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## Research Councils UK Executive Group meeting report

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### Report of the twenty-ninth meeting of the Research Councils UK Executive Group - 25 April 2007

The twenty-ninth meeting of the Research Councils UK Executive Group (RCUKEG) was held in Swindon on 25 April 2007.

The Chair gave an update on the Sainsbury Review and those Chief Executives who had met with the Secretary of State provided feedback and attendees discussed common issues.

RCUKEG discussed feedback from the recent European Heads of Research Councils (EUROHORCs) and European Science Foundation meetings, noting that the EUROHORCs governance structure was being revised to include organisations which perform research as well as research funding bodies. RCUKEG discussed proposals for promoting greater trans-national collaboration across Europe.

RCUKEG agreed that Dr Alf Game (BBSRC) be nominated as the second UK delegate on the European Strategy Forum on Research Infrastructures.

RCUKEG discussed progress on the RCUK Washington Office, noting that EPSRC would host the Office and that Ms Thorne would be leaving her role as Head of the RCUK Secretariat to take up the post of Director of the RCUK Office in Washington. RCUKEG congratulated Ms Thorne on her appointment.

RCUKEG discussed ways of promoting UK-Brazilian research collaborations and agreed to develop a memorandum of understanding with the Brazilians to enable barrier free peer review.

Following consideration of the recommendations of the recent National Audit Office report on Big Science, RCUKEG endorsed the science case and business case for the UK Household Longitudinal Study and recommended the release of £12.5 million from the Large Facilities Capital Fund for the study, subject to the caveat that any increases in budget were borne by the host Council, ESRC.

Members also discussed: good research conduct; pay harmonisation across the Research Councils; received a progress update on the Shared Services Centre Implementation Project; and agreed to establish a new RCUK Efficiency Delivery Project for the Comprehensive Spending Review 2007 period.

The Chair, on behalf of all members, congratulated Professor Goodfellow on her appointment as Vice-Chancellor at the University of Kent.

**Members present:** Professor Ian Diamond (Chair, ESRC), Professor Philip Esler (AHRC), Professor Julia Goodfellow (BBSRC), Dr Randal Richards (EPSRC), Professor Colin Blakemore (MRC), Professor Alan Thorpe (NERC), Professor Keith Mason (STFC)

**Guests:** Mr Peter Swinburne (BBSRC, Item 5), Mrs Frances Marsden (AHRC, Item 5)

**RCUK Secretariat:** Ms Helen Thorne, Miss Isobel Howe