The Francis Crick Institute (formerly UKCMRI) update for the House of Commons Science & Technology Committee

March 2013

A Joint Venture involving MRC, Cancer Research UK, the Wellcome Trust, UCL (University College London), Imperial College London and King’s College London.

Location: Central London (adjacent to the British Library and St. Pancras International)

Total Construction Budget: £541m (all parties)
Total Land Acquisition Cost: £85m (all parties)
MRC Construction Budget: £253m
MRC Transition Budget: £30.7m
MRC Portion of Land Cost: £47m

Forecast Completion: 3Q 2015

The Francis Crick Institute:
The Crick is named after the British scientist, Francis Crick, the co-discoverer of the structure of DNA.

Funding:
Government approved MRC expenditure is limited to £253m on construction costs and £30.7m on transition costs. £220m of this funding will be provided by the Department of Health. The MRC’s receipts from the sale of the National Temperance Hospital and Mill Hill (National Institute for Medical Research, NIMR) sites will be used towards the capital costs of this project. Current projections are that the construction will be completed within budget.

Major Projects Review Group (MPRG):
There have been two Project Assessment Reviews (PARs) in January 2011 and May 2012, both of which resulted in an Amber/Green Delivery Confidence Assessment. The second PAR report stated that due to the attainment of two consecutive Amber/Green ratings and the high degree of confidence in the Construction project further reviews would be via the MPA Gateway process. The next review is proposed to be a Gate Zero review, to take place no later than October 2013.

Governance Arrangements:
A Joint Venture Agreement is in place, which binds the parties together for the construction of the new facility and in operation. The Crick is governed by a Board with Director representation from each of the partners as well as independent Directors. The construction project is overseen by a Construction Project Board (CPB) which meets monthly. Members of the CPB include representatives from the partner organisations and BIS.

The MRC Monitoring Committee continues to meet monthly to review progress, issues and risks on both Construction and Transition aspects of the project.
The Building:
A contract was signed with the contractors Laing O’Rourke in March 2011 to undertake pre-construction services and initial construction works as part of a two-stage contract. The final stage of the construction contract was executed in February 2013 after extensive due diligence and negotiation.

Currently site works are progressing in accordance with the Project programme. The frame of the building is complete and glazing and cladding to the external envelope has commenced. The ‘topping out’ of the building is scheduled to take place in June 2013. Practical completion of the construction works is scheduled for mid-2015.

Public Relations:
The Crick continues to engage the local community. This year, the Crick’s flagship community engagement project is called Science and Story. Three community groups from Somers Town will work in partnership with a writer and illustrator to create three short books for young people, that each tell a story about the Crick; the history of Francis Crick’s discovery, the new Institute itself, and the future of biomedical research. This project began in February 2013, and the books will be distributed to local schools and community groups in the summer of 2013.

In addition the Crick continues to engage with the general public to raise awareness of the Crick and promote the importance of science. In 2012 the Crick trained thirty volunteer ‘science buskers’ who entertained people with scientific related tricks and demonstrations at St Pancras International Station during the Olympics.

Programme Planning:
A comprehensive programme plan for the transition from the existing institutes to the new one is in place. This plan will seek to ensure integration of the closure of NIMR and Cancer Research UK’s London premises with the opening of the new Francis Crick Institute. A Steering Group that includes representatives from the Crick, Cancer Research UK and MRC meet on a fortnightly basis to assist in the management of the integrated transition plan.

The Crick has completed a Science Assessment Process for research programmes at both existing institutes and has issued a draft science strategy.

Risk Management:
Major risks are covered in detail in risk registers that are regularly reviewed by the MRC Monitoring Committee for the project. In addition, MRC provides support and input to the Crick’s risk management process. One risk is currently classified as ‘red’ within the MRC Risk Register; keeping transition costs within the approved envelope. Extensive efforts are being taken to enable this risk to be reduced, including consideration of how to minimise the period of dual running of the Crick and the existing NIMR at the start of occupation of the Crick.

Sir John Savill
Chief Executive, Medical Research Council
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