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**Minutes of the 1st ukaea board meeting in 2022**

**19 January 2022**

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| **Location:** | HOW Room, UKAEA and remote |  |  |
| **Members** | David Gann (Chair)  Mark Bayley  Stephen Barter  Luc Bardin  Eithne Birt  Adrian Smith  Richard Hookway  Ian Chapman (CEO)  Antonia Jenkinson (CFO) | | |
| **Attendees** | Adam Baker (BEIS)  Lyanne Maclean (COO)  Tim Bestwick (CTO)  Nick Walkden (Secretariat)  Joe Milnes (Head of JET Operations, item 5)  Martin Townsend (Head of JET Repurposing programme, item 6)  Harry Turnbull-Jones (Business case lead, item 6)  Alli Brown (Finance Director, item 7) | | |
| **Apologies** | Kay Church  Stephen Hillier  Shrin Honap (before item 4) | | |

**MINUTES**

# chair’s opening remarks

## The Chair updated the Board on the latest status of Board renewals.

## No declarations of interest were raised.

# minutes and actions

## The minutes of the 6th UKAEA Board meeting in 2021 were reviewed, and approved with minor amendments.

## The outstanding actions of the Board were reviewed as follows:

### UKAEA(21)6/1: Action completed and closed.

### UKAEA(21)6/3: The Board reviewed the governance map for STEP provided within the Executive Board report, and were briefed on the formation of the STEP Technical Advisory Committee. Action Closed.

### UKAEA(21)6/4: The Board discussed progress among Non-Executive Members to reach out to networks and pass along best practice with regards to cyber.

### All other actions were confirmed as being due at future meetings.

# executive board report

## The CEO, CFO, COO, and CTO updated the Board on a number of areas of development since the report, and highlighted important details and key issues within the report.

## The Board reflected on the successes and activities undertaken by the organisation in 2021, and extended their thanks to the Executive team and wider organisation. The Board were briefed on the planned press conference for the release of JET DT results, and discussed the target audiences for the release.

## The Board were updated on that status of JET operations and EUROfusion participation in the interregnum to Euratom association, and noted a heightening risk as the financial year draws to an end without association ratified.

## The Board discussed Government plans for Arms Length Body reviews, noting an expectation that this will be conducted in the first half of 2022. The Board discussed the context and landscape of the review, including the related UKRI and Nurse reviews.

## The Board noted BEIS approval to enable wider utilisation of senior staff bands and noted that scrutiny of the enhanced flexibility will be provided by a small group of Executive and Non-Executive representatives. Members discussed the impact of the new flexibility on capability and capacity risks, and discussed the conditions for utilisation of the new flexibility, reinforcing a need to use the measure responsibly.

## The Board were briefed on a new risk related to the planning permission for the CCDP building, arising as a result of external factors. The Board discussed the impact of the issue, and highlighted the need to ensure those making decisions externally are fully appraised of the impact. The Board discussed a variety of measures to support the organisation in mitigating the risk.

## The Board discussed recent commercial opportunities arising with collaborators in the defence sector, and noted that within the organisations framework agreement SoS permission must be sought. Members discussed the need to ensure any work undertaken aligns with our own technical interests and recognised that this test had been applied. Members discussed the general motivations for undertaking business development opportunities.

## The Board were briefed on operational activity within the MRF, and were assured that continued close inspection of policies and processes will be undertaken as new facilities are set up.

## The Board discussed the latest position on COVID-19. The Board were assured on the continued response to COVID within the Authority, and discussed the impact of COVID on performance and working practices, noting UKAEA as being often held as an exemplar regarding midwifed work practices. Members noted that longer term plans for working practices will be reviewed by the RemCo. New policies from Government, introduced during the course of the Board meeting, were discussed and the Board reflected on the need to keep a conscious view on safety aside from changes in advice.

## Members reflected on the current recruitment of an EDI business partner, and Board reinforced the importance in taking forwards EDI measures within the organisation.

## The Board were briefed on the status of ITER.

## The Board discussed the evolution of the fusion landscape in light of major private investment in recent months in fusion industry, and the Board resolved to continue to keep a focus on the evolving landscape.

# Update on the step siting process

## A verbal update was provided to the Board by the CEO on the status of the STEP siting process. The Board noted plans for the shortlisting process, including site visits to begin in February with Non-Executive representation. Members discussed the timeframe, approvals, and process to a final decision on the STEP site.

# Update on JET DTE2 experiments

## A fulsome update was provided to the Board on the outcome of the JET DTE2 experimental campaign. The Board discussed the wide-ranging technical aspects of the headline results from the DTE2 campaign. Members discussed the contributions made by European collaborators despite the interregnum to Euratom association.

## The Board discussed the dissemination of the results from the DTE2 experiment and knowledge retention from the DTE2 campaign, noting a focus in the Executive on retention of knowhow and capability from JET. Members discussed the valuable learnings from JET and their relevance within the fusion landscape, particularly with ITER. The Board requested a future update as to how the JET DTE2 results inform, assist, and translate to ITER – Action UKAEA(22)1/2

## The Board reflected on the importance of an understanding of the detail and consequence of the results, and the wider challenges facing the fusion sector. The Board requested a future update on the position of the organisation with respect to the varied challenges of fusion, and where it aims to be – Action UKAEA(22)1/3

# Review of the jet decommissioning strategic outline business case

## The Board were briefed on the content and direction of the business case, and the approvals sought now and in future business cases for the JET Decommissioning and Repurposing programme.

## The Board held a wide ranging discussion on aspects of the business case, including the presentation and costing of options, the proposed programme governance, the flexibility and scalability of options, interaction with stakeholders including the NDA, assessment of risk in different options, and the workforce transition to decommissioning. Members discussed the legacy and history of JET for UKAEA, and requested that the Board remains attentive to this subject as JET moves towards decommissioning.

## The Board approved the development of the business case in terms of strategic direction, narrative, and optioneering, with Board engagement in the rating of options, and with a final draft for comments to be issued two weeks before submission to BEIS.

# Finance report

## The Finance Director briefed the Board on the overall financial perspective, highlighting an underspend position, and discussing ongoing risks. The Board discussed the forecast accuracy rate, noting high accuracy in long standing areas of the organisation, but lower rates in newer programmes and projects, which is a focus for improvement. The Board discussed the causes of the reported underspend position, actions being undertaken to mitigate the impact, and the impact on activity undertaken. Members discussed the position with relation to budget, and to forecast, noting that budget availability is subject to allocation of grant-in-aid lines which was delayed in year, and external issues driving delay in some capital areas of the budget. Members discussed methodologies for tracking activity against spend in future reporting. Members highlighted the backweighting of the forecast to the final months of the FY, and noted the upcoming three year allocation as an opportunity to address this in future years.

## The Board noted a second consecutive highlight of the UKAEA Annual Report and Accounts in the NAO Best Practice guide, and were invited to provide comment on any areas for improvement in the next annual report.

## The Board discussed the high level of non-reporting of KPIs within the report, and considered this a symptom of the Christmas break rather than an ongoing issue.

# sub-committee updates

## The Chair of the Audit and Risk Assurance Committee updated the Board on key issues from the last meeting:

### The committee agreed the programme of work for the next years interim audit, and the scope of work for the pensions audit

### The performance of the current years internal audit was noted as expected to be achieved, with overdue actions expected to be closed by year end, and one area of concern highlighted and being discussed by management

### The risk register and top corporate risks were reviewed by the committee

### Compliance to external Government standards was discussed by the committee with a plan to review progress at the next meeting

### The results of the recent phishing exercise were reviewed by the committee

### The Committee reviewed the status of the whistleblowing policy, with plans to re-publish

### Plans to increase mandatory training uptake were discussed by the committee

### Future plans for a committee deep dive on Asset Management were discussed.

## The Board noted this as the final report by the ARAC Chair to the Board, and reflected on the impressive performance of the ARAC under his chairmanship, extenging their sincere thanks, and welcoming the new Chair.

## The Board discussed the performance of external audit, noting a proactive approach with the management of external auditors to drive performance.

# plans for the fusion22 event

## The CTO provided an overview of plans for the Fusion22 event to the Board, including the strategic rationale and relationship to COP26, the location, scale, and potential agenda, and potential audiences. The Board discussed the targeted demographic for the event, and encouraged the use of social media to garner interest from younger generations, noting that social media plans are in place for the event. The Board also suggested extension of invitations to all known fusion startups as key stakeholders to the event. Members discussed potential advocacy for the event that could be enlisted to support its success. The Board were briefed on the approvals process for the event. The Board were asked to provide input into several aspects of the event, including the programme, invitation list, and potential speaker list.

## The Board discussed the measurement of success for the event, including metrics targeted, and requested that a report return in July to present the outcome of the event – Action UKAEA(22)1/4

# any other business

## The Board reviewed and confirmed the dates for 2023 Board meetings as:

* 20th January 2023
* 20th March 2023
* 15th May 2023
* 3rd July 2023
* 18th September 2023
* 17th November 2023

## The Board discussed a proposal to continue to operate a shadow board scheme by self-organisation with other interested and related PSREs. The Board supported the proposal and agreed to raise the proposal at a Board level with other potential partners in the scheme. The Executive agreed to return to the Board with a recommendation of individuals from the organisation who could be nominated for the scheme – Action UKAEA(22)1/5

## The Board discussed recent and upcoming visits from VIPs, and requested that a log of VIP visitors, and actions arising from their visits, be developed and maintained – Action UKAEA(22)1/6

## End