



**Council Meeting
Thursday, 29 September 2022
MEETING SUMMARY**

Welcome and Introductions	
1.	The Chair welcomed Professor Jessica Corner, officially starting as Research England's (RE's) new Executive Chair on 1 October. The Chair also welcomed RE's newest Council member, Bronwen Maddox.
UKRI Strategy Update	
2.	Dan Shah provided an update to Council to include the following points: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• UKRI now has a five-year strategy in place, a three-year funding allocation, and has also published a corporate plan, all of which provide a good foundation on which UKRI can build.• The underpinning message of the strategy, corporate plan and SR case is that R&I is key for growth and vital to tackling the major societal challenges currently being faced (such as the energy crisis).• UKRI represents a unique, established national asset that is running at scale.• UKRI uses the dual support system in an intelligent and dynamic way to achieve desired outcomes.• Broader engagement with the new government has been delayed by the period of national mourning.• UKRI continues to engage with its routine official contacts and is working closely with BEIS regarding Horizon Europe.
Sustainability Update	
3.	The Chair introduced Bryony Butland, who leaves UKRI at the end of October on secondment to Queen Mary University as their Director of Research and Innovation. He thanked her for her role in development of the legislation which created UKRI and noted that she has been pivotal in progressing UKRI's work on financial sustainability of the R&I system.
4.	Bryony provided an update on the Sustainability work being carried out by her team to include the following points: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Since she last presented to RE Council, her team has continued analysis of sector data, including the latest TRAC data, in which covid and other issues affecting the sector are starting to become evident.• Her team has been exploring the consequences of issues such as the domestic student fee cap, disruption to international student numbers, reduction in charity income, changes to business income, and balance of funding on sustainability of the sector.• All issues are being overshadowed by environmental factors such as inflation.• The team is considering alternative ways of revealing patterns as there is huge variability in universities within the sector.• The next step will be for her team to publish an interim report.



Executive Chair's Report	
5.	<p>The Executive Chair highlighted a few aspects of his report to include the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Dr Nick Merriman has agreed to chair the Higher Education Museum and Galleries review to take place next year.• Submissions of interest demonstrate significant sector interest in UKRPIF Round 7.• Research England Development funding has been awarded for a project on business skills for early career researchers led by Exeter/Chartered Association of Business Schools (CABS) which addresses the BEIS Funding & Priorities letter priority of “considering innovative models to advance developments of entrepreneurial talent that can further the porosity of academia with business”.• Research England continues to develop its partnership with The Conversation.• Jisc continues to progress their merger with HESA, and the Secretary of State has recognised Jisc as the Designated Data Body under HERA 2017.
RE Strategic Delivery Plan (SDP) Update	
6.	<p>The Chair explained that it is a requirement under HERA 2017 that RE produce a SDP that sets out intended activity over the coming period. RE's SDP has been delayed until November 2022 to ensure that the new Executive Chair can shape and have oversight of the document. RE's activities are set out in the BEIS Funding & Priorities letter and implemented through allocations; however, the SDP sets the broader context. The current SDP will be for one year with a longer-term SDP being prepared next year, and it builds on feedback received from RE Council during the allocations process.</p>
RE Performance Management Framework Update	
7.	<p>Council discussed RE's Performance Management Framework, which provides a way of assessing RE's performance.</p>
Expanding Excellence in England (E3) Round 2	
8.	<p>The Director of Research briefly outlined the design of the new round of E3 in preparation for its launch, noting that the Programme Board has recommended that a longer term of funding should be considered to enable projects to become fully sustainable; that the level of funding should be commensurate with size of the unit; and that the timetable should be adjusted to allow a longer time between announcement and draw down of funds. Council was supportive of these recommendations, noting that funding over longer durations should be accompanied by plans for sustained activity beyond the funding period and that clear guidelines should be available regarding the range of funding available. The benefit of collaboration between universities was also noted.</p>
Future Research Assessment Programme (FRAP) Update	
9.	<p>The Director of Research provided initial insights on the FRAP programme to date to include analyses and exploratory work, engagement, emerging findings, reflections on REF2021 feedback, and consultation outcomes. The intention is for a substantive item on FRAP to come to the February 2023 RE Council meeting.</p>



Risk, Assurance and Governance Report	
10.	Council noted the update on risk, assurance, and governance. They also noted the RE risk sitting on the UKRI corporate risk register covering the RE block grant funding platform and data, which must be fully implemented and tested by 31 December 2022.
AOB	
11.	David Sweeney thanked Council for being supportive and engaging during his tenure as RE Executive Chair. The RE Council SIM stated that it had been a privilege to work with David and, on behalf of Council, expressed a huge vote of gratitude. Jessica Corner stated that David has been an inspirational Executive Chair and that his leadership of the sector and research system has been amazing.

Date and Time of next Meeting: Thursday, 24 November 2022