



**APPROVED MINUTES OF THE THIRTY-SECOND MEETING OF STFC COUNCIL  
HELD AT RUTHERFORD APPLETON LABORATORY  
ON 21 SEPTEMBER 2023**

<b>Attendees</b>	
<b>Council Members:</b>	Mark Thomson (chair) (MAT) Sheila Rowan (Co-chair) (SR) Jon Butterworth (JB) Michele Dougherty (MKD) Mike Dunne (MD) Patricia Hodgson (PH) Angeli Moeller (AM) Hiranya Peiris (HP) Pam Thomas (PT) Carsten Welsch (CPW) Maya Riddle (MR), Private Secretary Janice Masone (JM), Minutes Secretary
<b>Apologies:</b>	Andy Schofield (AJS) Hitesh Thakrar (HT) Anu Ojha (AO)
<b>In Attendance:</b>	Paul Monks (PM), DESNZ CSA Tara Shears (TS), Chair of Science Board Maya Riddle (MR), Private Secretary Janice Masone (JM), Minutes Secretary
<b>Invited Guests:</b>	Item 4-5: Joanne Brown (JBr), STFC HR business partner Item 6: Sean Paling (SP), Boulby Director & Dave Newbold (DN), Exec Director National Labs: Science & Technology Item 7: Sarah Beardsley (SB), Director of RAL Space

<b>Chair, Mark Thomson</b>		
<b>1. Welcome and opening comments</b>		
	1.1	Mark Thomson (MAT) welcomed everyone to the thirty-third meeting of STFC Council, which was held at Rutherford Appleton Laboratory on 21 <sup>st</sup> September 2023.
	1.2	The following points regarding attendance were noted:  i. Apologies were received from Hitesh Thakrar, Anu Ojha and Andy Schofield.
	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.  i. No conflicts of interest were noted for this meeting.
<b>2. Minutes, Actions and Matters Arising from the meeting held on 19<sup>th</sup> July 2023</b>		
	2.1	<b><u>Minutes</u></b> Subject to some minor amendments which have now been actioned, Council approved the minutes as an accurate record of the meetings held on 19th July 2023.
	2.2	<b><u>Actions</u></b> The actions from previous meetings were reviewed and were either complete or in progress.
	2.3	<b><u>Matters Arising</u></b> The following matters relating to open actions were raised at this meeting:  i. <b>EDI Advisory Board:</b> Following discussion at the July meeting, Council remained concerned at the lack of appropriate resource allocated to the running of the Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) Advisory Board. MAT took an action to discuss the possibility of recruiting an EDI resource in STFC.  ii. <b>UKRI Attendance at Council:</b> Council continued to express disappointment at UKRI's inability to maintain a regular presence at Council meetings and highlighted the likelihood of a disconnect developing between UKRI and its Councils as a result. Council also encouraged STFC to continue to press UKRI to provide representatives for relevant strategic discussions such as planning for the next Spending Review.  iii. <b>Campus documents:</b> Council was disappointed to note the continued delay in producing the Campus documents. Pam Thomas reiterated the offer of help from the Faraday Institution and will follow up with Paul Vernon (Business and Innovation) and Liz Fellman (Strategy, Performance and Communications) offline.
<b>Chair: Sheila Rowan</b>		
<b>3. Executive Chair Update (presentation)</b>		
	3.1	Sheila Rowan (SR) invited Mark Thomson (MAT) to give his update to Council.
	3.2	The main points arising from the discussion of MAT's presentation are noted below:  i. <b>Council recruitment:</b> Over the autumn, MAT will be chairing interview panels for three new Council members with interest in Space, Quantum and Facilities.

		<p>ii. <b>Institutional diversity on Boards:</b> Council considered STFC’s guiding principles around diversity on its advisory bodies and suggested revising this to not allowing members from the same department rather than institution. Council reasoned that in large institution, it is entirely possible that two people would not know each or have the same networks.</p> <p>iii. <b>Gravitational Waves:</b> MAT reported that changes to funding arrangements for Gravitational Waves has been communicated to the community and no major concerns have been raised. Council strongly advised that the Astronomy Grants Panel will require additional expertise to properly assess GW grants. This will be communicated to the Programmes Directorate for action.</p> <p>iv. <b>Diamond II Upgrade:</b> Council expressed some concern around plans for the dark period for the Diamond II upgrade as this will have a significant impact on the community. Some Council members highlighted that Diamond could benefit from benchmarking similar US institutions, who had robust plans and experience of similar upgrades.</p> <p>v. <b>Operating Expenditure/Operating Model:</b> MAT cautioned that as the Opex reductions continued, and the new operating model is implemented, STFC will need to stop activities, and this will be visible to STFC’s communities.</p> <p>vi. Council explored some of the issues and supported STFC in its efforts to manage to serve its communities in a constrained environment. Council advised ensuring being open and honest with communities about the challenges and suggested a strategic top-down vision to guide prioritisation through this period.</p> <p>vii. <b>AI Research Resources (AIRR):</b> Council noted that STFC is leading on delivery of this project which has been initiated at the highest levels of government.</p>
		<b>Chair: Mark Thomson</b>
<b>4.</b>		<b>STFC People Survey results</b>
	4.1	Council welcomed Joanne Brown (JBr) to the meeting. JBr provided an update on the 2023 UKRI People survey results.
	4.2	<p>Council explored the results of the survey and the themes emerging from the data which looked at how employees felt about many aspects of their working life in STFC (and UKRI).</p> <p>i. STFC’s 70% completion rates were discussed, and it was noted this was a 2% improvement on the previous year’s completion rates. Council felt this was positive and praised the efforts of STFC’s leadership in encouraging staff to complete the survey.</p> <p>ii. Discussion focused on the relatively high percentage of staff who felt they did not have opportunities for promotion in their roles. It was recognised that the loss of in-band progression in 2015 will have been a contributory factor.</p> <p>iii. Council considered routes for improvement and suggested greater use of secondment opportunities, which would have the added benefit of reducing siloes and developing informal networks across STFC and UKRI.</p>

<b>5.</b>	<b>UKRI Pay Reform- presentation</b>	
	5.1	Joanne Brown (JBr) presented the outcome of UKRI's pay negotiations for 2022/23 and reminded Council members of the rationale for the STEM pay case- which overall sought to address the most severe and long-standing risk on STFC's corporate risk register (Recruitment and Retention).
	5.2	<p>Council thanked JBr and the HR team for their hard work throughout this process and for a very clear presentation of the outcome and plans for implementing the new pay awards. The following points covered in the presentation were discussed by Council.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. Council discussed the creation of the new STEM1 (S1) and STEM2 (S2) pay scales and JBr confirmed that STFC has the highest number of S1 staff in UKRI. In considering the STEM mapping process, Angeli Moeller (AM) offered to put JBr in touch with colleagues at Roche who had experience of managing movement between different types of pay scales.</li> <li>ii. The consolidation of Recruitment and Retention Allowances (RRAs) had seen some STEM staff disadvantaged despite the move to the new pay scales, Council supported the Executive Board's plans to review current IRRA/RAs in place across STFC.</li> <li>iii. Exit interviews were recognised by Council as being an important way to measure the effectiveness of the pay remit in mitigating STFC's recruitment and retention risk. However, Council appreciated the challenges in conducting and gathering data from exit interviews given the loss of local HR support in STFC.</li> </ul>
<b>6.</b>	<b>Boulby overview, virtual tour &amp; future plans - presentation</b>	
	6.1	Council welcomed Sean Paling (SP) and Dave Newbold (DN) to the meeting to give an overview of the Boulby Underground Lab and STFC's future plans.
	6.2	<p>SP provided an overview of Boulby and outlined STFC's aspirations to expand the facility.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. Council was supportive of STFC's ambition for Boulby to host an international facility and noted that this was in line with one of the goals in the government's Science &amp; Technology framework.</li> <li>ii. Council questioned whether the facility will be ready to align with international plans for XLZD (Italy) and SURF (USA). SP confirmed Boulby has good links with both the US and Italy which could develop into a partnership. Some Council members cautioned that the US could well take the decision to proceed alone.</li> <li>iii. Council members recognised the exciting science case, which is broader than prospects for a specific Dark Matter discovery. They recommended adding emphasis on the exploratory nature of the experiments, as well as the breadth of physics which will be probed and the technologies which will be developed..</li> <li>iv. The draft video was very well received by Council, who advised emphasising Boulby's potential as an international facility.</li> </ul>

<b>7.</b>	<b>RAL Space Strategy – presentation</b>
7.1	Council welcomed Sarah Beardsley (SB) to the meeting. SB gave an overview of the RAL Space Strategy including the funding model and Continuous Improvement activities.
7.2	<p>RAL Space staff and management, with support from the Continuous Improvement programme and Executive Board, have worked together to produce a clear strategy and financial model. Council explored some of the key themes highlighted in the presentation.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. In the past, RAL Space has faced significant reputational and financial consequences arising from contractual issues with suppliers and customers. SB discussed how these issues, and subsequent scrutiny, had affected staff morale and added to challenges in recruitment and retention, Council was pleased to hear this situation was improving</li> <li>ii. Council observed that this strategy will enable RAL Space to work with their customers and stakeholders in a more positive, open way. It is a key part of STFC’s mission to do the technologically challenging developments and de-risk for the UK Space sector, Council encouraged SB to continue to expand on the department’s strengths by emphasising its unique offering as a gateway into the capabilities of the wider organisation.</li> <li>iii. On the whole, the RAL Space Strategy and funding model was very positively received by Council. Council members thanked SB and her colleagues for their hard work and looked forward to receiving further updates in the future.</li> </ul>
<b>8.</b>	<b>Industry &amp; Business Board membership</b>
8.1	Angeli Moeller (AM) gave Council an update on the recent recruitment activity for membership of the newly formed Industry and Business Board (IBB).
8.2	<p>AM reminded Council that the IBB was formed by amalgamating Innovation Board (IB) and the Industry &amp; Business Partnerships Board (IBPB) following an efficiency and effectiveness review of STFC’s governance arrangements. Six members of these two boards were offered places on the new IBB, and four new members were appointed following an extensive recruitment activity.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. The new IBB will meet for the first time on 30<sup>th</sup> November. Council advised being clear on STFC’s mission and providing good quality information on the role of the campuses and other STFC interactions with business and industry. AM confirmed that IBB members were very keen to visit all STFC sites and a programme for this was being arranged.</li> <li>ii. Council gave a very strong steer in support of reducing the number of STFC members on the IBB and felt this will enable better ideation. Council recommended limiting this to one or two regular internal attendees in addition to the secretariat, other internal attendees can be invited if their input is required for specific agenda items.</li> <li>iii. Noting the strong steer on internal attendees, Council endorsed the membership of the IBB as detailed in the paper. The Terms of Reference will be updated accordingly.</li> </ul>
<b>9.</b>	<b>Any other business</b>
9.1	<p><b><u>Papers for Information</u></b> Council noted the papers submitted for information. The following points were</p>

		<p>raised in the meeting</p> <p>i. <b>Science Board report:</b> Some Council members raised concerns about STFC's inability to conduct a Neutrino Review due to resource constraints. These concerns were supported by all Council members.</p>
	9.2	Council requested that Science Board meetings be scheduled so that the papers can come to Council in a timely manner. This will be raised with the secretariat team.
<b>10.</b>	<b>Closing Remarks</b>	MAT thanked members and guests for their contribution. The next meeting will be a virtual one, held on 16 <sup>th</sup> November 2023.