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Sent: 12 September 2011 11:51
To: President
Subject: LMS Letter on Shaping Capability

Dear Angus

Thank you for your letter of 25th August and apologies for the delay in responding due to the fact that I have been away on leave.

You raised a number of interesting questions which I will ensure feed into internal EPSRC discussions and also the next meeting of the Mathematical Sciences SAT which is taking place in October. Of course there is also an opportunity to discuss at the next CMS-EPSRC Liaison meeting on 5th October. I just wanted to check that you had received the additional information I sent via Fiona Nixon following on from my original request for any input, in response to questions raised by the EMS on how the research areas shown in the landscape diagram had been chosen and how we had represented connections between them. This is reproduced below.

With respect to the research topics or themes we have used to describe our current support for mathematical sciences, an influence on how they were chosen is that they relate to how EPSRC classifies its data and hence enables us to describe the portfolio quantitatively and monitor past and future trends, very useful for both management and reporting purposes. However, the boundaries and interfaces should not be seen as fixed so please do not feel that the set of descriptions we have used is a constraint or how we see mathematical sciences or solely how we might seek to shape, or identify priorities. Please do submit information in the format you think is most useful and appropriate and we will map as required so that it feeds into our discussions with the Strategic Advisory Team. We also realise we have indicated only some of the possible connections between topics, based on an analysis of researchers on grants and this is an aspect where work is ongoing. We also recognized at the last SAT meeting that breaking down the grouping of algebra, geometry, topology and number theory could be useful and this work is in hand.

Your point about connections (recommendation 2) is very well made and of course it is challenging to fully reflect the richness of relationships between the different areas of the mathematical sciences and the wider research base. The diagram is only part of the way we have tried to do this and the information additionally provided on the different themes tries to reflect this more fully, along the lines that you suggest, but we are also keen to try and distinguish between potential connections and what we observe with respect to the current EPSRC portfolio. The themes descriptions also pick up the wider context in terms of importance and impact, in its broadest sense and again we are happy to strengthen these descriptions, drawing on additional inputs.

I also wanted to clarify that there are two opportunities for the LMS to provide any input that you feel would be helpful. We are of course making extensive use of the information already collected as inputs to the International Review and the International Review itself and EPSRC has recently written to universities in receipt of significant EPSRC funding. The deadline of the end of September is to inform the second phase, with publication due by the end of November and there is a further

opportunity ahead of the landscape being finalised in March, which means that to be most useful input would be required by early to mid February.

Please let me know if further discussion would be helpful.

Best regards

Philippa