**AHRC Strategic Delivery Plan 2022 – 2025: summary**

**Vision**

The AHRC states that its purpose is to “…invest in a rich, diverse and creative research and innovation system through the contributions that arts and humanities ideas and people make.”. Their four principles of driving change will underpin all of their work: diversity, connectivity, resilience and engagement. Six objectives will drive future work and investments.

**Objectives**

**People and careers**. Bringing breadth, diversity and visibility to research careers. Making connections between people, sectors and capabilities.   
Key opportunities:

* AHRC/Research Libraries UK joint fellowships, investing £1.5m over the next 3 years.
* Innovation Scholarship secondments in architecture and design to enable career mobility for researchers in this sector.
* Fellowships in public policy and the Galleries, Libraries, Archives and Museums (GLAM) sector.
* UK-US digital scholarship fellows to take a global approach to skills and capability.
* Five new programme directors to build on leadership strengths, e.g. responsible AI, design partnerships.

**Places**. Investing in large infrastructure projects to support research, innovation and the cultural sector. Transforming infrastructure to enable the best research. Working at the heart of thriving communities.   
Key opportunities/investments:

* New baseline research infrastructure funding (£72.15m), a national Research Infrastructure for Conservation and Heritage Science fund (£16.2m), national infrastructure for digital innovation and curation (£8m), Creative Research Capability Awards (building on CapCo; £15m – see below), and final stages of the Towards a National Collection programme.
* Creative Communities programme and investments to improve access to funding for organisations in the GLAM sector.

**Ideas**. Being open and taking risks to make changes needed to support the arts and humanities to thrive. Taking global perspectives and equitable approaches.   
Key opportunities:

* ‘Where next?’ programme to engage with the AHRC community and improve responsive mode programmes.
* Innovative and inclusive research programmes, including £500,000 dance research programme and ED&I engagement fellowships.
* Collaborative approaches to find global solutions to global challenges, e.g. disability-focused inclusive sustainable development project (£1m), Collaboration of Humanities and Social Sciences in Europe (CHANSE) initiative to explore social and cultural dynamics in the digital age (joint with ESRC), multinational research partnerships investment delivered through Humanities in the European Research Area (HERA) partnership.

**Innovation**. Strengthening the creative industries. Boosting innovation through design research. Growing investment in knowledge exchange and commercialisation.   
Key opportunities:

* CoSTAR: £95.8m investment (£31.5m over these 3 years) in research and innovation infrastructure to create new products, experiences and markets for screen and performance industries. Aims to lower barriers for SMEs to contribute to research, allow arts and humanities to take industry forward.
* Creative industries policy and evidence centre, and Creative industries clusters programme.
* Supporting and investing in design by making the Design Council an arms-length body and providing them funding.
* Future Observatory: Design the Green Transition priority programme.
* Scaling up investment in Knowledge Exchange to reach 10% of core budget.
* Follow on Fund highlight focussing on commercialisation (£1m).

**Impacts**. Leading interdisciplinary responses to national priorities. Building partnerships for a healthier, fairer society and more prosperous economies.   
Key opportunities:

* Responsible and ethical AI research programme, in collaboration with EPSRC.
* Cross-cultural collaborations to address issues contributing to climate change, aiming to reach Net Zero future.
* Mobilising Community Assets to address Health Disparities programme – improve the standard of evidence for place-based approaches for tackling public health inequalities.
* Bring humanities perspectives to understanding Covid-19 recovery, through the cross-UKRI Transatlantic Platform.
* Place programme, in collaboration with ESRC, to establish local policy and innovation partnerships.

**Organisation**. Learning, to improve how we work and to empower people. Positive action on equality, diversity and inclusion in AHRC’s funded portfolio. Promote the highest standards of transparency, openness and efficiency.   
Key opportunities:

* Regular, open and constructive dialogue.
* Suite of public engagement initiatives (£800,000) to actively engage stakeholders, communities and public with the potential of arts and humanities research.
* Directly address EDI in the portfolio by reviewing grant management and awarding processes. Annual co-funding for cross-council ED&I caucus to inform UKRI policy and practice.

**Other key points to note:**

* The objectives, and themes within them, outlined above will not define responsive-mode funding. AHRC’s open calls remain as the “bedrock” of AHRC funding, and it is committed to funding excellent research in any area within its remit, not just those above.
* Arts and Humanities intersect everything within UKRI; collaboration, interdisciplinarity and innovative approaches will be key to driving change through research. AHRC has a vision to lead on this.