

Innovate UK

Meeting of the Innovate UK Council

Wednesday December 12th, 2018

Summary of meeting

Innovate UK's Council met on December 12th, 2018 at the Advanced Manufacturing Catapult Training Centre (part of the Advanced Manufacturing Catapult) in Coventry. The meeting was chaired by Innovate UK's Interim Executive Chair, Dr Ian Campbell.

Council members were welcomed. The minutes of the previous meeting of Council (11.10.18) were agreed, without changes and outstanding actions were reviewed.

Approval of the Strategic Delivery Plan

It was explained that each UKRI Council will publish a Strategic Delivery Plan in Spring 2019. Council agreed with the presented vision statement and messages under the five strategic goals. It was commented that Innovate UK should explicitly show how it is working in partnership with others (e.g. Research Councils, KTN, Trade Bodies, Devolved Agencies etc.) to make a difference. The importance of people, both in the context of developing people's skills and talent, whilst ensuring business-led innovation within an ecosystem that helps people innovate, contribute to industry, and foster commercialisation of ideas was stressed.

Council believed that the environment where companies and people can innovate and succeed should be prominent – commenting that Innovate UK's objective should be aspirational - for the UK to be the best place in the world to innovate and succeed.

Update on UKRI

Sir John Kingman joined Council to provide an update on UKRI and describe progress made so far. He explained bringing Innovate UK into one organisation with the Research Councils was undertaken to create a strength of leadership throughout the research and innovation sector.

Sir John stated that there is a political consensus that the organisation and the objectives of the organisation are good; stressing that he believed that Innovate UK was 'in rude health'. The recent letter which he and Sir Mark Walport had written to all UKRI Council's Council members regarding their responsibilities was discussed, emphasising that Councils are not advisory; and that the Council should feel that they have a role in steering the organisation to have impact on the economy.

Executive Chair Overview and Council feedback on papers

Specific comments related to; ONS classification of private sector bodies that receive public funding, whether Innovate UK has sufficient resources to undertake the number of competitions the organisation is running and if these could be automated. Also discussed were areas of close working where Innovate UK provides the delivery for BEIS and other government departments' programmes. Council thought that the Innovation Loans programme was being constrained by lack of funding, and, if Innovate UK could give more opinion on ISCF and Catapult performance within the papers.

Update on Comprehensive Spending Review (CSR)

The preparations for cross-Innovate UK and UKRI spending review preparations were presented. Initial themes proposed were discussed, including the focus on areas of shared capability and Core Programmes to maintain existing levels of innovation activities; new priority areas, such as talent and skills. Council agreed that a 20% reduction in funding would be stark and extremely difficult to make a cutback across programmes.

Tour of the Manufacturing Technology Centre (MTC) and the Advanced Manufacturing Training Centre (AMTC)

Council members toured the facilities at the Manufacturing Technology Centre, learning about technologies such as additive manufacturing, automation, and how MTC can improve the productivity of the UK industrial base. Members learnt that the purpose-built facility validates and implements industry-based and academic concepts, providing a unique environment to develop new manufacturing processes in a safe, neutral, industrial setting, whilst reducing the associated financial risks. The MTC's training and apprenticeship programmes were also discussed.

Undertakings in Difficulty

Discussion took place on the application of UK State Aid.