



UK Atomic
Energy
Authority

MINUTES OF THE 6TH UKAEA BOARD MEETING IN 2020

19th November 2020

Location: Remote – via zoom

Members

David Gann (Chair)	Stephen Barter
Ian Chapman (CEO)	Luc Bardin
Antonia Jenkinson (CFO)	Mark Bayley
Chris Theobald	Shrin Honap
Adrian Smith	Eithne Birt
Sue Scane	
Shrinn Honap	

Attendees

Lyanne Maclean (COO)
Tim Bestwick (CTO)
Norman Harrison
Adam Baker (BEIS)
Kay Church
Nick Walkden (Sec)
Kay Nicholson (Head of Assurance, items 4 - 6)
Alli Brown (Finance Director, item 5)
Andrew Kirk (Director of Tokamak Science, item 7)
Rob Buckingham (RACE Director, item 8)
Joe Milnes (JOC item XX)
Paul Methven (item XX)

Apologies

MINUTES

1 CHAIR'S OPENING REMARKS

1.1 The Chair remarked on the success of the recent Board awayday held on Nov 16th, particularly with the challenge of remote working.

1.2 The following interests were declared:

- Antonia Jenkinson is taking up a non-executive position at TekFor Global Holdings Limited. No conflicts raised.
- Shrin Honap is becoming a panel member on the pensions determination panel as of 1st January 2020. No conflicts raised.
- Mark Bayley has been appointed to the audit and risk committee for the Department of Transport. No conflicts raised.

OFFICIAL SENSITIVE

1.3 The Chair requested that the process for recording and logging conflicts of interest be clarified

2 MINUTES OF THE 5TH BOARD MEETING IN 2020, AND ACTIONS REVIEW

2.1 Two minor corrections to the minutes were raised, which will be corrected and re-issued.

2.2 The Board reviewed the actions

3 REPORTS FROM SUB-COMMITTEES

3.1 The Audit Committee, Board Assurance Committee, and Campus and Property Sub-committees reported into the Board.

3.2 Audit Committee:

- The 2021 audit plans for pensions and wider UKAEA were agreed separately, with details to be presented when closer to the audit time. The overarching risks to be focussed on were discussed at committee
- The focus of the internal audit plan was agreed, including management assurance plan for 2021. A concern about audit resource was raised, and the March Audit Committee will review a resource plan. The Internal Audit charter and ToRs were agreed.
- New accountabilities for the Audit Committee were agreed as it takes on some responsibilities from BAC
- The outstanding audit action on an automated interface with payroll was discussed, and the committee agreed to review how to progress the action
- The top 10 corporate risks were agreed by the Audit Committee
- The potential need for security around equipment theft was discussed
- The committee requested that management re-communicate the whistle blowing policy
- The committee registered a risk that all non-executive members of the audit committee renew on the same date in 2021.

3.3 Board Assurance Committee:

- The Committee were assured of the continuing provision for COVID-19 security.
- A review of ongoing tritium handling operations was performed, and the committee noted the ongoing risk of machine availability
- The Board were assured that there will be continuing, ongoing independent review of DT operations
- The committee noted that a quality strategy is in development, and some progress was noted in non-conformance reports
- The committee noted major progress on asset management within the organisation
- A research quality dashboard was produced for the last committee meeting, which

OFFICIAL SENSITIVE

will provide tools to evidence statements on world leadership, and the committee recommended that the dashboard comes regularly if infrequently to the Board.

- The Chair and Members of the Board Assurance Committee were thanked for their support and challenge over 7 years

3.4 Campus and property committee:

- The first committee meeting was held in September, with a second to come in November
- A healthy discussion on objectives for property was held, and concluded a need to ensure property strategy aligns with UKAEA objectives
- The status of Culham and Harwell property development were overviewed
- The STEP site selection was discussed as an area of interest for the committee
- The objectives and current agenda of the property sub-committee was overviewed to the Board.

3.5 The Board discussion the STEP siting process and noted that it will be a policy issue in the next two years so will be relevant to the main Board, with the property sub-committee taking a lead after site selection is determined.

3.6 The Board requested that minutes and papers of sub-committees be distributed to the whole Board in timely manner

4 EXECUTIVE BOARD REPORT

4.1 An update was provided to the Board on the current status of EURATOM negotiations. The Board offered continued support for BEIS and the Executive efforts in this area.

4.2 The Board discussed the renewal process for the next EPSRC grant and agreed that the Board be presented with an overview of the grant proposal after it is seen by the review panel, with ongoing scrutiny from the Programme Advisory Committee

4.3 The Board overviewed the report, discussing points including:

- Latest developments in JET was provided, including the commissioning and use of tritium in NBI systems and developments with the shattered pellet injector.
- Recent MAST Upgrade achievements
- The status of construction projects
- The ongoing work of the commercial team, and the high regard held for UKAEA supplier engagement at present.
- The management of COVID-19, and reporting of symptoms which is continually strong. Board noted that the potential impact of COVID on operations remains high.
- Current recruitment challenges
- Relationships with the private sector

4.4 The Board discussed the provisions to support staff wellbeing over the Christmas period, and possible actions that the Board could take to show support to staff over the period. The Board will undertake to send a Christmas message to employees, and offered to

OFFICIAL SENSITIVE

attend a staff talk before the end of the year – UKAEA(20)6/5

5 FINANCE UPDATE

- 5.1 The Board were provided with a summary of the UKAEA financial position at P6, noting that a full bottom up consolidated forecast across the business has been produced and discussing the detail and capability in forecasting within UKAEA. The process for managing capital re-phasing across years was discussed, and an updated full year forecast P&L was requested, which will be distributed following the Board.
- 5.2 Members discussed the reported financial position in MRF. The Board noted that the business unit is Materials, not MRF in isolation, and requested a presentation on Materials from the Materials Director at a future Board meeting

6 CORPORATE RISK REPORT

- 6.1 The Board reviewed the risk report, noting that the risk landscape is currently dominated by EU exit and COVID-19. The Board noted that this will be the final report to the Board, and will henceforth report into the Audit and Risk Committee.
- 6.2 The Board held a wide-ranging discussion on the risk appetite of the organisation, including in regards to commercial risk, financial risk, and risk associated to property development. The Risk appetite statement was approved by the Board.
- 6.3 Members discussed the risk of impact from COVID-19 on weariness and wellbeing of people. The Board noted that welfare, wellbeing and morale are considered a reasonable reason for staff to return to site within the UKAEA response strategy.
- 6.4 Members discussed the cyber risk, and noted that excellent interactions are had elsewhere in the public landscape with the government cyber centre. Members noted that this issue has been well considered at the Audit Committee and previous Boards.
- 6.5 Members suggested the identification of opportunities in the exercise of risk management and presentation to the Board.
- 6.6 The Board suggested that, in cases where risk scores are high with mitigating actions in place, the organisation identify fallback scenarios, though where commercially sensitive care should be taken regarding the communication of these.
- 6.7 The Board clarified that high level corporate risks would be reported to the Board through the Audit and Risk Committee in future updates.

7 PROGRESS ON MAST UPGRADE

- 7.1 A verbal update, supplemented by a set of slides, on MAST Upgrade's current status and successes was presented to the Board. The Board congratulated the organisation on the successes of MAST-U.
- 7.2 Members discussed the period within which MAST-U can inform STEP, and how MAST-U might inform the design. MAST upgrade is in a pre-competitive research phase and concepts tested, including the Super-X divertor, are not proprietary.
- 7.3 The Board discussed the international context of MAST Upgrade, noting the existence of a sister device called NSTX in the US, due to start in 2021/22. The two devices are

OFFICIAL SENSITIVE

complementary not competitive, and MAST-U is a unique device in the world for Plasma Exhaust studies.

8 BRIEFING ON THE RACE LONGOPS PROJECT

8.1 An overview of the RACE LongOps project was provided to the Board including:

- The profile of the partners
- The use cases for the project
- The contractual arrangements of the collaboration
- The work breakdown structure of the project
- The governance of the project

8.2 The Board congratulated the Head of RACE on the achievement of the project, and noted its international status. The Board discussed the communications plan for the project, noting commercial sensitivities and sensitivities around the subject matter.

9 UPDATE ON PLANS FOR JET D-T

9.1 The JET operating contract senior manager provided an overview of JETs plans and preparations for D-T operations to the Board. The present status of JET was overviewed, and its relationship to STEP was discussed. The value of JET in the international landscape was discussed, which is centred on its D-T capability, the ITER-like wall, and preparing plasma scenarios for ITER. The timeline for the current JET programme was overviewed and noted by the Board.

10 OVERVIEW OF STEP SITING

10.1 The Board were provided with a briefing and overview of the STEP siting process and noted the motivation for an early site selection, with a significant level of external advice and engagement sought in the project

10.2 The potential cost and commercial arrangements for the step site selection, alongside the potential for local economic impact, was discussed by the Board. =

10.3 Members discussed the delivery of the STEP site, noting that the involvement of industry and the supply chain will be significant, and the impact of the physical characteristics of the STEP design was discussed.

11 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

11.1 The Board highlighted the start of the new BEIS Chief Scientific Advisor, Paul Monks.

OFFICIAL SENSITIVE