

PAB 24 Meeting Note

0. Attendees

PAB Members:

Chair: Hazel Hall, Edinburgh Napier University
Mike Chantler, Heriot-Watt University
Ian Hargreaves, Cardiff University
Andrew Hudson-Smith, University College London
Siân John, Symantec Corporation
Matt Jones, Swansea University
Paul Nightingale, University of Sussex
Mark Plumbley, University of Surrey
Clare Reddington, Watershed
m.c. schraefel, University of Southampton
Chris Speed, University of Edinburgh
Gabriel Straub, Tesco

RCUK/Innovate UK/KTN Staff:

John Baird, EPSRC, lead for the RCUK Digital Economy Theme
Claire Tansley, EPSRC
Jerome Ma, EPSRC
Tracy Keys, EPSRC
Eloise Meller, ESRC
Stephen Browning, InnovateUK
Lisa Coles, EPSRC

Apologies:

Alan Brown, University of Surrey
Wendy Mars, CISCO
Charlotte Dormer, ESRC
Natalia Davie, BIS
Thomas Trehella, AHRC
Heather Williams, AHRC
Pamela Mason, AHRC
Ruth Slade, EPSRC

1. Welcome to the meeting

Hazel Hall (Chair of the Digital Economy [DE] Programme Advisory Board [PAB]) welcomed everyone to the meeting and asked those present to introduce themselves. There were a number of new attendees. It was the first meeting for three new PAB members (Clare Reddington, Chris Speed and m.c. schraefel). It was also the first PAB meeting for Stephen Browning, who has taken over Nick Appleyard's role at Innovate UK, and Claire Tansley, who has taken over Ben Rendell's role at EPSRC.

2. Matters Arising, Theme Update

PAB members were invited to raise any points or ask any questions prompted by the minutes and action log. John Baird then gave a brief summary of each item in the update paper. PAB members were invited to raise any points or ask any questions prompted by these items.

3. Connected Nation

The purpose of this session was to ensure that the meeting participants were updated on progress in the delivery planning process and the scoping of the "Connected Nation" outcome. EPSRC has adopted a slightly different stance to previous delivery plans; an "outcome"-focussed approach has been used. The four "outcomes" are *productive, healthy, resilient* and *connected*, where supporting research in these areas will lead to a prosperous nation. The Digital Economy Theme have led on scoping the "Connected Nation" outcome. Five "ambitions" lie under each outcome, each with a brief description and a concise strapline. The input from the interim PAB meeting in September 2015 has been incorporated into the content that sits within each ambition.

4. Plans for the Next Financial Year

The purpose of this session was to consider what activities the Digital Economy Theme might want to invest in over the coming months, assuming sufficient funding is available to do so. John Baird gave meeting participants an overview of the activities that had been run by the Theme in recent years, and asked PAB members for input on priority areas for future activities.

5. Balancing Capability

The purpose of this session was to update the PAB on the process for the Balancing Capability strand of the EPSRC Strategic Plan, and to ask targeted questions in order to gather evidence for the Balancing Capability project. Tracy Keys gave an introduction to the strategy and a brief summary of the progress within the Balancing Capability project so far. This was followed by a targeted discussion around various Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) research areas.

6. Equality and Diversity

This session focussed on evaluating interventions to improve equality and diversity in the research base. Jerome Ma introduced the session and clarified that advice given at this meeting would be used in the first instance to inform EPSRC's delivery plan, feeding into an overall action plan being developed across the Research Councils led by RCUK. These plans build on RCUK's Statement of

Expectations released in January 2013 and existing activities to support equality and diversity¹. PAB members shared their experiences of equality and diversity issues. A facilitated session followed where the PAB members were asked to evaluate potential interventions and identify those they considered would have most impact for the DE community. Advice from the PAB will be considered with feedback from equivalent advisory bodies across the EPSRC to inform EPSRC's delivery plan due to be published in early 2016.

7. Career Tracking Report

The purpose of this session was to update the PAB on the findings and conclusions from Rachel Keller's report on Digital Economy Theme supported Doctoral Students' Career Tracking. Claire Tansley summarised the report by running through various aspects including: the objectives of the report; first job destinations; metrics for impact; stakeholder feedback and recommendations to maximise impact and enhance effectiveness of future cohorts. The PAB were asked for their observations and what else could be done in the area of CDT impact monitoring. The PAB provided advice on the next steps following the report, and fed in various suggestions and provided advice on other ways we could support DE post-graduates in the future.

8. Wrap up

John closed the meeting by thanking the PAB members for their input.

Hazel thanked everyone for attending and stated that the next PAB meeting would be an all-day meeting at Polaris House in Swindon, on Wednesday 24th February.

¹ <https://www.epsrc.ac.uk/funding/howtoapply/basics/researcherequalitydiversity/>