



**Approved by AHRC Council:
Author: Amy Smith**

Minutes of the AHRC Council meeting of 02 December 2025

Date: Tuesday 02 December 2025

Time: 09:00 – 16:15

Location: Caxton House, London and via Teams

Council Members and Observers	
Ms Emma Kane (Chair)	Professor Ambreena Manji
Professor Christopher Smith (Executive Chair, AHRC)	Dr Bridget McConnell
Ms Zeinab Badawi	Professor Sue Rigby
Ms Anita Bhalla	Professor Adrienne Scullion
Professor Tom Crick	Professor Steven Spier
Mr Tim Gardam	Professor Russell Viner (until 12:00)
Ms Seetha Kumar	
Attendees	
Dr Jaideep Gupte (Director of Research, Strategy and Innovation, AHRC)	Katherine Mansfield (Head of Design, Commercialisation and Innovation, AHRC – for item 7)
Dr Allan Sudlow (Director of Partnerships and Engagement, AHRC)	Alice Summers (Head of Risk and Assurance, UKRI – for item 11)
Ms Stella Power (Chief Operating Officer, AHRC)	Kate Boonham (International, Head of Governance and Assurance, UKRI – for item 12)
Sir Ian Chapman (CEO, UKRI- for item 3)	Jo Dunster (Head of Infrastructure, AHRC – for item 13)
Richard Cox (AHRC, Senior Investment Manager – Commercialisation - for item 7)	Lucy Hackett (Head of Health, Environmental and Urban Humanities, AHRC – for item 13)
Secretariat	
Amy Smith (Senior Governance Manager, AHRC)	Katie Hilliard (EA to Director's, AHRC)
Apologies	

Introductory Items	
1.	Welcome, Apologies, and Declarations of Interest
The Chair welcomed Council members to the meeting.	
The Chair welcomed Professor Tom Crick, DCMS Chief Scientific Advisor, who has joined Council.	
The Chair noted this was Professor Russell Viner's last meeting and thanked him for all of his valuable input during his time on AHRC Council. Professor Michael Thomas, DfE Chief Scientific Advisor, will join the Council from January 2026.	



The Chair noted no apologies were received prior to the meeting.

The Chair asked Council to declare any conflicts of Interest, Professor Sue Rigby noted she has joined the Board of the Scottish Funding Council.

2. Minutes, Actions, and Matters Arising

Council approved the minutes of 9th September 2025.

The Chair confirmed no actions were recorded at the last meeting.

Updates and Operations

3. Update from Sir Ian Chapman, UKRI CEO

Sir Ian updated Council on his vision for UKRI and the direction he intends for the organisation.

Council discussed the industrial strategy, partnerships with Universities, stakeholder engagement, growth across the AHRC portfolio and the creative sectors, and international.

ACTION: IC to return to a future Council, AS to add to forward plan.

ACTION: AS to add item for next meeting where Council can discuss the topics raised in IC's update. Council members to provide questions ahead of time.

4. Executive Chair's Report

Professor Smith noted his report and updated Council on the Spending Review (SR) allocations.

5. Executive Chair's forward look

Professor Smith noted his priorities moving forward.

ACTION: CS to update Council at a future meeting on co-funding. AS to add to forward plan.

6. Chief Operating Officer Update

Ms Stella Power noted the AHRC dashboard and updated Council on the AHRC People Survey, finance, recruitment, risk and governance.

ACTION: Council to feed into a quarterly paper to provide IC with updates and reflections.

7. AHRC Strategy for Commercialisation – Framework

Mr Cox shared slides with Council and noted that the proposed framework illustrates AHRC's commercialisation strategy with the aim of supporting Sir Ian Chapman's vision for UKRI.

Council discussed AHRC's community, the logic model, public value and the use of narrative and value chains.

Council were widely supportive of the strategy subject to the amendments suggested and noted strong comms will be needed.



8.	Director of Partnerships and Engagement Update
<p>Dr Sudlow noted his report and updated Council on building relationships with the other Research Councils, data infrastructure and the opportunities to push the digital agenda.</p> <p>Council discussed this along with next steps for Creative Industries, the policy landscape and breaking down barriers around sport.</p>	
9.	Director of Research, Strategy, and Innovation Update
<p>Dr Gupte noted his report and updated Council on the work being undertaken on the Curiosity Driven Research strategy.</p> <p>Council discussed this and the Gambling Levy Programme, the resilience of AHRC and UKRI, and the HERA crisis programme.</p>	
10.	Advisory Group reports
<p>Professor Scullion updated Council on the last Advisory Board meeting which took place in October. This was the first meeting with the new Board and discussions focused on looking at the approach of meetings moving forward as well as an item on commercialisation R&D.</p>	
11.	Risk and Assurance update from Alice Summers, Head of UKRI Risk and Assurance
<p>Ms Summers updated Council on the UKRI Risk and Assurance Management approach.</p> <p>Council discussed the comms element of risk preparedness, risk deep dives, risks around cyber, the use of legacy systems and emerging risks for AHRC.</p>	
Items for Discussion	
12.	AHRC's Risk Improvement Plan
<p>Ms Boonham updated Council on AHRC's risk improvement plan noting the intention to both align with UKRI's objective centric approach and AHRC's vision areas.</p> <p>Council discussed reputational risk, the balance between the woke agenda and not having too much homogeneity, risk mitigations and risk appetite.</p> <p>ACTION: AS to add deep dive on reputational risk to forward plan for next meeting.</p>	
13.	Arts, Humanities and Digitised Natural Science Collections for a Healthy Planet
<p>Ms Dunster and Mrs Hackett shared slides with Council and updated them on the healthy planet workstream, DiSSCo and AHRC's environment portfolio.</p> <p>Council noted the ambition and enormous value of the projects discussed.</p>	
14.	AOB
<p>There was no AOB.</p> <p>The next meeting will take place on 10th March 2026.</p>	