STRATEGIC ADVISORY TEAM

SUMMARY OF MANUFACTURING THE FUTURE MEETING NOTES AND DISCUSSION ITEMS: 1ST JUNE 2016
EPSRC, Polaris House, Swindon

Attendees:

Members: Jon Paul Sherlock, AstraZeneca
         Helen Finch, JLR
         Alison McKay, University of Leeds
         Alison Starr, National Composites Centre (Chair)
         Mick Steeper,
         Mark Summers, ATI
         Nick Weston, Renishaw
         Chick Wilson, University of Bath
         Paul Conway, Loughborough University
         Rob Wilson, Innovate UK

EPSRC:  Rebecca Williams, Manufacturing the Future theme
        Rhia Visavadia, Manufacturing the Future theme
        Richard Bailey, Manufacturing the Future theme
        Tracy Hanlon, Manufacturing the Future theme
        Gerard Davies, Manufacturing the Future theme
        Katie Daniel, Manufacturing the Future theme
        Renee Van de Locht, Leaders team
        Jane Nicholson, Leadership Team

Apologies: Karen Coopman, Loughborough University
          Bill O’Neill, University of Cambridge
          Rob Hardeman, Seagate Technology
          Kerry Kirwan, University of Warwick
          Adam Kowalski, Unilever
          Nilay Shah, Imperial College London

Introduction

After Welcome and Introductions from the Chair, a number of items were discussed which included a corporate update, discussions on Early Careers, an update from Innovate UK, an update on Balancing Capability (which was a facilitated session), Official Development Assistance, ways of working and any other business.
1. Corporate and Theme Update

Delivery Plan
Katie Daniel gave an overview of the EPSRC delivery plan and ran through the 10 key messages as presented at the SATs Conference.

Government White Paper
The Government White Paper ‘Success as a Knowledge Economy’ was published in May. The paper sets out plans for the creation of UK Research & Innovation (UKRI) which will contain the seven Research Councils, Innovate UK and the research and knowledge exchange functions of HEFCE. The subject focus of the Research Councils will be retained and the current Council set up will also go unaltered, however membership may be reduced. Individual names and brand will also be retained and the new UKRI structure should be in place from financial year 18/19. However, the timing is dependent on legislation being passed.

SAT Refresh
The 2016 SAT recruitment exercise is live and open until July. There is a particular focus on diversity and increasing industry membership.

Hubs
There are 15 applications under consideration, all of which are currently being peer reviewed. There will be a sift panel in June followed by an interview panel in July.

2. Early Career

Introduction
Renee Van de Locht gave a short presentation providing some background on the First Grant Scheme and the issues that have arisen.

New Proposals
Renee presented the possible changes to the First Grant Scheme, and stated that these modifications were being discussed by all SATs.

The SAT was invited to comment on the suggestions which had been presented by Renee. The SAT broadly agreed with the suggestions made. They particularly endorsed the idea of strengthening university support and introducing career support packages. Mentorship and industry engagement were raised as key challenges for an early career researcher conducting manufacturing research and opportunities for secondments was suggested.
3. Innovate UK Update

Delivery Plan
Robin Wilson gave the SAT an update of the new Delivery Plan and Innovate UK’s budget.

Restructuring
Innovate UK now comprises of four sector teams. The rationale behind the restructuring is to help simplify the process for the customer. The Manufacturing and Materials sector, where the Manufacturing team now sits, is headed up by Simon Edwards.

Manufacturing Strategy Refresh
The Manufacturing strategy refresh will be released following the publication of the National Innovation Plan; which is currently at the consultation stage.

Materials and Manufacturing Call
The manufacturing and materials call is now live and is the first of the new sector competitions to be launched.

Robin was asked about how Innovate UK plan to connect to EPSRC’s strategy and Robin said that the National Innovation Plan should strengthen the relationship. It was noted that EPSRC already work quite closely with Innovate UK eg by attending workshops and keeping people involved in all relevant activities.

4. Balancing Capability

This was a facilitated session and would be reported on separately.

5. Official Development Assistance (ODA)

Jane Nicholson gave an overview of the Global Challenges Research Fund (GCRF) and the opportunities for EPSRC. Key requirements stipulate that the research funded through the GCRF needs to be Official Development Assistance (ODA) compliant and though funding does not need to be spent in DAC countries, the research needs to be primarily and directly relevant to those countries. GCRF funding will be available for interdisciplinary research that cuts across Research Councils remits.

Jane went on to talk about next steps, which were to set up a GCRF SAT, and a call which needs to be put together by Autumn 2016.

The SAT suggested a number of manufacturing research topics that might be suitable for ODA funding. Jane will feed these into a SAN working group which will advise on EPSRC’s priorities for ODA spending.
6. Ways of Working

Katie led a discussion on ‘ways of working’ for the SAT. This was within the context of the Manufacturing the Future SAT acting independently, as well as considering interactions with other SATs or external bodies. There was also a discussion on ways of working between the Manufacturing the Future Team and SAT members outside of the SAT meetings; suggestions included individual telephone calls/WebEx prior to the meeting to discuss aims and objectives of the day. SAT members also requested that any ‘homework’ was flagged clearly in advance of the meeting.

From discussions it was agreed that the Manufacturing the Future Team would produce a map of Manufacturing the Future interfaces with other themes which would be presented at the next SAT meeting. Katie and Alison Starr would discuss the role of the SAT in identifying and connecting the manufacturing community. Hub Directors and SAT members would be brought together for a meeting and Manufacturing the Future would have WebEx/individual telephone calls with SAT members to discuss aims and objectives of forthcoming meeting.

7. Any Other Business

There was none of note.

Date of Next Meeting
The next meeting is scheduled for the 16th September