



**Natural
Environment
Research Council**

NERC Science Committee 3rd Meeting

Summary of Discussion

05 & 06 February 2020, London

Members Present: Professor Graham Underwood (Chair), Professor Sir Duncan Wingham (Executive Chair), Professor Lora Fleming, Dr Anna Jones, Professor Christine Maggs, Professor Tamsin Mather, Professor Andrew Shepherd, Professor David Thomas, Professor David Viner, Professor Simon Vosper, Dr Douglas Wilson

Ex-Officio: Professor Susan Waldron (NERC Director, Research and Skills)

Apologies: Dr Adrian Baker, Professor Alberto Naveira Garabato, Professor Richard Pancost (5th only), Professor Sir Duncan Wingham (6th only)

Other Attendees: Dr Sarah Turner (NERC Associate Director, Strategic Programme Delivery) whole meeting. 5th only, Dr Iain Williams (NERC Director, Strategic Partnerships). **Item 5 & 6** Robyn Thomas (NERC Associate Director, Talent and Skills); **Item 7** (via zoom) Dr Hannah Collins (NERC Associate Director, Strategic Programme Generation); **Item 9** Dr Sophie Laurie (NERC Associate Director, Institutional Partnerships); **Item 11** Dr Beth House (NERC Head of Productive Environment), Dr Simon Gardner (NERC Head of Digital Environment); (via zoom) Dr Hannah Collins; **Item 12** Candice Snelling (NERC Head of Sustainability) and **Item 14** Fiona Goff (NERC Head of Impact and Outcomes)

Secretary: Gemma Davies

Key issues discussed

Science Committee Terms of Reference

The role and expectations of Science Committee members were discussed following the Terms of Reference sign off by Council in September 2019.

Executive Chair update

The Committee heard about the lack of certainty regarding the government spending review, and the government position on European funds, and the UKRI strategic plan and involvement in COP 26.

Discovery Science

The Committee provided advice on the developing call text for the 'Pushing the Frontiers' pilot which will be launched in February 2020 and welcomed the streamlined application process.

Collective Funds and the Ideas Pipeline

The Committee agreed the process by which they can provide input into developing collective fund ideas, noting the potential for short timelines for External Partner led ideas.

UKRI Infrastructure Roadmap

Dr Iain Williams (NERC Director, Strategic Partnerships) provided an update on the progress towards implementing the UKRI Infrastructure Roadmap and the development of an internal NERC process for prioritising bids to access UKRI funds.

Developing a Community to Deliver Environment Solutions

Dr Sophie Laurie (NERC Associate Director, Institutional Partnerships) outlined this major new initiative for NERC, which aims to support research organisations to build cross disciplinary Institutional Capability for Environmental Solutions. The Committee provided advice on the developing call text.

Achieving Delivery Plan Ambitions

The Committee were introduced to, and provided advice, in two new areas that have been approved by Council as priorities for scoping and investment: 'Coupled economic and environment systems' and 'Digital Environment'.

Emerging UKRI Environmental Sustainability Strategy

Candice Snelling (NERC Head of Sustainability) provided the background to the strategy. Science Committee offered advice on how to embed environmental sustainability into UKRI Terms and Conditions and influence positive environmental behaviour across its operations.

Evidencing NERC's impact and outcomes

Fiona Goff (NERC Head of Impact and Outcomes) introduced the forthcoming Evaluation of NERC Centres. She also outlined NERC's approach to evidencing its own impact and outcomes: Science Committee suggested case studies to demonstrate where NERC Head Office has added value.

Standing items

The Committee confirmed the minutes and noted the forward agenda