

**Minutes of SMG Board of Trustees Strategy Day**  
**Held at The Royal Society, London**  
**Wednesday 13 October 2021**

**Present:**

Dame Mary Archer (Chair)  
Professor Brian Cantor  
Judith Donovan  
Professor Russell Foster  
Dr Jo Foster  
Sharon Flood  
Dr Hannah Fry  
Sir Peter Hendy  
Professor Ajit Lalvani  
Iain McIntosh  
Lopa Patel  
Professor David Phoenix  
Sarah Staniforth  
Dame Fiona Woolf

**In attendance:**

Ian Blatchford, Director & Chief Executive  
Jonathan Newby, Managing Director  
Shri Mukundagiri, Director of Corporate Services  
Peter Dickinson, Director of Communications  
Dr Roger Highfield, Science Director  
Deborah Myers, Director of Development  
Anna Dejean, Masterplan Director  
Sarita Godber, Director of People & Culture  
Susan Raikes, Director of Learning  
John Stack, Digital Director  
Sian Williams, Project Director: One Collection  
Craig Bentley, Estate Operations Director  
Helen Jones, Director of Global Engagement & Strategy  
Dr Julia Knights, Deputy Director, Science Museum (ScM)  
Sally MacDonald, Director, Science & Industry Museum (SIM)  
Judith McNicol, Director, National Railway Museum (NRM)  
Jo Quinton Tulloch, Director, National Science & Media Museum (NSMM)

Anton Valk (item 2 onwards)  
David Jacob (Chair, Science Museum Foundation: items 2-4)  
Sian Thompson (SMG Board Secretary)

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**1. Session 1: SMG Risk**

The paper circulated previously was noted and a presentation was received. A discussion was had regarding SMG's approach to its relationships with energy company sponsors, and the following points noted:

- SMG took seriously its responsibility to engage the public around the science of climate change. The ethical, moral and reputational issues linked to accepting sponsorship from energy companies were discussed at length;
- There was a distinction to be made between media coverage and public opinion towards both energy company sponsorship and climate change activism. It was also very difficult to effectively communicate the nuances and complexities of SMG's current position to a variety of audiences, which put SMG at risk of losing public trust. SMG would look to develop an appropriate method for surveying visitor attitudes on these issues **(Action: PD)**;
- SMG had comprehensive Ethics and Sustainability policies – including a rigorous due diligence process for potential sponsors – with all being regularly reviewed as part of routine governance process;
- SMG had conducted a thorough due diligence process on the proposed sponsor for the Energy Revolution Gallery project at the Science Museum. SMG's position was discussed at length and the Board agreed to continue with this partnership;
- The Board agreed that future partnerships should be reviewed on a case-by-case basis and that, when appropriate, the Board should be consulted earlier in the due diligence process. A suitable mechanism for this would be developed by the SMG Director and management team **(Action: IB / SMu)**

**2. Session 2: Science Museum Foundation**

A presentation was received which gave an overview of the history of the Science Museum Foundation (SMF) including its investment, development and grant responsibilities, as well as an update on its recent light governance review.

**3. Session 3: Open For All**

The papers circulated previously were noted. While SMG had made good progress in delivering its strategic priority to be 'Open For All', the vast scale of the challenge was discussed and several themes were summarized by smaller breakout groups, as follows:

- **Science Capital:** SMG would continue to prioritise and apply science capital research to its work so that a broader range of people could engage with and participate in science, technology, engineering and maths (STEM), including those who faced inequalities in wider society;
- **Inclusive Collecting and Interpreting:** SMG would continue to develop its curatorial practice to better serve its audiences by addressing gaps in stories told, in line with the Group value of being 'Open For All';
- **Workforce and Culture:** The museum sector had struggled with diversity in its workforce for a long time. COVID had led to significant career transience which presented SMG with an opportune moment to reassess its accessibility to candidates from different background and sectors, and also develop those who might be in a position to shape workforce culture and hire more diverse teams.

**4. Session 4: SMG Digital Strategy 2022–24: Reach and Impact**

The paper that had been circulated previously was noted and a presentation was given. In addition:

- The strategy represented the next steps onwards from the recent consultancy work by McKinsey & Co. to explore the potential for SMG to increase its digital reach and impact;
- It was certain that digital would continue to play an ever more critical role in delivering SMG's mission in future. Resourcing and funding models would be discussed accordingly (**Action: IB / SMu / JS**);
- **The Board approved** the recommendations as laid out in the paper.

**5. Session 5: Session 5: 5-year strategy review - Inspiring Futures: Strategic Priorities 2022-2030**

The paper that had been circulated previously was noted. In addition:

- The strategy review process was summarised and feedback was taken from smaller breakout groups. Trustees were invited to submit any further feedback directly to the Director of Global Engagement and Strategy (**Action: ALL**);
- **The Board agreed** to delegate final approval of the strategy to the *Inspiring Futures* Steering Group.

**6. Chair's summary of 2021 Strategy Day**

An overview was given of discussions had through the Strategy Day and participants were thanked for their contributions.

Signed by Chair:



Date: 01/12/2021