

PRIME MINISTER'S COUNCIL FOR SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

Meeting summary: 4th and 5th March 2020

Attended: Prime Minister Boris Johnson, Patrick Vallance, Nancy Rothwell, Christopher Bishop, Julia Black, Philip Bond, Muffy Calder, Suranga Chandratillake, Philip Duffy (Day 1), Josh Fleming (Day 2), Jim Hall, Saul Klein, Robert Lechler, Ottoline Leyser, Max Lu, Jim McDonald, Dervilla Mitchell, Fiona Murray, Paul Newman, Venki Ramakrishnan, Brooke Rogers, Jo Shanmugalingam (Day 1), Paul Stein, Nick Stern, Mark Walport

Apologies: David Cannadine, Charles Roxburgh

Guests: Amanda Solloway, Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Science, Research and Innovation; Dominic Cummings and Ben Warner, Special Advisers to the Prime Minister; Kwasi Kwarteng, Minister of State for Business, Energy and Clean Growth; Sarah Hodgetts, Deputy Director for Industrial Strategy, BEIS; John Aston, Chief Scientific Adviser to the Home Office; and David Hill, Director General for Environment, Rural and Marine, Defra.

Day 1

1. Amanda Solloway, Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Science, Research and Innovation, provided CST members with an overview of her role and discussed the importance of promoting diversity in science within the UK.
2. The Prime Minister set out his priorities for science, research and innovation. He championed science as a key part of his levelling up agenda, which aims to boost regional investment and productivity to ensure a more even distribution of growth and opportunities across the UK, and highlighted the role of scientists in tackling the policy challenges of the coming decades. The Prime Minister asked the Council to define their “moon-shots” for UK science and technology, their ideas for where the UK should aim high, for example across healthcare, transport, energy and robotics.

3. He re-affirmed the government's pledge to invest in science and significantly boost R&D funding that will help unite and level up the country, calling on the Council to look at what science can do to drive this agenda.
4. The Council also spoke about plans to develop the necessary infrastructure to boost research and development, such as the new UK Advanced Research Projects Agency for high-risk, high-pay-off research. This will ultimately tackle some of the world's greatest challenges, including climate change and delivering net zero emissions by 2050.
5. The Council agreed to develop its thinking on addressing the priorities outlined by the Prime Minister and the government.

Day 2

6. Professor John Aston, the Chief Scientific Adviser for the Home Office, presented on priorities for strengthening science and engineering advice and expertise in the Home Office.
7. Minister of State for Business, Energy and Clean Growth, Kwasi Kwarteng, presented his priorities, including the ambition to achieve net-zero carbon emissions by 2050. Members discussed science and technology developments that could contribute to achieving this goal and agreed to offer further advice to the Minister.
8. CST members received an update from David Hill, Director General, Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, on Government's approach to implementing measures for adaptation to climate change impacts.
9. Members discussed potential future projects and progress with current work projects.

CST Secretariat
March 2020