

<b>Institution: University of Gloucestershire</b>
<b>Unit of Assessment: 13 Architecture, Built Environment and Planning</b>
<p><b>1. Unit context and structure, research and impact strategy</b></p> <p>The Countryside and Community Research Institute (CCRI) at the University of Gloucestershire was created as a distinct research unit in 1986. It conducts and publishes world-class, agenda-setting applied research with the potential to influence policy actors, practitioners and decision makers at all levels - from local to global. CCRI has an international reputation for high quality food, farming, rural economy, community, environmental and climate-focused research. We work in small teams of senior and junior staff and research students, and engage with a wide variety of partners in the UK, Europe and beyond, in domains combining planning with socio-economic, political and natural science, and spanning research, policy and practice communities.</p> <p>The CCRI has a strong planning foundation, which has strengthened in each assessment cycle since 1996 to deliver a body of world-leading and internationally significant research. This has improved and consolidated both our intellectual and international position, embedding and developing a multi- and trans-disciplinary, evidence-based and relevant research agenda, sustained via UK and EU funding and focused upon key global priorities. Sustainability, transformation, co-innovation, multi-level governance and resilience are unifying themes. Our objectives are to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) be a centre of excellence in relevant and impactful research;</li> <li>2) create an intellectually stimulating research environment;</li> <li>3) deliver a valued postgraduate student experience through high quality research degrees and research-led teaching;</li> <li>4) deliver impact and widen access to our work via effective stakeholder engagement, communication and dissemination; and</li> <li>5) develop and foster international collaboration that reflects the breadth and depth of our global outreach and intended impact.</li> </ol> <p>In its REF 2014 Environment submission, the CCRI identified 3 strategic goals for the future:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>I. Consolidation, embedding excellence and ensuring relevance;</li> <li>II. Investing in the excellent researchers of the future;</li> <li>III. Fostering a reflexive research community, responsive to and engaged with rural and urban stakeholders and focusing on research with real world impacts.</li> </ol> <p>Today, the Institute reflects the benefits of significant progress in all three domains. Our research portfolio is consolidated with greater consistency in the volume, value and diversity of funding streams. Our PGR numbers and completions are rising from a low base, as we build upon membership of an ESRC Doctoral Training Partnership (DTP) secured in 2016 with the Welsh Universities. We continue to expand and strengthen the variety, significance and reach of our impactful research, as well as our research community and network of stakeholders, all aided by an active social media presence, a range of online and published outputs and regular engagement with policy and practice events and programmes. As a result, we see indicators of increased esteem for CCRI staff and research outputs, within HEI planning, social and applied science communities.</p> <p>The 2013-2020 period has seen significant growth and development for the CCRI. Our research portfolio featured a suite of major EU-funded rural research projects (under FP7 and Horizon 2020) and more recently, post-Brexit interdisciplinary UK research, situated at the cutting edge of thinking and development in the Architecture, Built Environment and Planning Unit of Assessment (UoA). Themes comprise the following.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Sustainable resources (soil, water, carbon)</b> – providing policy, social science and planning expertise to teams of natural scientists promoting innovation in sustainable</li> </ul>

resource management, working with farmers in case studies across Europe (Projects: SMARTSOILS, SOLINSA, RECARE, SOILCARE, VALERIE, SPRINT; leads Ingram, Mills, Reed, Gaskell)

- **Agri-food sustainability** – analysing farming and food systems to explore how best to measure and promote resilience (Projects: GLAMUR, SUFISA, SUREFARM; leads Maye, Vigani, Urquhart)
- **Resilient governance and communities** – examining how changing relations between urban and rural areas present new challenges and new opportunities for sustainable and resilient lifestyles and economies (Project: ROBUST; leads Maye, Reed, Keech; International studies; leads Staddon, Bundhoo)
- **Environmental co-production for sustainable management** – working with local farmers/foresters, citizens and communities to promote environmental learning and ownership of a long-term sustainability agenda (Project: PEGASUS; leads Dwyer, Short, Gaskell, Powell – Impact Case Study 2).

We have also continued and extended our work in formal policy and programme evaluations and strategic policy development, offering multi-method, enhanced planning approaches to Governments and agencies in the UK, Ireland and Malta, in addition to the European Commission DG Agriculture and Rural Development, and the European Parliament's COMAGRI (Parliamentary Committee on Agriculture and Rural Development). These have included:

- Contributing to the ex-post **evaluation of the Rural Development Programmes (RDPs)** in England and Ireland (2015), and ongoing evaluation of both current programmes, 2014-2020 (Dwyer, Powell);
- **One of 3 Core partners running a 6-year, £3m Framework contract to assess the impact of the Common Agricultural Policy on the EU strategic goal of 'balanced territorial development' (BTD)** – including evaluations of how the policy affects generational renewal; of the CAP's impact upon knowledge exchange, advice and innovation; of the social and economic impacts of the CAP; and of LEADER (Dwyer, Powell, Micha, Kubinakova).
- Work for the **Government of Malta** - reviewing Malta's **RDP 2007-2013** and co-developing the Strategy and Programme for the RDP 2014-2020, also a new **Agricultural Strategy** (2015), and the **CAP Strategic Plan** for Malta for 2022-2027 (Dwyer, Powell, Kubinakova).
- **COMAGRI** policy reviews on sustainable competitiveness in agriculture, rural development, rural employment, and small farmers (Vigani, Powell, Dwyer, Kubinakova).
- Developing creative and pioneering mixed methods in **policy and programme evaluation**, featuring Social Return on investment (SROI), peer researcher methodologies and digital storytelling (Courtney, Powell).

In addition, we led key UK policy research on specific themes:

- **Health and well-being social evaluation** – assessing a range of initiatives in community health, community growing and green space, employment inclusivity and physical activity as a stimulus to enhance health, well-being and social value among varied communities of place and interest (Courtney, Powell - Impact Case Study 1)
- **Post-Brexit agri-rural and landuse policy** – numerous topics including farming, the rural economy, agri-environmental management and learning, heritage and landscape/climate challenges (Urquhart, Chiswell, Berry, Gaskell, Short, Dwyer - Impact Case Study 2)
- **Heritage appreciation and management** – projects highlighting the links between heritage, ecosystem services and natural capital, and valuing historic landscapes (Gaskell, Courtney, Powell, Berry).
- **Fisheries management, science and policy** – continuing the long-standing reputation of the CCRi in the social science of fisheries and host communities (Reed, Urquhart, Courtney, Chiswell).
- **Animal and tree health** – specialist social science input into critical issues such as ash die-back and bovine tuberculosis, central to contemporary developments in planning and

encompassing new themes, e.g. engaging BAME communities through arts-based approaches and storytelling (Maye, Urquhart, Courtney).

Since the last REF period we have further strengthened our international work: including in **Georgia** and **Lebanon** for the **FAO** and in **Vietnam** for the **World Bank** (Vigani); with **Norwegian Research Council** projects on Commons (Short) and Urban Food (Reed, Keech); and exploratory fellowships and workshops in **Egypt, South Africa, Japan, Korea and Indonesia** (Ingram, Berry, Dwyer).

The CCRI at the University of Gloucestershire (UoG) today includes 26 research staff, 10 post-graduate research students and a business and admin support team, representing personnel growth of 37% since 2014. This is directly related to growth in income secured from externally-funded research. All staff are employed in the CCRI and not seconded in from other schools or departments. As a cohesive group, the CCRI works without rigid disciplinary divides; staff combine in flexible ways to cover the range of topic and methodological expertise that each research project or programme requires. For reference, the diagram in Section 2 identifies CCRI's key operational and strategic management arrangements.

Considering the next five to ten years, we intend to make a substantive contribution to two global priorities: the **UN Sustainable Development Goals** and the **zero-carbon agenda emerging from work of the Inter-governmental Panel on Climate Change** – highly relevant to contemporary developments and debates in Architecture, Planning and the Built Environment, as well as government policy. Accordingly, we have invested in expertise to grow our research capacity for interdisciplinary approaches to climate change adaptation and mitigation and continue to build capacity around inclusive approaches to sustainable regional and rural development. At a generic level this involves:

- 1) Extension of our current portfolio of research themes, working at a systemic level and embracing a wider range of connections between people, societies, economies, natural and cultural capital and healthy ecosystems;
- 2) Strengthening our trans-continental work, linking with researchers in Asia, Africa and the Americas, to ensure that global policies are sufficiently informed about the complex interlinkages between nature, culture and socio-economic wellbeing that our research demonstrates;
- 3) Contributing to an acceleration of scope and pace of transformational change within the UK - co-creating and distilling knowledge to help society, policy and rural actors move towards carbon neutral, circular, ethical and more resilient models of inclusive agri-food and rural development, natural and cultural resource management and planning, and behaviour change on the ground.

CCRI has developed and embedded a particular, preferred working style in co-produced, action-oriented, participatory and inclusive research with local, regional and national stakeholders, and focused upon promoting sustainability and resilience. This has ensured the relevance and real-world impact of much of what we do, and is reflected in the two Impact Case Studies submitted. Acting often as an enabler and a critical friend to policy and practice actors, we apply a unique mix of research knowledge, insights and exploratory and evaluative techniques. This combines planning, social science, natural science and creative approaches to help illuminate and enhance decision-making and action among our partners. We seek to be ethical and respectful in this engaged process, with research outputs often co-created and closely interlinked with policy and practice processes and outcomes. Partners comment that this is an unusual way of working for a university research institute, and one that they particularly value. We are committed to maintaining this operational style and our strong, multi-actor partnerships.

In parallel, CCRI has since 2014 invested in recruiting active researchers with new quantitative skills, including geospatial and big-data capability and state of the art econometrics. This has enriched our analytical work with robust, mixed-methods approaches combining established and innovative techniques in working to address complex issues and challenges in sustainable and transformative development.

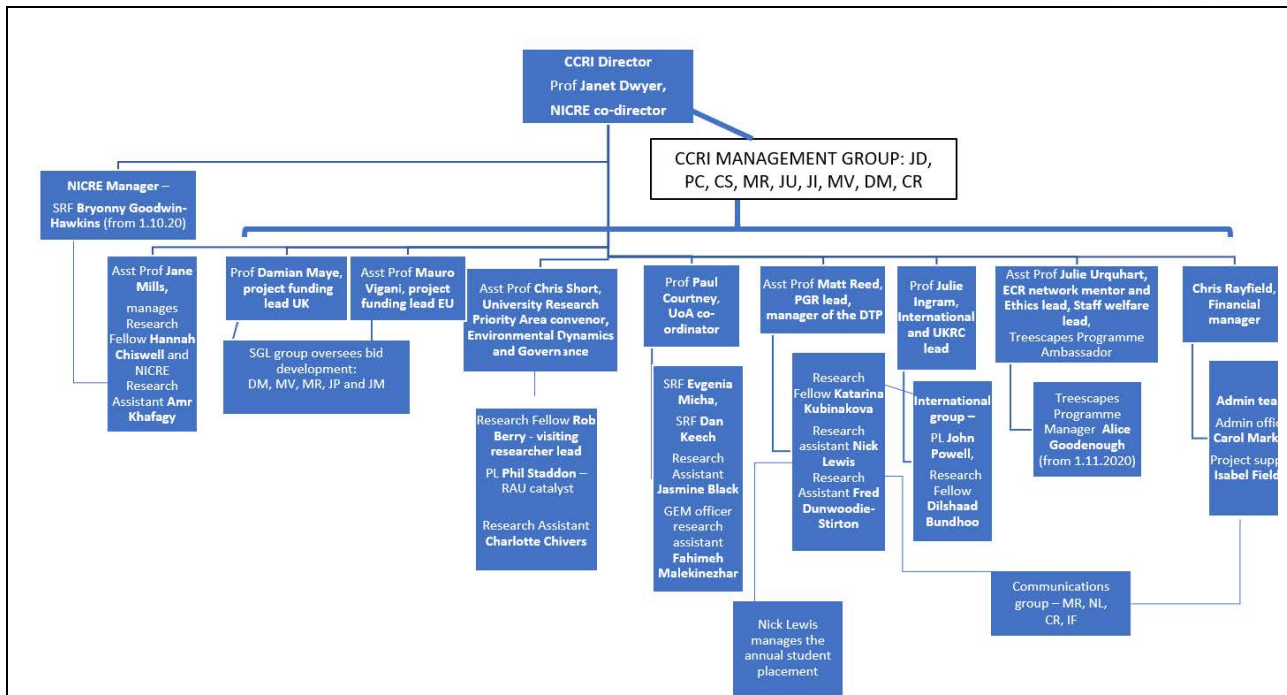
In communications and outreach, CCRI has maintained an open access policy for research work completed in the period. All research reports and non-technical Research Summaries for selected projects are published on our website and in the University's research repository, along with the pre-publication texts of all journal articles. In addition, regular research newsletters and reviews are produced and circulated to our mailing list of 736 subscribers and published on our website. We have 4,016 followers on Twitter and 493 on Facebook. In 2020 our website received 20,000 visits by 14,000 active users and the CCRI Twitter account @CCRI\_UK earned an average of 60,000 Tweet impressions per month.

For the next REF period, we believe our existing objectives remain valid and robust, and we plan specific research initiatives which build upon our core and emerging capabilities in new ways, particularly focused upon major societal challenges. In particular:

- We will engage in a suite of new work on climate change and decarbonisation in agri-food and rural domains, linked also to supporting Circular and Foundational Economy principles to enhance the sustainability and resilience of all rural economic activity. This will tie into our work with other HEIs and international partners on rural innovation and enterprise.
- In accordance with the Architecture, Built Environment and Planning agenda, we will expand the scope of our work on health and wellbeing, conscious of the prevalence of mental health as a growing societal challenge; on quality of life considerations arising from poor diet and inadequate access to outdoor exercise (in work as well as leisure)); and on likely radical changes in the types and styles of work which, taken together, suggest scope for re-emergent rural and new rural-urban connections.
- We will continue to work closely with land managers and other key agri-food actors to foster more fundamental synergies between the multiple demands upon rural land and natural and cultural resources, in ways which respect and build upon grounded experience but also target radical action to reverse past negative trends (e.g. soil and water deterioration and biodiversity decline).
- Similarly, we will continue to place emphasis on stakeholder engagement, participatory approaches and co-production throughout all aspects of our work. This is a real strength of the CCRI and is at the forefront our ability to forge real world impacts from our research.

## 2. People

The CCRI has one of the highest-scoring staff satisfaction levels across all Schools and Departments in the University of Gloucestershire (i.e. 100% of the 90% of staff respondents in CCRI were fairly or very satisfied with their job in 2017), which is testament to its strong collegiate atmosphere and sense of shared purpose and achievement. The staffing strategy is based upon our research aspirations and needs, favouring a mix of senior and junior staff with a broad range of planning-related expertise and disciplinary backgrounds, including specific agri-ecological skills. A diagram illustrating strategic operational and selected line management relations in CCRI is given below.



As illustrated, CCRI is a tightly integrated group with clear management structures and interrelated thematic research. This has enabled it to operate efficiently and grow in response to commissioned research, as well as to consolidate its position as a leading rural centre of excellence in the UK. We offer a supportive work environment, combining devolved and inclusive management, flexible working practices and an informal and welcoming office at Francis Close Hall (FCH) campus. An ethos of informal coaching and mentoring exists across all levels of seniority; tied to line management, operational project management, research student supervision and the nurturing of a strong writing culture. This helps to develop and share HR and management skills and strengthens the agility and resilience of the staff cohort (as proven during the current Covid-19 crisis). Research students and junior staff work alongside Professors, Associate Professors and Senior Research Fellows, and we have a mix of shared work-space - both formal and informal. CCRI has an even gender balance (15 female and 14 male staff), seven staff from non-UK backgrounds, including three of BAME origin, and our PGR community includes both UK and international students. We support the health and social needs of staff with frequent working from home and the team includes two part-time posts.

The CCRI has several groups with defined management roles and responsibilities: A Line Managers group (6 staff) who oversee staff development and review; A Management Group (8) supporting the Director in strategic management of the CCRI including business planning and horizon-scanning; A Communications group (5) which manages our social media, news releases, branding, publications and research and impact events; An Internationalisation group (4); and smaller groups for TEF CPD, ethics, diversity and sustainability. Most groups combine senior and junior staff. The CCRI maintains a lively and enquiring research culture, holding a regular monthly public seminar series with external and CCRI presenters. Twice-yearly writing retreats provide a focal point for writing peer reviewed publications, and regular Awaydays enable strategic learning and collective reflection. We host an annual Winter School which involves our own as well as other HEI 'rural' PhD students, invited via the Rural Geography Research Group and our DTP partners in Wales. The Winter School in January 2021 attracted six external participants from five other HEI. For CCRI's early-career researchers, the University's network (ECRN) offers a valuable forum and CCRI actively contributes to ECRN training, mentoring and coaching.

### Staffing strategy and staff development

The annual Staff Review and Development cycle reviews individual achievements and identifies priorities and targets for the coming year(s), for every staff member. New staff benefit from a mentoring system that supports them in identifying and producing research outputs, supporting supervision, selective teaching and career progression.

CCRI uses the line management system to provide support for all staff; each line manager is an experienced researcher/project manager with a strong track record and is trained in people management. We have an explicit policy enabling all researchers to attend at least one major academic conference annually, to give a paper or speak in plenary session, supported by the CCRI core budget. In addition, many staff participate in other conferences for which resources are sourced from ongoing research sponsored by funders and partners.

During the assessment period, the CCRI has recruited 11 staff in grades ranging from Research Assistant to Senior Research Fellow and Principal Lecturer. Posts are often fixed-term initially and linked to specific multi-annual projects, but many are subsequently made permanent, reflecting these individuals' significant contribution to the CCRI and to the University. Currently, six staff are in fixed-term posts in addition to our student placement (a post renewed annually, for an undergraduate sandwich-year student). With careful succession planning the demographic profile of the CCRI in 2021 is more balanced in terms of age, gender and experience than it was in 2014 and includes ten experienced researchers whose careers span more than two decades. Four Professors (all male) have retired and we have created two Professorial posts (1 male, 1 female) and five (2 female, 3 male) Associate Professorships since 2014.

The University does not provide guaranteed sabbatical leave for its staff; however, CCRI line managers seek to enable staff to secure funding for study away from the office and their usual project portfolio. In the current period, two staff secured OECD-sponsored research fellowships (in Japan, 2017 and Indonesia/Australia, 2018) and two post-doctoral researchers secured visiting researcher opportunities in Finland (2018) and Japan (2021).

CCRI's characteristic mode of applied research requires close engagement with stakeholders from the public, private and third sectors. Rather than conventional secondment, many staff are elected as representatives, advisors and office-holders in institutions with whose members we work. These include: Director of Rural England CIC; Heritage Alliance representative on 3 Defra Committees; partner-member of the WILD Upper Thames initiative; founder member of the Upland Alliance; Associate of the Royal Agricultural Societies of Great Britain; Chair of the Forum for Common Land; Board member of the Gloucestershire Local Nature Partnership; member of GFirst LEP Agri-food and rural sub-group; Fellow of the Royal Society of Arts; Chair of Defra's Nutrient Management Expert Group; and member of a variety of specialist advisory boards/panels including for: Defra; Green Alliance; the Food, Farming and Countryside Commission; Forest Research; Natural England and Historic England. For positions which require regular meetings, time is allocated within CCRI workload and business planning. As explained in section 1, our approach to inclusive and engaged research, combined with the nature of our externally-funded project work, ensures that much of our work has real world impact. This is recorded and evidenced via funded support from the University's QR allocation, distributed through its six Research Priority Area (RPA) groups, of which one (Environmental Dynamics and Governance) is convened by the CCRI's Short.

### **Support and training for postgraduate students**

Supervisory teams must include staff who have supervised two successful completions at or above the intended level. Within the UoA, Reed, Courtney, Maye, Mills, Gaskell, Ingram, Powell and Dwyer have experience in PhD examination and have responsibility for advising PGR students and supporting them through applications; allocating supervisory teams; running seminars and meetings; and encouraging students to participate in relevant conferences, workshops, and networks, internal and external (and national and international). CCRI PGR students' supervision involves teams of at least 2 people, usually drawn from within and beyond

CCRI in the Schools of Art and Design (Landscape Architecture) and Natural and Social Sciences (Environmental Science, Geography and Sociology), the Royal Agricultural University (whose research degrees are awarded by the University of Gloucestershire) or non-academic sponsoring bodies. The University provides initial training and CPD to ensure supervisors provide appropriate and effective support. Supervision is documented and monitored centrally.

PGR students enjoy access to every aspect of CCRI research activity including the winter school, writing retreats and seminar series, and periodic methodology skills-shares. Students access a broad range of academic and vocational training, including all the professional development activities provided for academic staff and some designed specifically for PGR students. Research students have the same entitlement as academic staff to computing and other resources. The University's Postgraduate Research Centre annually organises a PGR conference and summer school, where students present papers and engage in specialist training. Success in supporting research students is reflected in the University being ranked 6<sup>th</sup> nationally in the latest Postgraduate Research Experience Survey (PRES).

CCRI PhD studentships secured during the period include collaborative awards from the Wales ESRC DTP: with Natural England (2), also Gloucestershire Rural Community Council, the Environment Agency, Defra and CEFAS. All were recruited via national and EU-advertised open competition. One PhD is co-funded with the Welsh Government and the CCRI's Countryside and Community Foundation, and one MPhil is co-sponsored with the WILD (Water and Integrated Local Delivery) project in the Upper Thames catchment. In 2021 we will recruit two more PhD students through partnerships with the Soil Association and the AHDB. We successfully recruit high-calibre students – demand is strong, and we always have more excellent applicants than we can fund.

CCRI PGR students have a good level of successful completions. From January 2014 CCRI has had nine new Enrolments and Registrations and eight Completions. The ESRC Doctoral Training Programme (DTP) with Welsh Universities has been of clear benefit, with one sponsored student each starting in 2018/19 and 2019/20, and two approved for the 2020-21 academic year. All research students in CCRI have the opportunity to contribute to externally-funded research and all present papers at relevant academic society conferences (notably RGRG/IBG, IALE, AES, and ESRS), with funding provided under the terms of the studentships and in line with University policy and bursary provision. Those with collaborative DTP studentships also have the opportunity to gain work experience with their co-sponsoring organisations, as well as placement schemes through the ESRC such as with the Welsh Government.

CCRI research students registered over the period include eight females and four males: four full-time and eight part-time. Students are active in networking, embedded in relevant academic societies, regularly presenting seminars on their methods, and producing a variety of blogs and podcasts.

### **Equality and Diversity**

The UoA's promotion of Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) is overseen and monitored through a rigorous, wide-ranging and proactive University-wide policy, and EDI has always been an intrinsic and embedded value in the culture of the CCRI. In 2020 the University of Gloucestershire was shortlisted for its outstanding contribution in the *THES* 'Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Awards', and in 2019 the University formally subscribed to the AthenaSwan Charter, adhering to all its principles in contributing to issues of gender equality.

Within the CCRI, addressing issues of race, sexuality, disability and gender has long been fundamental to research activity and working practice. Staff collectively commit to contest discrimination and raise awareness of it through management and collegiate systems, as well as within research itself. In addition to maintaining an appropriate gender balance among employees, CCRI monitors gender and ethnicity aspects of promotion, recruitment and

selection. The University has achieved Level 3 of 'Disability Confident' and the CCRI actively accommodates disability in the workplace: 5 current staff members have identified specific conditions, and working practices and facilities have been reviewed and adapted to ensure they take adequate account of these. We aim to ensure that all internal communications, outreach and publications are as inclusive as possible in their language and approach.

In recognition of carer commitments and the need for more sustainable commuting CCRI supports flexible and/or remote working by staff and students. With high levels of trust between project managers and research teams, the majority of staff work at home at least one day a week. Our flexible working practice is evidenced by the fact that staff live in a wide geographic arc from Dartmouth (S) to Birmingham and Warwick (N) and from Swansea (W) to London and Kent (E). Part-time and fixed-term staff follow identical career pathways to full-time, permanent staff. Promotions must be supported by the CCRI Director and are made on the basis of experience and capacity, irrespective of mode of employment. Many staff are involved in projects which support national and EU travel on a regular basis and personal considerations inform decisions concerning how best to enable appropriate attendance without disadvantage. Allowances are made for sickness, disability and bereavement as well as caring - usually by other team members providing cover.

During the current period three members of research staff have taken periods of leave for reasons of significant ill-health and we have supported their re-integration into work with return-to-work strategies devised in partnership with the University's HR team. Re-integration has involved making reasonable adjustment for disability to enable full-time working (e.g. voice recognition software and workstation modifications). The CCRI Management Group lead for staff well-being provides an alternative and additional point of support for all staff, in addition to their line manager and the dedicated HR 'business partner' for the CCRI. All line managers are fully aware of well-being support provided to all University employees and students including counselling, coaching, mindfulness training and dispute resolution.

Issues of equality and safeguarding have been uppermost during the Covid-19 pandemic. Well in advance of national lockdown in 2020, the University took the initiative, recommending shielding of vulnerable staff and providing swift online support to enable staff and PGR students to work exclusively from home. Flexibility and decisive action in light of the changing situation and the on-going needs of all staff and students marked our approach throughout.

### **3. Income, infrastructure and facilities**

The CCRI's unique position as a research-focused institute in the University of Gloucestershire affords it invaluable autonomy in the way that it seeks and manages research funding opportunities and subsequent commissioned research programmes and projects. The strategy involves maximising the value of funded opportunities that are pursued, whilst ensuring that all secured commissions can be delivered to a high quality and to time, given staff commitments and the wider resources involved. Effective mobilisation of research capacity and the appropriate allocation of staff skills and experience to individual research projects are central to this process, as are considerations of the potential for research impact, intellectual and theoretical development and high-quality research outputs arising from each opportunity. The strategy is implemented through a complementary set of internal management structures and activities that have been in place since 2008 (when the Unit first attained Collaborative Research Institute status). These have been reviewed, updated and improved as the team has grown in scale and scope (for illustration of the current operational structure, see the diagram in section 2). In this REF period, improvements have been focused around three interconnected areas.

Firstly, we have prioritised diversifying our income portfolio away from previous heavy dependence on EU funding, including taking multiple actions to inform and influence post-Brexit policy. Key achievements in this sphere include the CCRI's new role as core partner in the National Innovation Centre for Rural Enterprise (a £3.5 million Research England-funded initiative, in partnership with Newcastle University's CRE and Warwick University's ERC,



September 2020-2023). NICRE represents an exciting blend of core research and applied, action-oriented demonstration and networking activities to better understand and support rural enterprise and innovation across England. This work assumes added policy importance in light of the current Covid-19 pandemic, and alongside the continuing drive to meet government targets on Net Zero by 2050 and within the 25-year Environment Plan. CCRI has also engaged in English and Welsh work on Future farming policies (including engagement in 4 ELMS tests and trials in England and a co-sponsored PhD with the Welsh Government's Future Farming team – all government/public agency-funded); leadership in the NERC/ESRC/AHRC-funded Treescapes programme which considers the UK land use response to global challenges; and key projects to support the UK successor to the Common Fisheries Policy (CFP – UK policy-funded and in collaboration with sector bodies such as CEFAS). These developments also enable us to build stronger partnerships for bidding into UKRC calls on related topics (see below for more details).

Secondly and in parallel, our work has evolved in disciplinary terms, broadening from a mainly planning/social science/policy evaluation focus into multi-, inter- and trans-disciplinary approaches that are better suited to addressing evolving national and global research agendas (including the climate challenge, pursuing the UN sustainable development goals, and strengthening links between our work and the health and well-being agenda). This has been achieved through internal development - our staff numbers have increased and their overall profile now reflects this wider mix of disciplinary skills; and also through continued and extended partnerships with policy, academic and practice partners, as described in section 4 of this document.

Thirdly, we have enabled these changes through a strengthened focus on teambuilding, planning and collaborative activities (both internal and external); and improvement of the structures in place within CCRI and the University of Gloucestershire to support funding identification, bidding and operational management, including an overhaul of time planning and project documentation and review processes. In practical terms the routine scanning and initial identification of research funding opportunities is shared by the CCRI's project support officer and business manager, followed by initial scrutiny from CCRI Subject Group Leads (SGLs) – a core of Senior Research Fellows and Associate Professors who oversee portfolios of research covering the CCRI's main subject areas (See section 2 for membership). The SGLs consider the merits and potential of each funding opportunity before passing it to specific individuals or larger teams to pursue. In addition, external approaches to individual researchers – for example from would-be collaborators or research sponsors – are shared with the SGLs in order to ensure strategic input at an early stage in bid and partnership development. On average, more than 100 opportunities will be given SGL consideration annually, of which around 60% convert into submitted research bids. Up to date information about staff capacity is crucial to this process, and is maintained through the timesheet system, coordinated and managed by the CCRI's Business Manager. While all staff routinely allocate time spent on specific projects and activities for the purposes of administration, audit and HR management, the same system enables them to log forthcoming commitments, thus giving the Director, Business Manager and SGLs valuable oversight of the available capacity for bid-writing and for research project delivery, looking ahead. This also facilitates the identification of resourcing needs in advance of new funding successes so that staff recruitment exercises can be planned and programmed as smoothly as possible, despite the uncertainties associated with CCRI's relatively high dependence on short-to-medium term project funding.

A particular feature of this REF period has been the emergence of co-created research agendas and multi-annual research opportunities where CCRI teams have engaged with local, national and international partners to develop research projects and associated consortia. In these contexts, the CCRI's internationally-recognised research skills and quality profile are sought out and drawn upon by third parties. This has generated a number of co-produced bids for significant research projects where non-HEI stakeholders are central to the research design and delivery process. Recent examples include the Big Lottery and ESF BBO 'Going the Extra Mile' (GEM) programme (2016-21); the multi-partner 'Water with Integrated Local Delivery' (WILD)

project and subsequent related initiatives in the Upper Thames catchment (2012-2019); the CCRI's major co-produced bid into the NERC 'Sustainable Management of UK Marine Resources' programme ('COFISH'); its role in a large BBSRC-sponsored (Strategic Priority Fund Wave 2) GHG removal project with natural science colleagues across the UK; and several current co-produced bids into the interdisciplinary UKRC Treescapes programme. At the same time, CCRI has seen continued success in EU RTD and policy research arenas, where it has an established reputation for addressing specific intellectual and methodological needs due to its strong skills set in stakeholder engagement and policy analysis for agri-rural sustainable resource management. Recent examples of secured research with this specific focus include the Horizon 2020 SPRINT (2020-2025) and FARMWELL projects (2021-23). These bids build on successful H2020 projects throughout this REF period with a similar resource management focus: RECARE, SOILCARE, AGRIDEMO, VALERIE, SUFISA and SUREFARM; while three other H2020 projects over the REF cycle had a broad agri-rural policy and systems focus – GLAMUR, PEGASUS and ROBUST.

The University's financial year runs from 1 August each year. For the 2019-2020 financial year, the gross value of research income secured by CCRI was £963,866. Since the start of this REF period, CCRI research income totals £5.04m, which is a significant increase on the £3.32m total income secured in the previous REF period 2008-2013. The source of this income is broken down as follows: UKRC 2%, UK charity 2%, EU 65%, UK Gov/other 31% (including UK government departments, agencies and NGOs, other national governments and 'other' funders). Since 2016 we have secured a slightly greater proportion of funding from non-EU sources, both within and beyond the UK. In the 2019-20 financial year 36% of all commissioned research income came from non-EU sources. We compete and collaborate with a wide range of academic/HEI, management consultancy and smaller independent research groups both nationally and internationally. Over the period, the number of active projects per year has exceeded 40, and the average number of bids submitted annually has been 98.

Principal sponsors of the CCRI's commissioned research include UK and EU governments and their agencies, such as Defra, Natural England, Historic England, the AHDB, BEIS, Forestry Commission and Environment Agency. Major UK funded multi-annual projects include two framework contracts with Natural England for the evaluation of Agri-Environment Schemes in England worth over £400,000 to CCRI; and a regular series of policy-related projects for Historic England on rural heritage issues. CCRI has also successfully supported Defra and the Welsh Government in specific areas of post-Brexit policy development, including Environmental Land Management (ELM) tests and trials, and work on future agri-rural and fisheries policies.

CCRI's grant funding from UK, EU and other international research councils has grown in breadth over the period, with new projects funded by the ESRC, AHRC and NERC/BBSRC, as well as the Norwegian and Australian Research Councils. The recent success of Associate Professor Urquhart, appointed as Ambassador for the 'Future of Treescapes' programme alongside Prof Clive Potter of Imperial College, London and jointly funded by NERC, ESRC and AHRC is testament to the success and profile of the CCRI as a centre of excellence in rural and environmental research in the UK.

Non-UK direct commissioned research funders include the government of Malta, the FAO and World Bank, the European Parliament and the European Commission, through policy evaluation commissions by the Directorates General for Agriculture and Rural Development, Environment, and Climate. The largest such commission over this REF period has been the co-leadership of a six-year 'framework contract' for evaluating the impact of the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) on Balanced Territorial Development, being undertaken in partnership with consultancies ADE and OIR. The project runs from 2018 - 2024 and involves EUR 3.5 million of individual thematic evaluation studies, shared among the partnership and working with sub-contracted national experts across the EU. So far, the CCRI has led one evaluation focused on generational renewal in farming and rural areas; has contributed to two evaluations on knowledge exchange, advice and innovation, and on economic and social development; The CCRI is now leading an evaluation of the LEADER local development approach, which will complete later in 2021.

CCRI's international project portfolio has increased in line with our growing international reputation, secured via high-profile publications, targeted research fellowship exchanges, and active engagement in international conferences and partnerships. We continue as active members of the International Association for the Study of Commons (IASC) and International Farming Systems Association (IFSA), and have since 2019 become enthusiastic members of the International Partnership for the Satoyama Initiative (IPSI) which promotes sustainable management of social-ecological production landscapes and seascapes in Japan (see also next section).

At local and regional level, the CCRI has secured research funding from local authorities, AONB and National Park Authorities, as well as numerous sponsors from the Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprise Sector (VCSE) spanning environment, community and business sector representative bodies. CCRI projects have also sourced funds from the Big Lottery and the European Structural and Investment Funds (ESIF) distributed via Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEPs). This notably includes a five-year monitoring and evaluation of a £6 million, Big Lottery and ESF Building Better Opportunities (BBO) employment inclusivity programme 'Going the Extra Mile' (GEM), led by Courtney, which is the largest of these types of CCRI project undertaken during the current REF period.

#### **4. Collaboration and contribution to the research base, economy and society**

The CCRI works in close collaboration with a strong network of research partners in the UK, across Europe, and internationally. Among EU and international connections, our most frequent collaborations are across four main research domains, as follows.

We collaborate with **natural science and economic centres of expertise** in our interdisciplinary work on sustainable land management and agri-food issues - with Wageningen University in the Netherlands; AGES Austria; Evora University, Portugal; UNIBIO Norway; Veronica Institute Brno, Czechia; various INRA institutes in France; the EU's Joint Research Centres in Sevilla and Ispra; and with various international forestry partners. Mills is an active Member of the Working Group for the European Network on Soil Awareness and Dwyer was elected a member of France's Academie d'Agriculture in 2019.

Many CCRI researchers work **on current and future policy development in collaboration with other agri-rural policy-active partners** including the National agricultural economics research institute CREA in Italy; IfLS at Frankfurt University; ZALF in Leibnitz; NORDREGIO in Sweden; BABL in Vienna; Centre for Research on Sustainable Societal Transformation, Sweden; IST Lisbon; and the major EU rural policy evaluation consultancies ADE, IEEP, OIR, Oreade-Breche and Cogea. Dwyer, Powell and Kubinakova have also undertaken several expert commissions for the European Network for Rural Development and its sister organisations the Evaluation Helpdesk and the EIP Agri unit for innovation partnerships, all based in Brussels, as well as joining expert groups for the European Court of Auditors and undertaking several studies for the European Parliament Committee for Agriculture and rural development. Vigani is a Specialist Member of REPRISE, the register of expert reviewers of the Italian Ministry of Education, Universities and Research (MIUR); and Evaluator for the ARIMNet2 (Coordination of Agricultural Research in the Mediterranean) programme, an ERA-NET Action financed by the European Union, as well as continuing to maintain close relations with the EC's Joint Research Centres in Ispra and Seville. International collaboration centred around the social science of tree health is led by Urquhart and linked to the co-editing of a book and hosting of sessions at several major conferences in recent years.

CCRI has a small but growing network of collaborators on **sustainable landscapes, culture and heritage** including Bamberg University, Germany and Karlstad University, Sweden, as well as Kyoto University, Japan, through links maintained by Dwyer, Short, Keech and Reed. CCRI is an active member of the IPSI – International Partnership for the Satoyama Initiative - which is global but operates from a base in Tokyo at the UN University, Japan. One of our junior

researchers, Black, will move to the UNU in 2021 for a post-doctoral fellowship co-sponsored by IPSI.

Another area rich in CCRI global academic collaboration is our work on **farmer learning and local participatory approaches**, led principally by Ingram, Mills and Gaskell, where partners include the University of Queensland; Curtin University, Perth; the International Association for the Study of Commons (of which Powell held the Presidency in 2017); and the University of Indonesia. Longstanding involvement by Ingram in the International Farming Systems Association (IFSA) has also helped to develop several of these connections.

**In the UK, our HEI collaborators** are mainly at project level, spanning multiple topic areas and in the past three years have included Imperial College London, Newcastle University, Exeter University, University of Birmingham, University of Sheffield, Cardiff University, Coventry University, Hull University, University of Reading, Aberystwyth University, University of Warwick, Leicester University and the Royal Agricultural University - on a diverse range of topics. A major new collaboration for the CCRI with the Universities of Newcastle and Warwick has been to jointly develop and launch **NICRE – the National Innovation Centre for Rural Enterprise, funded by Research England, 2020-2023** (see section 3 for more details of this programme). The collaboration grew from previous informal and formal partnering on the broad topic of rural economies and communities: for example, both CCRI and Newcastle's Centre for Rural Economy (CRE) play active roles in the CIC 'Rural England' which exists to stimulate and support research and knowledge exchange on this topic, and both are represented on Defra's Rural Academic Panel and have collaborated in policy-focused evidence provision to Parliament, in recent years. The new NICRE partnership extends our reach into the enterprise and innovation arena and will unlock the synergies between Warwick's Enterprise Research Centre (focused on SME and micro-businesses) and CCRI and CRE's pooled rural economy and rural resilience expertise. Dwyer, Vigani, Maye, Khafagy and new recruit Goodwin-Hawkins lead on this work, also drawing in expertise from the Royal Agricultural University, as our CCRI partners in Gloucestershire.

CCRI's UK HEI Collaboration takes many forms, from joint project work to visiting fellowship exchanges, to joint publishing and the organisation of co-hosted conferences, meetings and seminars. We frequently support colleagues in PhD examining and research project scrutiny / peer review, as well as a small amount of guest lecturing, insofar as resources allow.

**CCRI's non-HE UK partners are equally vital to our research and our identity.** These are organised around particular research themes that partly mirror, but also go beyond, those at the international level.

**For farmer learning and participatory approaches** to policy development, CCRI staff Ingram, Mills, Short and Dwyer work regularly with the Soil Association, ADAS, Bath and North East Somerset Council and English Severn and Wye Regional Flood and Coastal Committee; also the Exmoor Ambition coalition (Exmoor National Park Authority and the Exmoor Hill Farming Initiative), the Marlborough Downs farmer group and the WILD partnership in Gloucestershire which includes FWAG South-West, Gloucestershire Rural Community Council, local authorities and national agencies and NGOs. Some of these relationships are described in more detail in Impact Case Study 2. All involve situations where CCRI researchers have worked closely alongside our partners acting as continuous evaluators, stakeholder engagement facilitators and critical friends to help build capacity for planning and positive action. In this capacity, Short sits on Natural England's Social Science Expert Panel. He also has roles on the Board of Gloucestershire Local Nature Partnership, is Chair of the Upper Thames Catchment Partnership, and Chair of the Foundation for Common Land.

**We have developed a stream of collaborative work on transforming food supply chains**, particularly Maye, Reed and Keech with the South West Food Hub and local authorities including Gloucestershire and Monmouthshire County Councils. Initially set up with funding under the ROBUST H2020 project, one strand of this research has developed as a 'living lab'

with Gloucestershire County Council and is now moving into a stronger implementation phase of action-oriented research within the new NICRE programme. The collaboration is a partnership that will test dynamic procurement of food for public sector clients, through a major SW region-wide pilot. Ingram was on the Task and Finish groups for UKRIs Transforming Food Production Challenge, and Industrial Strategy Challenge Fund 2020. In addition, Vigani is on the Food Standard Agency's Register of Specialists.

**In our work on landscapes, heritage, nature, health and wellbeing policy, we work with key partners** including Gloucestershire NHS Trust partnership, Historic England and the NGO Heritage Alliance (HA). These relationships combine analysis and evaluation with policy development roles: for heritage our expertise feeds into Defra policy via membership of the Rural Development Programme Management Committee (Gaskell acts as HA's representative on this group) and in direct and regular liaison with Historic England, also building shared understanding in the application of Geographical Information Systems (GIS) to this domain through the involvement of Berry. In respect of health and well-being, Courtney has built a strong relationship with the local NHS Trust which has led to new opportunities to co-author research outputs with a strong biomedical component, arising through the application of SROI-based approaches to understanding psycho-social outcomes.

More broadly in the domain of **agri-rural policy development**, Dwyer sits on the Research Advisory Group to the RSA Food, Farming and Countryside Commission; she chairs Defra's Nutrient Management Expert Group; and is an Advisory Board member for Green Alliance's Natural Environment work-strand. Gaskell also has roles as ELM Stakeholder Engagement Group; Historic Environment specialist: ELM Strategic Group; Co-Chair: Rural Heritage Advisory Group, for the Heritage Alliance; and Historic Environment specialist on Historic England's post-Brexit Heritage Group.

**Fisheries policy and practice** is another strong area of collaborative partnership for us, where Reed, Urquhart, Chiswell and Courtney have been engaged in research and development work with a range of practitioner and stakeholder groups to identify, analyse and help reform the complex and conflicted domain of UK fisheries policies, both within and beyond membership of the EU.

**Rural communities** have seen some revival of interest from a research and policy perspective, in the last few years – some of which has been brought into sharper focus during the current Covid-19 pandemic. The CCRI maintains its longstanding collaborative relationship with the Rural Services Network through co-hosting their annual conference, and Dwyer is a Director of Rural England CIC, which brings together rural stakeholders to help resource and steer relevant research and policy briefing work. Dwyer also sits on Defra's Rural Academic Panel, and she, Chiswell, Reed and Powell are currently engaged in a key research project for Defra on the lived experience of rural communities and economies in England, which is co-funded with the NGO Power to Change, and delivered in collaboration with Newcastle University's Centre for Rural Economy (CRE).

**CCRI Esteem indicators - academic publications, scrutiny roles and positions attained**  
Staff Members undertake regular Journal reviewing for more than 70 international peer-reviewed journals in planning, social science, geography, environmental science, policy and economics – most frequently mentioned titles include Land Use Policy, the Journal of Rural Studies and Environment and Planning A, C and E. CCRI researchers also undertake a number of editing roles, including: Journal of Rural Studies (Associate Editor), Frontiers in Sustainable Food Systems (Review Editor), Journal of Depopulation and Rural Development Studies (AGER) (Associate Editor), Frontiers in Veterinary Science (Veterinary Humanities and Social Sciences, Associate Editor), and Journal of Agricultural Education and Extension (Editor). CCRI Special Issue guest editor roles include: Sustainability, 2020; Frontiers in Public Health 2020; Ecosystem Services, 2021; Soil use and Management, 2019; Agriculture and Human Values, 2019; Forests, 2019; and Sociologia Ruralis, 2017. CCRI staff editorial board memberships include: Eurochoices, Society and Natural Resources, Cogent Environmental Science, Open

Agriculture, Geografia-Malaysian Journal of Society and Space, and Environmental Science and Policy.

CCRI staff have been very active over this REF period as reviewers in Grants Committees, Selection Panels and other funded research competitions, on behalf of the European Commission (H2020 – four staff); AHRC; NERC (two staff); MRC; Canadian Research Council; ESRC; ANR, France; Third Sector Research Centre; Research committee of the RGS-IBG Food Geographies and Rural Geography Research Groups; German Research Council; Fullbright Commission; Australian Research Council; UKRI Strategic Priorities Fund; Fundação para a Ciência e a Tecnologia (Portugal) and ICT projects of the FONCyT (Fondo para la Investigación Científica y Tecnológica) / ANPCyT (Agencia Nacional de Promoción Científica y Tecnológica), Argentinian Ministry of Science, Technology and Productive Innovation.

Visiting research fellows to CCRI have come from: Norway, Italy (4), Japan (2), France (3), Netherlands, South Korea, Turkey and the USA, over this REF period. From 2014-16 CCRI had a very successful UK Leverhulme-sponsored artist in residence, working with our local initiatives on water environments, flood management and local cultural landscape practices. The same person is returning in 2021 as ‘artist in dialogue’ to work with us on a new AHRC project requiring experiential reflections of selected staff while in the field, undertaking a variety of action-oriented research in nature-culture topics.

In 2021 Dwyer will assume the Presidency of the well-respected UK Agricultural Economics Society (AES), having been President-elect since 2019.