



House of Commons
Science and Technology
Committee

Pre-appointment hearing for the Chair of UK Research and Innovation

Second Report of Session 2021–22

*Report, together with formal minutes relating
to the report*

*Ordered by the House of Commons
to be printed 30 June 2021*

Science and Technology Committee

The Science and Technology Committee is appointed by the House of Commons to examine the expenditure, administration and policy of the Government Office for Science and associated public bodies.

Current membership

[Greg Clark MP](#) (*Conservative, Tunbridge Wells*) (Chair)

[Aaron Bell MP](#) (*Conservative, Newcastle-under-Lyme*)

[Dawn Butler MP](#) (*Labour, Brent Central*)

[Chris Clarkson MP](#) (*Conservative, Heywood and Middleton*)

[Katherine Fletcher MP](#) (*Conservative, South Ribble*)

[Andrew Griffith MP](#) (*Conservative, Arundel and South Downs*)

[Mark Logan MP](#) (*Conservative, Bolton North East*)

[Rebecca Long-Bailey MP](#) (*Labour, Salford and Eccles*)

[Carol Monaghan MP](#) (*Scottish National Party, Glasgow North West*)

[Graham Stringer MP](#) (*Labour, Blackley and Broughton*)

[Zarah Sultana MP](#) (*Labour, Coventry South*)

Powers

The Committee is one of the departmental select committees, the powers of which are set out in House of Commons Standing Orders, principally in SO. No. 152. These are available on the internet via www.parliament.uk.

Publication

© Parliamentary Copyright House of Commons 2021. This publication may be reproduced under the terms of the Open Parliament Licence, which is published at www.parliament.uk/site-information/copyright-parliament.

Committee reports are published on the Committee's website at www.parliament.uk/science and in print by Order of the House.

Committee staff

The current staff of the Committee are: Masrur Ahmed (Second Clerk), Dr James Chandler (Committee Specialist), Emma Dobrzynski (Committee Operations Officer), Sonia Draper (Committee Operations Manager), Danielle Nash (Clerk), and Emily Pritchard (Senior Media and Communications Officer), Carl Thomas (POST Fellow).

Contacts

All correspondence should be addressed to the Clerk of the Science and Technology Committee, House of Commons, London, SW1A 0AA. The telephone number for general inquiries is: 020 7219 2793; the Committee's e-mail address is: scitechcom@parliament.uk.

You can follow the Committee on Twitter using [@CommonsSTC](https://twitter.com/CommonsSTC).

Contents

1	Pre-appointment hearing for the Chair of UK Research and Innovation	3
	The role of pre-appointment hearings	3
	The role of UKRI Chair	3
	Our work on this appointment	5
	The hearing on 23 June and answers to written questions	5
	Knowledge of research and innovation policy	6
	Sir Andrew's interests	6
	Conclusions	8
	Appendix One: Campaign information	9
	Appendix Two: Sir Andrew Mackenzie's CV and declaration of interest	11
	Appendix Three: Candidate questionnaire	15
	Formal minutes	18
	Witnesses	19
	List of Reports from the Committee during the current Parliament	20

1 Pre-appointment hearing for the Chair of UK Research and Innovation

The role of pre-appointment hearings

1. In 2019 guidance, the then Liaison Committee summarised the purpose of pre-appointment hearings and set out four aims:

- scrutiny of the quality of ministerial decision-making, which is a proper part of ministerial accountability to Parliament;
- providing public reassurance, in addition to the processes of the Office for the Commissioner of Public Appointments, that those appointed to key public offices have been selected on merit;
- providing public evidence of the independence of mind of the candidate; and
- enhancing the appointee's legitimacy in undertaking his or her function, including providing the public with an insight into the candidate's views on the policy issues related to the role.¹

2. Whether a public appointment is subject to a pre-appointment hearing depends on whether the role appears on a Cabinet Office pre-appointment list, or a Select Committee of the House of Commons has agreed with the Government that a role not on the list should be subject to a pre-appointment hearing.² The Chair of UK Research and Innovation (UKRI) is a role that appears on the Cabinet Office pre-appointment list.³

The role of UKRI Chair

3. The role of Chair of UKRI was advertised in February 2021. It was advertised as a one day a week role. The candidate information pack summarised the purpose of the role:

The Chair of UKRI will play an integral role in guiding this young organisation along its path to corporate maturity. The Chair will work with the CEO, the Board and the Executive Chairs of UKRI's nine Councils, leading UKRI in pursuit of its objectives, ensuring its success, and the UK's continued leadership globally on research and innovation. The Chair acts as custodian for UKRI's mission and objectives and is responsible for overall direction and management of UKRI, ensuring that the Board takes an effective governance role.⁴

4. More specifically the key duties/objectives of the role were stated in the candidate information pack as:

1 Liaison Committee, Third Report of Session 2017–19, [Pre-Appointment Hearings](#), HC2307, para 3
 2 Liaison Committee, Third Report of Session 2017–19, [Pre-Appointment Hearings](#), HC2307, paras 7–8
 3 Cabinet Office, [Cabinet Office Guidance: pre-appointment scrutiny by House of Commons select committees](#), January 2019, Annex D
 4 UKRI and Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, [UK Research and Innovation: Chair—Candidate Prospectus \(February 2021\)](#), p5

1. Formulating UKRI strategy–Ensure progress of a coherent strategic approach across the organisation on cross-cutting research and innovation priorities as well as UKRI and its Councils own corporate reform.
2. Work with the CEO to advise the Secretary of State on strategic priorities, the case for investment into BEIS and spending review allocations to UKRI's Councils.
3. Build vital relationships with various partners aimed at realising the potential of UKRI research and business to drive economically beneficial outcomes. In particular engaging with the business and academic communities, Government departments, Parliament and relevant all-party groups as well as other public, private and third sector partners including those outside of the UK to increase the relevance and economic impact of UKRI's research.
4. Ensuring the UKRI board takes proper account of guidance provided by the Secretary of State for Business energy and Industrial Strategy.
5. Ensuring that there is coordination and co-operation with the Office for Students, the devolved higher education funding bodies and other key partners.
6. Working with the Senior Independent Members of each Council to ensure that UKRI's Councils operate effectively and are able to discharge their remits within UKRI.

Responsibilities of the role were listed as:

7. Chair board meetings, typically eight times a year, in a way that facilitates the corporate pursuit of UKRI's objectives and gives due consideration to the interests of all stakeholders across academia and business.
8. Provide advice to the Secretary of State on appointments to the UKRI board including the CEO and CFO. Support the CEO in recruitment of UKRI's other senior executive appointments.
9. Chair the Nominations and Remuneration Committee, which determines senior executive pay policy and contracts, and corporate bonuses, and appointments to research Council committees, as well as regular attendance at the Audit and Finance Com

Essential criteria for the role were:

1. Ability to Chair and lead the Board and to develop, drive forward and oversee strategic direction;
2. A passion for the role R&D can play in the UK economy and society;
3. Strong links to and credibility with industry and business, or demonstrable ability to build significant credibility within those communities;

4. Exercise judgement across a broad spectrum of policy and management issues;
5. Ability to engage with the breadth of UKRI stakeholders at senior level;
6. Show a strong understanding of governance and other governing body management issues, including compliance and probity;
7. Ability to provide constructive challenge to the UKRI Executive and to drive forward change in behaviour and practice across the organisation;
8. Promote and embed an inclusive culture.⁵

Our work on this appointment

5. In May 2021, the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, informed us that following the conclusion of an open recruitment campaign, the Government's preferred candidate for appointment as Chair of UKRI was Sir Andrew Mackenzie.

6. We decided in June 2021 that we would invite Sir Andrew to an oral pre-appointment hearing in addition to requesting answers to written questions in advance of that hearing. Our oral hearing with Sir Andrew took place on Wednesday 23 June and sought to achieve the aims of pre-appointment hearings as set out at paragraph 1 of this Report. A transcript of the session is available on our website.⁶ We have also published, as Appendices to this Report:

- a) Campaign information provided to us by the Department for Business Energy and Industrial Strategy, including information on the number of candidates and diversity information;⁷
- b) Sir Andrew's CV as submitted by him and declaration of interest;⁸ and
- c) Sir Andrew's responses to a set of written questions we sent him in advance of the hearing on 23 June.⁹

The hearing on 23 June and answers to written questions

7. The hearing and the written questions addressed Sir Andrew's motivation for applying for the role, his background and experience, and his understanding of the work of UKRI and issues relating to research and innovation policy. We also questioned Sir Andrew on his priorities for UKRI and any conflicts of interest that may arise from his appointment.

5 UKRI and Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, [UK Research and Innovation: Chair—Candidate Prospectus \(February 2021\)](#).

6 Science and Technology Committee, [Pre-appointment hearing: Government's preferred candidate for UKRI Chair: Publications](#), accessed on 25 June 2021

7 See Appendix One.

8 See Appendix Two.

9 See Appendix Three.

Knowledge of research and innovation policy

8. To assess Sir Andrew’s suitability for the role, including knowledge, we asked him a number of questions relating to research and innovation policy and the issues facing the sector. For example, we asked questions about research and development (R&D) funding,¹⁰ UKRI funding,¹¹ UKRI’s role in contributing to the Government’s levelling up agenda and the concentration of funding in the Golden Triangle,¹² and the disparity in funding between Research Councils.¹³

9. While Sir Andrew has not been working in research-focussed roles for much of his career, especially more recently, we acknowledge that in answers to our questions he articulated how he had worked on R&D in the companies he has worked for¹⁴ and Sir Andrew is also a Fellow of the Royal Society.¹⁵ However, Sir Andrew’s answers to our questions did not always demonstrate a depth and breadth of knowledge that we would have expected. For example, when asked about the distribution of funding across Research Councils, and in separate questions on funding for Horizon Europe and whether the UK’s subscription should instead be given to UKRI, Sir Andrew said as part of his reply that “these are questions I will ask of UKRI staff”.¹⁶ This, combined with his own admission that he will need to “acquire skills to work across government”,¹⁷ and his career history not being in R&D could mean that early in his tenure he will face challenges in:

- advising the Secretary of State on the breadth of policy issues covered by UKRI;
- negotiating across Government for increased funding for UKRI specifically and public sector investment in research and innovation more generally; and
- providing challenge to and alternative views to pre-held organisational views within UKRI.

However, Sir Andrew has had an eminent career to date which indicates a track record of being able to adapt and succeed.

Sir Andrew’s interests

10. UKRI has a conflicts of interest policy. That policy “defines a conflict of interest as a set of circumstances that create a risk that an individual’s ability to apply judgement or act in one role is, or could be, impaired or influenced by a secondary interest”.¹⁸ Three main groups of conflicts are set out in the policy:

- a direct or indirect financial interest;
- non-financial or personal interests; and

10 See for example [Q44](#) and [Qq46–54](#).

11 See for example [Q45](#).

12 See for example, [Qq71–72](#).

13 See for example, [Qq55–57](#).

14 See for example [Qq2–3](#)

15 See Appendix 2.

16 See for example [Q57](#) and [Q74](#).

17 See Appendix 3, Q2 and Q4.

18 UKRI, [Conflicts of interest](#), accessed 24 June 2021

- competing loyalties between an organisation they owe a primary duty to and/or some other person or entity.

UKRI’s policy also emphasises the importance of considering a perception of a conflict of interest as it “may be damaging to UKRI’s reputation”.¹⁹ The policy is clear though that (our emphasis) “**the existence of an actual, perceived or potential conflict of interest does not necessarily imply wrongdoing on anyone’s part**” and says that “any private, personal or commercial interests which give rise to such a conflict of interest must be recognised, disclosed appropriately and either eliminated or properly managed”.²⁰ Sir Andrew indicated in evidence that he might not have looked at this policy in detail.²¹

11. If appointed Chair of UKRI Sir Andrew told us that he intends to continue his recently acquired position as Chair of Shell, a two day a week role. Sir Andrew explained to us that he thought two days a week at Shell was “a little bit of an underestimate” and he conceded that it was “early days”.²² Sir Andrew said that he thought his Shell role might increase to two to three days a week once travel resumed.²³ Sir Andrew assured us that if the UKRI Chair role required more than one day a week of his time—which he thought it would—he would make this time available.²⁴ He also told us that he would be taking on no further roles.²⁵

12. Sir Andrew indicated in answer to our written questions and in answer to various questions at our session on 23 June that he did not think a conflict of interest would arise from him retaining his role at Shell alongside the UKRI role as “any R&D collaboration between UKRI and Shell will be handled deep in the two organisations and would not be part of the Boards’ reserve powers”.²⁶ Sir Andrew also noted that both Shell and UKRI had “protocols to allow recusal, even of the Chair, should the unexpected occur”.²⁷

13. Sir Andrew also explained how he thought the two roles might complement each other while noting that they “must clearly remain carefully separated”:

I am, of course, aware of the contrast between Shell, as an energy company, and the role of UKRI as the major funder of environmental R&D. But rather than a conflict I see this as a positive. Climate change is the major issue of our day and [it’s] essential to have effective understanding between different organisations if we are to reach the UK’s Net Zero goals. I am well placed to help facilitate this in a broader sense.²⁸

Sir Andrew did not elaborate at the oral hearing on what “carefully separated” meant in practice, although he told us he had “a lot of experience in my life of managing these conflicts of interest”.²⁹

19 UKRI, [Conflicts of interest](#), accessed 24 June 2021

20 UKRI, [Conflicts of interest](#), accessed 24 June 2021

21 [Q12](#)

22 [Q7](#) and [Q23](#)

23 [Qq23–28](#)

24 See for example [Qq7–10](#) and [Q16](#).

25 [Q28](#)

26 See Appendix 3, Q4. See also [Q11](#) and [Qq64–65](#).

27 See Appendix 3, Q4.

28 See Appendix 3, Q4.

29 [Q11](#)

14. Sir Andrew illustrated to us the importance he placed on personal integrity, including how it related to managing any conflicts of interest: “I am very thoughtful about the requirement for me to behave in a manner of the highest integrity”.³⁰ Sir Andrew was able to set out the importance of integrity to him personally and how he would, from a time management perspective, manage both roles. However, when we asked him a number of questions on how any potential conflicts of interest would be managed in practice it did not appear that a formal process had been put in place by Sir Andrew and UKRI to manage potential conflicts of interest.

Conclusions

15. **On the basis of the discussions during the pre-appointment hearing, of our consideration of his CV and the answers he provided to our questionnaire, we consider that Sir Andrew’s career provides him with the professional competence and many of the skills required for the role of Chair of UK Research and Innovation, although we have reservations about Sir Andrew’s science and innovation policy knowledge and how potential conflicts of interest will be managed.**

16. **Sir Andrew’s evidence and career experience to date indicated that he would need to improve his personal knowledge of how Government works, the research and innovation landscape and the most pertinent issues relating to research and innovation. Early priorities for Sir Andrew to focus on should include how to work with Ministers and officials in Whitehall and within UKRI, as well as developing further knowledge of research and innovation issues.**

17. **As the UKRI conflicts of interest policy states “the existence of an actual, perceived or potential conflict of interest does not necessarily imply wrongdoing on anyone’s part” but it should be considered as it “may be damaging to UKRI’s reputation”. It is therefore in the interests of the Government, UKRI and Sir Andrew that there is no perceived conflict of interest between Sir Andrew’s role as Chair of UKRI and as Chair of Shell. Prior to confirming the appointment, the Government, UKRI and Sir Andrew should formalise a process for how potential conflicts of interests (direct and indirect) between these two roles will be managed in practice. An update on this process, once agreed, should be provided to the Committee. Should Sir Andrew be appointed we wish him well and look forward to working with him.**

Appendix One: Campaign information

BEIS provided the following information on the recruitment process and the candidates who applied for the role of Chair of UKRI:

Campaign Launch Date	03/02/2021
Campaign Closing Date	10/03/2021
Reason for any changes in timetable to that originally published	A one week extension to the advert for further outreach to take place.
Advertising strategy	Advert on the Cabinet Office Public Appointments website, BEIS LinkedIn, Cabinet Office LinkedIn and Twitter. UKRI advertised the role on their platforms and outreach was carried out by BEIS, UKRI and No. 10.
Advisory Assessment Panel	Panel Chair and BEIS Representative: Jo Shanmugalingam—Director General, Industrial Strategy, Science and Innovation Representative of the UKRI Board: Professor Julia Black—UKRI Board Senior Independent Member Scientific Credibility: Sir Patrick Vallance - Government Chief Scientific Advisor Senior Independent Panel Member: Perdita Fraser—Board Member, National Lottery Fund
Number of applicants	25
Number of candidates invited to interview	4
Number of candidates found appointable	3

Proposed terms of appointment and remuneration—The UKRI Chair will be appointed for a term of 5 years with an annual remuneration package of £29,500.

Diversity data

A: Gender

	% male	% female	% identify another way	% not declared
Applicants	16 (64%)	2 (8%)	0	7 (28%)
Shortlist (applicants invited to interview)	4	0	0	0

B. Ethnicity

	% white	% ethnic minority	% not declared
Applicants	14 (56%)	4 (16%)	7 (28%)
Shortlist (applicants invited to interview)	4	0	0

C. Disability

	% disabled	% non-disabled	% not declared
Applicants	1 (4%)	17 (68%)	7 (28%)
Shortlist (applicants invited to interview)	0	4	0

Appendix Two: Sir Andrew Mackenzie's CV and declaration of interest

Sir Andrew submitted a CV as part of the recruitment process, which we have reproduced below.

CV: Sir Andrew (Stewart) Mackenzie

A renowned, award-winning scientist, proven leader of several of the world's foremost companies, champion of diversity and of the social value of liberal capitalism. He was knighted for services to UK-Australian relations, science and industry in 2020.

Andrew has uniquely spanned science and commerce. His research has spawned groundbreaking methods for oil exploration and recovery, new catalysts and safer alternative solvents, each delivering sustained competitive advantage and re-defining industry practices worldwide. He was elected to the Royal Society in 2014, named by the Science Council as "one of the UK's top-100 scientists", and has been awarded three honorary doctorates.

He speaks six languages, having operated in five continents, consistently fostering partnerships with civil society, public servants, business and academics.

Andrew's commercial leadership is characterised by building progressive corporate cultures, diverse, high-performance teams, successful community collaboration, and combining sustainable returns for shareholders with social value and reform.

In addition to senior positions at BP and Rio Tinto, Andrew is acknowledged as the CEO who transformed BHP, the world's largest mining company, fundamentally simplifying the business, strengthening the balance sheet, creating options for the future, including provision to restrict global warming to less than two degrees. His work is recognised by numerous awards, driven commercial returns and social benefits.

BHP 2008–2020

Andrew became Group CEO of the world's largest miner in 2013. He systematically simplified the business, transformed performance and fundamentally strengthened the balance sheet. Core functional costs fell by 70% (excluding the removal of costs by divestments and demerger), from over \$3bn to \$1bn. BHP became the world's lowest cost iron producer. Annual capital expenditure was reduced from over \$20bn to under \$8bn, while still growing the company. Net debt was cut by \$20bn, and \$30bn in cash was returned to shareholders. As a result BHP has risen to become the largest company in the FTSE. His handling of the Samarco tailings dam disaster in Brazil is acknowledged as a model for company crisis management.

Andrew championed diversity, community and indigenous people. He committed BHP to achieving an equal balance of male and female employees by 2025, establishing progressive apprenticeships and diverse talent pipelines. And he created a 10-member leadership team with equal representation of men and women.

Under his stewardship, relationships with key customers in China, Japan, Korea and Asia were transformed, and complex tax and regulatory disputes were resolved, ensuring, constructive partnerships, tighter conformance to a clearly-defined, transparent risk appetite, and a clean slate for his successor.

Rio Tinto 2004–2007

As Chief Executive of Diamonds and Industrial Minerals, Andrew led the production of materials used globally in construction and cement, water treatment, automotive, ceramics, and as feedstock for the inorganic chemical industry.

He became a key member of Rio's leadership team, delivering safer and simpler operations, successful large-scale projects in titanium and borates and entry into Madagascar and Serbia.

Overseeing activities across Africa, he forged strong relationships with the ANC, invaluable some years later when Andrew demerged BHP's African businesses.

BP 1982–2003

Joining BP in R&D, Andrew's research transformed oil exploration, delivering increased discoveries, improved drill performance, and lower finding-costs than the competition for decades.

Major operational roles in the North Sea, Indonesia, Norway and Alaska followed. He served as Head of Technology and Engineering for BP Chemicals and, in 1994, became Chief Reservoir Engineer, overseeing global oil and gas production and reserves. In the late 80s he was BP's first Financial Planner, then Head of Capital Markets, honing his financial skills in London's booming financial centre after the 'Big Bang'. He led external relations with major stakeholders in the mid-90s, building BP's first website.

As Chief Technology Officer from 1997, Andrew catapulted BP to technology leadership. He re-engineered systems after major M&A, developed new iridium-based heterogeneous catalysts for the production of acetic acid and safer alternatives to harmful paint solvents. In the late 90s, his research and engineering increased oil recovery from discovered fields. Together, these technology advances increased BP's market share, profitability and revenue from technology licences, and enabled early entry into Asian markets in the 90s including emerging China.

In 2001 he took over BP's petrochemicals and plastic business in North and South America.

Postdoctoral Career 1980–1982

Andrew continued at Bristol University in 1981 as a NERC Postdoctoral Fellow, documenting the origins of major oil discoveries in the North Sea. He continued his research into the origin of sedimentary basins and continental deformation as a Humboldt Fellow in collaboration with Cambridge University at a Nuclear Research Centre in Germany (Forschungszentrum Jülich).

Directorships and Memberships

Present

- US Business Council (2014–)
- Royal Dutch Shell—non-executive director (2020–)

Past

- Premier Xi Jinping’s advisory council—member, among 15–20 top global CEOs (2013–2019).
- German-Australian Chamber of Commerce—president (2014–2020).
- Australian Business Council—member (2013–2019).
- Grattan Institute (Australia’s leading policy think-tank): trustee (2013–2017).
- UK Research Assessment Exercise: panel member (2008).
- Centrica (British Gas)—non-executive director, deputy-chair CSR Committee (2005–13).
- Demos (leading UK political think-tank)—chairman (2005–07).
- American Chemistry Council: executive committee member (2002–2004).
- Museum of Science and Industry, Chicago: board member (2002–2004).
- UK Civil Service—member of the fast-stream selection Board (1995–1998).
- UK Natural Environment Research Council—grant committee member (1983–1986).
- Putin’s CEO Council—member until the invasion of Crimea.

Awards and Qualifications

- BSc (I) in Geology, St Andrews University (1977).
- PhD in Organic Chemistry, Bristol University, Institut Français du Pétrole and École Polytechnique (1981).
- Humboldt Fellow for Geochemistry at Forschungszentrum Jülich, Germany (1981–1982).
- Frank Clark medal for the “best young geochemist” (1983).
- President’s Award, Geological Society (1986).
- Aberconway Medal for novel oil exploration methods. Geological Society (2002).
- Hon DSc for contribution to earth science, Bristol University (2011).

- Hon DSc for contribution to Australia, Kings College (2014).
- Hon DSc for contribution to geochemistry and resources industry, Curtin University (2015).
- Fellow of Royal Society, Geological Society, Society of Petroleum Engineers and Institute of Materials, Metals and Mining.

Candidate's interests

The following information has been received from the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy on Sir Andrew's interests:

- The preferred candidate's declaration of interest—None declared on his application; and
- The preferred candidate's declaration of relevant political activity—None declared.

Appendix Three: Candidate questionnaire

Motivation

1) **What motivated you to apply for this role, and what specific experiences would you bring to it?**

I believe that trade-tested and market-driven innovation is the best way to make the UK successful on all fronts. The key is to convert UK's world-beating research and ideas into competitive commerce, culture and social well-being. My twin career as a successful scientist and industrialist gives me a special perspective on how to take ideas into action. I know how to run large complex organisations through the best and worst of times and have worked with, and helped form, small start-ups.

2) **Please elaborate on any experience you have that will be relevant to the role. In which areas do you feel well-qualified to make a contribution; and in which will you have to acquire new skills, or knowledge?**

I am comfortable in the fields of research, public policy, industry and finance. I have also worked with start-ups and commercialised breakthrough science. I am well-versed in the highest standards of corporate governance. I am international. I have worked on these issues across all five continents, from Europe to China and Africa. My research forte is in the physical sciences and engineering, but even in these fields it will be essential to canvas broad range of voices. In terms of new areas, I am looking forward to working with others in the medical and life sciences, the arts and humanities, and the social sciences. I will have to acquire skills to work across government although I have long experience cooperating with politicians of all colours in many countries.

3) **How were you recruited? Were you encouraged to apply, and if so, by whom?**

Many people across academia, on the UKRI board, in industry and government suggested I apply.

Personal background

4) **Do you have any business or financial connections which might give rise to a conflict of interest, or perception of conflict of interest, in carrying out your new duties as Chair of UK Research and Innovation (UKRI)? If so, how do you intend to resolve them?**

I do not believe so. My only other job is Chair of Shell. Any R&D collaboration between UKRI and Shell will be handled deep in the two organisations and would not be part of the Boards' reserve powers. Both organisations are committed to net zero. Both organisations have protocols to allow recusal, even of the Chair, should the unexpected occur.

I am, of course, aware of the contrast between Shell, as an energy company, and the role of UKRI as the major funder of environmental R&D. But rather than a conflict I see this as a positive. Climate change is the major issue of our day and its essential to have effective

understanding between different organisations if we are to reach the UK's Net Zero goals. I am well placed to help facilitate this in a broader sense, although my roles at UKRI and Shell must clearly remain carefully separated.

5) If appointed what professional or voluntary work commitments will you continue to undertake, or do you intend to take on, alongside your new role? How will you ensure that this will not impinge on your responsibilities as Chair of UKRI?

Only Chair of Shell. A 2-day/week role.

6) Have you ever held any post or undertaken any activity that might cast doubt on your political impartiality? If so how will you demonstrate your political impartiality in the role if appointed?

I was a Trustee and Chair of Demos during the Blair governments. It was linked with New Labour, yet we did work for both Conservative and the Liberal Democrats. I have had no connection with them since 2008.

7) Do you intend to serve your full term of office, and do you intend to apply for another once it has ended?

Yes, I am committed to the full term. I find a second term hard to assess. I hope the Board, BEIS and others are impressed by my performance and consider that a good option.

UKRI

8) If appointed, what will be your main priorities, both short and long term, on taking up the role? What do you envisage as being the main challenges to these priorities?

- a) Delivering innovation that makes the UK the most competitive and creative country in the world, which leads to strong economic growth and increased soft power, a better quality of life and sense of well-being and pride. Challenge: Align and integrate UK's innovation infrastructure, including access to the world-class UK research base.
- b) Supporting the quality of R&D within the UK across the spectrum of disciplines and attracting and retaining the best research to our shores in people, in companies and in private and foreign investment. Challenges: Create a joined-up, cross-departmental, whole-of-government approach to research and innovation. Inspire policy options that stimulate innovation and investment.
- c) Shorter term—de-bureaucratising UKRI and researchers' lives while introducing new funding mechanisms that accelerate the number of great market- and trade-tested ideas. Challenges: Insufficient degrees-of-freedom. Absence of trust.

9) What criteria should the Committee use to judge your performance over your term of office? Please explain why.

Progress in points 1–3 under Q8. Clear data on sector-by-sector competitiveness. Morale and motivation of UKRI-funded people. International reputation of the UK research and innovation system.

10) How will you protect and enhance your personal independence and the institutional independence of UKRI from the Government/Ministers?

I hold that it is my duty to provide and execute plans that aim to fulfil the relevant objectives of the elected government while providing transparency of the inputs to all MPs and civil society with due consideration of national security and competitiveness.

11) How do you assess the public profile and reputation of UKRI?

It is off to a good start. It has integrated the disciplines and begun to connect the research councils to the innovation ecosystem of the country. It now has to support more cross-disciplinary work and ideas, and create more market-pull-through from the research base. Individual researchers have to feel more empowered and less encumbered by bureaucracy. This has to be a broader effort than UKRI since changes are required in the universities and public sector spending rules. I am aware of work already underway here in BEIS that I would hope to engage with.

12) What risks do you think UKRI will face over your term of office? How do you intend to manage them?

Failure to increase funding. Insufficient cross-government work to make innovation happen more. Responses: Secure longer term funding commitments without tying Treasury's hands. Work on increasing efficiency to release more funds for new approaches to invention and innovation. Cross-government relations.

13) How do you assess the role of UKRI in working with other parts of the research and development sector, including new organisations such as the Advanced Research and Invention Agency? What role do you see for the Chair of UKRI in these relationships?

Although UKRI is only about 15% of UK R&D spend, it is unique in reaching across all sectors and disciplines, and can connect all market and trade-tested innovation in UK to deliver policy objectives and better UK-wide innovation—and should aim to attract more private sector and overseas funding for UK R&D. I will deepen further engagement with private sector industry and finance, and make sure UKRI engages fully across the whole of government and with HMT.

ARIA will be a new addition to the public sector's tools for faster and greater innovation. Some of these tools and ARIA should be free to innovate outside the research council umbrella while UKRI focusses on completing the Nurse Review reforms. I and UKRI will also make sure all parts of the R&D system, including ARIA, are supported to network with and work closely with the research councils so they can spark off and learn from each other to be better inventors and innovators.

14) Please add anything you wish to bring to the Committee's attention that has not been covered by the above questions. Please keep your answer to 250 words.

The whole technology transfer machine is not right for the innovation objectives of BEIS and the government, including the role of public finance of private innovation-based companies and the valuation of publicly-funded IP. This requires much work fast if the innovation ecosystem is to deliver for the nation. It will have my early attention.

Formal minutes

Wednesday 30 June 2021

Members present:

Greg Clark in the Chair

Aaron Bell

Mark Logan

Dawn Butler

Rebecca Long-Bailey

Chris Clarkson

Carol Monaghan

Katherine Fletcher

Graham Stringer

Andrew Griffith

Zarah Sultana

Second Report of Session 2020–21: *Pre-appointment hearing for the Chair of UK Research and Innovation*.

After consulting all Members of the Committee, the Chair was satisfied that the Report represented a decision of the majority of the Committee and reported it to the House. (Order of the House of 24 March 2020).

Witnesses

The following witnesses gave evidence. Transcripts can be viewed on the [inquiry publications page](#) of the Committee's website.

Wednesday 23 June 2021

Sir Andrew Mackenzie, Government's preferred candidate for the role of Chair,
UK Research and Innovation

[Q1-75](#)

List of Reports from the Committee during the current Parliament

All publications from the Committee are available on the publications page of the Committee's website.

Session 2021–22

Number	Title	Reference
1st	Direct-to-consumer genomic testing	HC 94

Session 2019–21

Number	Title	Reference
1st	The UK response to covid-19: use of scientific advice	HC 136
2nd	5G market diversification and wider lessons for critical and emerging technologies	HC 450
3rd	A new UK research funding agency	HC 778