



**MINUTES OF THE 18th MEETING OF COUNCIL
HELD ON 5 MAY 2022 VIRTUALLY**

Present:	Professor Diane Coyle (<i>Chair, Senior Independent Member</i>)
	Professor Rachel Brooks
	Professor Jane Duckett
	Mr Mike Emmerich
	Professor Dame Rachel Griffith
	Professor Lasana Harris
	Professor Todd Landman
	Mr Ben Page
	Professor Sir Bernard Silverman
	Professor Jackline Wahba
	Sir Chris Wormald
	Professor Alan Penn
Apologies:	Professor Sir Simon Wessely
	Ms Desirée Lopez
Office:	Alison Park (<i>Interim Executive Chair</i>)
	Claire Graves (<i>Chief Operating Officer</i>)
	Jeremy Neathey (<i>Director of Strategy</i>)
	Jen Gold (<i>Director of Research</i>)
	Frances Burstow (<i>Deputy Director of Skills and Methods</i>)
	James Canton (<i>Deputy Director of Public Policy Engagement</i>)
	Teresa Griffiths (<i>Deputy Director of Planning, Operations and Governance</i>)
	Melanie Knetsch (<i>Deputy Director of Innovation and Impact</i>)
	Damien Smith (<i>Deputy Director of Research Economics</i>)
	Emily Swaine (<i>Deputy Director of Strategy and Partnerships</i>)
	Joy Todd (<i>Deputy Director of Research Portfolio</i>)
	Peter Ethelston (<i>Associate Director for Governance and Policy</i>)
	Doug German (<i>Private Secretary to Executive Chair</i>)
	Luca Mannocchi (<i>Secretariat</i>)
	Gillian Bartoszezewska (<i>Secretariat</i>)
Guests:	Dr Karen Salt (<i>Nominated UKRI observer, Deputy Director, R&D Culture and Environment</i>)
	Professor Kimberley Scharf (<i>ESRC Council deferred member</i>)
	Professor Patrick Devine-Wright (<i>ACCESS, University of Exeter</i>)
	Professor Birgitta Gatersleben (<i>ACCESS, University of Surrey</i>)
	Mike Biddle (<i>Innovate UK Programme Director for the Industrial Strategy Challenge Fund</i>)
	Ailsa Kennedy-Ballard (<i>Innovate UK Head of Industrial Strategy Challenge Fund Future Programmes</i>)

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

1.	Welcome and Apologies
1.1	The Chair welcomed members to the 17th meeting of Council.

1.2	Diane Coyle welcomed Karen Salt (standing in as UKRI observer), new Council members Rachel Brooks and Jackline Wahba to their first meeting, and deferred Council member Kim Scharf who attended in an observer capacity.
1.3	Council noted apologies from Simon Wessely and Desirée Lopez.
2.	Minutes of the Previous Meeting (ESRC 2022-08)
2.1	The minutes of the previous meeting were agreed as an accurate record.
3.	Matters Arising (ESRC 2022-09)
3.1	Members were updated on the status of matters arising from the previous meeting.
4.	Interim Executive Chair's Business and Update on Context
4.1	Alison Park gave an update on recent activities and noted that a full report would be circulated following the meeting.
4.2	Council recommended that in the next round of Executive Chair recruitment ministerial sign off of the person specification should be sort prior to recruitment going live.
4.3	Council discussed how to utilise UKRI and ESRC's convening power to catalyse and support coordination and collaboration in government to ensure existing effort and lessons learnt in levelling up and innovation is captured. This includes from partnerships such as the What Works Centre for Local Economic Growth, the Productivity Institute's Regional Productivity Forums (RPFs), and Large Paired Institutional Partnerships (LPIPs).
5.	Update from UKRI Observer on UKRI Strategy
5.1	Karen Salt provided Council with an update on the UKRI allocations process, and the soon to be published bureaucracy review. Karen highlighted the UKRI response to the Russian government's invasion of Ukraine by monitoring and working closely with those at various stages of Russia-related applications to ensure staff are supported, risks are managed and projects are stabilised. Council noted that UKRI is undertaking further work to understand the long term implications to academics and international partnerships, working with the FCDO and universities to provide consistent guidance and mitigations.
5.2	Council said they would welcome further opportunities to discuss ESRC's activity around the security, risk and resilience theme.
6	ESRC Allocations FY22/23 – 24/25
6.1	Jeremy Neathey updated Council on the outcome of the overall UKRI allocation process and set out proposals for the allocation of ESRC's core budget over the next three years (FY22/23 -24/25). This will be consistent with the broad strategic priorities identified in the new draft Delivery Plan (DP) and informed by the Quadratic Voting (QV) exercise outcomes discussed at the last Council meeting.

	Council noted that following the publication of the UKRI strategy and now the allocation model is close to being finalised, the next version of the Strategic Delivery Plan will be produced, working with the Delivery Plan Steering Group.
6.2	Council expressed disappointment that following ESRC's significant contribution to the COVID-19 rapid response it would receive a reduced overall share of the core allocation. They welcomed the opportunity to engage in this high-level allocations' discussion and requested further detail on headroom versus committed funding by strategic area.
6.3	Council suggested that the mapping of proposed investments to funding programmes should reflect how specific activities would support multiple priorities to mitigate the risk of becoming siloed at an administrative level.
7.	Strategic initiatives update on Net Zero, Environment, Biodiversity and Climate Change
7.1	Joy Todd updated Council on the Delivery Plan area of 'Net Zero, Environment, Biodiversity and Climate Change' followed by a presentation by Patrick Devine-Wright and Birgitta Gatersleben from the newly appointed Environmental Social Science Leadership Team called ACCESS.
7.2	Patrick and Birgitta outlined the challenges ACCESS would seek to develop solutions to during their 5-year programme by mapping lessons learnt, providing tailored training and capacity building, testing new approaches for agile deployment of social science capacity and championing environmental social science across the UK and internationally.
7.3	Council discussed how ACCESS might develop opportunities for synthesis for better coordination and to address fragmentation that policy makers can build on, listen to diverse voices to prioritise practical steps to ensure quality and validity for agendas for action, and deliver solutions that will also support competitive advantage, employment and growth within UK businesses. Council suggested that further work could include understanding the skills required by social scientists to tackle cross-sectoral barriers to working with other scientific disciplines. They noted opportunities for social science leadership should include measures and metrics within the Building a Green Future programme.
8.	ESRC equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI) action plan
8.1	Frances Burstow updated Council on the draft ESRC equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI) action plan, developed to align with the UKRI EDI Strategy by the ESRC EDI internal working group with input from the ESRC Strategic Advisory Network.
8.2	Council welcomed the proposed ESRC EDI action plan and the intention to establish an EDI Expert Advisory Group to advise and steer the EDI programme of work. Members supported the focus on systems and processes rather than individual behaviours and discussed the need to develop our understanding of what works. They welcomed the planned 'EDI Caucus' which is intended to support evidence based decision making by reviewing, synthesising and generating new evidence. Members emphasized the importance of undertaking qualitative research to better understand how policies and processes impact on outcomes and considering socio-economic background.

8.3	Council noted there will be a cross UKRI action plan to capture areas of collective working including the end to end review of peer review and a Good Practice Exchange and pointed to the need for this to take a whole systems approach.
8.4	Council noted that the action plan will be developed further over the summer, informed by the responses received to the consultation on the UKRI EDI Strategy, with the aim of publishing it alongside the UKRI EDI Strategy and Action Plan.
9.	Innovate UK and ESRC areas of mutual interest
9.1	Alison Park introduced Mike Biddle and Ailsa Kennedy-Ballard to Council who presented an overview of Innovate UK and their key areas of focus over the next three years. This included an introduction to Innovate UK, its role in delivering the Plan for Action set out in the Innovation Strategy, and its approach to cross-UKRI collaboration.
9.2	Council thanked Mike and Ailsa and noted how current engagement between Innovate UK and ESRC exemplified how councils can work in partnership to utilise the innovation agenda to embed high impact innovation and build ecosystems.
9.3	Council discussed how Innovate UK and ESRC would need to support socio-technical challenges in levelling-up and the consumption economy, public services and the third sector, labour shortages, retro-fitting housing stock, professional services and AI. It was agreed that meeting these challenges would require coordination of different bodies and research into effective, scalable and impactful interventions.
10.	Papers for discussion by exception and any other business
10.1	No papers for discussion by exception were submitted.
11.	Close of Meeting