



**APPROVED Minutes of the UKRI Board Meeting of 16<sup>th</sup> September 2020**

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<b>Board Attendees</b>	
Sir John Kingman (Chair)	Lord Willetts
Professor Dame Ottoline Leyser	Professor Ian Diamond
Siobhan Peters	Fiona Driscoll
Lord Browne	Sir Harpal Kumar
Sir Peter Bazalgette	Professor Max Lu
Professor Julia Black	Vivienne Parry
Professor Sir Leszek Borysiewicz	Mustafa Suleyman
Professor Dame Sally Davies	
<b>Attendees</b>	
Isobel Stephen	Mike Blackburn
Jo Shanmugalingam, BEIS	Alex Marsh
Joanne Allison (items 1-3)	Paul Gemmill (item 5)
<b>Secretariat</b>	
Chris Chudziak	Amy Smith
Hannah Berriman	Tim Russell

**Time: 9:45-13:15**

**Date: 16 September 2020**

**Location: By Zoom**

**1. Welcome and Introductions**

- 1.1. John Kingman welcomed members to the meeting, noting that it was Mustafa Suleyman's last Board meeting. John thanked Mustafa for his contribution as a Board member.

**2. a) Minutes of 15<sup>th</sup> July 2020, b) Action Log and c) Forward Look**

2.1. The Board approved the minutes and noted the Action Log and Forward Look without comment.

### 3. CEO Report

3.1. Ottoline updated the Board on a number of live issues not covered later, including;

3.1.1. Appointments – Ottoline noted the Government’s overall approach to public appointments is to move to recruitment without head-hunters. This will have an impact on outstanding UKRI appointments.

3.1.2. ARPA – Ottoline shared current thinking on the development of ARPA in the context of the R&D roadmap.

3.1.3. Catapults – Ottoline noted there were ongoing discussions related to the future of the catapult programme in the context of the Spending Review. John Kingman recognised that discussions were at an early stage but requested a further discussion on catapults to be included on a future agenda.

**ACTION:** Catapult discussion to be added to the agenda for an upcoming Board meeting.

3.1.4. Ottoline provided an update on the COVID-19 rapid response call that focused on how COVID-19 was disproportionately effecting BAME communities. UKRI was investigating a complaint raised by **(withheld from publication)** about the way that this call was run.

Ottoline noted that another BAME focused call is being established, which will take into consideration the lessons learnt from the initial campaign. The Board noted that the business case for this call is currently with Treasury for approval.

3.1.5. Returning to office space - Mike Blackburn provided an update on staff returning to office space. He noted that within the science facilities, about 40-50% of staff have returned, in a COVID safe manner. Mike noted that no one will be required to return to their workplace, and this is being carefully managed with line managers.

Mike noted that ~45 people who had asked to return to the office are working in Polaris House in a COVID secure manner. From 1<sup>st</sup> October 2020, Mike noted that collaborative workspace in Polaris House will be available to book.

Staff have been assured that they will be given four weeks’ notice to any changes to the current working from home policy, and that this will remain in place until 31<sup>st</sup> October. Mike noted that ExCo are considering extending the working from home policy until 31<sup>st</sup> January 2020, with the intention of increasing to a COVID secure maximum of 500 in Polaris House. Jo Shanmugalingam noted that current government policy was that civil servants should return to the office in a managed

and safe way. Although UKRI is not counted as civil service, the Board agreed UKRI should have a plan in place regarding returning to work.

The Board raised concerns about the science facilities, noting that if they were not able to operate at capacity this would affect partnerships with business. Mike Blackburn noted he will discuss Mark Thomson and report back to the Board. The Board noted that in some research facilities regular staff testing may be standard. Mike Blackburn to investigate whether this approach would be feasible for UKRI science facilities.

3.1.6. The Board were asked to comment on the corporate plan which had been previously shared by correspondence.

**DECISION:** The Board approved the Corporate Plan for 20-21 for onward submission to the Secretary of State ahead of publication at the end of September.

#### **4. Spending Review Preparation and Next Steps**

- 4.1. Alex Marsh provided an update on progress of the spending review negotiations, setting out a timeline and the contents of the current bid. Alex noted that additional information has been requested following the submission of the bid and that UKRI was working closely with BEIS, Treasury and No 10. The Board noted that stabilisation of the research sector after the impacts of COVID-19 would be a priority, acknowledging that the full impact of the pandemic would not be known for some time.
- 4.2. Alex noted that there is a lot of interest in co-investment with other Government departments, noting that Executive Chairs are meeting frequently with Chief Scientific Advisors to ensure we are aligned on agendas. The Board noted the need to ensure an effective overall suite of interventions for technologies between Innovate UK and the British Business Bank. Jo Shanmugalingam offered to follow up with IUK and BBB offline to ensure both organisations have the right tools following the spending review.
- 4.3. The Board expressed interest in how we can demonstrate delivering value for money from our settlement and delivery of objectives in our bid. The Board noted they would like to discuss the performance framework shortly.
- 4.4. The Board was supportive of the general approach to the spending review and was keen to be kept up to date as progress is made.

#### **5. Update on plans for Reforming our Business**

- 5.1. Paul Gemmill (Director, UKRI Reforming our Business) provided an update on the UKRI Reforming our Business programme, including noting that Minister Donelan had made a ministerial announcement regarding reducing bureaucratic burden in research, innovation and higher education, which had received positive feedback from the community. Paul also noted he was working closely with Karen Salt to ensure positive EDI implications of any changes.

- 5.2. The Board noted the good progress the programme had made, and that it has been well received by the community. ARAPC will be looking to receive a target operation model soon. Jo Shanmugalingam noted that this area was a priority for No 10.
- 5.3. The Board raised concerns over progress regarding giving UKRI institutes pay flexibility. Paul noted that this is being addressed through the UKRI pay strategy discussions, which includes a proposal on returning flexibilities to institutes.
- 5.4. The Board noted the potential implications of current Cabinet Office procurement rules for innovative procurement. Paul is exploring the issue with COOs across UKRI and with BEIS. Ottoline noted that this demonstrates a wider research and innovation system issue which UKRI (as steward of the system) is well placed to address.
- 5.5. Paul noted he was happy to discuss any issues in detail with individual Board members.

## **6. AOB**

- 6.1. The Chair noted that the next Board meeting would be held on 11<sup>th</sup> November 2020. Board members agreed they would like to meet in person if COVID precautions allow. Secretariat to investigate possibility of a return to in-person meetings.
- 6.2. The Board agreed that the Innovate UK Strategy should be discussed at the November Board meeting, prior to Ian Campbell stepping down as Executive Chair.
- 6.3. The Board requested detail about delivery of the university stabilisation package. Jo Shanmugalingam will update the Board in due course.
- 6.4. The Chair noted that, in line with the requirements in the Framework Document with BEIS, the Secretariat are exploring options for procuring a Board effectiveness evaluation. The Secretariat will update the Board as plans progress.
- 6.5. On behalf of ARAPC, Fiona Driscoll thanked Siobhan Peters for delivery of the Annual Report and Accounts. Fiona noted ARAPC will be recruiting new independent members and would welcome suggestions from the Board.

## **7. Non-Executive Session**

### **Papers for discussion by exception**

## **8. CFO Report**

- 8.1. The Board noted the CFO Report without comment

## **9. Health and Safety Report FY 19/20**

- 9.1. The Board noted the Health and Safety Report without comment.