



## MINUTES OF COUNCIL

FRIDAY 16 MAY 2014

Present: Ms A Berti, Mr D Burn (Chair), Professor D Clarke, Councillor S Cook, Mr R Cowap, Dr E Crawley, Mr T Flynn, Professor G Foster, Mr A Garrad, Mr C Green, Mr R Griffiths, Dr M Hamlin, Mr Paul Hand, Ms P Lawrence-Archer, Professor N Lieven, Mr T Macdonald, Dr J Manley, Professor R Middleton, Mr B Morton, Professor G Orpen, Ms C Peck, Mr A Poolman, Mr B Ray, Mr M Saddiq, Ms V Stace, Ms A Stephenson, Professor Sir Eric Thomas, Dr T Thompson, Mr J Wetz.

In attendance: Miss L Barling (Clerk), Dr H Galbraith, Ms S Paterson, Mr P Finch, Ms R Geller, Mr G Gregory, Mr A Nield, Ms A Philips (UBU Equality, Liberation and Access Officer), Ms L Robinson, Professor J Squires, and Ms S Vieru (UBU Postgraduate Officer).

Apologies: Dame Denise Holt, Mrs S Goymer and Sir Ronald Kerr.

### 1. Welcome and announcements

- 1.1 The Chair welcomed two of the new Sabbatical Officers, Ms S Vieru (Postgraduate Officer) and Ms A Philips (Equality, Liberation and Access Officer), who were in attendance as observers.
- 1.2 The Chair thanked the three out-going Sabbatical Officers, who were attending their final Council meeting.
- 1.3 The Chair also thanked Council members who had given their time and expertise to sit on various appeals and appointment panels during the year.

### 2. Apologies

- 2.1 NOTED.

### 3. Declaration of interests

- 3.1 Members were reminded that they had an obligation to disclose any pecuniary, family or other personal interest that they had in any matter under discussion at any meeting of Council as soon as practicable.

### 4. Minutes of meeting on 14 March 2014

- 4.1 CONFIRMED.

### 5. Matters arising and actions

- 5.1 There was nothing outstanding to report.

### 6. University business objectives, budget and capital programme 2014/15

- 6.1 The Vice-Chancellor introduced this session, highlighting some key successes and challenges for the University:

#### Successes

- The operating surplus was currently ahead of plan

- The University had successfully delivered on the second cohort of additional home undergraduate students
- A large capital investment programme was being delivered
- The University had successfully restructured UBPAS.

### Challenges

- There were still, however, a substantial number of unknowns:
  - UK Elections 2015
  - Uncertain economic growth
  - Uncertainty of student numbers and the lack of predictability
  - Uncertainties around PG teaching and the impact of higher fees
  - Over-dependence on China in relation to the University's ambition to grow its overseas student market
  - The re-evaluation of USS which had a deficit in the order of £13 billion
  - The single state pension – an additional £3m in NI costs as of 2015/16
  - Outcome of the REF exercise which would be settled in 2015
  - Planned public sector cuts from 15/16 onwards

6.2 RECEIVED: A presentation from the Finance Director setting out the proposed budget for 2014/15 and the capital programme, including outline financial plans for 2015/16 and 2016/17 (on file). A supporting paper had been circulated with the main Council papers (reference **CN/14/030**).

6.3 The resultant discussion highlighted the following points:

- Targets for faculties had been agreed based on the Faculties' total contributions. The Deans had responded positively to the target approach with wider involvement from the Faculty Managers and Heads of School.
- The Chair of the Finance Committee commented that the real issue was cash generation and that his committee was satisfied the level of debt was affordable, provided the University delivered in its surplus.
- **\*\*COMMERCIAL IN CONFIDENCE\*\***
- The Finance Director advised that there was currently no capacity in the capital programme for further major projects such as the Victoria Rooms, although the University had agreed to undertake an annual maintenance programme. The Finance Director was working with the Bursar to map out the longer term capital programme up to 2024/25 and would discuss this with the Capital Investment Programme Board (CIPB) in due course.

6.4 APPROVED: the proposed budget for 2014/15 and the capital programme as set out in the report.

6.5 NOTED: the outline financial plans for 2015/16 and 2016/17.

## **7. Strategic Performance Indicators**

7.1 RECEIVED: A presentation from the Director of Planning & Deputy Secretary setting out the 2014 University SPIs and summary dashboard (on file). A supporting paper had been circulated with the main Council papers (reference **CN/14/031**).

7.2 The resultant discussion highlighted the following points:

- It was noted that the University's ability to benchmark staff satisfaction data against its peer group was limited to whether those institutions had asked similar questions of their own staff.
- Only eight of the questions in the Staff Survey had been drawn out for indicator 'S1 Staff satisfaction', with only four of these included in the summary dashboard. The

University was encouraged by Council to consider including additional questions even if it would present a more mixed picture, as this would reflect the true position.

7.3 Council thanked the Director of Planning and her colleagues for their hard work in preparing the SPIs and summary dashboard and for an excellent presentation.

## **8. Annual Risk Review 2013/14**

8.1 RECEIVED: A presentation from the Director of Planning & Deputy Secretary on the University's Annual Risk Review and Risk Register 2014/15 (on file). A supporting paper had been circulated with the main bundle of Council papers (reference **CN/14/032**).

8.2 The resultant discussion highlighted the following points:

- It was noted that risk IT/14/01 was high but that a significant amount of work was being progressed in this area in order to mitigate the risk – this was a key responsibility of the IT Advisory Group led by the interim CIO.
- Procedurally, it was the responsibility of the Internal Auditors to review all of the risk areas to ensure that all mitigating actions were being carried out. The annual risk review document was also considered annually by the Audit Committee.
- Dr Manley commented that most of the real systems failures occur due to software issues, not due to hardware and that the risk register should be adjusted to reflect this. Members noted that the interim CIO had already been asked to review the risk register to that effect.
- The OFFA agreement had now been approved and the University had significantly increased its activity and spending in widening participation, the results of which would be revealed in due course. A full discussion on widening participation would be had at the Senate meeting on 16 June 2014.

8.3 The Chair of Council thanked colleagues for their hard work in producing such useful information for Council today.

## **9. Chair's Report**

9.1 RECEIVED: (reference **CN/14/033**).

### Governance Effectiveness Reviews

9.2 Council DELEGATED AUTHORITY: to the Membership Appointments Group (MAG) to approve the following elements of the Council Effectiveness Review:

- (a) The Effectiveness Review Terms of Reference and consultants brief;
- (b) The composition and establishment of an Effectiveness Review Panel;
- (c) The appointment of an external consultant to lead the Review, following an appropriate tendering process.

### Review of Court

9.3 NOTED.

## **10. Vice-Chancellor's report**

10.1 RECEIVED: (reference **CN/14/034**).

### Biomedical Review

10.2 The consultation period had been extremely positive, members of staff had enthusiastically engaged in the process.

- 10.3 The reports would be made available to University colleagues on Monday 19 May via the intranet and an all staff communication would also be circulated. Following this, an open forum was scheduled for 11 June whereby the Pro Vice-Chancellor (Research), Deputy Vice-Chancellor, Pro Vice-Chancellor (Education) and two Deans would present the key actions arising from the review reports' recommendations. A full discussion would also be held at the UPARC meeting on 17 June in order to take the recommendations forward.

#### Visiting Professors

- 10.4 APPROVED: The appointment of the following Visiting Professors:  
(1) Professor Alasdair MacGowan, in the Faculty of Medical and Veterinary Sciences for a period of three years;  
(2) Professor Martin Siegert, in the Faculty of Science for a period of one year.

#### Update on National Pay Negotiations

- 10.5 On 16 April UCEA held the second negotiating meeting with the five HE trade unions about the pay award for 2014/15. During that meeting, UCEA moved to a 'full and final' pay settlement offer for 2014/15, of 2.0 per cent on all pay spine points from 1 August 2014.
- 10.6 The offer was made with the following understanding:
- that it would settle the pay negotiations for 2014/15;
  - that it would draw a line under the 2013/14 negotiating round and dispute; and
  - that a requirement was that the trade unions responded to the offer before the commencement of any further industrial action.
- 10.7 All unions went through their own processes to consider this final offer for the 2014/15 pay round. UCU did a rapid consultation and were prepared to accept the offer, withdrawing the threat of industrial action. UNITE had also accepted the offer. UNISON was also consulting on the offer but the closing date was not yet known. The HR Director was not anticipating any risk of a dispute on other issues at the current moment.

#### Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) – Higher Education Review (HER)

- 10.8 NOTED.

#### Admissions update

- 10.9 NOTED.

#### Student Survey Updates

- 10.10 Members were advised that the University response rate to the 2014 National Student Survey was at 80% today.

- 10.11 NOTED.

#### Appointment of Chief Information Officer

- 10.12 NOTED.

#### Fry Building Update

- 10.13 NOTED.

#### Health and Safety

- 10.14 There were no matters to bring to Council's attention.

### Recent Grants and Awards

- 10.15 Council congratulated Professor Benton on achieving the rare distinction of being elected Fellow of the world's most eminent and oldest scientific academy in continuous existence: the Royal Society.
- 10.16 The Vice-Chancellor commended the University for being awarded a £150,000 grant as part of a multilateral partnership with academic institutions in the US, China and India. This was the first time that such a collaboration initiative had been achieved.

## **11. Financial Matters**

### Finance update

- 11.1 RECEIVED: (reference **CN/14/035**).
- 11.2 **\*\*COMMERCIAL IN CONFIDENCE\*\***
- 11.3 **\*\*COMMERCIAL IN CONFIDENCE\*\***
- 11.4 AGREED IN PRINCIPLE: a site acquisition, as presented in the report, subject to final approval from the Finance Committee. Council members NOTED the commercial in confidence nature of the issue.

### Finance Committee Report (spotlight committee item)

- 11.5 RECEIVED: an oral report from the Chair of the Finance Committee. Copies of the Finance Committee minutes from 19 March 2014 (reference **CN/14/036**) and from 30 April 2014 (reference **CN/14/037**) were also received.
- 11.6 The Chair advised that the committee was working very well - a new Vice-Chair, Mr Paul Hand, had recently been appointed and Mr Richard Jeffrey, a lay member appointed by Council, brought his investment banking skills and experience in issues relating to Treasury. The committee was also well supported by the senior executive team.

## **Committee reports**

### **12. Audit Committee**

- 12.1 RECEIVED: an oral report from the Treasurer on the business discussed at the Audit Committee meeting on 6 May 2014.
- 12.2 The Chair of Council advised that the Membership Appointments and Governance Group was due to consider the draft terms of reference for a new IT Committee. The committee would report jointly to Senate and Council.
- 12.3 The Treasurer reported that the Audit Committee had received regular updates from the IT Advisory Group and held substantial discussions on key IT issues. IT was a major concern for the Committee, but members felt that they did not have quite the time nor expertise required to give IT issues their full attention. The Treasurer therefore supported the University's approach in establishing a new IT Committee.
- 12.4 Council DELEGATED AUTHORITY: to the Membership Appointments and Governance Group to approve the creation of the IT Committee and associated terms of reference at its next meeting.
- 12.5 Other business considered by the committee included:
- A presentation from the Deputy Finance Director on ERP. The committee was pleased with progress.

- Mazars' internal audit report revealed that the University had achieved a substantial assurance report for eleven out of twelve areas. The only area that received a partial assurance was on the subject of academic consultancy. The committee had requested a follow up report in one year's time. The senior executive team were working hard on a new procedure and the committee was satisfied with the progress being made.
- A presentation from the Bursar on the subject of Estates procurement. A series of FAQs setting out more clearly the principles of the procurement process would be made available in due course. In response to a recommendation from the Estates Divisional Review, a benchmarking exercise against other HE institutions would be carried out in due course. The committee was satisfied with the progress being made.
- The committee had received and noted HEFCE's Annual Assessment of Institutional Risk.
- The Treasurer thanked the Deputy Vice-Chancellor for his wise counsel over the years and wished him well for the future.

12.6 RECEIVED and NOTED: HEFCE's Annual Assessment of Institutional Risk, March 2014 (reference: **CN/14/040**).

### 13. Estates Committee

13.1 RECEIVED and NOTED: (reference **CN/14/41**).

13.2 The Deputy Vice-Chancellor advised Council that the University had agreed a target occupational date for the Life Sciences Building as 9 June 2014. It was hoped that the new lecture theatre would be ready by the end of September 2014. Council would be invited to tour the building in due course.

### 14. Ethics of Research Committee

14.1 RECEIVED: (reference **CN/14/042**).

14.2 The Chair of the Ethics of Research Committee was asked about a reference in paragraph 3 of the Report to providing "support for potential misconduct alleged by a major funder" and he confirmed that there was no action required, this referred to how a potential misconduct alleged by a major funder would be supported if it were to occur.<sup>1</sup>

### 15. Library Strategy

15.1 RECEIVED: a presentation from the Director of Library Services (on file) and the University Library Strategy document 2013-2018 (paper reference **CN/14/043**).

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<sup>1</sup> Post meeting note: In approving the Report, the Chair had understood this to refer to general discussions at the Ethics of Research Committee about how such issues would be dealt with if they arose and he answered the question accordingly. However it later became clear that the reference in the Report was to some actual research misconduct allegations received at the end of last year. The Report is inaccurate in referring to allegations by a major research funder as the allegations were received from a third party, but they were referred to the University by a research funding body (Cancer Research UK). The allegations related to images in a small number of research publications with University of Bristol authors. In accordance with the University's research misconduct procedures, the allegations were initially considered by the PVC Research on behalf of the VC. The PVC Research commissioned a preliminary expert review of the allegations and concluded on the basis of this review that there were no serious allegations of research misconduct that required investigation. The PVC Research reported back to CRUK with the outcome of the review and his conclusions and CRUK was satisfied with the action that had been taken and that no further investigation was required. The matter was dealt with in strict confidence and was not discussed at Ethics of Research Committee.

- 15.2 The Pro Vice-Chancellor (Research), who had chaired the review panel, commended the presentation and the leadership of the Division. The recommendations from the review report highlighted that there were some key challenges ahead but it was clear that the Library Division, led by the Director, had very much embraced those challenges and there was a strong appetite to modernise the service.
- 15.3 The Director of Library Services commented that she very much wanted to leave a legacy of staff who were innovative and forward thinking in order to make the change happen. She had put in place appropriate staff development for this purpose.
- 15.4 The Pro Vice-Chancellor (Education) advised that the Learning Spaces Management Group was reviewing the university strategy on learning spaces, which was distinct from but complimentary with libraries. The Divisional Review recommendations had also made the overlap between study spaces and libraries very clear.
- 15.5 Members commented that whilst the transformation of the Hawthorns into a study space had been extremely successful, its connections with the Library were not obvious. Effective marketing and branding were an essential part of the change.
- 16. University of Bristol Students' Union Election Results**
- 16.1 RECEIVED and NOTED: (paper reference **CN/14/044**).
- 17. Senate Report**
- 17.1 RECEIVED: (reference **CN/14/045**).
- 17.2 NOTED: the key business discussed by Senate at its meeting on 28 April 2014.
- 17.3 APPROVED BY SPECIAL RESOLUTION: (nem. con.) an amendment to Ordinance 19 – Summary of Academic Awards - as outlined in paragraph 9 below. This was a consequence of the creation of a range of new academic programmes (see paragraph 8 below):

Education Committee Report

8. *Senate noted that the University was successful in bidding for funding to host a Q-Step Centre supported by the Nuffield Foundation, Economic and Social Research Council and HEFCE with a remit to address the national shortage of quantitative skills training in social science students through new degree programmes adding inter-disciplinary training in applied quantitative social science. The following new programmes were then approved by Senate:*

- (i) *BSc and MSci Geography with Quantitative Research Methods*
- (ii) *BSc and MSci Politics with Quantitative Research Methods*
- (iii) *BSc and MSci Sociology with Quantitative Research Methods*
- (iv) *BSc and MSci Social Policy with Quantitative Research Methods*
- (v) *BSc and MSci Childhood Studies with Quantitative Research Methods*

Amendment to Ordinance 19

9. *Senate approved the amendment of Ordinance 19 – Summary of Academic Awards to include the undergraduate award of Master in Science denoted by MSci in the Faculty of Social Sciences and Law (as a consequence of the addition of the new programmes outlined above).*

**18. Faculty of Engineering Annual Report**

18.1 RECEIVED: (paper reference **CN/14/046**).

18.2 The Chair thanked Professor Nishan Canagarajah, outgoing Dean of Engineering, for his excellent report and congratulated him for the success of his Faculty.

**19. Standing Items**

Equality and Diversity Implications

19.1 Council noted that access to library and study space regarding disabled students was currently being reviewed.

19.2 Council did not feel that any of the other business discussed at the meeting had raised any equality and/or diversity issues which had not been appropriately addressed by report authors and/or relevant sub-committees.

Communications and Consultation

19.3 Council did not feel that the business discussed at the meeting had raised any communications and/or consultation issues which had not been appropriately addressed by report authors and/or relevant sub-committees.

**Date of next meeting**

The next meeting of Council would be held on Friday, 4 July 2014.