

# Innovate UK

## **Meeting of the Innovate UK Council**

**Thursday October 11<sup>th</sup>, 2018**

### **Summary of meeting**

Innovate UK's Council met on October 11<sup>th</sup>, 2018 at the Cell and Gene Therapy Manufacturing Centre (part of the Cell and Gene Therapy Catapult) in Stevenage. The meeting was chaired by Innovate UK's Interim Executive Chair, Dr Ian Campbell. Rebecca Endean, UKRI's Director of Strategy, attended as the senior UKRI observer.

### **Virtual Tour of the Cell and Gene Therapy Manufacturing Centre**

Keith Thompson, CEO Cell and Gene Therapy Catapult, gave a presentation detailing the Catapult and the facilities, skills and activities that take place at the manufacturing centre in Stevenage.

The Catapult allows companies to take new products into clinical trial; de-risking them for further investment and development. Onsite, the manufacturing centre holds the infrastructure and expertise in cell and gene therapy, allowing companies to develop safe therapies that are scalable and affordable, and, facilitate a route to ensure that cell and gene therapy products can get to the patient safely and quickly.

### **Overview of our Catapult Network**

The whole Catapult network, of 10 centres, were then reviewed. This covered how they operate and provide collaboration between businesses, scientists, and engineers to exploit market opportunities.

The presentation drew on the recent review of the Catapults, and the Ernst and Young (EY) review (published in November 2017). These reviews, which took place after completion of a full five-year funding period, have led to the creation of a major programmes directorate in Innovate UK that ensures the Catapults are appropriately monitored, governed, and that strong economic benefit is obtained. It was emphasised that although the Catapults do work together on projects, they are very focussed on their specific sectors; their purpose and role is to help companies and markets grow, not to specifically grow themselves. Council members were paired with a Catapult outside of their technical expertise to build relationships and see the infrastructure which Innovate UK funds.

### **Executive Chair Overview and Council feedback on papers**

The Council discussed Innovate UK's Open funding programme. It was explained that Innovate UK are awaiting decisions from BEIS/UKRI and will not run competitions at risk. Innovate UK's £50m loans pilot was discussed; all available funding has been committed, additional funding may become available through the forthcoming Spending Review (CSR). Planning for, and impact of, Brexit was discussed; it was explained that the SME instrument is most likely to be impacted, regardless of the final Brexit deal; this may result in an extension of the Open competition as a comparable alternative.

### **Undertakings In Difficulty**

Discussion took place on the application of UK State Aid.

### **Innovate UK's role in the Commercialisation Landscape**

It is Council members wish that they should have significant input into the UKRI commercialisation strategy. Council members discussed the general commercialisation landscape and the mechanisms which UKRI currently operates that facilitate the commercialisation of publicly funded early-stage research. Council wished to discuss commercialisation at a forthcoming Council meeting.

### **Facilitated Session on the role and Future of Innovate UK as part of UKRI**

Discussion focussed on creating the interface where academia and industry can co-exist and create a culture to transfer technology and help businesses commercialise the outputs of academic research. It was felt that a larger discussion is needed regarding the role of UKRI in ensuring that it operates the 'right programmes' for commercialisation.

It was felt that metrics and the remits of UKRI's Councils needed definition. Council agreed that there should be a simple vision encompassing the Industrial Strategy that can be communicated simply and easily.

### **Innovate UK's Strategic Delivery Plan**

The context for publishing Innovate UK's Strategic Delivery Plan in April 2019 was explained. Innovate UK's mission, vision and strategic goals were discussed.