

Disclosable

---

## RESEARCH AND KNOWLEDGE EXCHANGE COMMITTEE

---

The 86<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Research and Knowledge Exchange Committee was held on 24 August 2022 at 10am at 97 Haymarket Terrace, Edinburgh.

**PRESENT:** Professor Lesley Yellowlees (Chair)  
Professor Irene McAra-McWilliam  
Caroline Stuart  
Professor Anne Anderson,  
Dr Caroline Cantley  
Dr Jano van Hemert  
Professor Julian Jones,  
Ms Sara Rae  
Professor Jonathan Seckl  
Professor Andy Porter

**OTHER** Professor Iain Gillespie, US RKEC

**OFFICERS:** Dr Cat Ball  
Gary Bannon  
Fiona Bates  
David Beards  
Morag Campbell  
Jenny Jamieson  
Hazel McGraw  
Maria McPhillips  
Dr Charlotte Matheson  
Karen Watt, CEO

**OBSERVERS:** Helen Cross (UKRI)  
Gillian Galloway (HIE)  
Laura Dougan (SG)  
Carolyn Reeve (BEIS)

APOLOGIES: Dr Alicia Greated  
Mhairi Harrington  
Professor Nick Fyfe  
Derek Shaw  
Dr Helen Reddy

## 1. Welcome from Chair (Oral)

The Chair welcomed members to the meeting and noted that this was the first in-person meeting to be held since 2019 and how positive it was to see everyone in person, to which all members agreed.

The Chair shared several staffing and membership updates:

- Julian Jones, Sara Rae and Nick Fyfe have all officially accepted an offer of a second term starting 1<sup>st</sup> Nov 2022.
- Both Helen Reddy and Caroline Cantley were retiring and would finish with the Committee on 31 October 2022. Carolyn Reeve was also retiring and would no longer sit on the committee as BEIS observer after this meeting. Another BEIS observer would be appointed. Very best wishes were relayed by the Chair to all on behalf of members.
- A recruitment exercise was carried out and **three** appointments had been made for academic members on the Committee. The business vacancy would be readvertised and with a more targeted content. The three new members were **Professor Tom Brown**, Vice-Principal (Research and Innovation) and School of Physics and Astronomy, University of St Andrews, **Dr Alison McIntosh**, Executive Director, Scottish Universities Life Sciences Alliance (SULSA) and **Gordon Hunt**, Senior Manager: Research and Enhancement, College Development Network. They would all start their first terms on 1<sup>st</sup> November 2022.
- Professor Iain Gillespie had joined the Committee as an observer after taking on the US RKEC Convenor role. The Chair welcomed him to the meeting and looked forward to working together in the same positive and collaborative way as with previous Convenors.
- The Chair welcomed SFC's Chief Executive, Karen Watt, who joined the Committee for the first two items.
- Finally, the Chair welcomed Dr Maria McPhillips who had joined the SFC team on a part time secondment from the University of Glasgow where

she is Head of Strategic Research Initiatives. Maria was leading on the development of the ARCs and would present an update to the Committee as part of the agenda.

### Assistant Director's update RKEC/22/13

The Director presented the update paper for the August meeting that provide a summary of recent developments of interest to members. This paper will be published on the website.

### 2. Minute of previous meeting on 1 June 2022 (RKEC/22/14)

The minute was agreed.

### 3. Future Research Assessment Programme environment/culture aspects (RKEC/22/15) and *Presentation from Dr Catriona Firth, Associate Director for Research Environment, Research England*)

Morag Campbell introduced this paper that provided an update on the Future Research Assessment Programme (FRAP) and highlighted several questions for discussion. Morag also introduced Dr Catriona Firth from Research England who gave a supporting presentation to the Committee.

RKEC was asked to:

- Note the progress of the Future Research Assessment Programme;
- Note some of the key issues that FRAP seeks to address; and
- Offer a view on the key questions in Para 31 to be addressed by FRAP.

The Committee noted the following on both the presentation and the paper:

- A healthy research system is experienced as less competitive and more collaborative and inclusive.
- The impact that REF now has on shaping the economy is more fundamental and has gone beyond specific disciplines.
- REF results and international league tables closely align
- The challenge of reducing the burden of REF is a constant one with no straightforward solutions

- Beyond the metrics, we should consider how REF drives collaboration and the impact it has on society in terms of application and usage.
- Consider the drivers that initiate industry to engage in the REF

#### 4. DEVELOPING THE RESEARCH AND INNOVATION EVIDENCE BASE (RKEC/22/16)

Cat Ball introduced this paper that updated the Committee on ongoing work to develop our research and innovation evidence base following the publication of REF2021 and our review recommendation to develop a new narrative on the value of research. It asked for views on both short-term and longer-term areas of focus, recognising the wider context of changing UK R&D policy and Scottish Government development including the National Strategy for Economic Transformation, the Purpose & Principles and the emerging Innovation Strategy.

Members were invited to:

- Consider this update of SFC's ongoing analysis and evidence development work;
- Suggest further areas for exploration or ways in which current work could be deepened or developed; and
- Offer advice on longer term work, including areas to pursue in building our economic evidence.

Members made the following points:

- That this was an excellent piece of work from the Executive
- There would be a need to mine case studies that could show a compelling narrative and demonstrate impact.
- Scotland's successes can be misrepresented when compared to the rest of the UK and there was a need for a supporting narrative
- A strong research culture is needed to strengthen our voice and articulate our research outcomes and impacts, alongside a robust communication strategy that demonstrates social purpose

The Chair noted that a fuller discussion on this would take place at the October meeting.

## 5. Update on the development of Alliances for Research Challenges (RKEC/22/17)

Maria McPhillips will provide an update on the development of SFC's new support for research collaboration, Alliances for Research Challenges (ARCs). It follows the announcement of the ARC challenge areas and the beginning of the second stage of the two-step development process.

Members were invited to:

- Consider this update following the conclusion of the first stage of ARCs development where ARC challenge areas and bid leaders were identified; and
- Provide comment and feedback on the proposed approach for co-development between SFC and ARC bidders during stage two, including the establishment of SFC operational guidelines and preparation of assessment criteria.

Members made the following points:

- That the aim was to develop a shared vision across challenge areas.
- The level of interest from the academic community had been high and therefore very encouraging
- Successful outcomes may generate the appetite and need for further funding and investment.

## 6. Researcher development concordat action plan (yearly update) (RKEC/22/18)

The Chair introduced this paper that was **FOR NOTING ONLY** and provided an annual progress report against the current SFC Researcher Development (RD) Concordat Action Plan, in line with SFC's requirements as a signatory to the concordat.

The Committee was invited to:

- Note progress against the revised SFC RD Concordat Action Plan from August 2021 to July 2022, as outlined in the annual report in [Annex A](#).

The Committee noted the paper.

## 7. Global Challenges Research Fund: analysis of 2020-21 reports (RKEC/22/19)

David Beards introduced this paper that reported on the use of formula ODA funding in 2020-21 and updated the Committee on the current position with the International Science Partnerships Fund.

The Committee is invited to:

- Note the paper.
- Advise the executive on actions to best position the sector for future ODA research funding.

Members noted the following:

- That a new International Science and Technology Partnerships fund was being established to support ODA but that a formula funding stream for SFC to manage was unlikely
- There was a need to preserve consistency of purpose with ODA at its heart
- There will be a renewed focus on partnerships alongside the SDGs
- Work at SFC on developing the research and innovation evidence base will inform further.

## 8. Forward agenda (RKEC/22/20)

The Chair introduced this paper that notified the Committee of proposed agenda items for the future business of the Research and Knowledge Exchange Committee. These items take account of views expressed by Committee members.

The Committee is invited to **note** the proposed agenda items and **suggest** any further additions or amendments to this list.

The Chair invited members to indicate if they wished to discuss any of the starred items on the agenda.

Member noted the proposed agenda items.

9. AOCB

There was no other business.