

**Science Council Governance Consultation May 2007**  
**Questionnaire for members**

<b>Role and work of the Science Council:</b>	
<b>1. What do you get out of your membership of the Science Council? Please also identify what you value most and what do you value least?</b>	<p><i>Connectivity into a much bigger network is very helpful as a small societies. The Science Council has that connection with the corridors of power and that is enormously useful and we don't have it. We are very focused on our work and engaged with the smaller picture.</i></p> <p><i>We have tried to become more engaged through participating in national and regional consultations on major issues, but Science Council very valuable</i></p> <p><i>Because very engaged with higher education, the consultations arrive direct on that topic, but often the responses to the wider ones are better collated and presented by the Science Council on behalf of its members.</i></p> <p><i>Also a member of the Society of the Environment and there may be potential for partnership with the Science Council. Not as engaged as I would like to be with the Chartered Scientist as very involved with the development and roll out of the Chartered Environmentalist.</i></p>
<b>Current arrangements:</b>	
<b>2. What do you understand to be the different roles of the Board and Council?</b>	<p><i>I find it incomprehensible. I have had it explained two or three times, and I am still none the wiser. Still don't understand whose job it is to do what. What do they do apart from talk?</i></p> <p><i>As a small society and not a member of the Board, I really don't know what they do.</i></p>
<b>3. Do you look upon the Board primarily as a representative body, or as the board of management of the Science Council?</b>	<p><i>A bit of both - The Council is the great and the good who eat dinner, the Board is both representative and managing.</i></p>
<b>4. Do you believe the Board is fit for purpose and effective? If not, please indicate why/how. If yes, please explain.</b>	<p><i>The question is does the Science Council need so many levels? To administer lots of agendas and minutes becomes very onerous.</i></p> <p><i>If the reality is that the work of the Science Council is done by Diana and her team, and the Board is actually a steering committee, would that be a more efficient structure? The Board is de facto acting as a board of Directors/Trustees in the eyes of both charity and corporate law. So its steering and checking role has to be real.</i></p>
<b>Size and make-up of Board:</b>	
<b>5. Do you think that the current Board membership is about the right size, too big, or too small for its purpose. There are 25 members at present.</b>	<p><i>As long as it is clear what the function of the Board is then the size is not important. If this group is to</i></p>

*be representative of the membership it should include a wide range of representatives, and not exclude members because of size etc. Chair should rotate frequently, and that should be built in – every 2 or 3 years. The individual institutions should decide who best can represent their interests on the board.*

**6. What do you think are primary role/s of the President?**

*Doorman! He opens doors. He can get to people that most of us can't connect with. If he was also Chairman of the Board it might be helpful, cos he is outside and therefore neutral.*

**7. Do you think there should be additional honorary officers for the Science Council? If yes, what would these roles be? Do you have any views on how individuals be appointed?**

*No additional ones are required. But officers, and indeed individual board members, should be given responsibility for various portfolios e.g. sustainability, publishing,*

**8. Do you think there should be places for observers on the Board enabling the participation of non-member organisations with which the Science Council works closely. Currently the Royal Society, British Association and BSF attend Board and Council meetings as affiliates.**

*I have no problem with this. I think meetings should be open and transparent and the Board very open and straightforward. No need for complicated procedures and lose the plot of what you are trying to do.*

**Selection/election of Board:**

*Member organisations eligible to sit on the Board are those with a qualifying membership of 3000 or over. Currently 22 organisations meet this requirement and there is no limit set for Board size.*

**9. How do you think members of the Board should be selected?**

*Every organisation should have a member on the Board, and the member organisation should decide who that is to be. Divide it up into special interest groups each of which has a portfolio of responsibility; it would be expected that each would provide its own administration; and each would be expected to report on progress to the Board. It would take a strategic approach and define the projects, allocate the team to work on them, and address budgetary and other issues associated with them.*

*Member organisations are very inconsistent about the way in which they calculate their numbers and the 3000 cut-off seems arbitrary.*

**10. It will be important to ensure that the Board is able to reflect the breadth of membership of the Science Council. Do you support the concept of an electoral college system, each section being based on interest groups, for example size (both large and small), core discipline, licensed bodies, etc.?**

*See 9 above*

**Future direction of the Science Council:**

**11. How would you like to be involved in the work of the Science Council? – for example, as a member of a special subject interest group (education, sustainability), sub-sectoral interest group (small member, core disciplines, professional bodies, licensed bodies), membership of the Board or Honorary Officer?**

*On the Board; engaged or lead on appropriate project work; join a sustainability special interest group. Also interested in connections with Higher Education.*

**12. Is it important for the Science Council to maintain a balance of membership between professional bodies (many of which are licensed bodies for CSci) and learned societies?**

*Not important.*

**13. For the purposes of membership of the Science Council, should we closely define the term "Science", or leave it to interpretation?**

*I did my first degree on contemporary studies with a strong theme of "What is this thing called Science"! Leave it open to interpretation. Probably better to address the question "What is it to be a scientist?" rather than closely define Science. Ref: A S Chalmers' book "What is this thing called Science?"*

**14. Do you have any other points you would like to make about the governance of the Science Council as it is now or might be in the future?**

*I am very impressed with Diana and like working with her, and like her approach and feel included which is nice. I have felt valued and I like her management style.*

*For many people, the Science Council – along with some of the other science institutions – are seen as personal fiefdoms. This makes an issue of the size of the board being very important.*

*HE = hyper-expansionist*

*SHE = Sane humane ecological*

**Subscriptions**

Subscription rates are currently 60p per qualifying member. Qualifying members are: full members excluding students and overseas members. There is a minimum subscription level of £1000 and an intention to index link (to RPI) subscriptions in the future. Qualifying membership does not include overseas members (even though they would be eligible for CSci, and includes membership in general even though this may not reflect all those who would be considered 'scientists'.

**15. Would you suggest any changes to either the rate of subscriptions or the basis of the calculation? If yes, please indicate what you might change.**

*All right – but the membership numbers which are published may not be the same as the numbers they give to the Science Council.*

**Name and job title of individual completing questionnaire:**

*Jennifer Blumhof*

*Hon Secretary*

**Organisation:**

*Institution of Environmental Scientists*

**Contact information:**

*Telephone: 020 7730 5516*

*Email address: [j.r.blumhof@herts.ac.uk](mailto:j.r.blumhof@herts.ac.uk)*