



Minutes of the Innovate UK Council Meeting – 21st January 2026

Venue – online via Teams

Council Members:

Tom Adeyoola (Chair)
John Gibson
John Patterson
Harry Destecroix
Annalisa Gigante
Simon Weeks
Julia Sutcliffe
Mark Treherne
Tunde Olanrewaju
Isabel Fox

Apologies:

Chris Ganje
Jennifer Rubin

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

1. Welcome and apologies

1.1 Tom Adeyoola (chair) welcomed the Council members to the 21st January Council meeting.

1.2 Apologies were received from Chris Ganje.

1.3 Context

The chair opened the meeting and outlined its purpose as a strategic check-in at a significant point in the development of Innovate UK's strategy and organisational transformation.

The Council members were reminded that government allocations had been confirmed, strategy development was progressing in alignment with UKRI's wider planning, organisational redesign was underway to support delivery readiness, and the next tier of senior leadership had been announced

2. Strategy

2.1 The Chair outlined a strategic shift from funding projects to supporting businesses, with a stronger focus on organisations delivering national economic benefit. The strategy clarifies Innovate UK's role as an innovation service and prioritises interventions with the greatest potential to impact business growth. Members welcomed the clarity of direction and emphasised the importance of clear, externally accessible language.

2.2 Council members discussed the proposed sector framework, noting the cross-cutting nature of many technologies and the need for flexibility across sectors, sub-sectors and technologies. The importance of

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collaboration across sector leadership and clear articulation of Innovate UK's operating approach was highlighted.

2.3 Council members endorsed the focus on national benefit and emphasised the importance of retaining long-term economic activity within the UK, including high-value jobs, infrastructure and manufacturing capability. Members noted the role of capital, facilities and public procurement in supporting sustained UK impact.

2.4 The Chair outlined planned changes to improve focus and impact, including supporting fewer businesses more intensively, reshaping some activities, and prioritising programmes that demonstrate clear potential to support growth and sustainability. Council members supported this approach and highlighted the importance of clear external communication.

Provisional sector allocations were presented. Council members welcomed flexibility to move funding between sectors and years, a shift towards portfolio-level management, and strengthening engagement with investors to improve leverage and alignment. The need for better insight into the Innovate UK company portfolio was emphasised.

Council members also discussed the importance of strengthening decision-making capability, including improved use of data and digital tools, faster triage and clearer decision points. The need to increase pace, reduce administrative burden and support proportionate, risk-aware decision-making was reinforced.

3.Transformation

3.1 An update was provided on organisational redesign, noting constructive staff engagement and the introduction of a programme-led operating model from April. Members welcomed the pace of progress and clarity of approach.

3.2 Council members discussed innovation infrastructure in the round, supporting a system-wide view aligned to strategic priorities. Technology, data and digital capability were identified as critical enablers, with emphasis on building internal capability alongside maintaining existing systems.

4.Council close

4.1 The Chair thanked members for a constructive discussion.

Council members endorsed the strategic direction and organisational approach, emphasising the value of continued engagement, feedback and external insight as work progresses