



Council Meeting
Thursday, 4 February 2021
MEETING SUMMARY

Welcome and Introductions	
1.	The Chair welcomed Research England's (RE's) two newest Council members, Cathy Gormley-Heenan and Anne-Marie Imafidon, both attending in the capacity of observer (their terms of office commence on 1 April 2021). Cathy is Deputy Vice-Chancellor of Research and External Affairs at Ulster University. Anne-Marie is CEO, Co-founder and 'Head Stemette' of Stemettes, an award-winning social enterprise aimed at inspiring and supporting young women into Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths careers.
2.	The Chair announced that it would be the last meeting for Jessica Corner and Deborah Smith. He thanked them for their wisdom and invaluable contribution.
3.	Council also bid farewell to Alex Marsh, who leaves UKRI to become the Director for Academies and Schools Reform at the Department for Education. The Chair thanked Alex for his insights and candour and wished him all the best in his next endeavour.
UKRI Update	
4.	Alex Marsh provided an update from UKRI Strategy on the Comprehensive Spending Review (CSR), to include the following points: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Near-term decisions are likely over the next few weeks; however, the exact timeline is still to be determined, and the detail of the CSR settlement remains unclear.• The relevant teams across UKRI are working together to understand the pressures, commitments and government expectations, and will draw on expertise across the individual councils when details of the settlement become available.• UKRI is drawing on work already in train to ensure an integrated approach across the organisation and in its interaction with BEIS.
5.	Alex closed by saying that it has been a privilege and pleasure working with RE and that the interaction has always been rewarding and worthwhile. He thanked Council for allowing him the opportunity to attend their meetings, stating that he has valued joining, listening to and participating in their discussions. He wished RE and Council all the best.
Executive Chair's Report	
6.	The Executive Chair noted a few highlights from his report, to include the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Wave 2 full stage Strength in Places (SIP) proposals will be considered by the SIPF Assessment Panel on 10 February. There is a very strong selection of projects. The funding envelope is dependent on CSR outcomes.• The deadline for submission of bids for the joint funding call (RE with the Office for Students) to improve access and participation for Black, Asian and minority ethnic groups in postgraduate research study has been extended due to COVID impacts. Anne-Marie Imafidon will be chairing the panel for the fund.• Additional measures to support institutions on the REF have been announced. The measures will not compromise the assessment schedule and appear to have been well received by the sector.



	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Plans for Specialist Provider funding for 2020/21 have been published.• The Insight and Engagement team has been gathering intelligence on the impact of the recurrent lockdown on Postgraduate Research activity and whether there are further interventions that UKRI or RE can make to mitigate those challenges. There are no easy solutions in the current climate of financial constraints and uncertainty.
7.	Members provided positive feedback on the 'TenU Hosts' event held on 27 January. The Director of Knowledge Exchange stated that the US partners have set a good ambition, and the UK is working on identifying ways to spread the learning. A follow up event on levelling up is planned. TenU builds on, and disseminates via, the general tech transfer organisations in the two countries, AUTM and PraxisAuril. The group focuses significantly on technical matters of tech transfer practice; however, the aim is to send TenU Hosts invitations, which have more policy focus, out more widely.
UK Research Partnership Investment Fund (UKRPIF) Update	
8.	The Director of Research provided an update to Council in its capacity as UKRPIF Programme Board. A risk panel chaired by Peter Saraga, and with Richard Armour and Janet Finch as members, has been established to review projects facing major changes or risks. Two projects have already progressed through the panel, and three more will be reviewed in the next couple of weeks.
Research England Strategic Funding	
9.	The Chair provided an overview of the policy intent of each of RE's funding streams and explained how each one contributes to meeting RE's stated vision, mission and objectives.
Knowledge Exchange Framework (KEF) Demonstration	
10.	Council received a demonstration of the web-based platform developed by Jisc to display metrics-based information on universities' performance in knowledge exchange (KE). The interactive dashboards, based on narrative statements submitted by nearly 90% of eligible providers, will enable universities to understand their performance and to compare it to that of other institutions in their KE cluster. The KEF is an important way of showing the diversity of the sector across a broad range of KE activities.
Future Research Assessment Programme	
11.	Council were provided with an overview of the future research assessment programme to be undertaken by the four UK Higher Education funding bodies.
Risk Report	
12.	Council was provided with an update on RE's strategic risks and an overview of UKRI corporate strategic risk. Council agreed to the addition of a new risk – REF Reform Programme – to RE's strategic risk register.