

MINUTES

ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE COUNCIL

15:00 - 16:30, Tuesday 18th May 2021

Department of Digital, Culture, Media and Sport and
Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy

Virtual Meeting

Attendees:

Council members:

Alice Bentinck	Entrepreneur First
Professor Chris Bishop	Microsoft Research Lab
Professor Pete Burnap	Cardiff University
Ann Cairns	Mastercard
Dr Claire Craig	The Queen's College, Oxford
Paul Clarke	Formerly Ocado
Rachel Dunscombe	NHS Digital Academy
Tabitha Goldstaub	AI Council Chair
Professor Dame Wendy Hall	UK AI Skills Champion
Dame Patricia Hodgson	Centre for Data Ethics and Innovation
Lila Ibrahim	Deepmind
Professor Nick Jennings	Imperial College London
Adrian Joseph	BT Group
Priya Lakhani	CENTURY Tech
Professor Neil Lawrence	University of Cambridge
Professor Sir Adrian Smith	The Alan Turing Institute
Martin Tisné	Luminate
Professor Sir Mark Walport	Formerly UKRI and Government CSA
Marc Warner	Faculty

Observers:

Logan Graham	10DS (10 Data Science)
Ottoline Leyser	Chief Executive, UKRI
Paul Monks	Chief Scientific Adviser, BEIS
Tom Rodden	Chief Scientific Adviser, DCMS

Officials:

Blake Bower	DCMS
Tom Child	BEIS
Tim Cook	Office for AI
Dylan Evans	Office for AI
Liam Izod [For Item 5]	BEIS
Sana Khareghani	Office for AI

Iarla Kilbane-Dawe	Office for AI
Jessica Moore [For Item 5]	BEIS
Nick Swanson	Office for AI
Geoffrey Thornton	Office for AI
Sir Patrick Vallance [For Item 3]	Government Chief Scientific Adviser

Apologies

Professor David Lane	Edinburgh Centre for Robotics
Professor Máire O'Neill	Queen's University Belfast

Item 1: Chair's Welcome

- The Chair welcomed attendees to the meeting. Apologies for absence had been received from Professor David Lane and Professor Máire O'Neill.
- The Chair gave an update on activity occurring since the last meeting of the Council. This had included a series of member-led round table discussions, intended to advise the Office for AI and UK Government on the opportunities and challenges for AI policy and to help inform the development of the National AI Strategy.
- A survey of the wider AI ecosystem was planned over the coming weeks to further inform the development of the National AI Strategy. The Alan Turing Institute had agreed to assist with the hosting and analysis of the survey.
- Members continued to engage with officials from the Ministry of Defence (MOD) to inform the development of their AI defence strategy, announced as part of the MOD science and technology strategy 2020.
- In addition, the Council had agreed to continue providing feedback on the needs of the wider ecosystem in understanding the requirements of the new National Security and Investment regime.

Item 2: Office for AI Update

- The Head of the Office for AI (OAI) thanked members for their continued engagement and advice to the Government as it developed its National AI Strategy for the UK.
- A Government response to the recent consultation on the National Data Strategy had been published earlier that day.
- Research on the UK's AI labour market, carried out on behalf of the OAI by Ipsos MORI, had been published. In addition to gathering evidence on the current skills shortages and diversity within the workforce, the research aimed to recommend policy areas that government and industry should focus on to bridge the skills gap.

- Members' attention was drawn to a number of Bills contained within the Queen's Speech (2021), including the Draft Online Safety Bill, Telecommunications (Security) Bill; and Product Security and Telecommunications Infrastructure Bill.
- On international affairs, engagement was continuing through the Council of Europe's Ad hoc Committee on Artificial Intelligence on the feasibility of a legal framework for the development, design and application of artificial intelligence. In parallel, work was underway to explore priorities for future cooperation with the US flowing from the joint UK-US Declaration on Cooperation in AI Research and Development.

Item 3: Government Office for Science: Update

- The Government Chief Scientific Adviser gave an update on plans to establish new Science and Technology (S&T) horizon-scanning and policy capabilities within government, announced as part of the recent Integrated Review. The aim was to better anticipate and assess future priorities.
- It was recognised that strategic choices and decisions would be needed by the government, both on S&T priorities and on how to harness the UK's national capability in support of wider policy goals.
- A new 'own-collaborate-access' framework had been announced to guide government activity in priority areas of S&T, such as AI, quantum technologies and engineering biology.
- A discussion followed during which members put questions to the Government Chief Scientific Adviser.

Item 4: AI Strategy: Update and Next Steps

- The Deputy Head (Strategy) of the OAI gave an update on the emerging themes of the National AI Strategy.
- The Council had played an important role in gathering evidence to inform the development of the Strategy to date. It would be important to continue engaging with the wider AI ecosystem as work continued, both to ensure the final published strategy was underpinned by a robust evidence base and to build awareness and support across the wider AI community.
- A series of external events were planned with the AI Council and other partners (e.g. CBI, TechUK and Tech Nation).
- The OAI would continue to work closely with the AI Council over the coming months, including on the cross-cutting themes of diversity and public trust. A discussion followed during which members responded to the emerging themes.

Item 5: Innovation Strategy: Introduction and Overview

- The Assistant Director of Innovation Policy (BEIS) and Head of Technology Strategy (BEIS) gave an update on the emerging framework for considering new technologies within the forthcoming Innovation Strategy.
- At Budget 2021, the Government had committed to publish an Innovation Strategy this summer as part of its wider plan for growth. The strategy was intended to advance the agenda set out in the recent Integrated Review delivering on the Government's ambition for the UK to become the world's most innovative economy, providing a vision for high-growth sectors and technologies where the UK was well-placed to develop a globally competitive advantage.
- Members discussed the role of government in promoting innovation in transformative technologies; different approaches to the commercialisation of research; and the importance of achieving effective join-up between government departments and strategies.
- The Chair thanked officials and Council members for their attendance and closed the meeting.

AI Council Secretariat