



**Council Meeting  
Thursday, 22 April 2021  
MEETING SMMARY**

<b>Welcome and Introductions</b>	
1.	Professor Cathy Gormley-Heenan and Dr Anne-Marie Imafidon joined the meeting in an official capacity as Council members following the commencement of their terms of office.
2.	The Chair welcomed Dr Bryony Butland, UKRI interim Director of Investment Strategy and System Insight.
<b>UKRI CEO Remarks</b>	
3.	<p>Ottoline Leyser addressed Council. Her talk included the following remarks:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• An inclusive, joined up approach is essential for the Research and Innovation (R&amp;I) system to work effectively: an integrated, connected system will be crucial as we emerge from the pandemic. Research England is at the heart of this endeavour.</li><li>• Diversity is also key: the system should support the different types of people who make up the system and the different types of activities that they undertake.</li><li>• Diversity of ideas will create new ways to propel the system forward.</li><li>• A more resilient structure should emerge from a system that is founded on diversification with collaboration.</li><li>• In the context of dual support and sustainability, there needs to be the right range of support and funding mechanisms, alongside high-level connectivity, to capture the benefits of diversity.</li><li>• Research England is very good at promoting the place/civic role of universities and collaboration activities, which map to a more national context.</li><li>• An approach incorporating all of these factors (diversification, connectivity and resilience) would require UKRI to work in a way that priorities high quality engagement and would encourage collective development of the R&amp;I system.</li></ul>
4.	<p>During the discussion, the following points were raised:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Alignment between key technologies and major societal challenges is also important.</li><li>• Connectivity across the various aspects of the system will enable UKRI's contribution to have maximum impact.</li><li>• Challenges to UKRI's vision include pressures on resources; resistance from within and from outside of the sector; and previous approach to, and policies regarding, competition and collaboration.</li><li>• Shifting the narrative towards a collective, collaborative, united vision is important.</li><li>• The REF reform and 'Reforming our Business' programmes will be important vehicles for encouraging a more collaborative approach.</li><li>• The benefits of the public and private sector need to be captured such that the whole is greater than the sum of the parts.</li><li>• UKRI should align itself with opportunities that support its vision.</li></ul>
<b>Innovation Strategy</b>	



5. Dr Eoin O’Sullivan (the Babbage Fellow of Technology & Innovation Policy and the Director of the Centre for Science, Technology & Innovation Policy (CSTI) at the Institute for Manufacturing) and Tomas Coates Ulrichsen (Director of the University Commercialisation and Innovation (UCI) Policy Evidence Unit at the University of Cambridge (funded from the Research England Development fund)) provided a presentation on development of innovation strategy, including international comparisons and expert/conceptual frameworks.

**Executive Chair’s Report**

6. The Chair noted a few highlights from his report, to include the following:

- Professor Adam Tickell, Vice-Chancellor of the University of Sussex, has been appointed to lead a BEIS-led review into research bureaucracy. The review will seek to identify why bureaucracy has increased across the UK’s research system and will conclude by early 2022 with interim findings due in the autumn.
- Strength in Places Fund (SIPF) Wave 2 seedcorn awards and Wave 1 resubmissions have been considered by the SIPF Assessment Panel and a portfolio of proposals recommended to the UKRI Board for funding.
- REF panels are currently working on assessing submissions to REF 2021.
- KEF results were published on 31 March with positive feedback from the sector: this work represents a real step change in knowledge exchange understanding.
- The Insight & Engagement team has been working with colleagues across UKRI, including international colleagues, to assess the impact of cuts to ODA funding.

**Allocations Update**

7. Council discussed the issue of sustainability of the research sector and the level of funding going into university research. Bryony Butland’s team is gathering evidence around levels of funding available, how funding is being deployed, and impact of new initiatives (such as ARIA) on the balance of funding and sustainability of the sector.

**Institutions Engagement Strategy Evaluation**

8. A lot of engagement work has taken place during the pandemic, and the Insight & Engagement team has had to be innovative about how they have engaged with the sector. Over the next 12-18 months, there will be a combination of online and face-to-face activities as the team seeks to resume face-to-face engagement and to bring people together collectively.

**Terms and Conditions of Research England Funding**

9. The terms and conditions (T&Cs) for RE funding are being updated to apply from August 2021. Through the Higher Education and Research Act 2017, RE is required to consult on changes to the T&Cs. Council endorsed the proposals set out in the paper.

**Risk Report and Risk Management Overview**

10. Council received an update on RE’s strategic risks, a summary of risk management since May 2019, and an overview of UKRI corporate strategic risk.