



The
University
Of
Sheffield.

University
Secretary's
Office

Minutes Meeting of Council

Date: 22 February 2016

Present: Mr Pedder, Pro-Chancellor (in the Chair);
Mrs Harkness, Pro-Chancellor; Mr Young, Treasurer;
Professor Sir Keith Burnett, Vice-Chancellor;
Professor West, Deputy-Vice-Chancellor;
Professor Labbe, Pro-Vice-Chancellor;
Mr Bagley, Mr Belton, Mr Kelly, Mrs Legg, Mr Mayson, Mr McMorrow,
Professor Phillips, Ms Prout, Mr Sykes, Professor Vincent, Mr Wood

Secretary: Dr West

In attendance: Mr Borland, Mr Dodman, Ms Green, Ms Horn, Ms Purves, Mr Rabone, Mr Swinn,

Apologies: Professor van den Boom, Dr Eden, Ms Hague

WELCOME

The Chair welcomed Mr Gary Wood (a new member in Class (5), deputising for Ms Hague) to his first meeting. Also welcomed were Ms Jo Purves (Director, Sheffield International); Ms Anne Horn (Director of Library Services and University Librarian), Ms Sally Green (Senior Policy Adviser) and Mr Matthew Borland (Senior Governance and Policy Officer), who were attending as observers.

AGENDA

1. DECLARATION OF CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

No conflicts of interest were declared.

2. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

The Minutes of the meeting held on 27 November 2015, having been circulated, were approved and signed.

3. MATTERS ARISING ON THE MINUTES

Matters arising on the Minutes were noted as follows:

- (a) Minute 3(a), Senior Executive Structure: The process of recruiting a successor to Professor Tony Ryan as Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Science) was underway and a shortlisting meeting would take place on 24 February. The recruitment process for a Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Research and Innovation) would commence during March; Professor Richard Jones would stand down from the role in September.

- (b) Minute 3(f), Council Effectiveness Review: Discussion was taking place to identify an external reviewer to undertake the review, in accordance with the approach recommended in the HE Code of Governance. A proposal for the scope, conduct and timing of the review will be presented to Council in April.
- (c) Minute 3(g), Council Business Plan: The Business Plan was being used to inform agenda planning and the updated Plan was available via the BoardPad Reading Room. Members were invited to contact Dr West with any comments or suggestions.

4. VICE-CHANCELLOR'S REPORT

Council received for information a report from the Vice-Chancellor providing information on key current and forthcoming developments across a range of areas. Points noted in particular, and on which clarification was provided, included the following:

- (a) Higher Education Green Paper: The University had submitted its response to the consultation on the HE Green Paper and there was strong coherence of views advanced from the sector as whole. Particular concerns had been raised regarding the proposed separation of decision-making regarding policy and funding of research and teaching. Also highlighted had been the need to ensure that analysis of teaching quality to underpin the TEF would not unduly increase the administrative burden on institutions. Council noted with concern the proposed closure of BIS' Sheffield office, which currently housed the department's HE policy experts and followed previous cuts to the BIS budget that had led to a 25% reduction in staff.
- (b) Anti-extremism and free speech: The University continued to implement measures that sought to balance compliance with the Prevent duty under the Counter-Terrorism Act and the right to freedom of speech. The student movement had been a vocal critic of Prevent and the University and Students' Union engaged in regular dialogue to ensure that events provided appropriate opportunities for views to be challenged and for attendees to consider alternative perspectives. Council would have a further opportunity to discuss the implications of Prevent over dinner.
- (c) Social mobility: Despite positive government rhetoric about widening access to HE, the replacement of maintenance grants with loans and the freezing of the student loan repayment threshold risked eroding universities' ability to recruit students from WP backgrounds. The University continued to take action to increase its intake of such students through initiatives such as the Sheffield Outreach and Access to Medicine Scheme but increasing access remained challenging given that funding was only one element; raising the aspiration and attainment of under-represented groups was essential but highly complex. A further concern was the potential imposition of measures to evaluate success against WP objectives that were too simplistic or general. The University was currently engaged in work to evaluate and enhance the progression and attainment of BME students and the University continued to lead the development of apprenticeship provision in HEIs, including discussions with the Minister for Universities Science and the Vice-Chancellor's recent address to the Council for the Defence of British Universities; the University was considering how to develop new, high quality

apprenticeship routes in other disciplines, informed by the success of the AMRC-Training Centre; and using its expertise to inform developments in other institutions.

- (d) Student recruitment and related matters: Student registrations were below target and the University was considering its forecast student numbers. Figures from UCAS demonstrated the challenging recruitment environment across the sector generally, and indicated several trends, particularly the continuing decline in home PGT recruitment. The introduction of government loans to support PGT students in 2017 represented an opportunity to increase home PGT student numbers but the likely uptake was uncertain. Recruitment of overseas students could become increasingly challenging because of Home Office changes to visa requirements and negative rhetoric about immigration generally. It was noted that Council would have an opportunity to discuss the progress of 2016 recruitment at its April meeting, by which time the University would have received the HEFCE Grant letter and the process of financial forecasting would be underway.
- (e) Human Resources: The University had been included in the Sunday Times Best 100 Companies 2016, an annual ranking of the happiness and motivation of workforces - the only university in the list; and had received the Wellbeing Special Award in recognition of its creative approach to improving all aspects of employees' health. It was ranked 32 in the 100 Best Not-for-Profit Organisations and awarded a two-star accreditation for outstanding employee engagement. In recognition of its commitment to workplace equality, the University had also recently been ranked in the Stonewall Top 100 Employers list - an annual audit of workplace culture for LGBT staff across all employers - for the third consecutive year. These were significant achievements and Council congratulated Mr Dodman and HR colleagues for the work that had underpinned these successes.
- (f) UK Referendum on EU Membership: The referendum on the future of the UK's membership of the EU would be held on 23 June. Council noted the legal limitations on charities' ability to campaign on political issues and related guidance from the Charity Commission, whereby any campaigning had to relate to an organisation's charitable objects. As a leading educational institution, the University should seek to facilitate debate by promoting public engagement with the evidence about EU membership beyond economic arguments to include wider matters of society, culture and security; and enabling access to a range of views. It was noted that the University had been widely commended for its approach to student voter registration and it would be important to ensure that the student body had the opportunity to participate; a complicating factor was that the date of the referendum fell after the end of the second semester. Further discussion would take place to agree the format for a potential event about EU membership to be hosted by the University, including influential pro- and anti-EU speakers, in liaison with the Student's Union. It was noted that Universities UK was expected to make representations on behalf of the sector and individual mission groups were actively discussing their approaches.

5. INTERNATIONAL STRATEGY

Council received a presentation from the Deputy Vice-Chancellor about the University's International Strategy in which she set out a vision for the University as a global institution, previous successes, areas for improvement and strategic actions to deliver institutional objectives in the short and longer-term. Particular attention was drawn to the following:

- a) Vision: The overarching theme of the International Strategy was to promote efforts to create a globally-minded institutional culture, ensure the cultural agility of both staff and students and develop an internationalised curriculum. It was noted that although the University performed well against external measurements of 'international' and was ranked in the THE Top 100 most international universities, these measurements were limited and did not take into account cultural nuances.
- b) Objectives: The strategic objectives involved developing select global corporate partnerships; further increasing the diversification and integration of the student body; increasing international funding for research; facilitating the global mobility of staff and students; and celebrating the benefits of working in Sheffield to attract more international staff.
- c) Current Successes: Recruitment of overseas students was generally strong at present and the University continued to enjoy a distinctive, positive relationship with China. The Students' Union's establishment of the International Officer post, one of only a small number in the sector, is an example of the initiatives in place to ensure the integration of overseas students into institutional life, and USIC was the largest foundation college of its kind in the UK. Student mobility is high and demand was increasing to the extent that the University's outgoing ERASMUS programme was now the third-largest in the UK. However, it was noted that the overall UK rate of student mobility was significantly lower than a number of other EU countries, and it was important to encourage greater numbers of students to have international experiences. The University was highly visible in national policy debates about international students, notably through the #weareinternational campaign, and was a founder member of the international Business and Innovation Network.
- d) Possible Enhancements and Action:
A number of mutually reinforcing areas had been identified where the University could enhance its performance and where actions were proposed.
 - (i) Global outlook: Diversifying the intake of international students, by focusing marketing and targeting resource; and attracting greater numbers of high quality international staff, informed by benchmarking talent attraction activities, would further develop the global outlook of staff and students and add to the resilience and sustainability of the University's international recruitment.

Active consideration was being given to developing a new phase of the #weareinternational campaign and could include initiatives to further embed international awareness in the institutional culture and enhance the integration of international students.

More generally, the University will seek to better articulate to employers the international aspects of its provision to raise awareness of the skills that could be expected of Sheffield graduates. It was confirmed that the employment rates of graduates with international experience were proportionally higher than those without, but further work was required to ensure that all students could take advantage of international opportunities, regardless of background, by building on existing student support initiatives.

- (ii) Alumni Relations: The University will also work with the Alumni Board to increase opportunities for engagement with and between international alumni, whose collective expertise and affinity for the University represented a potentially significant resource that was currently under-utilised. It was noted that the Alumni Board was developing plans to celebrate the anniversary of the granting of the University's Royal Charter by holding a series of events around the world. In due course, the Alumni Board proposed the establishment of other fora through which to promote institutional- and inter-alumni relations overseas.
- (iii) Strategic Partnerships: A further priority is to strengthen corporate partnerships with both overseas institutions and industry, supported by developing operational workstreams and baseline data to monitor success against this strategic aim. It was confirmed that this work would take place in the context of a wider initiative to map the current extent of corporate relationships across the University according to the level of maturity and seniority as a means to identify new opportunities and unrealised potential benefits. It was recognised that there were a number of effective ways in which to establish an institutional presence overseas: the University had agents in a number of key regions, the White Rose office in Brussels would open shortly and collaborative or partnership working offered a range of opportunities.

6. PERIODIC REVIEW OF THE STUDENTS' UNION CONSTITUTION: FINAL REPORT

Council received and approved the report of the external adviser, which had been endorsed by the Council Task and Finish oversight Group. The Report offered good assurance over the level of compliance with the University's Code of Practice relating to the Students' Union and the SU's governance arrangements. It was particularly pleasing to note the strong position that the SU occupied relative to its peers and the strength of its mutually supportive relationship with the University. It was important to capture the bases of this relationship to sustain them in the long-term, irrespective of changes in personnel. Council noted that a small number of recommendations from the previous review that took place in 2011 had not been implemented and agreed that an update on progress should be provided during 2016/17. Clarification was provided that, as separate legal entities, the internal audit functions of the University and SU were distinct. Nevertheless, the University's internal auditor could be asked to consider the interface with the SU during the development of the next internal audit plan.

7. STUDENT SYSTEMS PROGRAMME: PROPOSAL TO ESTABLISH A COUNCIL OVERSIGHT GROUP

Council received and approved a proposal to establish a Sub-Group to oversee the Student Systems Programme, together with its terms of reference and membership, subject to the possible addition of an external member with relevant experience of such a major change project. Mr Belton had agreed to Chair the Sub-Group, which would provide overarching support for the Programme Board, Chaired by the University Secretary, and the Executive Sponsorship Group, Chaired by the Deputy Vice-Chancellor. The project represented a significant opportunity for the University but its large scale and complexity necessitated the engagement and support of a wide-range of colleagues across the organisation.

8. CAPITAL PROGRAMME: SHEFFIELD BUSINESS PARK

Council considered two related papers proposing further negotiations over the potential purchase of land on Sheffield Business Park under a pre-existing option agreement and potential new deal, and related matters, which would be submitted to Council for formal approval in due course if positive progress was made. It was noted that significant strategic discussion had taken place to consider the long-term future use of the site as a whole, including taking into account existing projects and the University's work with regional partners to develop the emergent Advanced Manufacturing District. It was confirmed that drawing down the remaining available land under the option agreement would achieve the greatest value for money and that there were a number of possible projects that could be accommodated on both of the two sites in question. Clarification was provided that there would be a range of options to finance any resultant construction of new buildings and the University would continue to investigate potential partnerships and funding sources.

It was noted that part of the land subject to the option agreement included the proposed route of HS2. Although this had not been finalised it was clarified that the proposed use of that area would minimise the impact if HS2 proceeded on the current planned route. Finance Committee had recommended that both negotiations should proceed.

Following discussion, Council agreed the following:

- (a) negotiation should continue for the purchase of the remaining land available under an existing option agreement, subject to a clean title being available, with any negotiated settlement being subject to Council approval in due course;
- (b) an extension to the Estates Masterplan fees to enable the completion of a Section 106 agreement with Sheffield City Council;
- (c) negotiation should continue for the potential purchase of additional land on Sheffield Business Park, with further updates to be provided to Council in advance of any agreement being formalised.

10. REPORT OF THE SENATE

(Meeting held on 16 December 2015)

Council received and noted the Report.

11. REPORT OF THE AUDIT COMMITTEE
(Meetings held on 26 November 2015 and 18 January 2016)

Council received and approved the Report.

12. REPORT OF THE COUNCIL NOMINATIONS COMMITTEE
(Business conducted by correspondence)

Council received and approved the Report, including the appointment of Ms Melanie Perkins and Professor Gill Valentine to Finance Committee, with immediate effect.

13. REPORT OF THE ESTATES COMMITTEE
(Meeting held on 20 January 2016)

Council received and approved the Report. It was reported that an inspection by the City Council as part of the planning process for the proposed refurbishment of the Western Bank concourse in Summer 2016 had identified some remedial works that were required to the underpass, which was likely to delay completion.

14. REPORT OF THE FINANCE COMMITTEE
(Meeting held on 26 November 2015)

Council received and approved the Report, noting that items listed as requiring approval were presented separately to Council in November as part of the University's annual accountability return to HEFCE.

15. REPORT OF THE HUMAN RESOURCES COMMITTEE
(Meeting held on 12 November 2015)

Council received and approved the Report.

16. REPORT OF THE SENIOR REMUNERATION COMMITTEE
(Meeting held on 11 November 2015)

Council received and approved the Report.

17. REPORT OF THE BOARD OF THE ADVANCED MANUFACTURING INSTITUTE
(Meeting held on 26 January 2016)

Council received and approved the Report.

18. ANNUAL REPORT OF THE SPORT SHEFFIELD BOARD

Council received and noted the Report.

19. ALUMNI ENGAGEMENT AND CONVOCATION: UPDATE

Council received and noted an update on University engagement with alumni. This featured the final report from the Chair of Convocation covering activities undertaken between 2014-2016, its decision to suspend its activities and pass responsibility for its funds to the Alumni Board.

20. CORPORATE RISK REGISTER

Council received and approved the updated Corporate Risk Register.

21. USE OF THE UNIVERSITY SEAL

Council received and noted the Report.

22. PUBLIC AVAILABILITY OF COUNCIL PAPERS

Council received and approved recommendations concerning the publication on the web of papers presented at the meeting, in accordance with previously agreed proposals on the disclosure of information. It was noted that a number of papers were confidential and would not be made publicly available.

23. OTHER BUSINESS

It was reported that Professor van den Boom had resigned her membership of Council and, on behalf of Council, the Chair thanked her for her valuable contributions during her tenure.

These Minutes were confirmed

at a meeting held on 25 April 2016

..... Chair