

**MINUTES OF THE EIGHTH MEETING OF COUNCIL
HELD ON 7 NOVEMBER 2019 AT {10-11} CARLTON HOUSE TERRACE, LONDON**

Present:	Professor Jennifer Rubin (<i>Executive Chair</i>)
	Professor Diane Coyle (<i>Chair, Senior Independent Member</i>)
	Mr Mike Emmerich
	Professor Jane Falkingham
	Professor Matthew Flinders
	Professor Nigel Gilbert
	Professor Melinda Mills
	Professor James Smith
	Professor Anna Vignoles
Apologies:	Professor John Aston
	Professor Rachel Griffith
	Sir Chris Wormald
Office:	Ms Frances Burstow (<i>Deputy Director of Skills and Strategy</i>)
	Mr Simon Crine (<i>Chief Operating Officer</i>)
	Ms Melanie Knetsch (<i>Deputy Director of Innovation and Impact</i>)
	Professor Paul Nightingale (<i>Director of Strategy and Partnerships</i>)
	Professor Alison Park (<i>Director of Research</i>)
	Dr Tom Roberts (<i>Assistant Secretary to Council</i>)
	Ms Gillian Bartoszewska (<i>Secretariat</i>)
Guests:	Ms Sophie Purdey (<i>Interim Director of Governance & Information, UKRI</i>)
	Mr Mike Blackburn (<i>Interim Chief Finance Officer, UKRI</i>)
	Dr Ian Campbell (<i>Interim Executive Chair, Innovate UK</i>)
	Mr Mike Biddle (<i>Programme Director, ISCF</i>)

These minutes do not necessarily reflect the precise order in which items were discussed.

1.	Welcome and Apologies
1.1	Professor Diane Coyle, Chair, welcomed members to the eighth meeting of Council.
1.2	The Chair welcomed Mr Mike Blackburn (Interim Chief Finance Officer, UKRI) and Ms Sophie Purdey (Deputy Director of Corporate Strategy, Governance and Performance, UKRI and ESRC Observer).
1.3	Apologies were noted from Professor John Aston and Professor Rachel Griffith.
2.	Innovate UK and the Industrial Strategy Challenge Fund

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2.1	Dr Ian Campbell gave Council an overview of Innovate and its role and ambition as an investor in, and funder of, nascent ideas and technologies that can drive productivity and economic growth. Mr Mike Biddle and Ms Knetsch explained how the relationship between Innovate and ESRC built on the success of the earlier Innovation Caucus which brought together joint strategic thinking on challenge led areas and how this has developed through successive waves of ISCF so that social science is now much more embedded within awards.
2.2	Council welcomed the strength of the partnership between ESRC and Innovate and the significant translational work that had gone into ensuring the social sciences were now embedded into challenge-led research as evidenced by successive waves of the ISCF and more recently the successful collaboration on the Productivity Institute Programme.
2.3	Amongst other comments, Professor Vignoles reiterated the centrality of the role of the social sciences not only to services, but also in terms of helping to understand human and organizational behaviour. Mr Emmerich suggested greater centralisation risked denuding other regions of capital and that funders and funding decisions should consider these factors in addition to academic excellence.
3.	Minutes of the Previous Meeting
3.1	The minutes were agreed as an accurate record of the previous meeting.
4.	Matters Arising
4.1	Members were updated on the status of matters arising from the previous meeting.
4.2	The Executive Chair updated on progress on social science spending across Councils and promised a further update in advance of the February meeting.
5.	Executive Chair's Business
5.1	Professor Rubin updated Council on the public launch of the £43m Productivity Institute call. Council were also updated on ESRC's recent reorganisation (which responded to the broader UKRI transformation activity) and included layering management, the separation of administrative and programme expertise and recruitment of additional senior capacity.
5.2	Council welcomed these changes and asked for detail of the Deputy Director roles so that they can circulate across their networks.
5.3	Minute not included as contains exempt material, at the time of publication, under the terms of the Freedom of Information Act 2000.
6.	New Governance Structure and Forward Look for Data and Infrastructure
6.1	Professor Park updated Council on a number of upcoming activities within the Data and Infrastructure portfolio. These included, the recommissioning of Understanding Society, the development of cases for both a new early life cohort and a cross council longitudinal population research resource, and the establishment of an Expert Advisory Group (EAG). The latter drew upon Council and Strategic Advisory Network (SAN) membership to furnish the office with additional advice on strategy, risk, assurance and impact across ESRC data and infrastructure investments.

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6.2	Council welcomed these developments and ESRC's key role in the UKRI Infrastructure Roadmap, and requested the EAG have requisite expertise in emergent forms of data such as social media, transactional and administrative data.
6.3	Council requested Dr Emma Gordon, Director of the Administrative Data Research UK team be invited to update Council on progress with gaining research access to administrative data at the next meeting.
6.4	Minute not included as contains exempt material, at the time of publication, under the terms of the Freedom of Information Act 2000.
6.5	Council reiterated the need for future cohort and longitudinal activity to be cross disciplinary and social science-led. Links with industry and biobanks, it was suggested, may be beneficial and should be pursued provided they did not adversely affect survey recruitment.
7.	ESRC-UKRI project development pipeline
7.1	Professor Nightingale updated Council on plans for a more structured process for accessing and developing emergent discrete and timebound projects or ideas that emphasised upfront work and early engagement with users that would give greater agility to ESRC in responding to changes and opportunities presented by cross UKRI funds.
7.2	Minute not included as contains exempt material, at the time of publication, under the terms of the Freedom of Information Act 2000.
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8.	Future of PhD training
8.1	Ms Burstow set out the rationale for the forthcoming high level review of PhD training Minute not included as contains exempt material, at the time of publication, under the terms of the Freedom of Information Act 2000.
8.2	Council welcomed the review of the structure and content of PhD training and noted that it formed part of a wider package of work that would inform the recommissioning of the Doctoral Training Partnership (DTP) network in 2021.
8.3	Minute not included as contains exempt material, at the time of publication, under the terms of the Freedom of Information Act 2000.
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9.	Review ESRC Risk Register
9.1	Mr Crine updated Council on progress with ESRC's risk register.

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9.2	Council welcomed the improvements to the risk register but requested that the risk opportunity associated with ESRC's success with GCRF (and its possible displacement effects to the portfolio and within ESRC's community) be appropriately worded and captured. Professor Gilbert observed a characteristic of risk registers can be that risks are often considered in isolation and not together.
9.3	Mr Crine thanked Council for their feedback and invited them to write to him should they spot any gaps or interrelationships they think the office may have missed. Minute not included as contains exempt material, at the time of publication, under the terms of the Freedom of Information Act 2000.
10.	Forward Look
10.1	Minute not included as contains exempt material, at the time of publication, under the terms of the Freedom of Information Act 2000.
10.2	Minute not included as contains exempt material, at the time of publication, under the terms of the Freedom of Information Act 2000.
11.	Any Other Business
11.1	Minute not included as contains exempt material, at the time of publication, under the terms of the Freedom of Information Act 2000.
12.	Close of Meeting
12.1	Professor Rubin thanked members for attending and reminded them the ninth meeting of Council is scheduled for 27 February 2020.