



MINUTES OF COUNCIL

FRIDAY 15 NOVEMBER 2013

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

In attendance: Miss L Barling (Clerk), Ms Jane Bridgwater, Mr P Finch, Dr H Galbraith, Ms R Geller, Mr G Gregory, Mr A Nield, Ms L Robinson, Professor J Squires.

Apologies: Professor D Clarke, Mr D Ord, Mr M Saddiq.

1. Welcome and announcements

1.1 As this was their last Council meeting, the Chair thanked Mrs D Moore and Mr D Ord for their extremely valuable contributions to Council over the past nine years.

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 5 July 2013

4.1 CONFIRMED.

5. Matters arising and actions

5.1 Members noted that an update would be provided on the Fry Building and Long Ashton at a future Council meeting.

6. Presentation

6.1 The Dean of Arts gave a presentation on Project MFT – A vision for Music, Film, Theatre (MFT) and the Theatre Collection (**on file**).

6.2 The Pro Vice-Chancellor (International) introduced the presentation, noting that this was on today's agenda to seek Council's endorsement of the vision for a shared 'academic home' for Theatre and Music; of the need to seek a separate home for the

Theatre Collection/Museum; and for the plan to develop space in the Richmond Building to provide accommodation for Film.

6.3 The discussion which followed highlighted these points:

- There was currently not enough space for MFT to be able to compete as effectively as it could on a world-wide scale within the existing facilities. Much of the theatre space was being used for teaching which limited availability for high visibility creative platforms, and what was required was a facility that allowed for both teaching and performance.
- MFT was currently sharing space with other city art 'spaces' such as St George's and the Watershed and would continue to look at strategic ways to maximise their facilities and its own.
- The University could potentially share facilities with other GW4 Universities and was already undertaking research collaborations, but this would not be feasible for UG student teaching due to the practical limitations of moving the students around.
- There was a gap in provision for Dance as a performing art in the city and the University had recently made an appointment in this area in order to raise the profile, and was looking at introducing dance into current curricula.
- The MFT project should be viewed from a University-wide perspective as the improvements would generate a significant benefit to the Bristol 'brand' overall. As such, the business case should emphasise that the 'space' could also be used by other faculties and not solely as an arts space. It was also suggested that the space could be used for external conferences to supplement any existing income from the main auditorium.
- Should the business case and external funding not be taken forward, this would have a negative impact on student recruitment and the University's reputation, particularly given that competitor institutions were investing in this area.
- It was clear that there was no provision within the existing Capital Programme for substantial investment in Project MFT and that it was very unlikely that the University would have sufficient financial capacity from its own resources to fund a major project in the foreseeable future.
- Interdisciplinary work between performing arts and other disciplines in the University should continue to be strongly encouraged.
- Members agreed that it would be a great shame to allow a building such as the Victoria Rooms to fall into disrepair as it was one of the most prominent buildings in Bristol.

6.4 APPROVED: the proposal to seek external funding and develop a business case for improvements to the facilities for MFT. Council requested that the above points be reflected in the business case.

7. Presentation

7.1 The Pro Vice-Chancellor (Education) gave a presentation on student involvement in University governance (**on file**) followed by a presentation from the UBU Sabbatical Officers on their key issues for the session (**on file**).

7.2 The discussion which followed highlighted these points:

- The key priorities in the UBU presentation had already been incorporated in Education Committee work-plans and the Student Affairs Committee would decide which of the key strategic priorities should be reported to Council throughout the academic year.

- Divisional Heads had been asked by the end of November 2013 to prepare a student engagement plan which would ensure that the student voice was being heard. The Sabbatical Officers had also been invited to attend some Divisional Heads meetings to discuss their manifestos and how Professional Services could support them in achieving their ambitions.
- The University was working hard to develop a joint strategy for Sport and would continue its discussions with UBU in order to progress the current issues around sports pass pricing. Ms Goymer emphasised that from an industry perspective sports was extremely important, not only in relation to mental and physical health but because it also offered life skills development which had a positive impact on employability.
- The University was working in partnership with the Sabbatical Officers on all student-related matters and, had introduced a new student representation system with student membership of all University Education Committees.
- The new terms of reference for the Student Affairs Committee were welcomed.
- There was still work to be done with regards to the perception of the relationship between UBU and the student body. However, the Sabbatical Officers were committed to ensuring that students fully understood the role of UBU.

8. Chair's report

8.1 RECEIVED and NOTED (reference **CN/13/001**).

8.2 APPROVED: the appointment of four Visiting Professors (reference **CN/13/001**).

8.3 Council members also noted the following points:

- Mr C Green would become the Chair of the Finance Committee from 1 January 2014 in lieu of Mr D Ord's leaving University Council as at end December 2013.
- For future Council meetings there would be a reduction in the number of attendees for the presentation/strategic sessions.
- The Chair would encourage Deans to incorporate into their annual reports and presentations their views and comments on the results of the National Student Survey (NSS), the University staff survey, health and safety and equality and diversity.
- Next year there would be an additional Council meeting in September. A key focus of that meeting was intended to be on training Council members.
- A faculty visits schedule was currently being drawn up for the Chair. Once this was available, the Chair would invite other Council members who were available to join him. It was hoped that this would help members to feel more engaged with the wider University.
- SPIs were being allocated to particular Council Committees and the Chairs of those Committees would report to Council regularly throughout the academic year.
- Members were reminded that once the Committee Schedule was published there was limited ability for changing committee meeting dates and if any changes were required, these should be made in consultation with the Governance Office.
- As part of the Council effectiveness review, a self-assessment questionnaire would be circulated to Council in Spring 2014.
- Lay members of Council Committees would be invited to attend the Away Day dinner in March.

8.4 Copies of the Annual Review of the Year were provided to Council members for information.

9 Vice-Chancellor's report

9.1 RECEIVED (reference **CN/13/002**).

9.2 The following points were noted:

- The Vice-Chancellor had recently visited GCHQ where information and cyber security were high on the agenda. Members noted that the University was following the recommendations made by the Centre for the Protection of National Infrastructure (CPNI) in order to protect its system and that it was a risk that was being constantly monitored.
- The Pro Vice-Chancellor (Research) would provide Council with an update on the outcomes of the Kyoto symposium next term.
- The University had recently had considerable success with its doctoral training applications. The GW4+ Doctoral Training Partnership (DTP) which the University lead had been allocated 28 studentships per annum for each of the next 5 years by the Natural Environment Research Council (NERC) in collaboration with Exeter, Cardiff and Bath. This was the largest allocation of studentships to any DTP in the country. This had been complemented by a further 10 studentships per annum by the GW4 partners. It was the University's ambition to be, at the end of the next 5 years, the leading centre for doctoral training in NERC remit science in the UK. In the parallel Engineering and Physical Sciences Research Council (EPSRC) competition, the University led on successful 7 bids for Centre for Doctoral Training (CDTs) and was partnering another 4. This was significant given that no university in the UK had lead on more than 7 CDTs and therefore Bristol was at the top of the league. Council members noted that tremendous credit was due to those individuals who led the activities and the professional support that RED had provided to those individuals.

Appointments

9.3 Given the Dean of Medicine and Dentistry's imminent departure and the development of a large concentration of biomedical research resources in London, the University had decided to look at appointing an interim Dean for the Faculty whilst it took stock of how the University should prosecute its bio-medical research, how this should be resourced and what the structures should be before a permanent post-holder was recruited. Before final decisions were made, a significant research project would be commissioned to map all biomedical research currently carried out in the University, to benchmark against comparators and to consider the extent and quality of international and national collaborations.

9.4 The post of Deputy Vice-Chancellor had been advertised and interviews were taking place in December 2013. A formal announcement would be made before Christmas.

GW4 – collaboration with Bath, Cardiff and Exeter

9.5 NOTED.

Update on IT Action Plan and IT Advisory Group

9.6 The Registrar advised that the action plan reflected the recommendations in the KPMG report but had been expanded to include additional streams of activity relating to IT, including recent reviews relating to high performance computing and IT support for research. A number of actions had already been taken forward including the creation of a device deployment team to fast-track the successful

upgrade of computers in light of changes to Windows. In addition, the Group had recently approved the creation of a new structure for the support of Research IT. This would reduce the pressure on IT zonal teams who were also providing high delivery support in other areas. The next meeting of the IT Advisory Group would look at measures to improve the effectiveness of the service desk and streamlining the procurement of computers (and IT devices more generally). In the longer term the group would be developing a model for governance structures for IT in the future and establish a process for developing and delivering a new overarching IT strategy. An extensive communications strategy was being developed and rolled out and HR and IT Services were working hard to ensure staff continued to be actively engaged.

- 9.7 Members noted that the IT Advisory Group would report to every meeting of the Audit Committee, which in turn would provide assurance to Council regarding the University's commitment to addressing the concerns raised in the KPMG report.

Update on national pay negotiations and industrial action

- 9.8 The HR Director reported on the recent industrial action. Only a small proportion of staff had taken action, and whilst there had been some impact it was not widespread. A second day of strike action was planned for 3 December, but national talks were taking place to try and alleviate this.

- 9.9 Members noted that the University had in the past two days received a recommendation from the UCEA advising that it should proceed to implement the recommended national pay offer. This recommendation would be discussed by the senior team and a proposal brought to the Chair and Vice-Chair of Council for approval.

Admissions update

- 9.10 NOTED.

CIPB

- 9.11 NOTED.

League tables

- 9.12 NOTED.

National Student Survey (NSS) results 2013

- 9.13 The Pro Vice-Chancellor (Education) advised that:
- Actions arising as a result of last year's NSS analysis were already being put in place and were beginning to have some impact.
 - A schedule for NSS school visits was now in place and would be completed before Christmas. School action plans had already been created and were 'SMART' in their focus, based on feedback from the internal auditors. The Student Experience Committee would monitor progress against the actions. The action plans would also be considered by Faculty Boards.
 - The University would continue to focus on the area of Assessment and Feedback, particularly during school visits.
 - Academic support was an issue that had been identified last year and the introduction of a senior tutor system (which would embed a more standardised approach to personal tutoring) had now been launched. The University would work hard to embed this during this academic year

- Personal development was the next key priority for the Education Committee. This would also be addressed as part of the set of specific questions being drawn up for school visits.
- The Council Away Day in March would focus on education and student experience.

Recent Grants and Awards

- 9.14 Council members also congratulated Dr Esther Crawley in respect of the two new research grants awarded for projects that aimed to advance treatment for people with Chronic Fatigue Syndrome [CFS] or Myalgic Encephalopathy [ME].

Graduation ceremony schedule

- 9.15 NOTED.

UBU Annual Members Meeting (AMM)

- 9.16 NOTED.

10. Election of Council Chair and Vice-Chair

- 10.1 The Vice-Chancellor took the Chair for this item. The Chair of Council and Vice-Chair of Council left the room.
- 10.2 APPROVED (in accordance with Statute 16 and Ordinance 3):
- The reappointment of Mr Denis Burn as Chair of Council for further year until 31 December 2014.
 - The reappointment of Mr Bob Morton as Vice-Chair of Council for further year until 31 December 2014.

11. UBU Financial Matters

- 11.1 APPROVED: UBU draft budget for 2013/14 (reference **CN/13/003**).
- 11.2 NOTED: Audited annual report and financial statements for the year ended 31 July 2013 (reference **CN/13/003**).

12. Financial Matters

Overview of financial results

- 12.1 NOTED (reference **CN/13/027**).

Annual report and financial statements

- 12.2 APPROVED: the Annual Report and Financial Statements 2012/13 (reference **CN/13/004**). The Vice-Chancellor and Chair of Council agreed to sign on Council's behalf.
- 12.3 It was agreed that at the next meeting of Council there would be a more detailed consideration of the current pensions risk and Council's responsibilities.

Action: Finance Director

- 12.4 The Finance Director reassured Council that both he and the Finance Committee spent considerable time reviewing and testing the University's financial strategy and plans and the resultant compliance with the financial covenants within the Barclays' loan agreements. He was confident that the current plans were compliant with reasonable headroom. However, as previously presented to Council, there was

significant future challenge and uncertainty (HEFCE funding, payroll and pensions costs etcetera). A number of key uncertainties would come to a head in 2015/16.

- 12.5 The Finance Director provided a brief update to Council on the negotiations with Barclays regarding the potential restructuring of the existing loans.

External Auditors Report

- 12.6 APPROVED: the letter of representation to the auditors PricewaterhouseCoopers (reference **CN/13/005**) and AUTHORISED: the Vice-Chancellor and Chair of Council to sign on Council's behalf.

Monthly Financial Report

- 12.7 NOTED (reference **CN/13/006**).

- 12.8 Members were advised that in recent days the Royal Bank of Scotland (RBS), which held the University's retail banking arrangements, had been downgraded by Standard and Poors rating agency. As an interim measure the Finance Director had reduced cash/investment holdings with RBS within a revised counterparty limit of £10m. This would be kept under review. RBS were the University's retail banker.

- 12.9 APPROVED (reference **CN/13/006**):

- A revised approach to the University's main cheque signatory arrangements and the addition of Professor Judith Squires as a signatory;
- To amend the University's fixed rate Barclays loans to move from quarterly interest to monthly interest for a duration of up to three years and to authorise the Finance Director to conclude negotiations/arrangements with Barclays. This follows previously similar transactions, the latest of which expire spring 2014;
- The grant of authority up to the end of July 2014 for the Finance Director together with any one of the Vice-Chancellor, Deputy Vice-Chancellor, and the Registrar & Chief Operating Officer to sign any amendments and or documents related to the Barclays Loan agreements;
- The creation of a spin out company UltraHaptics and the delegation to the Finance Director and Director of RED to finalise arrangements and proceed.

Financial forecasts for HEFCE

- 12.10 APPROVED: the financial forecasts (subject to final checks and amendments) for submission to HEFCE (reference **CN/13/007**).

HEFCE Sustainability (ASSUR) return

- 12.11 APPROVED: the ASSUR return for submission to HEFCE (reference **CN/13/008**).

- 12.12 The Finance Director explained the background to the return. The draft report had been reviewed by the Finance Committee, which recommended their approval to Council.

Endowment and other funds – Investment Unit Values

- 12.13 APPROVED: the investment unit values of the endowment and other funds of the University for the period 1 August 2012 to 1 August 2013 (reference **CN/13/009**).

Audit Committee Annual Report

- 12.14 APPROVED: the Annual Report of the Audit Committee for 2012/13 for submission to HEFCE (reference **CN/13/010**).

HEFCE Annual Accountability Returns

- 12.15 APPROVED: the Annual Monitoring Statement 2013 and the Annual Assurance Return 2013 for submission to HEFCE (reference **CN/13/011**).
- 12.16 NOTED: that question 12 of the Annual Monitoring Statement would be updated following discussion at the Student Experience Committee.

13. Annual Risk Review 2013/14

- 13.1 NOTED (reference **CN/13/013**).
- 13.2 It was agreed that:
- Cyber security should feature more prominently.
 - Damage to university reputation and brand should be made more explicit.
- 13.3 Members noted that the Planning Office was undertaking a review of the way the risk register was presented and that this would be discussed again at the May Council meeting alongside SPIs and business objectives.

14. Recommendations to Court

- 14.1 RECOMMENDED to Court: the proposed nominations as contained within the report for consideration at its meeting on 6 December 2013 (reference **CN/13/004**).

15. Committee reports

Student Affairs Committee

- 15.1 APPROVED: the terms of reference and membership of the Student Affairs Committee for academic year 2013/14 (reference **CN/13/015**).

Audit Committee

- 15.2 APPROVED: the terms of reference and membership of the Audit Committee for academic year 2013/14 (reference **CN/13/016**).
- 15.3 Members noted that the covering report referred in error to Dr M Hamlin when it should have referred to Ms C Peck. The wording should be: "Ms Cindy Peck's current term of office on the Audit Committee ends on 31 December 2013. It is anticipated that her membership will be renewed by the Membership Appointments Group on 24 January 2014."
- 15.4 The Treasurer outlined the role and specific responsibilities of the Audit Committee as part of his committee 'spotlight' slot.
- 15.5 The Treasurer gave an oral update from the meeting on 5 November 2013, highlighting the following points:
- The committee considered and concluded that there was no reason why Council should not approve the Annual Report and Financial Statements 2012/13.
 - Members discussed UBPAS and were impressed with how the financial position had been improved by the implementation of a revised employee benefit/contribution package from November 2013.
 - There was a considerable discussion about USS and the Finance Director provided a detailed update on the general financial sustainability of the University and the

potential financial impact of the USS pension scheme. The update provided reassurance to the committee and members agreed that similar detailed updates would continue going forward.

- Following a tender process the University had re-appointed Mazars as the University's internal auditors. Members were satisfied that university management had given positive responses to any queries raised by Mazars and were pleased with the continued positive relationship between the auditors and management.
- The committee considered and approved the external auditors (PwC) report including management letter.

15.6 Council members were invited to contact the Treasurer if there were any issues that they felt ought to be considered by the Audit Committee.

15.7 The Finance Director advised that the issue relating to EU timesheets was being addressed. A timesheet recording system had been put in place 18 months previously. Full compliance had not yet been achieved but this was being monitored and chased very firmly.

Estates Committee

15.8 APPROVED: the terms of reference and membership of the Estates Committee for academic year 2013/14 (reference **CN/13/017**).

15.9 The Bursar advised Council that the Life Sciences building would now be completed in March instead of January. The delay was caused by a slight defect in the building structure which the contractors were now addressing.

Ethics of Research Committee

15.10 APPROVED: the terms of reference and membership of the Ethics of Research Committee for academic year 2013/14 and NOTED the change of Chair, to Pro Vice Chancellor Nick Lieven, (reference **CN/13/018**) and that further revisions to the terms of reference and membership would be reported to Council at a future meeting.

Finance Committee

15.11 APPROVED: the terms of reference and membership of the Finance Committee for academic year 2013/14 (reference **CN/13/019**).

15.12 AGREED: that any references in the terms of reference and membership to the Pro Vice-Chancellor (Research) should be changed to read 'Senior Pro Vice-Chancellor'.

15.13 Mr C Green thanked Mr D Ord for his excellent chairmanship of the committee.

Honorary Degrees Committee

15.14 APPROVED: the award of the honorary degrees contained within the report including the allocation of public orators, at degree congregations in January 2014, July 2014 and January 2015 (reference **CN/13/020**).

15.15 NOTED: that the terms of reference for the committee would be presented to Council for approval at its meeting on 7 February 2014.

15.16 Members noted the strictly confidential nature of the papers.

Personnel and Health & Safety Committee

- 15.17 APPROVED: the terms of reference and membership of the Personnel and Health and Safety Committee for academic year 2013/14, and the proposed name change to 'Personnel, Equality and Health and Safety Committee' (reference **CN/13/021**).
- 15.18 APPROVED: the recommendation that Dean's reports to Council do, in future, include an update on the progress made against their Faculty action plans, developed following the 2012 staff survey.
- 15.19 Mr B Morton thanked Mrs D Moore for her valued contributions to the committee over the past nine years.

Nominations Committee of Court

- 15.20 NOTED (reference **CN/13/022**).

16. Academic Redundancy Committee report

- 16.1 APPROVED: the institution of redundancy procedures in respect of cases arising from the application of the Fixed-term Contract Policy, in relation to Ordinance 26 (reference **CN/13/023**).

17. Report of the meeting of Senate

- 17.1 NOTED (reference **CN/13/024**).

18. Anti-Corruption and Bribery Policy

- 18.1 APPROVED: the proposed amendments to the Anti-Corruption and Bribery Policy, the consequential amendments to the Code of Conduct and Conflict of Interest Regulations, including the recommendations made by the Secretary's Office as set out in the report (reference **CN/13/025**).
- 18.2 Council members emphasised the importance of communicating the changes.

19. Amendment to the appeals section of the Academic Promotion Procedure

- 19.1 APPROVED: the proposed amendments to the Academic Promotion Procedure as set out in the report (reference **CN/13/026**).

20. Standing Items

Equality and Diversity Implications

- 20.1 Council did not feel that the 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. Council agreed that the change in the name of the Personnel and Health & Safety Committee to address equalities issues was welcomed.

Communications and Consultation

- 20.2 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.

21. Date of next meeting

21.1 The next meeting of Council would be held on Friday 7 February 2014, venue to be confirmed.