



*The Royal Society
of Edinburgh*

KNOWLEDGE MADE USEFUL

Strategic Framework
2016 – 2021



FOREWORD

This Strategic Framework sets out the Royal Society of Edinburgh's vision and strategic objectives for the next five years. It identifies the distinctive impact we aim to make nationally and internationally, and the benefits that a vibrant multidisciplinary National Academy can bring to Scotland.

The Royal Society of Edinburgh (RSE) has approached the development of this Framework with an appetite for change.

We will build on our existing strengths, focusing on the pillars of Inspiration, Engagement and Expertise, but we are keenly aware that the context in which the RSE operates is ever-evolving. The referendum on EU membership clearly presents many challenges, but we must also seek opportunities.

In a period of uncertainty, it is all the more important we have a clear sense of strategic direction. We must also strengthen the foundations that underpin all we do, so the RSE has the capacity to deliver its vision now and in the future.

All this will require a step change in order to:

- ***create an active and more diverse Fellowship*** that reflects outstanding individual achievement in modern society;
- ***secure increased funding*** from a diverse range of sources;

- ***forge stronger national, international and cross-sector relationships and partnerships*** in order to enhance and widen the RSE's outreach and impact; and
- ***re-develop our premises*** to provide the modern facilities necessary to deliver our activities more effectively.

I am grateful to the Fellows and Staff of the RSE who have contributed to the development of this new Strategic Framework, as well as for the constructive input from many external organisations that we will work in partnership with in its delivery.

Building on our history while looking clearly to the future, this Strategic Framework demonstrates our desire to play an even greater role in the wellbeing of Scotland and all its people. Delivery of this will be set out in our annual Operational Plans for the coming years.

S Jocelyn Bell Burnell

Jocelyn Bell Burnell
President

The Royal Society of Edinburgh

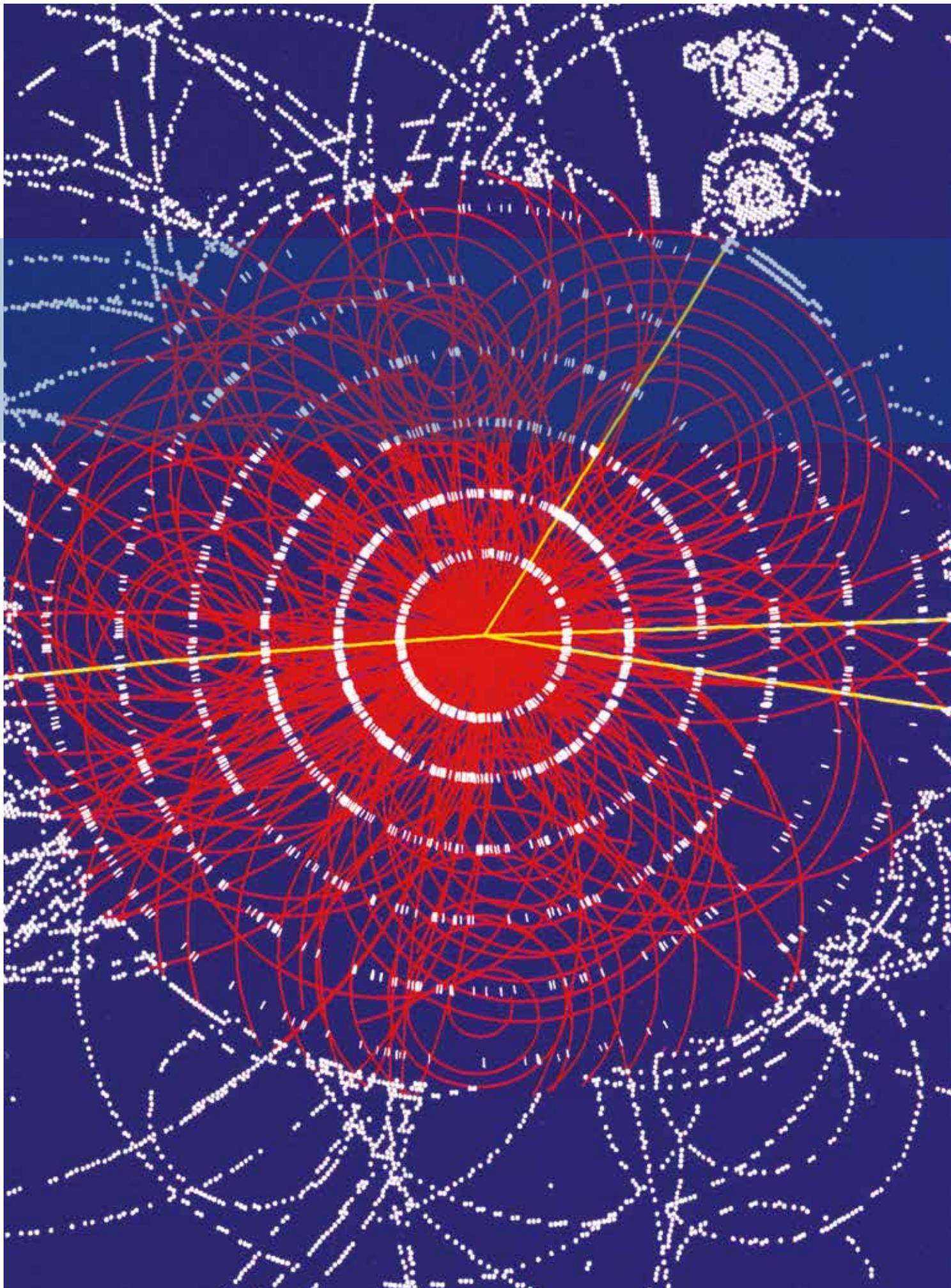


IMAGE: Simulated decay of the Higgs Boson particle, discovered by Physicist Professor Peter Higgs FRSE © CERN

OUR VISION

The RSE's aim is to play a leading role in the development of a modern Enlightenment that will enable Scotland to contribute significantly to addressing the global challenges facing humanity in the 21st Century.

TO ACHIEVE OUR VISION

The RSE's mission, set out in its Royal Charter of 1783, is "*the advancement of learning and useful knowledge*". Its contemporary purpose remains the same. The breadth of expertise and experience within our Fellowship ranges from life sciences, physical sciences and technology, to arts, humanities, social science, business, public service and civil society. The multidisciplinary breadth of the RSE – reaching well beyond the academic world – is a distinctive strength and unique within UK national academies.

We will continue to build a diverse Fellowship of demonstrable excellence and actively engage our Fellows to be:

- Excellent role models, mentors and advisers to Scotland's top young researchers, creative talent and potential business and public leaders. This is done through our *research awards, enterprise and prizes programmes*; and support for the *RSE Young Academy of Scotland*;
- Expert advisers and commentators on key contemporary issues, delivered through our *policy and advice programme*;
- Renowned ambassadors for Scotland, through our *international programmes*;

- Distinguished speakers and panellists involved in our wide-ranging *public events programme* held across the whole of Scotland; and
- Inspirational role models and educators through our *schools programme*.

The RSE also has distinctive strengths based on its broad convening power, its capability for scrutiny of complex issues, its standing as an impartial forum and its ability to showcase the best of Scottish intellectual and cultural achievement.

The RSE is one of many public, private and third sector bodies that contribute to Scotland's economic, cultural and social wellbeing. RSE Fellows and Staff work alongside and in partnership with many other individuals and organisations which share our aims. In particular, we will continue to work closely with the RSE Young Academy of Scotland to support and deliver on the objectives of the RSE's Strategic Framework and those of the Young Academy's 2020 Vision.

The time and effort our Fellows donate willingly is an invaluable free resource to support the delivery of the RSE's activities to make knowledge useful for the benefit of Scotland and wider society.

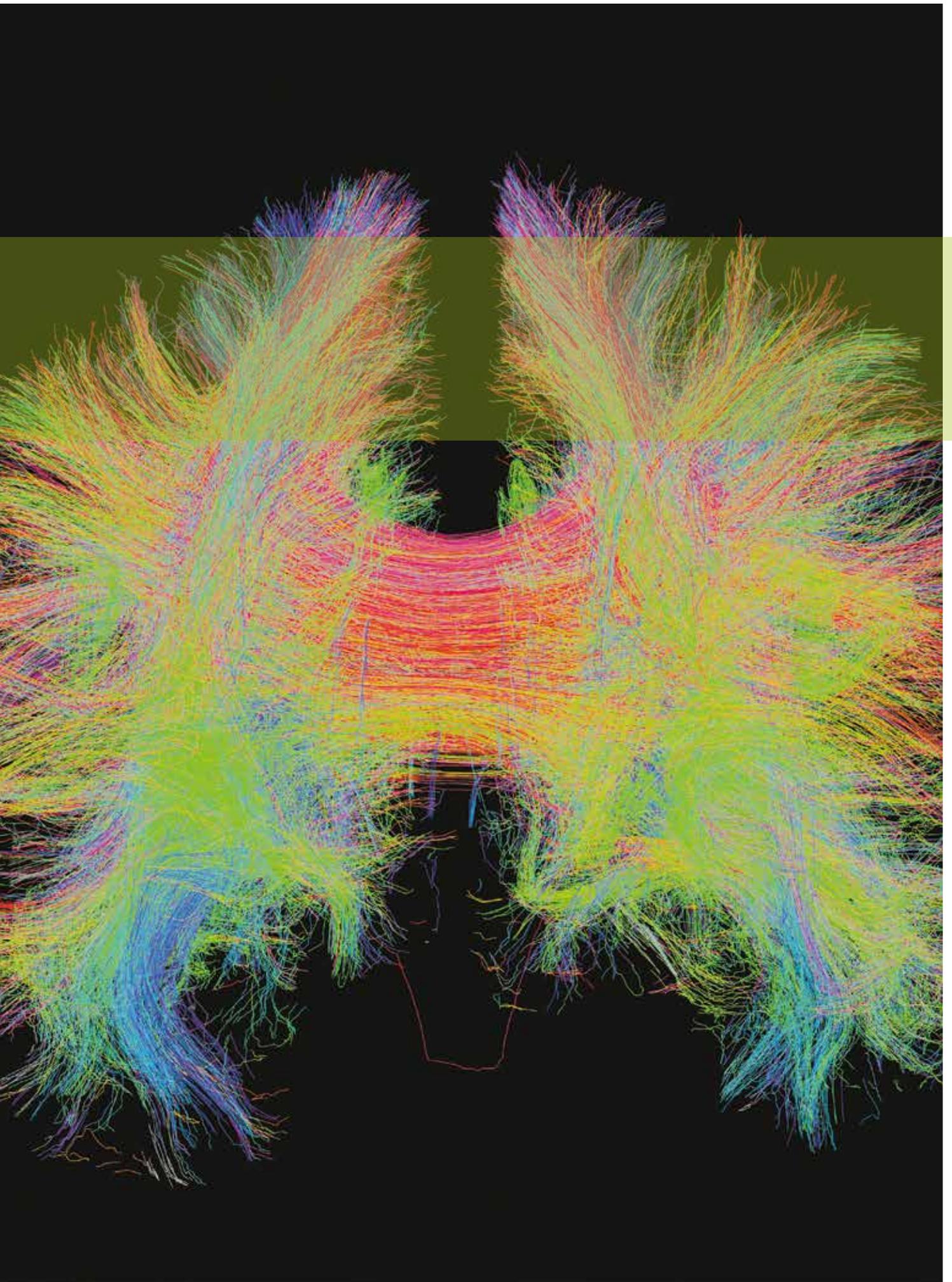


IMAGE: Brain scan illustrating the work of Neuroscientist Professor Richard Morris FRSE © Dr. Mark Bastin

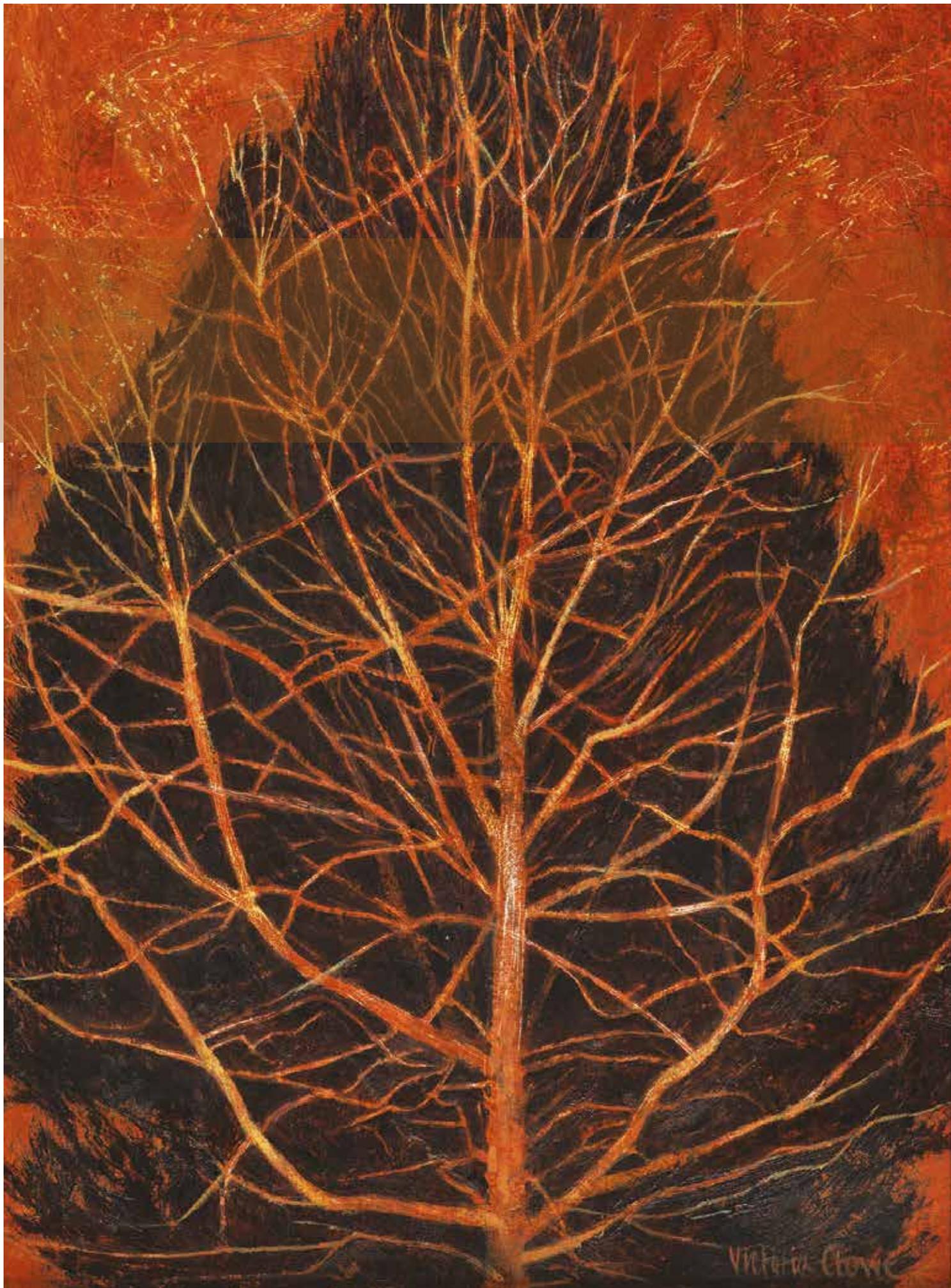


IMAGE: Detail of the painting Ice and Fire, painted by Artist Professor Victoria Crowe FRSE © Victoria Crowe

OUR STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES AND IMPACTS

THE RSE IS GUIDED BY ITS OBJECTIVES TO:

- ***inspire*** and support Scotland's most promising young talent across the research, business and public sectors, in order to create value for the economy and society;
- ***engage*** on key contemporary issues by providing an impartial forum for public debate and discussion;
- ***provide expertise*** to ensure that Scotland's policy makers and influencers have access to the best national, and indeed global, expertise; and
- ***promote*** Scotland's interests and reputation on the global stage.

It is important to identify explicitly the value that the RSE can add, and the difference we aim to make.

This enables us to measure success and informs our on-going strategic decisions. Building on the impact and difference we have already achieved we will seek to;

- Enhance research capacity and leadership in Scotland;
- Strengthen Scotland's cross-sector connections and its ability to realise benefits from its research and innovation base;
- Raise Scotland's profile and strengthen its connections with the world;
- Inform and influence public policy;
- Enhance the public's contribution to and engagement with contemporary national and global scientific, cultural and economic issues.

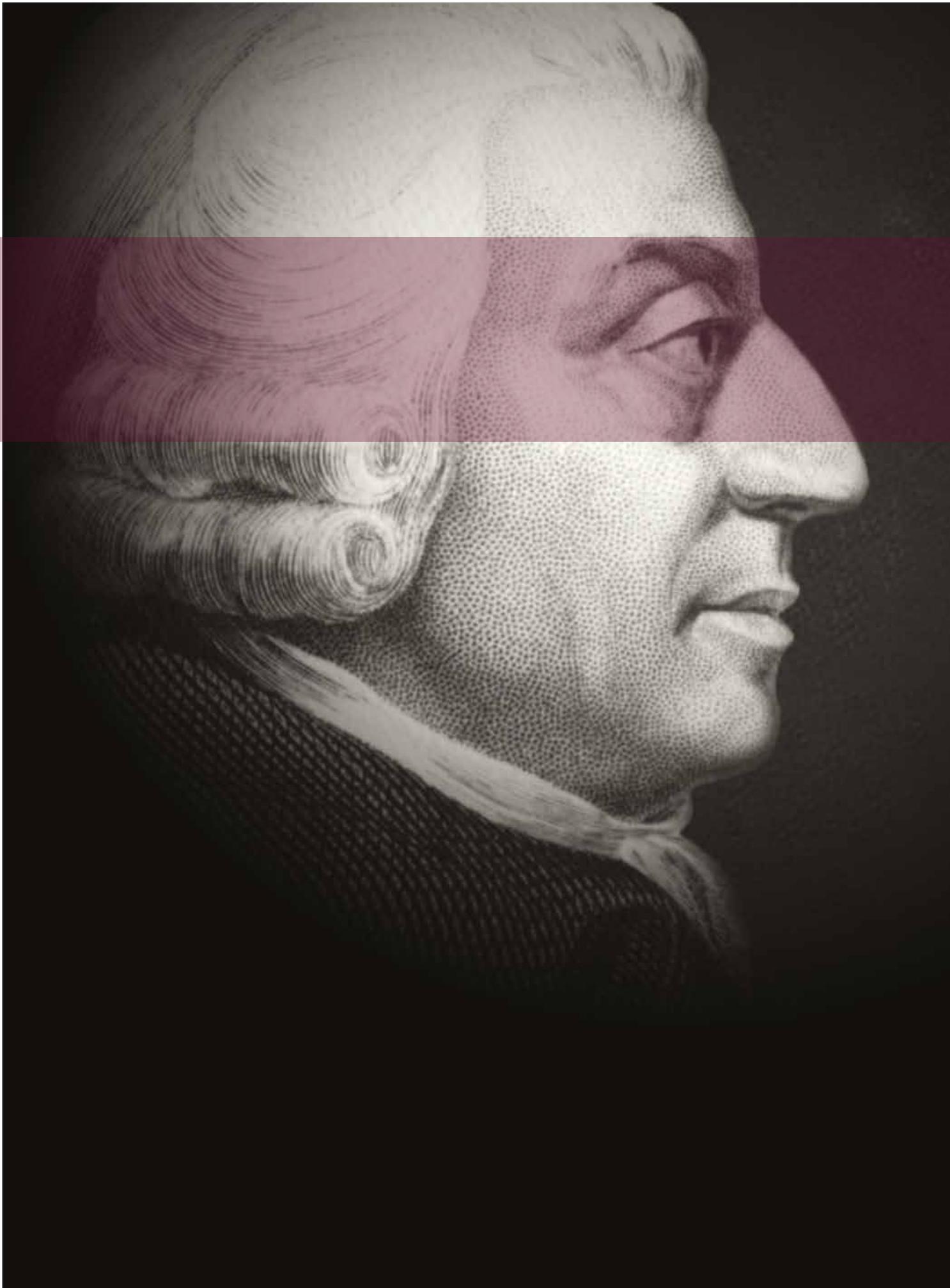


IMAGE: Portrait engraving of Adam Smith FRSE, Economist and founding father of the RSE

DEVELOPING THE RSE

The RSE has identified four key areas for development that will enable it to realise its strategic objectives and deliver the impact it seeks to have. A focus on strengthening these foundations now will place the RSE in the strongest possible position to enhance its impact over the period of this Strategic Framework, and beyond.

DEVELOPING THE RSE

1. Fellowship

DEVELOPMENT AIM:

To create an active and more diverse Fellowship that reflects outstanding individual achievement in modern society

WHAT DOES THIS MEAN?

The Fellowship of the RSE is its greatest asset. The RSE has, from its inception, embraced excellence across all areas of Scottish life. Representing an outstanding knowledge bank, Fellows give generously of their time and expertise to take part in the RSE's programme of activities for public benefit. The RSE will take positive steps to ensure that the Fellowship is truly representative of excellence in Scottish society. The areas to be addressed are:

- Lowering the average age of the cohort of Fellows elected each year;
- Achieving a better gender and diversity balance;
- Broadening representation across the whole of Scotland to reflect the richness of talent and resource nationwide; and
- Increasing the intake of Fellows in areas of vital importance to Scottish civic life, including business, the professions, the public sector, arts and humanities, and social sciences.

The RSE will strive to engage more of its Fellows in its activities at all stages of their career, and across all disciplines and sectors, to ensure its programmes and policy positions reflect the breadth of talent in Scottish society today.

2. Funding

DEVELOPMENT AIM:

To secure increased funding from a diverse range of sources

WHAT DOES THIS MEAN?

The RSE has a varied and ambitious programme of activities to inspire, engage and channel expertise, putting this knowledge to work for the wellbeing of Scotland. This programme is delivered through a combination of public funding and individual, charity and business support. The RSE will implement a focused and systematic development programme to grow its income streams from

- the business and corporate sectors;
- grant-giving charities; and
- individual donations and legacies.

We will clearly articulate the added value that the RSE is uniquely placed to generate for Scotland and report regularly on its impact against the target areas identified above. A strategic focus on diversifying and increasing funding sources will enable the RSE to build upon its activities for the continued benefit of Scotland and, crucially, to maintain an independent voice.

DEVELOPING THE RSE

3. Outreach and impact

DEVELOPMENT AIM:

To forge stronger national, international and cross-sector relationships and partnerships in order to enhance and widen the RSE's outreach and impact

WHAT DOES THIS MEAN?

The RSE recognises the importance of developing constructive relationships with individuals and organisations, nationally and internationally, to enable it to implement its vision and deliver its strategy, through:

- working with like-minded organisations to undertake joint activity in areas of mutual interest;
- increasing the RSE's reach into key sectors (for example, industry, business and commerce, Further Education);
- developing influential networks that will enhance impact on policy making;
- building links with other leading national academies and related bodies; and
- acting as a showcase for Scotland's innovative success and impact.

A clear strategic focus on outreach and impact will support the RSE to deliver more effectively its objectives of inspiration, engagement and expertise.

4. Facilities

DEVELOPMENT AIM:

To redevelop our premises to provide the modern facilities necessary to deliver our activities more effectively

WHAT DOES THIS MEAN?

The RSE's own building at 22–26 George Street is a considerable asset and provides the base for many of its varied activities. It was extensively refurbished in the 1980s and '90s and is now in need of further improvement to enable the RSE to:

- function more efficiently;
- facilitate wider public engagement through improved physical access; and
- reach out to much wider audiences using recent developments in digital technology.

The RSE will take forward a redevelopment plan in keeping with the key functions and style of the building and one that embodies the RSE's distinguished history, while positioning it as a forward-looking, contemporary organisation.



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