

 UK Atomic Energy Authority	<b>BOARD MEETING</b> Meeting Reference UKAEA(26)2	
<b>Date</b>	Wednesday 25 <sup>th</sup> March 2026	
<b>Time</b>	0930 - 1625	
<b>Location</b>	UKAEA Board Room, C7, Culham Campus	
<b>Members</b>	Bernard Taylor (Chair) Luc Bardin Tim Bestwick Ruth Elliot Claire Flint Sue Gray	Robin Grimes Richard Hookway Stephen Hillier Mary Ryan (remote) Lee McDonough
<b>Attendees</b>	Madhav Bakshi (DESNZ) David Sandford (DESNZ) David Gann (UKIFS Chair) Justin Kingsford (UKAEA COO) Heather Lewtas (UKAEA CDO) Nina Tomlin (Sec)	
<b>Apologies</b>	Sue Gray Stephen Hillier Lee McDonough	

## MINUTES

### Items

1. **Chair opening Remarks and declarations of interest** led by B Taylor
  - 1.1. Apologies had been received from Sue Gray, Stephen Hillier and Lee McDonough.
  - 1.2. No **Declarations** of interest were received.

2. **Minutes, Actions and matters arising** led by B Taylor

The minutes UKAEA(26)M1 were **approved**.

2.1. The open actions due by March were reviewed:

Action	Owner	Due	Status	Update
A sub-section of the Board to meet to approve final Tritium JV agreement	H Lewtas	Dec-25	Closed	Final approval meeting took place on Monday 9 March.
Discuss power outage length and timing with National Grid	L McDonough	Jan-26	Open	Meetings now concluded, this action to be closed.

Articulate the questions to be addressed in a one-day Board meeting to circulate to Board	T Bestwick	Feb-26	Open	Questions will be articulated in detail before the summer. The Strategy Day will focus on working through key strategic choices facing the organisation.
Confirm a date for a full day additional Board meeting on landscape of challenges	N Tomlin	Feb-26	Open	Confirmed as Friday 5 <sup>th</sup> June. Action to be closed.
Share the UKAEA Group overview graphic with Board members	T Bestwick	Feb-26	Closed	Included in the Draft Strategy in March Board papers.
Innovation Team to capture the questions that need to be addressed every time spin outs, JVs and collaborations are considered by Board	H Lewtas	Mar-26	Closed	Covered within the Innovation Paper in March Board papers.
Provide a more detailed report and update on safety to the Board.	J Kingsford	Mar-26	Closed	Included in March Board For Information papers.
Schedule future more detailed discussions on magnets, plasma, breeding, materials and other sub-sections of the presentation.	N Tomlin	Mar-26	Closed	Integrated into Board Forward Planner
Provide a discussion paper on risk appetite for the March Board meeting.	R Elliot	Mar-26	Closed	Included in March Board papers.
Include detailed information on robotics spin out in March innovation paper	H Lewtas	Mar-26	Closed	Included in the securing value projects paper in March Board papers.
Check whether Admincontrol is secure and whether licence is per person or per device	N Tomlin	Mar-26	Closed	Due diligence undertaken, hosted in Norway, meets Secure by Design standards. Licence is per person.
Include a technical session on Robotics in a future Board meeting	N Tomlin	Jun-26	Closed	On Forward Plan for November 2026

### 3. Sub-committee updates – PRemCo (verbal update), led by C Flint

- 3.1. Chair of PRemCo reported on the last meeting. The Sub-committee had received an update on CEO recruitment, had looked at Board succession and had discussed the skills assessment process with a view to including objective measures in future years.
- 3.2. Contingent labour reduction was being regularly monitored by PRemCo, as this was part of the agreement to implementation of the new pay and grading system.

- 3.3. PRemCo had discussed the 2026/27 objectives for UKAEA Executive Directors Execs to ensure focus on UKAEA mission and appropriate incentivisation; the content and weighting of objectives had been reviewed.
- 3.4. The People Strategy and Delivery Plan had been reviewed, with an emphasis on mission, performance culture, leadership development and employee engagement activity and how to ensure these were joined up, effective and efficient. The effect of automation and AI on the organisation had been discussed. PRemCo would keep a watching brief on the resources available to realise the ambitions captured in the People Strategy.
- 3.5. PRemCo endorsed the People Strategy and Delivery Plan subject to final iteration through governance, and with the understanding that the Strategy would need to remain flexible to allow for changing priorities.

**4. People Strategy**, led by Sharon Taylor

**UKAEA(26)2 – People Strategy – V3**

- 4.1. ST introduced the latest draft of the People Strategy to the Board, which had been developed following extensive consultation across organisation. The Strategy was underpinned by a detailed Delivery Plan. It was focused on resourcing, workforce planning, learning and development, and culture, including EDI, wellbeing and values.
- 4.2. The Delivery Plan represented a realistic assessment of what the organisation would be able to achieve and over what period of time. It would be reviewed at future PRemCo and ExCo meetings.
- 4.3. The Board discussed the importance of performance management and delivery and professionalisation of management and asked about the biggest areas with capability gaps.
- 4.4. The Board heard that the strategy focused on building capability across the organisation and that the Delivery Plan included KPIs against each element. This would include strategic workforce planning. The Board asked to see the Delivery Plan.

**Actions:**

Reference	Action	Actionee	Due
UKAEA(26)2/1	Provide Board with a copy of the People Strategy Delivery Plan	S Taylor	May 26

**5. CEO Recruitment (verbal update)**, led by B Taylor

- 5.1. The Board were provided with a review and update on the CEO recruitment process and preferred candidate identified by the recruitment panel. Contracts and checks were now being worked through.
- 5.2. Formal approval would be sought from DESNZ Ministers; the Board **approved** the decision reached by the recruitment panel and **delegated** final decision on contract details to PRemCo.

**Decisions:**

Reference	Decision
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UKAEA(26)2/D1	The Board <b>approved</b> the CEO recruitment decision reached by the panel and <b>delegated</b> final approval on the contract to PRemCo Sub-Committee.
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**6. UKAEA Executive Report**, led by T Bestwick, R Elliot and J Kingsford

**UKAEA(26)2 – UKAEA Executive Board Report**

- 6.1. TB took Board through the written report, drawing particular attention to the detailed Safety Report annexed under For Information. The Board expressed their appreciation that no new incidents had been reported since the last meeting and noted the update on the Just Culture Model being strengthened across UKAEA.
- 6.2. The purchase of the non-operational areas of the West Burton site had been completed; this would be leased by UKAEA Group to UKFE.
- 6.3. The Board heard that the schedule and budget for the national grid shutdown and upgrade had now been confirmed, subject to detailed design work.
- 6.4. The Board discussed the plans for a Strategic Investment Partner for Culham Campus and subsequent development of a new facility and data centre. Negotiations with DSIT on the compute facility continued.
- 6.5. TB highlighted three items in addition to the report: the Group structure of the organisation to be clarified, STRIDE and Sunrise latest developments and TAE Beams JV finalisation.

**Actions:**

Reference	Action	Actionee	Due
UKAEA(26)2/2	Integrate safety tracking into Exec Report to Board for every meeting	N Tomlin	May 26
UKAEA(26)2/3	Provide Board with a think piece on Group structure and purpose	T Bestwick	May 26

**7. UKFE (UKIFS) Executive Report** led by P Methven

**UKAEA(26)2 – UKIFS CEO Report – Mar 26 – OSC**

**UKAEA(26)2 – STEP reporting**

- 7.1. PM reported on updates since the written report had been circulated. The name change to UK Fusion Energy Ltd and Construction Partner had been announced on 16<sup>th</sup> March, West Burton site ownership of non-operational areas had been transferred to UKAEA Group, with lease arrangements and management delegations to UKFE now in place. Part 1 of the Development Consent Order had been completed.
- 7.2. Regular announcements would follow the launch of the Fusion Strategy, including on 14<sup>th</sup> April at the Economist Fusion Fest.
- 7.3. An event for industry leaders would be organised, with invitations to be issued to engineering companies and others.

**8. DESNZ UK Fusion Strategy (verbal update)**, led by D Sandford

- 8.1. DS reported on the recent launch of the UK Fusion Strategy, which sets the framework for subsequent discussions on a whole swathe of topics. Many FIA members expressed

their belief that the Strategy puts the UK back in the lead for investment attractiveness and companies are asking about potential UK deployments.

- 8.2. Actions to follow include the publication of a National Policy Statement in the summer, the announcement of UKAEA's new CEO and a Global Fusion Summit in the autumn.
- 8.3. The Board discussed implementation of the NISTA re-set and delegations provided to ALBs as a result of this.

**9. UKAEA Strategy**, led by T Bestwick

**UKAEA(26)2 – UKAEA Strategy cover note**

**UKAEA(26)2 – UKAEA Strategy – version for Board review**

- 9.1. The Board heard that the UKAEA Strategy delineated broad activities, role and goals against one UKAEA Group mission, with the twin rationales for the UK National Fusion Lab and UKFE laid out. The Strategy would be launched on 14<sup>th</sup> April, following an internal launch on the 13<sup>th</sup>.
- 9.2. The focus of the UK National Fusion Lab strategy is on shorter-term deliverables than the UKFE strategy
- 9.3. The Board **approved** the UKAEA Strategy subject to final detailed comments from DESNZ and other Board members.

**Decisions:**

Reference	Decision
UKAEA(26)2/D2	The Board <b>approved</b> the UKAEA Strategy subject to final detailed comments from DESNZ and other Board members.

**10. UKFE (UKIFS) Strategy**, led by P Methven

**UKAEA(26)2 – UK Fusion Energy Strategy**

**UKAEA(26)2 – UK Fusion Energy Ltd Strategy – Public version v0.5 (For UKAEA Board)**

- 10.1. The board reviewed the UKFE Strategy, pending final layout changes and ministerial approval. The document would be followed up with a more fulsome internal strategy document.
- 10.2. The Board recognised that the strategy document was the outcome of a major transition within UKFE and commended the UKFE team for successfully going through a significant transformation process.
- 10.3. The Board heard that the primary audience for the document was industry and potential investors.
- 10.4. PM would share the list of stakeholder being targeted with UKAEA Group Board.

**Actions:**

Reference	Action	Actionee	Due
UKAEA(26)2/4	Share the final list of UKFE Strategy stakeholders being targeted with UKAEA Group Board	P Methven	May 26

**11. UKFE Ltd Business Plan 2026-30**, led by P Methven

**UKAEA(26)2 – UKFE Ltd Business Plan**

11.1. PM took Board members through the final draft of the UKFE Business Plan, which had been agreed by UKFE Board.

11.2. A discussion followed on investment propositions and how these would be delivered in practice; the document would be amended to clarify this area further. Further edits would also clarify the terminology around technology demonstration.

11.3. The Board discussed how CPMs would be monitored and the governance role of the Board and it was confirmed that the overall position for UKAEA Group was overseen by Group Executive Committee, which ensured no gaps and no duplication.

11.4. DESNZ provided some feedback, including in relation to readiness for Tranche 2b and the core mission of delivering STEP.

11.5. A revised version would be circulated, with the Board **delegating approval** of this final version to the Board Chair, UKAEA Group CEO and DESNZ.

**Actions:**

Reference	Action	Actionee	Due
UKAEA(26)2/5	Circulate final UKFE Ltd Business Plan for delegated approval	P Methven	Mar 26

**12. UKAEA Strategic Business Plan update**, led by R Elliot

**UKAEA(26)2 – Strategic Business Plan Update**

12.1. The Board noted the update, which confirmed that UKAEA Strategy milestones and outcomes would be replicated in the business plan; the 2030 targets would be appropriate for Board monitoring.

12.2. A discussion would be scheduled at May Board to look at the high-level deliverables in more detail.

**Actions:**

Reference	Action	Actionee	Due
UKAEA(26)2/6	Schedule a discussion on high-level UKAEA deliverables at May Board	N Tomlin	May 26

**13. Finance update**, led by R Elliot

**UKAEA(26)2 – Finance Update**

13.1. Jill Evans, Director of Finance and Business Systems, reported that UKAEA Group was forecast to spend on budget by year end. The organisation would continue to aim for a smoother profile in future years.

**14. UKAEA 2026/27 Budget and CPMs**, led by R Elliot

**UKAEA(26)2 – UKAEA Budget 2026/27**

**UKAEA(26)2 – CPMs 2026/27**

**UKAEA(26)2 – CPMs FY26-27 Board Export**

14.1. Bottom up detailed budgets were presented for approval, subject to small late adjustments being delegated to the CFO. JE confirmed that overheads had come down following work on creating efficiencies.

14.2. The Board **approved** the budget for 2026/27

14.3. The Board were invited to review and approve CPMs for next year. Things to note had been flagged in the covering note, including the formulation of the new research output performance measure and a new CPM on effective working between UKAEA and UKFE.

14.4. The Board **approved** the CPMs.

**Decisions:**

Reference	Decision
UKAEA(26)2/D3	The Board <b>approved</b> the budget for 2026/27, delegating minor final adjustments to the CFO
UKAEA(26)2/D4	The Board <b>approved</b> the 2026/27 CPMs.

**15. Investments**, led by R Elliot

15.1. The Board discussed potential investments requiring decision this financial year. Actions to conclude before year end were agreed.

15.2. The investments were **approved** subject to certain conditions being met.

**Decisions:**

Reference	Decision
UKAEA(26)2/D5	The Board <b>approved</b> late investments in 2025/26 as outlined and discussed at the meeting.

**16. Spin outs**, led by H Lewtas

**UKAEA(26)2 - New venture approval process**

**UKAEA(26)2 - Spinout fast track**  
**UKAEA(26)2 - Remote Maintenance Systems - Spinout**  
**UKAEA(26)2 - RMS Spinout proposal 6.2.2026**  
**UKAEA(26)2 - Spinout Business Case - RMS - 6.2.2026**

- 16.1. The approvals process for any new venture was outlined in the paper submitted to Board; based on what had been learnt from joint ventures this year.
- 16.2. There was a high level of interest within the organisation in entrepreneurial training and developing ventures. A fast track spin out process had therefore also been developed, to be used in areas which were not deemed fusion critical.
- 16.3. Equity terms for anything fusion critical would be agreed on a case-by-case basis.
- 16.4. The Board discussed how to get optimal value out of IP and royalty rate levels.
- 16.5. The aim of this activity was to encourage commercialisation to maximise value.
- 16.6. The Board **approved** the dual track approach to spin outs; and that all ventures are approved by the following **approval** process: Corporate Development Committee, Group Executive Committee, and then UKAEA Group Board for final approval.
- 16.7. DESNZ asked to receive a regular look ahead to ensure a smooth process, for instance in relation to classification nor subsidy.
- 16.8. The Remote Maintenance Systems spinout was **approved** by Board.

**Decisions:**

Reference	Decision
UKAEA(26)2/D6	The Board <b>approved</b> the dual track approach to spin outs; and that all ventures are approved by the following <b>approval</b> process: Corporate Development Committee, Group Executive Committee, and then UKAEA Group Board for final approval.
UKAEA(26)2/D7	The Remote Maintenance Systems spinout was <b>approved</b> by Board.

**17. Securing Value, Innovation and IP**, led by H Lewtas  
**UKAEA(26)2 - Innovation and Securing Value Pipeline**  
**UKAEA(26)2 - SV Update - Robotics**  
**UKAEA(26)2 - SV Update - Materials**  
**UKAEA(26)2 - BB\_SV\_Summary\_March2026**  
**UKAEA(26)2 - SV Waste Update**

- 17.1. HL provided the Board with an update on the Securing Value stream of work, including two JVs ready to be set up.
- 17.2. The securing value work on Robotics was discussed in detail with a three-pronged approach recommended. The Board discussed whether the Group structure

should be used to underpin future developments and debated what model should be used.

17.3. This work would continue to be developed.

**18. Sub-committee updates – ARAC, led by R Hookway**

**UKAEA(26)2 – ARAC – March 26**

18.1. The Board heard that the last ARAC meeting included a detailed discussion on the JET lifetime plan and a review of the control environment and culture of compliance.

18.2. ARAC raised concerns about audit findings completion rates and encouraged management to be held to account, while also pushing back on internal audit recommendations where appropriate.

18.3. RH noted that financial and commercial controls were working well, while other areas required embedding a shift in culture.

18.4. Additional resources being put towards cyber risk would be brought back to a joint UKAEA/UKFE ARAC.

**19. Risk appetite discussion and risk report/dashboard, led by N Barber**

**UKAEA(26)2 – Board Risk Report March 2026**

19.1. The Board heard that the top group risks covered in the circulated report had not changed since the last review. Some flightpaths had been amended and target scores had been added to the dashboard. Risk management continued to be about demonstrating technical progress while having a proportionate control process. Protecting IP remained one of the top risks.

19.2. The risk appetite annual review had been completed at UKAEA National Fusion Lab Executive Committee, Group Executive Committee and ARAC. The Board heard that the risk culture at UKAEA had matured significantly over the past few years while further improvements were possible.

19.3. The Board **approved** the risk appetite annual review.

**Decisions:**

Reference	Decision
UKAEA(26)2/D8	The Board <b>approved</b> the risk appetite annual review.

**20. AOB, led by B Taylor**

**20.1. UKIFS CSD changes**

**UKAEA(26)2 – UKFE CSD amendments**

**UKAEA(26)2 – UKFE Corporate Structure Document – Updates Mar26**

20.1.1. The proposed changes to the UKFE Corporate Structure Document were **approved**.

20.1.2. The name change to UKFE was **approved**.

**Decisions:**

Reference	Decision
UKAEA(26)2/D9	The proposed changes to the UKFE Corporate Structure Document were <b>approved</b> .
UKAEA(26)2/D10	The name change to UKFE was <b>approved</b> .

**20.2. Harwell PubSP Directorship**

**UKAEA(26)2 – AOB – PubSP Directorship**

20.2.1. The appointment of Simon Peck as Director of Harwell PubSP was **approved**.

**Decisions:**

Reference	Decision
UKAEA(26)2/D11	The appointment of Simon Peck as Director of Harwell PubSP was <b>approved</b> .

**20.3. Register of interests and skills assessment table for ARA**

**UKAEA(26)2 – Declaration of interests and Skills for ARA 2025-26**

**UKAEA(26)2 – Register of Interest for publishing 2026**

**UKAEA(26)2 – Board Skills Self Assessment ARA 2025\_26**

20.3.1. The annually reviewed public register of interests and the Annual Report and Account Directors' Independence statement were **approved**.

20.3.2. The skills assessment table was **approved** for publication.

**Decisions:**

Reference	Decision
UKAEA(26)2/D12	The annually reviewed public register of interests and the Annual Report and Account Directors' Independence statement were <b>approved</b> .
UKAEA(26)2/D13	The skills assessment table was <b>approved</b> for publication.

## 20.4. BER actions update

### UKAEA(26)2 – Board Effectiveness Review – Actions Update

### UKAEA(26)2 – BER Actions Log

20.4.1. All remaining BER open actions were recommended for closure. This would be reflected in the 2025/26 Annual Report and Accounts.

The meeting closed at 1617.

For information papers:

1. **Detailed report and update on safety**
  - a. Noted – including under the Executive Report to Board under item 6.
2. **FOSTER update**
  - a. Noted
3. **Cyber Governance Code of Practice – for awareness**
  - a. Noted

### Attendance record:

Position	Name	Present	Absent
Members	Bernard Taylor	/	
	Ruth Elliot	/	
	Tim Bestwick	/	
	Richard Hookway	/	
	Luc Bardin	/	
	Claire Flint	/ until 10.40am	
	Sue Gray		/
	Stephen Hillier		/
	Mary Ryan	/ until 12.45pm	
	Robin Grimes	/	
	Lee McDonough		/
Attendees	Nina Tomlin	/	
	Justin Kingsford	/	
	David Gann	/ from 11am until 3pm	
	David Sandford	/	
	Madhav Bakshi	/	
	Heather Lewtas	/ from 12 noon	

**End of Minutes**