



## MINUTES OF COUNCIL

FRIDAY 14 MARCH 2014

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, Mr C Green, Mr R Griffiths, Dr M Hamlin, Mr Paul Hand, Dame Denise Holt, Sir Ronald Kerr, Ms P Lawrence-Archer, Professor N Lieven, Mr T Macdonald, Dr J Manley, Professor R Middleton, Mr B Morton, Professor G Orpen, Ms Cindy 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: Mrs K Dudley (Clerk), Dr H Galbraith, Ms Jane Bridgwater, Mr P Finch, Ms R Geller, Mr G Gregory, Mr A Nield, Ms L Robinson and Professor J Squires.

Apologies: Mrs S Goymer and Professor D Clarke.

### 1. Welcome and announcements

- 1.1 The Chair welcomed members to the meeting.
- 1.2 The visitor who was due to present the "Virtual Boardroom" system to Council had been unable to attend and the Chair had therefore decided to vary the order of the agenda to accommodate this. The Pro Vice-Chancellor's presentation on International Strategy would be delivered first.

### 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 7 February 2014

- 4.1 CONFIRMED.

### 5. Matters arising and actions

- 5.1 There was nothing outstanding to report.

### 6. International Strategy

- 6.1 RECEIVED: A presentation from the Pro Vice-Chancellor (International) setting out the proposed International Strategy and the University's key opportunities and challenges in this area (on file). A document setting out the detail of the draft International Strategy had been circulated with the main bundle of Council papers (reference **CN/14/016**).
- 6.2 Professor Lieven informed Council that he would welcome Council's input into the draft International Strategy. Those who did not have an opportunity to comment at the Council meeting were invited to contact Professor Lieven outside of the meeting.

6.3 The resultant discussion highlighted the following points:

- It was recognised that language problems continued to be a significant barrier for many international students. An insufficient command of English presented both academic and social challenges for some students. Finding good quality English language courses that were pitched at an appropriate level had proved to be difficult. The School of Modern Languages was, however, making significant efforts to provide support and training for those students that needed it. Currently some 800 students who were registered outside of the School of Modern Languages were undertaking additional language courses at the School.
- Although Faculty Deans had lobbied for the devolution of scholarship/studentship allocations, it was noted that studentships generated high levels of interest amongst many international communities. It was suggested that if this could be made into a competitive process which was marketed internationally, it could generate significant interest in and competition for Bristol PhD places and, in turn, could deliver a large number of high calibre PhD candidates.
- The University's Strategic Pricing Group had been looking at the potential impact of offering alternative tuition fee pricing structures to different international markets.
- The importance and value of reciprocal arrangements for students was noted. Particularly, for example, through 'student exchange' and 'year abroad' programmes. The University was very supportive of these programmes and hoped to be in a position to expand them in future years.
- It would be important to work with state governments as well as universities in certain countries. Formal partnerships with state-run institutions may require Bristol to enter into contractual agreements which brought with them new risks and opportunities. It would, however, not be sensible for Bristol to forge ahead with international partnership arrangements unless it had the full support and engagement of its academic communities.
- The growing importance of engaging Bristol's alumni in international strategy delivery and development was noted.
- A high level of cultural awareness would continue to be a critical factor in successfully delivering the International Strategy. The University would need to think carefully, for example, about how it welcomed, inducted and supported new international staff and students.
- It was recognised that many Council members had a number of important and influential international contacts and access to networks. Council members had an important ambassadorial role to play.
- There was felt to be significant potential for Bristol to increase its representation amongst African countries. This would enhance the overall diversity of Bristol's student population.
- It would be critical to ensure that Bristol's brand and reputation continued to underline every aspect of the International Strategy and that this should continue to be monitored closely.
- The benefits of developing links with schools, particularly international schools and/or the international branches of schools, were noted.

6.4 Council members indicated that they were supportive of the general direction and tone of the International Strategy and looked forward to receiving progress reports in due course.

## **7. Personnel, Equality and Health & Safety Committee Report**

7.1 RECEIVED and NOTED (reference CN/14/016).

- 7.2 Mr Bob Morton, Chair of the Committee, took a few moments to apprise Council of the key business that the Committee had been considering over the past year. The Personnel, Equality and Health and Safety Committee had welcomed the opportunity to have oversight of the key areas of equality and diversity and health and safety. Mr Morton began by assuring Council that the University's new Health & Safety structures had resulted in the University adopting a more integrated and holistic approach to health and safety throughout the University. Health and safety performance and monitoring systems had improved significantly and strategies had become more solution-focussed. The level of collaboration with staff across the University and with the Trades Unions had increased significantly. It was recognised that the Health and Safety Consultative Committee continued to play a critical role in overseeing the effectiveness of health and safety practices although it would be important to ensure that the membership of this committee retained sufficient breadth and expertise to enable it to make informed decisions about all aspects of health and safety.
- 7.3 The Committee had spent much time considering the implications of the staff survey and in parallel with this had reviewed strategies and targets for increasing staff satisfaction and engagement.
- 7.4 The University's performance enhancement programme had now moved from the development to the implementation phase. Performance reviews had become mandatory across the University. The Committee had felt that this was a major positive step for the University and hoped that the benefits would become apparent over the coming months.
- 7.5 Mr Morton concluded by reassuring Council that it was his Committee's view that the University was on the right track in terms of personnel, equality and health and safety strategy and that systemic and long-term progress had been made and would continue to be made across all of these areas.

## **8. Equality and Diversity Annual Report 2012/13**

- 8.1 RECEIVED (reference **CN/14/018**).
- 8.2 The Human Resources Director reported that the University had, over the past year, prioritised increasing gender diversity throughout the University, particularly in relation to the representation of female academics. The focus would broaden to other groups in the next 12 to 18 months, including minority ethnic groups and people with disabilities. There would be a particular focus on reviewing recruitment practices with the aim of removing barriers for people from under-represented groups.
- 8.3 The report had traditionally focused on staff rather than student equality and diversity issues. The new Student Experience Committee was, however, looking at strategies for improving student equality and diversity and at setting up processes to enable the collection and analysis of detailed student equality and diversity data.
- 8.4 It would be important to engage post graduate research (PGR) students in equality and diversity strategy as there were challenges to the careers progression of female PGR students, particularly within the STEM subjects. The University was aware of these issues and had appointed a female PGR student to sit on the University's new Academic Career Equalities Working Group.

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

9.1 RECEIVED (reference **CN/14/019**)

### Remuneration Committee

9.2 APPROVED: The appointment of Dr Roger Holmes, Pro Chancellor, to the Remuneration Committee, with immediate effect until 31 December 2016.

### Appointment of University Vice-Chancellor

9.3 NOTED: Following the Vice-Chancellor's recent announcement of his intention to stand down from his role at the end of July 2015, the Chair outlined the proposed process and timescales for appointing a new Vice-Chancellor. As part of the appointment process, the University would consult with staff, students, alumni and members of Court and Council. The consultation would be based on the following key questions, the answers to which would inform the appointment process overall.

9.4 The questions were: (1) what is it about the University of Bristol that is special and that we should seek to preserve and develop – and what, if any, characteristics should we seek to change?

(2) What key challenges and opportunities does the University face over the next five to ten years?

(3) What qualities should the University seek in its future leader?

9.5 Members of the University Council and Senate would host a series of consultation sessions for staff which would provide an opportunity to discuss the questions. In addition, staff could send their responses to the questions to a dedicated email address. Arrangements were also being made to engage students, alumni and members of Court within the consultation process.

9.6 Members of Council would be invited to attend consultation sessions and in addition would be encouraged to send feedback directly to the Secretariat. The Governance Office would contact Council members in due course to explain the process.

9.7 The answers to the questions from staff, students, alumni and Court would be summarised in a document which would form part of the briefing for the appointed search organisation. The document would be made available in June 2014. It was anticipated that the appointment process, which would involve the appointed search organisation as well as an Appointment Committee, would start in June 2014. This would be with a view to long-listing candidates in September, short-listing in October and the Appointment Committee making a final recommendation to Council in November 2014.

9.8 The Appointment Committee would include five members of Council, including the Chair of Council, three members of Senate, a senior representative from Professional Services and one student. The Chair of Council would shortly be writing to all members of Council to invite expressions of interest from those who were interested in joining the Appointment Committee.

### Council Effectiveness Review

9.9 The Chair of Council felt that it would be important to engage the Vice-Chancellor in the planned Effectiveness Review of Council before he left the University. In view of this, the Chair, with the support of the University's senior team, had decided to accelerate the timing of the Review so that it would start during the current academic year. A meeting of the Membership Appointment Group would be held on the

afternoon of the next Council meeting (16 May 2014) to consider the terms of reference for the Review. It was anticipated that the Review would also consider the relationship between Council and Senate and include a review of Senate's effectiveness.

- 9.10 If appropriate, the Council "development day" in September 2014 could be used to consider the outcomes of the initial effectiveness review.

Council Effectiveness – Skills Audit Questionnaire

- 9.11 The Chair reminded members that if they had not already done so, they should complete and return a skills audit questionnaire as soon as possible.

Council Effectiveness – Self-Assessment Questionnaire

- 9.12 Members of Council would shortly be asked to complete a Self-Assessment Questionnaire. This would form an important part of the wider Council effectiveness review.

Changes to the University of Bristol Union's Memorandum and Articles of Association

- 9.13 The Chair had been advised that he would be asked to approve a series of changes to the Union's Memorandum and Articles using Chair's Powers in advance of the next meeting of Council. The Chair would approve the changes only with the unanimous support of the working group (a sub-group of the Student Affairs Committee) which had been looking at the detail of the proposed changes. The changes, if approved, would be reported to Council at the earliest opportunity.

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

- 10.1 RECEIVED (reference **CN/14/020**).

Appointments

- 10.2 APPROVED: The appointment of Professor Nishan Canagarajah, current Dean of the Faculty of Engineering, as the new Pro Vice-Chancellor (Research) from 1 August 2014.

Biomedical Review

- 10.3 The initial review was now underway. In addition to the Biomedical Research Review, led by Professor Guy Orpen, this included a detailed review, lead by Professor Judith Squires, of the University's clinical courses (medical, veterinary and dentistry). An outline report of the key findings of the initial reviews was expected at the end of March 2014 and an update would be presented to Council in due course.

Visiting Professors

- 10.4 APPROVED: The appointment of the following Visiting Professors:
- (1) Dr Florian Pappenberger in the Faculty of Science for a period of three years.
  - (2) Professor Mike Todd in the Faculty of Engineering for a period of three years.
  - (3) Dr Kenton O'Hara in the Faculty of Engineering for a period of two years.
  - (4) Dr Andy Hughes in the Faculty of Engineering for a period of one year.

Update on National Pay Negotiations

10.5 The latest round of industrial action had been concluded. Talks between the 'employers' and the Joint Trades Unions were ongoing. Further industrial action was anticipated in April 2015 and the University was reviewing how it should respond to this.

Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) – Higher Education Review

10.6 NOTED.

University of Bristol / Kyoto University Collaboration

10.7 NOTED.

Admissions update

10.8 NOTED.

10.9 The University was commissioning a brand research project, the aim of which would be to identify key stakeholders' perceptions of Bristol, including students, applicants and parents.

National Students Survey (NSS)

10.10 NOTED.

10.11 The University was interested to identify any correlation between NSS scores and the results of the staff survey: data on both are considered in School Reviews.

League tables

10.12 NOTED.

Health and Safety

10.13 The Vice-Chancellor informed Council that he continued to meet with the University's Director of Health & Safety on a monthly basis to review progress.

Recent Grants and Awards

10.14 NOTED.

**11. Financial Matters**

11.1 NOTED (reference **CN/14/021**).

11.2 Earlier in the morning, HEFCE had issued outline details of recurrent grant levels for 2013/14 (revised) and 2014/15. Initial analysis indicated an in-year cut to the teaching grant of c.£1.8m and a cut of £1-2m in 2014/15. Research funding was expected to remain constant in absolute terms. The final funding letter was expected on 24 March 2014. A more detailed account would be presented to Council at its next meeting.

11.3 **\*\*COMMERCIAL IN CONFIDENCE\*\***

11.4 The Life Sciences building was nearing completion and final handover of the building was expected in mid-May 2014. It was hoped that the building would be fully operational by mid-June/July 2014.

11.5 **\*\*COMMERCIAL IN CONFIDENCE\*\***

11.6 **APPROVED:** Authorisation for the above agreements to be signed by the Finance Director plus one of the Vice-Chancellor, Deputy Vice-Chancellor, or Registrar and Chief Operating Officer.

## 12. Access Agreement

12.1 RECEIVED (reference **CN/14/022**).

12.2 The Students' Union Sabbatical Officers confirmed that they were happy with the proposal and considered it to be a very positive step forwards. The senior team were confident that the proposed student support package bought Bristol in line with what its competitors were offering and would enhance our ability to meet our widening participation targets.

## 13. Annual and Committee reports

### Audit Committee Report to Council

13.1 RECEIVED (reference **CN/13/023**).

13.2 The Treasurer reported that the Pro Vice-Chancellor (Research) and the Finance Director were working to assure Audit Committee of appropriate risk mitigation regarding the development and operation of the NCC model.

13.3 The Registrar reported that the University had interviewed three candidates who had applied for the position of Chief Information Officer (CIO). The appointment panel had not been able to achieve any consensus about the suitability of the applicants and had decided not to appoint to the role on this occasion. The current Director of IT Services would be leaving the University at the end of April 2014. The Registrar was considering the various interim options that were open to the University, including the possible appointment of an interim CIO.

### Student Affairs Committee

13.4 RECEIVED (reference **CN/14/024**).

13.5 The recent review and subsequent restructure of the Student Affairs Committee had been viewed as positive. The Chair cautioned that it would be important to monitor the roles of the Education and the Student Affairs Committee to ensure that they continued to complement each other, and to ensure that there was no duplication of work.

### Report of the Membership Appointments Group (MAG)

13.6 RECEIVED (reference **CN/14/025**).

13.7 APPROVED: The proposed changes to the MAG's terms of reference as set out in **Appendix A** of the report, subject to the following amendment:

6. An annual review to ~~ensure~~ endeavour to achieve the diversity of members....

13.8 APPROVED: The proposed changes to the Council Committees' terms of reference, as set out in Section 2 of the report.

13.9 The Chair of Council reminded all members of Council that they were welcome to attend any Council committee meeting. He asked that members informed the chair of the relevant committee before attending.

### Senate Report

13.10 NOTED (reference **CN/14/026**).

### Student Complaints Officer – Annual Report 2012/13

13.11 NOTED (reference **CN/14/027**).

- 13.12 Council noted that problems relating to mental health and wellbeing continued to rise and that this trend was reflected in institutions throughout the UK. The University of Bristol's Director of Student Services was currently looking at this issue and trying to identify ways in which the University could offer more support to those students who needed it.
- 13.13 The report author would be asked to include an account of action taken and progress with that action within the main report in future years.
- 13.14 The Director of Legal Services thanked Katy Gullon and Graham Petch, student advisers from the Union's "Just Ask" service, for the good work they continued to deliver on behalf of students in respect student complaints and appeals.

#### Faculty of Arts Annual Report

- 13.15 NOTED (reference **CN/14/028**).
- 13.16 Council noted that the Foundation Programme in Arts had proved to be a very successful and innovative widening participation initiative. The pilot programme had now been endorsed formally by the University.

#### Faculty of Social Sciences & Law Annual Report

- 13.17 The Dean of the Faculty of Social Sciences & Law, Professor Wendy Lerner, presented her Faculty's Annual Report to Council (on file). Her written Annual Report had been circulated with the Council papers (reference **CN/14/029**).
- 13.18 The discussion which followed highlighted these points:
- The Faculty was keen to increase its number of PhD students. It was considering ways in which it could work with external partners to develop new and innovative funding models which would attract good quality PhD applicants. It was suggested that the Faculty would need to offer a greater range of flexible learning models.
  - The Chair of Council thanked Professor Lerner for her informative and interesting presentation and asked that Council's congratulations and thanks be passed on to key staff in the Faculty. The Faculty had enjoyed a very successful year and was well placed to capitalise on this success in future years.

### **14. Any Other Business**

#### Goldney Wall Collapse

- 14.1 The Bursar wished to bring to Council's attention, an incident that had recently occurred within the University estate. On the evening of 12 February 2014, a section of wall that formed a boundary between the University's Goldney Hall and adjacent private residential properties in Ambra Vale East had collapsed during a storm. Parts of the wall had fallen into the gardens of four properties, causing significant damage to one house and slight damage to two others. The University had engaged a structural engineer on 13 February 2014 to assess the condition of the houses and to advise on further urgent works of demolition on parts of the wall. The wall is part of the curtilage of a listed building and conservation officer consent would be needed before any rebuilding could be undertaken. Occupiers of the affected houses had been advised that they should consult with their own insurers concerning permanent repairs. The University, in consultation with the structural engineer, was liaising with its own insurers.

- 14.2 The Vice-Chancellor requested that the structural engineer should be asked to register any anxieties or concerns that he had about the current and future safety or integrity of the wall as a matter of urgency, and the University should take immediate action to respond to these.

Virtual Boardroom System

- 14.3 The Director of Planning, Dr Helen Galbraith and Lucy Barling, Governance Officer, briefly outlined how members could use the new Virtual Boardroom system to access their Council and committee papers electronically. If members wished, they could be given access to an ipad 'app' which would allow them to download their papers onto their ipad device and view them at their leisure (with or without internet access). Members who wished to take advantage of the new system were encouraged to seek advice from the Governance Office.

**15. Standing Items**

Equality and Diversity Implications

- 15.1 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.

Communications and Consultation

- 15.2 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.

**16. Date of next meeting**

- 16.1 The next meeting of Council would be held on Friday, 16 May 2014.