

**MINUTES OF THE TENTH MEETING OF COUNCIL
HELD ON 23 APRIL 2020 VIRTUALLY VIA ZOOM**

| | |
|-------------------|---|
| Present: | Professor Jennifer Rubin (<i>Executive Chair</i>) |
| | Professor Diane Coyle (<i>Chair, Senior Independent Member</i>) |
| | Mr Mike Emmerich |
| | Professor Jane Falkingham |
| | Professor Rachel Griffith |
| | Professor Melinda Mills |
| | Professor Anna Vignoles |
| | Professor Sir Bernard Silverman |
| | Professor Sir Simon Wessely |
| | Dr Lasana Harris |
| | Professor John Aston |
| Apologies: | Sir Chris Wormald |
| | Ms Joanne Allison |
| Office: | Ms Frances Burstow (<i>Deputy Director of Skills and Strategy</i>) |
| | Mr Simon Crine (<i>Chief Operating Officer</i>) |
| | Mr Jeremy Neathey (<i>Deputy Director of Strategy Partnerships</i>) |
| | Professor Paul Nightingale (<i>Director of Strategy and Partnerships</i>) |
| | Professor Alison Park (<i>Director of Research</i>) |
| | Mr Damien Smith (<i>Deputy Director of Economic Research</i>) |
| | Dr Catherine Bromley (<i>Deputy Director of Data and Infrastructure</i>) |
| | Ms Melanie Knetsch (<i>Deputy Director of Innovation and Impact</i>) |
| | Ms Joy Todd (<i>Deputy Director of Research</i>) |
| | Dr Christina Rowley (<i>ESRC Strategy Team Head</i>) |
| | Dr Tom Roberts (<i>Secretary to Council, Minutes</i>) |
| | Mr Doug German (<i>Private Secretary to Executive Chair</i>) |
| | Ms Gillian Bartoszewska (<i>Secretariat</i>) |
| | Mr Harry Cavey (<i>Secretariat</i>) |
| | Ms Sara Slade (<i>Head of Governance and Policy</i>) |
| Guests: | Ms Isobel Stephen (<i>Executive Director of Strategy, Performance and Engagement</i>) |

These minutes do not necessarily reflect the precise order in which items were discussed.

| | |
|-----------|---|
| 1. | Welcome and Apologies |
| 1.1 | The tenth meeting of ESRC Council took place online due to COVID- 19 restrictions. |
| 1.2 | The Chair welcomed Dr Lasana Harris, Sir Bernard Silverman and Sir Simon Wessely to their first Council meeting. Council also welcomed Dr Catherine Bromley (incoming Deputy Director of Data and Infrastructure), and congratulated Mr Jeremy Neathey on his recent promotion to Director of Strategy. |

OFFICIAL - SENSITIVE

| | |
|-----------|--|
| 1.3 | Apologies were noted from Sir Chris Wormald and Ms Joanne Allison. |
| 2. | Minutes of the Previous Meeting |
| 2.1 | The minutes of the previous meeting were agreed as an accurate record. |
| 3. | Matters Arising |
| 3.1 | Members were updated on the status of matters arising from the previous meeting. |
| 4. | Executive Chair's Business and Update on Context |
| 4.1 | Professor Rubin updated Council on how COVID-19 research commissioning was being undertaken at pace and confirmed that the social sciences were well represented within recent UKRI/DHSC COVID-19 research proposals (many of which were multi council bids). |
| 4.2 | Professor Rubin informed Council on development of the soon-to-be- launched Information Hub for Economic Analysis, as well as progress on existing initiatives, such as the ADR UK business case for the next phase and establishment of the Productivity Institute. She welcomed UKRI's recent commitment toward further major economic, psychological, educational responses to COVID-19, and thanked the office for rising to the challenge and Council for all their support. |
| 4.3 | Council welcomed the update and recognised there would be budgetary and reprofiling implications that would need to be managed. |
| 5. | Strategic Goals and Council Collaboration |
| 5.1 | Ms Isobel Stephen updated Council on the UKRI response to COVID- 19 and the appointment of Professor Charlotte Deane EPSRC's Deputy Executive Chair as UKRI's COVID-19 Response Director. She noted work on UKRI 2025 had been paused to focus on immediate priorities in response to the pandemic, and welcomed Council's continued engagement and feedback on the thematic goals. It was suggested this pause offered an opportunity to refocus the 2025 strategy and provided an opportunity to enhance the embedding of social and economic questions into the strategy. |
| 5.2 | Council welcomed these developments and the invitation to engage further to shape the UKRI 2025 strategy. |
| 5.3 | Minute not included as contains exempt material, at the time of publication, under the terms of the Freedom of Information Act 2000. |
| 6. | New Strategic Initiatives Part 2 |
| 6.1 | Mr Neathey updated Council with progress on development of areas of strategic activity Minute not included as contains exempt material, at the time of publication, under the terms of the Freedom of Information Act 2000. |

OFFICIAL - SENSITIVE

| | |
|------------|--|
| 6.2 | Council congratulated the team on their development, endorsed the initiatives and offered to help shape them further. |
| 6.3 | Minute not included as contains exempt material, at the time of publication, under the terms of the Freedom of Information Act 2000. |
| 6.4 | Minute not included as contains exempt material, at the time of publication, under the terms of the Freedom of Information Act 2000. |
| 7. | ESRC Pipeline of Ideas |
| 7.1 | Mr Neathey updated Council on progress with the process for systematically capturing, curating and developing a repository of major new research ideas which would allow ESRC to optimise its reach into different organisations and ensure it is even better prepared for future opportunities. He explained that a big ideas advisory group would help triage ideas and that he would be approaching a Council member to chair this group. |
| 7.2 | Council endorsed the agility that the pipeline process offered and advised that the office aim to identify a Chair from Council and launch in the autumn. |
| 7.3 | Council advised that caution would be needed to ensure the pipeline maintained breadth beyond immediate policy requirements and that careful consideration be given to how to calibrate emergent research ideas that can rapidly change in scale and relevance (such as pandemics). |
| 8. | Risk Update |
| 8.1 | Mr Crine invited Council to note the ESRC risk register and raise any issues. He informed Council that the ESRC Senior Leadership Team had recently reviewed it Minute not included as contains exempt material, at the time of publication, under the terms of the Freedom of Information Act 2000. |
| 8.2 | Council praised ESRC on the step change in performance of the ADR UK initiative and the smooth way it has allowed researchers to access administrative data. |
| 8.3 | Minute not included as contains exempt material, at the time of publication, under the terms of the Freedom of Information Act 2000. |
| 9. | Any Other Business |
| 10. | Close of Meeting |
| | |