



PRESS RELEASE

28th September 2017

Sir Keith O’Nions named as first Chair of the new British Geological Survey Board

Today, Sir Keith O’Nions has been announced as the first Chair to lead the new British Geological Survey (BGS) Board. The BGS Board has been created to assist the BGS meet future challenges and ensure it continues as a globally leading survey, delivering services and providing infrastructure support nationally and globally. The Chair and Board will work closely with the BGS Director and the Chief Executive of the Natural Environment Research Council (NERC) to shape BGS’ successful future, with a particular focus in the short term on developing new funding and governance arrangements for BGS that will sustain it into the future. Sir Keith will take up post with immediate effect.

Announcing the appointment, NERC Chief Executive, Professor Duncan Wingham said:

"Sir Keith’s wealth of knowledge and experience in science and innovation within Government and academia, and his pivotal role in joining up science with innovation and commercialisation to meet big challenges, makes him well-placed to take on the role of the BGS Chair.

Under Sir Keith’s leadership, and in close coordination with all who benefit from the BGS’s services, the new BGS Board will ensure that the BGS continues to punch above its weight to the benefit of us all, both in the UK and internationally."



Professor John Ludden CBE, Executive Director of the British Geological Survey said:

"I am delighted to welcome Sir Keith as the first Chair of the British Geological Survey. The addition of a new Chair and Board to bring challenge, and insight that will help push the BGS to further develop its role as a world-class survey, bring new ideas to assist us to continue to diversify, and ensure we remain at the forefront of new ways of working for the benefit of Government, business and the wider public."

Sir Keith O’Nions said:

"I am delighted to take up this role as the first chair of the BGS Board. In my view the BGS will be at least as important in the future as it has been over its illustrious past.

"I look forward to building on the prior work and experience of the BGS, NERC and the wider geoscience community to ensure a collaborative and



coherent approach to maximise the **BGS's future capability and capacity to help meet some of society's big challenges.**"

Sir Keith O'Nions was President and Rector of Imperial College until 1 September 2014 and has been Chair of Cambridge Enterprise, University of Cambridge since 2014. Sir Keith has previously held the positions of Professor of Geology at Columbia University, Royal Society Research Professor at University of Cambridge and Head of Earth Sciences at University of Oxford. He was Chief Scientific Advisor to the Ministry of Defence from January 2000 until 2004. After which he moved to the Department of Trade and Industry (later the Department for Innovation, Universities and Skills) to become Director General, Science and Innovation, and Chief Scientific Advisor – a position he held until 2008.

Sir Keith has participated in a broad range of academic and technological committees and served on the Board of the Natural History Museum from 1995 to 2005 (Chair from 2002). In 1979 he became a Fellow of the American Geophysical Union and a Member of the Norwegian Academy of Science and Letters in 1980. He has been a Fellow of the Royal Society since 1983, an Honorary Fellow of the Indian Academy of Sciences (1998), Fellow of the Indian National Science Academy (2001) and Honorary Fellow Royal Academy of Engineering (2005). He has received honorary doctorates from a number of Universities. He currently serves on the Board of A*Star and the Board of Trustees of Nanyang Technological University, Singapore, the Board of Trustees of the King Abdullah Petroleum Studies and Research Center, Saudi Arabia and the Board of Plymouth University. He is also a Trustee of The Black Stork Charity (Defence National Rehabilitation Centre). Sir Keith was knighted for services to earth sciences in the 1999 Queen's Birthday Honours.

Ends



For further details or to arrange media interviews please contact:

Jo Thompson, Head of Communications Campaigns, NERC

Phone: 01793 441539/ 07864 601852

Email: joatho@nerc.ac.uk

Notes for Editors

For additional information go to: www.bgs.ac.uk

The British Geological Survey

The British Geological Survey (BGS), a component body of the Natural Environment Research Council (NERC), is the nation's principal supplier of objective, impartial and up-to-date geological expertise and information for decision making for governmental, commercial and individual users. The BGS maintains and develops the nation's understanding of its geology to improve policy making, enhance national wealth and reduce risk. It also collaborates with the national and international scientific community in carrying out research in strategic areas, including energy and natural resources, our vulnerability to environmental change and hazards, and our general knowledge of the Earth system. More about the BGS can be found at www.bgs.ac.uk.

The Natural Environment Research Council

The Natural Environment Research Council (NERC) is the UK's main agency for funding and managing world-class research, training and knowledge exchange in the environmental sciences. It coordinates some of the world's most exciting research projects, tackling major issues such as climate change, food security, environmental influences on human health, the genetic make-up of life on earth, and much more. NERC receives around £300 million a year from the government's science budget, which it uses to fund research and training in universities and its own research centres. www.nerc.ac.uk