

Minutes of an extraordinary UKRI-BBSRC Council meeting on 4 February 2021.

Those attending:

Steve Bagshaw
Professor Ewan Birney
John Bloomer
Professor Ian Graham
Professor Laura Green
Professor Martin Humphries (Chair of the meeting)
Professor Andrew Millar
Professor Malcolm Skingle CBE
Professor David Stephens
Professor Melanie Welham (UKRI-BBSRC Executive Chair)
Professor Ijeoma Uchegbu

Also attending:

Dr Amanda Collis
Dr Karen Lewis
Dr Sarah Perkins
Mr Bill Poll
Laura Notton
Ksymena Grzybowska

ITEM 1. OPENING REMARKS

1. The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting and, in particular, two new Council members Ijeoma Uchegbu and Steve Bagshaw, who had joined Council on 1 January 2021.
2. Apologies were received from Belinda Clarke.

ITEM 2. SPENDING REVIEW DISCUSSION

3. Melanie Welham informed Council members that the Spending Review (SR) landscape had shifted quite considerably since the last discussion with Council in December 2020. At that time, BBSRC had anticipated that by the time of this meeting we would have some indication of what BBSRC's future budgets would look like over a multi-year period.
4. However, UKRI has not yet received confirmation of its budget for 2021-22 from BEIS and this next financial year (2021-22) will be very constrained due to existing commitments and a lack of flexibility to move funds between years and ringfences. Council noted that there were additional uncertainties and pressures on UKRI and the wider system, such as the reduction in ODA and any costs of association to Horizon Europe.
5. Council noted that current BEIS and UKRI allocations discussions were focused on confirmation of 2021-22 budgets, and we were unlikely to have any indication of longer-term budget trajectories until later in the year.
6. The Spending Review announcement in November 2020 was positive and it was noted that the three years settlement commitment was still there. However, with the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic there has been a difficult fiscal situation and due to these constraints and unknowns, UKRI had been asked to model a series of scenarios for financial year 2021/22.
7. Council highlighted the importance of longer-term planning and Council would discuss this at its next meetings in March and June 2021.

Action: Spending review updates to feature on Council agendas for March and June meetings (Laura Notton, Ksymena Grzybowska)

8. In response to a question on details of the New Venture Fund, Council noted that there were

ongoing discussions across the Government that had involved the UKRI CEO. It was noted that there were many ideas on the table and the governance was not in place. Council was also informed that there had been some progress on ARPA.

Sections below were recorded separately as they related to work in progress and business sensitive information.

Council Secretariat
February 2021