

Minutes of the STFC Extraordinary Council meeting

Thursday 23rd October 2025

Virtual meeting

**Attendees**

Council:

Michele Dougherty (Chair)

Andy Schofield (SIM)

Lucy Edge

Jana Kolar

Patricia Hodgson

David Charlton

Andrew Pontzen

JT Janssen

Hitesh Thakrar

Council observers:

Keith Grainge, Chair of Science Board (PPAN)

Jacqui Cole, Chair of Science Board (F&L)

STFC Secretariat

Other attendees:

Keith Zimmerman, COO

Roger Eccleston, Exec Director National Labs: Large Scale Facilities

Chris Wrench, Director of Finance

STFC Strategy team members

Apologies

Carsten Welsch

Angeli Möller

Jayne Lawrence

Stan Bentvelsen

## 1. Welcome and Executive Chair update

- 1.1. Michele Dougherty (MKD) welcomed everyone to the meeting and the above apologies were noted.
- 1.2. No conflicts of interest were recorded
- 1.3. She informed Council that she had temporarily appointed Keith Zimmerman and Roger Eccleston as Deputy Executive Chairs for six-months to provide her with help through this critical period.
- 1.4. It was noted that the STFC transformation workstreams teams had been brought together to launch the programme. Following the steer from Council, workstreams will now be given specific targets following initial engagement.
- 1.5. Staff forums had been held across STFC's sites to engage staff on transformation plans.

## 2. Future of STFC

- 2.1. MKD said that she would appreciate feedback from Council on the paper going to the UKRI Executive Committee the following week.
- 2.2. She had attended a joint meeting of both Science Boards and had received good feedback on the proposals for STFC.
- 2.3. Council discussed the rationale, risks, and implications and raised several concerns.
- 2.4. It was commented that erosion of the Drayson partitions had led to a dichotomy which tensioned facilities against science. Whilst the proposed structure did not offer savings, it would provide a framework for addressing costs saving.
- 2.5. MKD thanked members for their contributions and asked them to email further feedback.

## 3. UKRI Allocations update

- 3.1. Chris Wrench provided an update. DSIT were expected to announce UKRI's top-level allocation in the next week or so.
- 3.2. A paper on proposed allocation of UKRI's budget was going to the UKRI Executive Committee on 28 October, but it was not yet available. This was an evolution of the strawman that had been discussed at the September ExCo meeting.
- 3.3. The UKRI budget was being apportioned into four buckets. Anticipated STFC mapping was:
  - curiosity driven research – PPAN programme and facilities
  - government IS-8 and defined frontier industries – Hartree, NQCC & RAL Space
  - scaling companies
  - enabling platform – multidisciplinary facilities and capabilities
- 3.4. STFC was facing a probable reduction in research volume, with the need to seek external income and exploit opportunities in government priority funding.

## 4. Science Board Facility and Labs Chair

- 4.1. Jana Kolar described the recruitment process for a new chair, which she had chaired.
- 4.2. Council approved:

- the appointment of Prof Howard Stone as chair for a period of two years from January 2026
- the extension of Prof Adrian Bevan as deputy chair for a period of up to two years from January 2026

## **5. Any other business**

- 5.1. Council briefly discussed the draft UKRI Infrastructure Roadmap and expressed concerns about the readiness of the document, suggesting that further engagement and clarity over uncertainties were needed before public release.
- 5.2. The next meeting was a half-day virtual meeting on the 18th November 2025. This is likely to focus on allocations and STFC evolution with standard business being deferred to the January meeting.