Council Meeting
Thursday, 24 November 2022
MEETING SUMMARY

Welcome and Introductions

1.	The Chair welcomed all to the meeting, in particular Dr Morag Campbell (Assistant Director for Research & Innovation at the Scottish Funding Council); Tomas Coates Ulrichsen (Director, UCI Policy Evidence Unit at the University of Cambridge); Ellen Bamford (RE's Head of Data and Evidence); and Rachel Tyrrell (RE's Associate Director of Knowledge Exchange).
2.	The Chair reflected briefly on the Autumn statement, stating that protection of R&D spend had been positive news: this has largely been as a result of significant effort on the part of UKRI and BEIS in evidencing value. There are, however, still uncertainties regarding what lies beyond the current SR period.

Knowledge Exchange (KE) Metrics

3.	The Higher Education Business & Community Interactions (HE-BCI) survey is the main source of KE data at the moment. The survey is the longest running, most complete longitudinal dataset in KE and provides a reasonably complete set of data that is fit for current KE purposes. The Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA), which publishes HE-BCI data, is leading a major review of HE-BCI, supported and guided by RE and by priority areas of the OfS, the other HE funding bodies, and Government Departments.
4.	During the discussion, the following points were raised: • Income is currently the best metric available, but alternative metrics do need to be considered in the changing landscape. • There are activities that are unlikely to be captured by the current robust metrics, such as community and cultural engagement, which appear – for example – in REF impact case studies but not in HE-BCI data. • Income metrics are also unlikely to capture the contribution of academic research to public policy such as made during covid through various advisory structures. • There are other types of metrics, which should possibly also be considered as part of a wider package of data; however, data collection for these alternative sources may present a large burden to universities.
5.	The Director of KE raised the prospect of automated systems such as machine learning, as well as use of registration numbers to track performance (such as for spin-outs), stating that consideration should be given to how to get better data in simpler ways.
6.	Council acknowledged that introduction of the HE-BCI survey has gradually increased the internal focus of universities on KE and has resulted in an improvement in the understanding and visibility of KE in universities over time.

Executive Chair's Report

| 7. | The Executive Chair noted the range of activity since the last meeting, including considerable engagement with RE staff and the sector. She provided an update on Horizon Europe, stating that a pre-decision package has been announced to support stability within the sector with RE managing distribution of some of the funding. She also indicated that the first Future Research Assessment outputs are due to be published soon. |

School of Advanced Studies (SAS)

| 8. | The Director of Research provided an update on the SAS Advisory Group. A review of SAS is planned for late 2023/early 2024. Council noted the particular role of SAS in stimulating arts and humanities research. |

RE EDI Action Plan

| 9. | The Director of Insight & Engagement briefed Council on development of the RE EDI Action Plan. A final version of the plan will be presented to Council for endorsement in May 2023. |

Risk, Assurance and Governance Report

| 10. | Council noted progress on closure of four of the five actions arising from the GIAA Audit of RE's Governance Framework; the update on the 'Delay to Research England Block Grant Funding Platform and Data' risk currently sitting on the UKRI principal risk register; and update on assurance activity. |

| 11. | Council also noted two areas of increased risk: Risk 8 (Understanding and Responding to Sector Expectations (Research)) – score increased due to uncertainty regarding the Horizon Europe pivot point; and Risk 11 (FRAP) – score increased due to the challenging timetable for providing options. Controls are in place to actively manage both risks. |

RE Strategic Delivery Plan (SDP)

| 12. | The Chair provided an overview of the status of the RE SDP, stating that originally RE's SDP was to have been published alongside those of the other research councils; however, due to the transition of Executive Chairs, publication has been delayed to enable her to consider and guide the overall strategic direction for RE. |

| 13. | The RE Executive Group will discuss the SDP and strategic priorities during its next Planning Session, and a Council mini session will be held in the New Year to provide a further opportunity for RE Council to discuss RE's strategic direction. |

| 14. | Council acknowledged that RE works in a fundamentally different way to the other councils, reflected on the distinctiveness of RE working in partnership with other institutions, and recognised that RE has a culture of 'working with others to deliver'. |

Date and Time of next Meeting: Thursday, 2 February 2023, 10:30–13:30