

**UNITED KINGDOM ATOMIC ENERGY AUTHORITY**  
**Minutes of the 5<sup>th</sup> Board Meeting in 2014**

**Date:** 27 November 2014

**Location:** Llewellyn-Smith Room, K2,  
Culham

**Members present:**

Roger Cashmore, Chairman  
Keith Burnett  
Steve Cowley  
Peter Jones  
Steve McQuillan

**In attendance:**

Martin Cox  
Sharon Ellis (BIS)  
David Martin  
Catherine Pridham  
Maya Riddle (secretary)  
Rosie Hawkes (Item 4)  
Andrew Bickley (Item 8)  
Hiroko Plant (BIS – Item 8)

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## **1 Chairman's Opening Remarks**

- 1.1 Roger Cashmore welcomed everyone to the meeting.
- 1.2 A Board paper had been taken via written procedure and the Board had endorsed the submission of a funding bid for the Oxford Advanced Skills Hub for phases 1 and 2.

## **2 Minutes of the 4<sup>th</sup> Board meeting in 2014**

- 2.1 The Board approved the minutes of the Board meeting on 17 September 2014.
- 2.2 Members reviewed the actions.

## **3 CEO's Report**

- 3.1 Steve Cowley informed members that the ITER council had nominated Bernard Bigot as the next ITER Director-General. He was Chairman of CEA in France and a very senior scientific manager.
- 3.2 There was successful testing of substitution of sulphur hexafluoride (SF<sub>6</sub>), a potent greenhouse gas, with nitrogen gas on the JET neutral beams. Tim Jones, the JET senior manager, was confident that significant reductions in the carbon footprint could be achieved.
- 3.3 The cost for construction of the Remote Application in Challenging Environments (RACE) building had risen above the provisional estimates provided by the contractor due to changing market conditions. The Board was asked to endorse the new value.
- 3.4 The autumn statement was expected to include funding for nuclear materials, including a major new materials institute at Manchester. He had been asked by Greg Clark, the Science Minister, to sit on a Nuclear Materials Council.
- 3.5 The UK Atomic Energy Authority (UKAEA) had won several significant awards for staff development including the Institute of Physics' 2014 Best Practice in Professional Development Award, the National Apprenticeship Large Employer of the Year in the Thames Valley and a position in Top 100 Apprenticeship Employer's list.
- 3.6 Discussions were in progress with the Local Enterprise Partnership about the Oxford Advance Skills Hub proposal. This was the only non-infrastructure proposal currently being considered for local growth funding.
- 3.7 Roger Cashmore reiterated the Board's support for the Oxford Advance Skills Hub.
- 3.8 The Board noted the report and endorsed the RACE construction contract.

*Rosie Hawkes, Head of HR, joined the meeting*

## **4 Succession Planning Update**

- 4.1 Rosie Hawkes reminded members that about two years ago, the Board raised concerns over succession planning. Significant progress had been made and now there were very high levels of emergency cover and identified successors

for safety and business critical roles.

- 4.2 UKAEA had a significant proportion of staff over 50, particularly in the higher grades. Work on knowledge retention and capability planning was also underway to mitigate against risks related to the age profile and scarcity areas.
- 4.3 Around 100 new people had been recruited in the past year. The agency supplied workers had also been reviewed and targeted conversions were taking place. Staff development and talent management programmes were being rolled out. There was still further work to do on line management.
- 4.4 Steve McQuillan said that really great progress had been made and offered his congratulations to the team, encouraging them to continue. He asked about recruitment of women, stating that NPL had had problems, but had greatly improved this by adjusting the language used in recruitment adverts.
- 4.5 Rosie Hawkes responded that the Authority was working towards an Athena Swan application. While the number of female applicants was low, the conversion rate was high.
- 4.6 The Board noted the report.

*Rosie Hawkes left and Colin Shimell, Head of Assurance, joined the meeting*

## **5 Annual Assurance report**

- 5.1 Colin Shimell provided an overview of assurance over the past year. Key points included:
  - there had been a positive audit from ANFOR and UKAEA had retained accreditation of its management system;
  - the Environment Agency had updated the permit for disposal of very low level waste, opening up new routes;
  - there had been a fire at the Culham site in one of the tenanted buildings;
  - the RoSPA gold award had been achieved for the 3rd year running;
  - an assurance map had been developed, based on the Treasury guidance, and would be taken forward with the Board Assurance Committee;
  - the Authority had a significant carbon footprint due to the high power nature of the fusion research and the use of SF<sub>6</sub>. Work was underway to reduce use of SF<sub>6</sub>, but engineering substantiation of the pressure systems would be required;
  - the Executive had agreed an energy strategy and cost effective energy efficiency improvements would be implemented;
  - the sickness absence rate had increased over the preceding year, but still was well below the public sector average;
  - the number of corporate risks had reduced from 53 to 47, with 13 key risks. A review of the risk management process was planned and there was still further work to do on mitigation of risks;
  - the radiation exposure levels continued to be very low; and

- a number of information assurance improvements had been made including reviewing and training of the information asset owners and implementation of the new government security classifications.

5.2 Steve McQuillan thanked Colin Shimell, on behalf of the Board, for all his work for UKAEA and Roger Cashmore wished him a good retirement.

5.3 The Board noted the report.

*Colin Shimell left the meeting*

## **6 Financial Report at P6 2014/15**

6.1 Catherine Pridham highlighted key points of the financial position at the end of period 6, which included:

- forecasting indicated that the business development target was unlikely to be met;
- the commercial property measure was expected to hit the stretch target. Even though a major tenant had left, the property team was working hard to backfill and the occupancy levels were almost back to normal;
- there were currently underspends across all the programme areas. In the EPRSC and JET areas this is mainly due to phasing of spend;
- budgeted spend at Harwell might be delayed into the next financial year as there were delays in the Nuclear Decommission Authority releasing land back to UKAEA; and
- the SAP replacement project was progressing well and the invitation to tender was due to go out the following day.

6.2 The Board noted the financial position.

## **7 Board Schedule for 2015**

7.1 Maya Riddle informed members that the reporting schedule followed a similar cycle to 2014.

7.2 Peter Jones suggested scheduled reports on business development be included.

7.3 The Board endorsed the schedule subject to the above change.

*Hiroko Plant (BIS) and Andrew Bickley joined the meeting*

## **8 Triennial Review Update**

8.1 Hiroko Plant informed the Board that Stage 1 of the review recommended that UKAEA should continue as a non-departmental public body as it fulfilled the criteria for continued technical need. However, in the post JET era a merger with another similar public body should be considered.

8.2 The draft Stage 1 report was going to the challenge panel on 10 December. Once completed it would be put to the Minister for approval and would be published.

8.3 Stage 2 of the review was underway and included assessment of governance.

8.4 Roger Cashmore thanked Hiroko Plant for the update.

*Hiroko Plant (BIS) and Andrew Bickley left the meeting*

## **9 Any Other Business**

9.1 The next Board meeting would be held on Wednesday 21 January 2014.

**Secretary** Maya Riddle

**Chairman** Roger Cashmore

**Date** 21<sup>st</sup> January 2015