

Research and Knowledge Exchange Committee

The 76th meeting of the Research and Knowledge Exchange Committee of the Scottish Funding Council was held virtually by Zoom on 14th July 2020 at 10.00am.

Present

Chair

Professor Lesley Yellowlees

Board members

Mhairi Harrington, Professor Irene McAra-McWilliam, Douglas Mundie, Caroline Stuart

Members

Professor Anne Anderson, Professor Nicholas Fyfe, Professor Julian Jones, Professor Andy Porter, Ms Sara Rae, Dr Helen Reddy, Professor Jonathan Seckl

US RKEC

Professor Wayne Powell

Observers

Morven Cameron (HIE), Helen Cross (UKRI), Laura Dougan (Scottish Government), Dr Pieter van de Graaf (Scottish Government), Alison Munro (SE)

Apologies received

Dr Caroline Cantley, Dr Alicia Greated, Dr Jano van Hemert, Carolyn Reeve (BEIS)

SFC Executive:

Morag Campbell, Dr Stuart Fancey, Jenny Jamieson, Robin Lee, Keith McDonald, Morven Pritchard

20/18 Welcome from Chair

The Chair welcomed members to the 76th meeting of the Research and Knowledge Exchange Committee.

Update from Director

COP26 would now take place in 2021 in Glasgow. The Director noted that the Research Pools and Innovation Centres plan to host a joint climate change event during this time to promote their engagement with the climate emergency.

20/19 Minutes of previous meetings: 19th June 2020

The minute was agreed with the exception of one minor change. Professor Irene McAra-McWilliam should be listed as a board member. Executive to change.

20/20 UK Research and Development Roadmap (RKEC/20/08)

Robin Lee introduced this paper that noted the publication of the UK Research and Development (R&D) Roadmap.

Members were invited to make high-level comments at this stage and to provide more detailed comments to the RKEC Clerk by 31 July. These views would be used to support SFC's response to the online survey (closing 12 August).

The Committee noted that the Roadmap in principle was a broad document that required tackling fundamental and challenging questions about UK R&D priorities and addressing long-term problems in the system. The Committee's role was to deliberate on how future investments should be directed, particularly in light of recent key sector reports such as Muscatelli and the Cumberford/Little report.

Helen Cross noted that the Roadmap was a consultative document that sought to engage a full conversation with the sector and related stakeholders. The Committee noted the questions provided by the Department of Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy (BEIS) and made the following observations:

- The roadmap consultation could be an opportunity to identify and address areas of inequality across the whole UK sector in

terms of discipline, sector, inter-institutional partnerships and striving for and protecting research excellence. How can everyone become part of the Road Map?

- Moonshots as described in the Roadmap suggest a new approach and a different model to those used before. Current moonshot models are technology driven. How could they be adapted to work with the place agenda? Do we need to examine the commercialisation approaches adopted within and across multinational companies?
- Members welcomed the ambition shown within the Roadmap to place-based agenda, co-creation, collaboration and recognising local influence. Any collaboration should be useful and promise meaningful value.
- A green recovery that delivers social justice must feature in any roadmap.
- Maintaining the ability to collaborate across the EU remains an ongoing concern and in how we achieve it.
- The voices of young people need to be captured during this 'conversation'.

20/21

SFC Innovation Strategy (Covid-19): Research and Innovation in the SFC review of coherent provision and sustainability (RKEC/20/09)

Keith McDonald introduced this paper that invited members to note the published scope and objectives for SFC's review of coherent provision and sustainability (published following the June meeting) and to comment on the proposed approach for the research and innovation funding policy aspects of the review.

Members are invited to:

- note the published scope and objectives for SFC's review of coherent provision and sustainability;
- comment on the proposed approach for the research and innovation funding policy aspects of the review;
- contribute further thinking and revisit, as appropriate, any of its previous advice from the March and June meetings now it has

more clarity and context on the scope and objectives for the review;

- recommend its view on the recommencement of the RKEC-led review of UIF.

The Committee made the following observations:

- The UIF is a very important feature of the SFC review both strategically and in terms of its impact potential
- This Review is a system-wide review that will involve looking at the opportunity for life-long learning and the role of education in supporting this.
- Research has a key role to play in civic and societal recovery. How can we shape the society we live in through research and innovation? What is our relationship with entrepreneurial students and how can their activity positively influence the place agenda?
- Our ambition is to achieve a sustainable environment post-Covid that includes commitments to fair work, net zero and inclusivity and reflects the Scottish Government's values of a 'wellbeing economy'.
- There is a challenge in trying to develop a diverse eco-system when colleges and universities are reviewed as a dichotomy in parallel.

The Chair thanked the Committee for their feedback. This would be fed back into the SFC board discussions. Members would also be kept Informed on issues and relevancies as they emerge from the ongoing review.

20/22 SFC Risk Register (RKEC/20/10)

Stuart Fancey introduced this paper that asked the committee to note the intention of the SFC Executive to consult the Committee on risk in areas of the Committee's remit, in order to inform the risk register considered by the SFC Board.

The Committee was invited to note that it will, in future, be consulted

on risk in research and innovation in order to inform the SFC Board's risk register.

The Director agreed to update members as appropriate.

20/23

AOCB

There was no other competent business.