTAO, the level of likely future leadership, the UK position in the collaboration and the impact that the current funding position may have.
7.	Any other business	
	7.1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. TAAB update (STFC (UKRI) 22/38- Council noted the TAAB update ii. Council was very saddened to hear of the death of Professor Tom Marsh, ESO astronomer. Warwick Physics are appreciative of support from STFC and ESO in this very difficult time.
8.	Closing Remarks	
	MAT thanked members and guests for their contribution. The next meeting will be held at CERN, Geneva Switzerland on 16 th Feb 2023. Tours of some CERN facilities will be held on the 15 th February. Zoom will be available for those who are not able to travel.	