

Research Councils UK
Excellence
with impact

RCUK Public Engagement with Research

Chloe Sheppard
RCUK Strategy Unit
www.rcuk.ac.uk/per



Research Councils UK



Arts & Humanities
Research Council



EPSRC

Engineering and Physical Sciences
Research Council



Science & Technology
Facilities Council



NATURAL
ENVIRONMENT
RESEARCH COUNCIL

What is Research Councils UK?

- The name for the Research Councils working together
- Increases the collective visibility, leadership and policy influence of the Research Councils
- Provides a single focus for collective dialogue with stakeholders
- Ensures greater harmonisation of operational and administrative functions across the Councils



RCUK Framework for the Future



RCUK, working in partnership, cultivates the essential research and skills to provide the bedrock for the UK to have a productive economy, healthy society and contribute to a sustainable world.



RCUK Vision for Public Engagement with Research

- **To enable society to value and have confidence in research processes and outputs;**
- **For public engagement to inspire young people to pursue research careers; and**
- **To increase the societal impact of research by creating a culture where:**
 - **The research sector and researchers themselves value public engagement as an important activity;**
 - **An awareness of social and ethical issues informs research decisions.**

Our rationale

- **If we involve and listen to the public** (and encourage our research communities to do so) then our decisions and research should be informed by their views, and therefore more likely to have enhanced impact in return for the investment.
- Similarly, **if we talk with the public** (and encourage our research communities to talk to the public) about the outputs of our research and their implications and applications then society will share in the benefits of that knowledge, whether for their health, wealth or culture, and therefore helping to maximise the impact of that research.
- And **if we encourage researchers to interact with schools** to enrich students' experiences then we can help improve the supply of skilled people to the research base and the UK economy and encourage more to act as informed citizens.

RCUK Public Engagement with Research Strategy

- **Aim 1 Recognising and responding to public views** – Identify public attitudes and values to be considered through the lifecycle of research, and foster debate that will enable public aspirations and concerns to contribute to Councils' policies and research strategies.
- **Aim 2 Inspiring young people** – To help secure and sustain a supply of future researchers to support the research base that is critical to the UK economy by encouraging engagement between young people and researchers.
- **Aim 3 Supporting researchers** – Achieve culture change in the HE and research sectors so that public engagement is embedded alongside research and valued as an important activity through encouraging researchers to engage with the public and supporting and rewarding those who do so.

Recognising and responding to public views

- **Support for public engagement within cross Council themes**
- **Public dialogue on new and emerging research (e.g. stem cells, synthetic biology and energy)**
- **Sciencewise (BIS)**

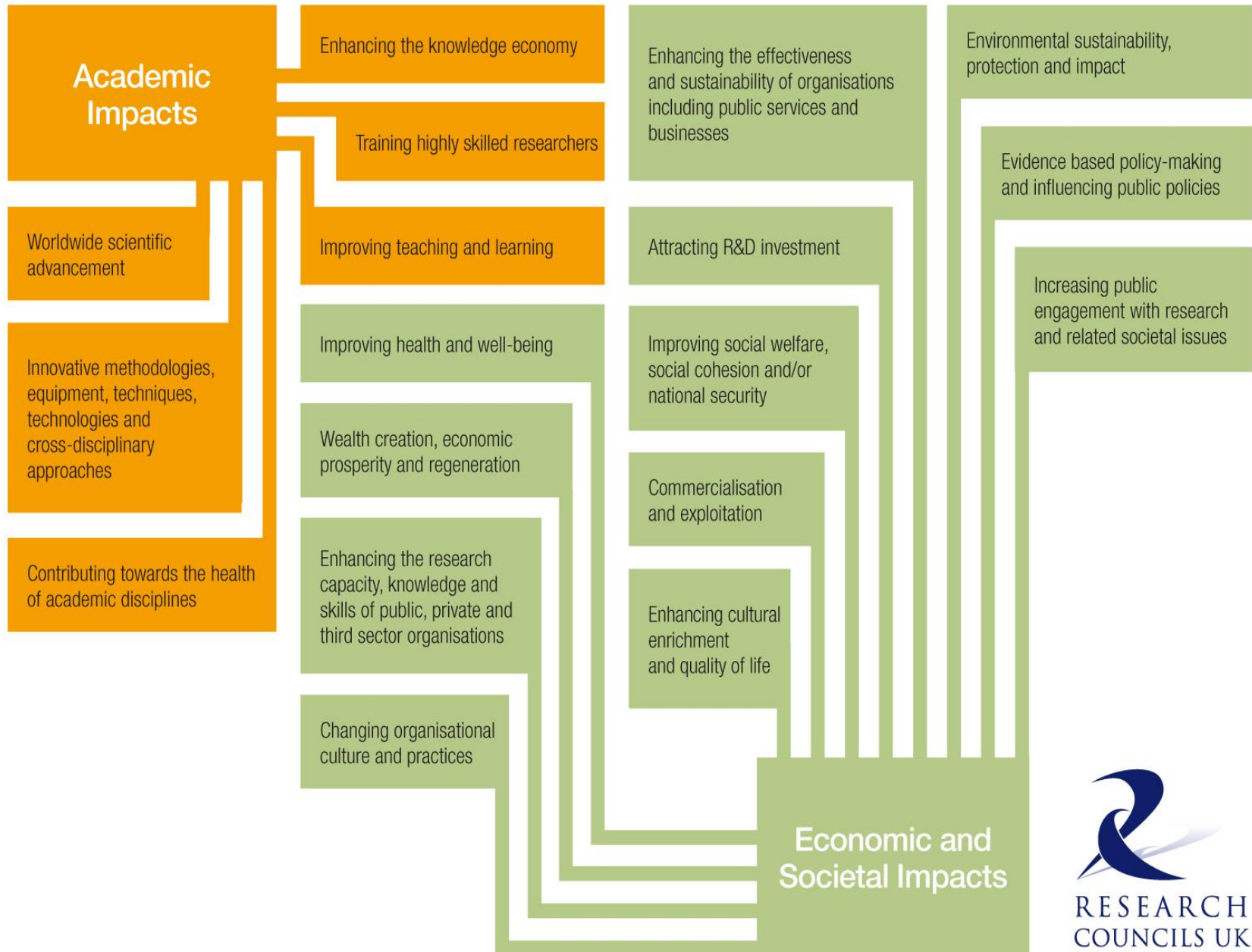
Inspiring young people

- **Review of schools policy in 2009**
- **National STEM agenda**
- **Activities for young people, teachers and researchers include:**
 - **Researchers in Residence**
 - **Bringing Cutting Edge Science into the Classroom**
 - Teacher CPD courses
 - Fresh Science online CPD
 - RCUK also sponsors:
 - **Nuffield Foundation Science Bursaries**
 - **British Science Association CREST Award**

Supporting researchers

- **Statement of Expectation**
- **Concordat for engaging the public with research**
- **‘What’s in it for me?’**
- **Science and Art Festivals**
- **Pathways to Impact**
- **Beacons for Public Engagement**

Pathways to Impact



Beacons for Public Engagement

- The Beacons are six university-based collaborative centres help **support, recognise, reward and build capacity for public engagement work**
- **National Coordinating Centre for Public engagement** captures and shares learning between the Beacons and across the sector
- Successes include universities committing to PE within their strategies, creating champions, changes to promotions criteria, job descriptions and appraisals to recognise PE, creation of prizes and provision of training and funding to enable researchers to engage



Beacon case studies

- **Manchester Beacon: Culture Change Labs**
- **CUE East: Prizes**
- **UCL: Bright Club**
- **Beacon North East: Staff support and training**
- **Edinburgh Beltane: Fellowships**
- **Beacon for Wales: Networks**



How should universities engage with the public?



[View a transcript of this video.](#)

Sign up for our newsletter

Our newsletter keeps you up to date with our research and events, as well as highlighting news about public engagement.

Enter your email address

Get your feet wet

Welcome to our website. Whether you are a seasoned practitioner with wide-ranging experience of public engagement, or you are just at the stage of finding out more, you've come to the right place.

- > Find out more [about us](#)
- > Get involved in our [research programme](#)
- > Review our [public engagement framework](#) and tell us what you think
- > Come to an [event](#)
- > Find out about our [student volunteering project](#)
- > [Get in touch](#) to tell us about your own work

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Current activity

- Manifesto for Public Engagement
- Ambassadors and Networks
- Events
- Website

Practitioners' Toolkit

- Launch Dec 2010
- Interactive / searchable resource:
 - Methods and guides to PE
 - Inspirational Case Studies
 - Experts
 - Funding and training opps
 - People's Profiles

Another UK example: University of Bristol

Strategic work – overcoming barriers, celebrating success

1. Change to promotion criteria
2. Change to departmental review guidelines
3. Launch of the engagement award
4. Public engagement fora – getting external input to our PE work

Supporting academics

1. Accessing funding
2. Training
3. Advice, support, practical help

Running a public engagement programme

Individual Research Councils Public Engagement case studies

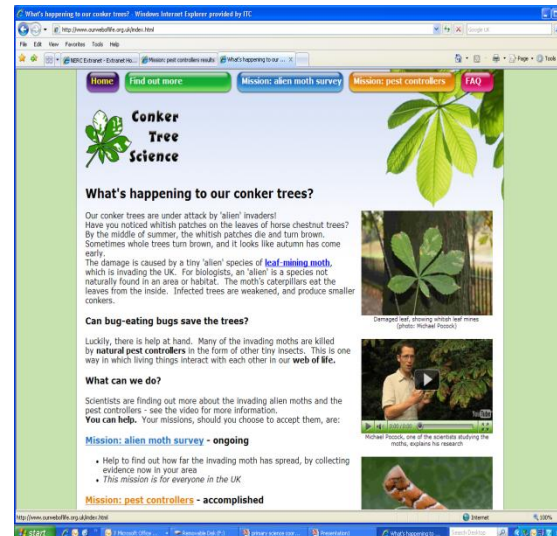
Regional Networks:

- MRC regional communication managers
- BBSRC local school coordinators

Public Engagement Fellowships

Festival of Social Science

NERC 'citizen science' conker project



Individual Research Councils Public Engagement case studies

Public Engagement embedded in institutes

- Strategies
- Reporting

Societal Issues Panel

LWEC Citizens Advisory Panel

Staff resources and training