



Council Meeting
Thursday, 1 July 2021
MEETING SUMMARY

Welcome and Introductions	
1.	The Chair welcomed the UKRI Director of Investment Strategy and System Insight, Dan Shah; the UKRI Deputy Director of Research Sustainability and Infrastructure, Bryony Butland; and the Chair of the UKRI ARAPC, Fiona Driscoll, to the meeting.
UKRI Strategy Directorate Update	
2.	<p>Dan provided Council with an update on behalf of the UKRI Strategy Directorate. His remarks focused on the spending review (SR) and impending government publications:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The SR has not officially started, and timelines have not been confirmed.• The overall funding envelope is likely to decrease, particularly in view of BEIS's contribution to Horizon Europe.• The Strategy team has started to identify the type of information that is likely to be required and are working with BEIS to ensure alignment with government priorities.• Topics of interest include Enterprise and long-term growth, Net Zero carbon emissions, the Innovation Strategy, COVID, Levelling Up, Global Britain, and responding to the Integrated Review.• UKRI will make a case for research and innovation but also for the unique role that it plays in the funding of research and innovation, which is complementary to the role played by other government departments.• The aim will be to encourage the research and innovation sectors and business to help make the case for increased funding.• Work is still underway on the Innovation and People & Culture Strategies.• Research England has made a significant contribution to the development of the Innovation Strategy.• Levelling Up is likely to feature in the Innovation Strategy.
Executive Chair's Report	
3.	<p>The Executive Chair noted a few highlights from his report, to include the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• There have been an increasing number of requests for the Executive Chair to speak at universities; this is likely to continue as the sector seeks a view on issues faced.• Five Strength in Places Wave 2 awards have been made: formal announcements are pending.• The KE Concordat has been very well received by the sector.• The Insight & Engagement team has developed a programme of online engagement events, the most recent of which was held on 30 June. Attended by 140 people, the event featured a talk by Graeme Reid on <i>The Role of QR in a Time of Change</i>.• Trusted Research continues to be an area of interest within UKRI, and a programme of work has recently been launched to support cross-sector campaigns designed to protect those working in the international and innovation sectors.



People and Culture	
4.	The Director of Research provided an overview of the UKRI People & Culture Strategy to include background, scope, vision, emerging themes, example actions, and implications for Research England. The strategy follows a commitment made in the UK R&D Roadmap published on 1 Jul 2020, is framed as a call to action for the sector, and it aligns with some of the content of the emerging UKRI Organisational Strategy.
Future Research Assessment Programme Update	
5.	The Director of Research introduced the Future Research Assessment Programme and provided an update on activity. Formally launched by the four Funding Bodies in May 2021, the programme is exploring possible approaches to the evaluation of research performance in the UK post REF2021. The team is hosting a series of round tables with diverse stakeholder groups. The 'Real-time REF Review' will be published in July followed by sector-wide consultation in the Autumn. Outcomes will be published in Summer 2022.
Strategic Funding	
6.	Research England is awaiting its letter of guidance from BEIS. The letter provides a steer on government priorities and includes a three-year settlement of core funding as well as non-core funding.
Allocations	
7.	The Chair provided an update on preparations for the distribution of the Research England budget in advance of receipt of the letter of guidance. This year's budget is expected to be in line with that of previous years. UKRI has provided a high level overview of constraints and decisions to the sector in its 'Allocation Explainer' (https://www.ukri.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/05/UKRI-270521-UKRI-Allocation-Explainer-2021-22-FINAL-PDF.pdf).
Items by Exception Only	
8.	There were two items for consideration by exception: development of an experimental platform for scholarly communication (Octopus) aimed at improving research culture; and funding for Universities UK International.
Risk Report	
9.	Council received an update on Research England's strategic risks, a summary of risk management since April 2021, and an overview of UKRI corporate strategic risk.
Senior Recruitment	
10.	The Chair informed Council that work to prepare for the launch of the Executive Chair recruitment campaign is currently underway. A campaign for the recruitment of new Council members is also underway.