

# Cross-Party Group on Science and Technology

Tuesday 24<sup>th</sup> October 2023 1800 - 2000

Minute

Present

MSPs

Clare Adamson MSP; Ivan McKee MSP; Kaukab Stewart MSP, Brian Whittle MSP (Online)

Invited guests

Evelyn Toma; Qammer Abbasi; Martin Weides; Hadi Heidari; Brendan Casey

Non-MSP Group Members

Martyn Pickersgill; Janet Brown; Stuart Farmer; Chris Rodger; Clare Reid; Alastair MacGregor; Iain Hunter; Paul Beaumont; Alan Purves; Dilraj Sokhi-Watson; Graeme Rough; Fraser Gillan; Jack McGleish; Derek Young; Erin McKee; Paul Bradley; Fiona Quinn; Kathleen Hill; Allan Colquhoun; William Duncan; Graeme Cook; Alistair Taylor

Apologies

Niall Sommerville; Sylvia McKay; King Omeihe; Jeremy Darot

Agenda item 1

Welcome and networking.

Agenda item 2

**University of Glasgow: Scotland's Critical Technologies Supercluster**

This CPG received a whistlestop tour of what the University of Glasgow is doing in terms of quantum tech, semiconductors, and the applications of this (e.g., how are we using this technology in healthcare systems). Researchers were joined by industry partners, KNT Nano, to discuss what we can do now in Scotland to strengthen this supercluster, create opportunities for industry, and translate research into tangible benefits for Scotland.

Evelyn Toma: Introduced the topic and speakers and explained why this supercluster of critical technologies has a role to play in the key sectors identified in the national strategy for economic transformation in Scotland. Quantum, semiconductors, plutonics, and wireless all have a role to play in healthcare, net zero, financial services and space. Evelyn outlined what these clusters of technologies have in common industrially and makes them well suited to becoming grouped together at a national level.

Professor Martin Weides: Provided a broad overview of quantum technology and computing – noting that this technology is over 10 years old but understanding and reception have rapidly increased recently. Prof Weides highlighted opportunities for quantum in communications, audio-visual, and location services. The University of Glasgow's James Watt Nanofabrication Centre is one of the four quantum technology hubs, and it is one of the leading centres of research and international collaboration in micro and nanofabrication technologies.

Professor Hadi Heidari: Outlined the importance of semiconductors and quantum technology for future prosperity globally, noting that the UK strategy will be vital for attracting inward investment and universities will play a critical role in delivering the strategy. Prof Heidari noted the challenges in terms of international supply chains of semiconductors and the importance of being at the forefront of the development of semiconductor devices.

Professor Qammer Abbassi: Emphasised the importance of developing a workforce to deliver the quantum and semiconductor strategies and utilise these technologies in policy areas such as healthcare and net zero. Prof Abbassi noted that the technologies in discussion have the potential to completely reshape the way we think about and deliver healthcare, shifting practice away from doctor-centered healthcare to patient-centered healthcare systems. Different quantum and semiconductor technologies and sensors could be key to improving the quality of healthcare and the sustainability of current healthcare systems.

Brendan Casey (KNT Nano): Explained how KNT is bringing industry partners into the university to utilise resources and expertise and create commercial opportunities for technologies. KNT bridges the gap between research activity and industry and creates institutional memory through expertise and experience. Brendan presented examples of the kind of laser, sensors, and computing technology being developed through the partnership with the University of Glasgow.

The presentations were followed by carefully questions put to the speakers by members of the CPG.

## Agenda item 3

### **SSERC Honorary Fellowship Presentation**

The CPG hosted the official presentation the 2023 SSERC Honorary Fellowship Award to Iain Hunter. Kaukab Stewart MSP (SSERC Board member) presented the

Fellowship trophy, and Paul Beaumont (2022 SSERC Honorary Fellow) presented the Honorary Fellowship Certificate alongside SSERC CEO, Alastair MacGregor.

**AOB.**

Next meeting TBC (AGM).