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Dear Professor Tickell,

Thank you for responding to my request for advice regarding open access to research publications. I have considered your report and am encouraged by the positive progress across the UK which it shows. The UK research community has responded admirably in stepping up to the challenges. As we see science increasingly opening up, the opportunities for the advancement of knowledge and innovation can only increase. I welcome your recommendations, which will help ensure that the UK continues to make progress in the transition to open access.

I am confident that, by 2020, the UK will be publishing almost all of our scientific output through open access. The advantages of immediate 'gold' access are well-recognised, and I want the UK to continue its preference for gold routes where this is realistic and affordable. I also accept the validity of green routes, which will continue to play an important part in delivering our open access commitment. I note your recommendation that the Research Councils continue to support gold open access charges. Research Council policies are not determined by Government, but I know they are looking carefully at your report.

The UK has supportive policies in place across the research councils, higher education funding councils, and key funders outside Government. You recommend flexibilities in how policies are applied, and I encourage funders to continue to be mindful of this in their approach to compliance. I am also keen that funder policies are harmonised and simplified as far as possible, so that the research community is not unduly burdened.

Effective monitoring will be key to assessing progress and providing market insights. I want to see gold access charges reducing over time in a healthy competitive market. I welcome your proposals to develop service standards for gold access and a voluntary "good practice" guide seems like a positive step in promoting clearer service expectations between publishers and researchers. I am also keen to continue to see progress in off-setting arrangements and better value obtained for higher education institutions.

Developing greater market maturity will require continued dialogue across stakeholders, and regular review. I therefore welcome your proposals for reporting of progress in open access to Ministers from the UK Co-ordination Group, to include coverage of market conditions and issues. I would suggest that the first such report is provided by the end of 2017, and we take stock again later in this Parliament. The report should also take account of other key monitoring activity, such as the invaluable work undertaken by Research Councils UK.

Your report notes that stakeholders have significant financial and policy differences. The research community has come together well through the UK Co-ordination Group that you chair to promote shared purpose and tackle challenges. Good practice is emerging and I want to see a strong dialogue maintained and developed. I think this can continue to be facilitated through the Co-ordination Group and I therefore propose that we confirm by next year whether there is an on-going need for a separate Research Sector Transparency Board. I support your proposals for additional working groups to address efficiencies, monographs, and repositories and encourage stakeholders to fully engage with them.

I am supportive of the UK continuing to make progress on open research data. I am aware that costs associated with developing the necessary infrastructure and curation requirements are potentially very high, so we need to gain a much fuller understanding of what may be needed. I therefore agree with the recommendation for the UK Open Research Data Forum to establish a national infrastructure roadmap to support open research data, and to produce an action plan for the UK by summer 2016. My department will carefully consider its advice.

I am grateful to the whole research community for enabling the UK to take its place as a leading nation in developing and implementing open access. These are themes we will return to in the National Innovation Plan which the Government is currently developing. Through further focus and concerted action implementing the recommendations in your report I am confident that we can continue to make excellent progress through this Parliament.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Jo Johnson', written in a cursive style.

JO JOHNSON MP