



The
University
Of
Sheffield.

Council Oversight Group: Student Lifecycle Project (Meeting held on 15 May 2017)

Chair: Mr Adrian Belton

Secretary: Mrs Rebecca Barker

1. Background and Project Update

The Group noted a paper provided to Council in February 2016 and Programme Director's update. The Programme Director's update covered an update on progress to date; and a summary of the agreement for PwC to undertake project assurance.

The change of name from 'Student Systems Project' to 'Student Lifecycle Project' was endorsed by the Group, noting that it better reflected the scope of the project and recognised that the project is IT-enabled rather than IT-led.

It was reported that a meeting of the Project Sponsoring Group (SG) had considered and approved a Programme Definition Document (PDD) in advance of the next phase and noted that work over the next few months would ensure that the project was ready for the development phase (e.g. recruitment to key roles).

Whilst it was noted that the project was currently running to schedule and within budget, it was agreed that Council should receive an update on the financial aspect of this project in due course.

Clarification was provided that the estimated completion date for the project would be 2019/20.

2. PwC Programme Assurance Report

2.1 Background to the Review:

The Group noted that these assurance reviews were being undertaken by PwC outside of the routine Internal Audit process in order to provide external scrutiny on the project. The selection of PwC was unrelated to its role as the University's Internal Auditors.

This review primarily focused on the project build. At the request of the University it had tested plans and structures in advance of the discovery phase and to give advance notice of significant risks so that mitigation could be put in place.

The Group noted that the SG had considered the findings and reviewed the recommendations which would then be built in to the project timeline.

The following focus areas of risks were noted:

- (a) Project governance and decision making structures
- (b) Dependency and change management
- (c) Third parties

- (d) Resourcing
- (e) Benefits management
- (f) Stakeholder engagement

The Group considered the management response to the report and noted that the recommendations were being progressed by the SG.

2.2 Comments noted by the Group:

The Group expressed concern at the lack of a formal communication plan. It was noted that the Provost & Deputy Vice-Chancellor had been visiting academic departments (16 completed) to highlight the project, including speaking with relevant support staff who would need to engage with the project in the future.

It was also noted that student engagement was key to the success of the project. It was reported that a number of briefings had taken place with the students and these had been positive. There had been less engagement in Phase 2 due to this phase being primarily about procurement. It was also noted that a student intern would be appointed each year.

The Group noted that many projects fail due to lack of engagement and that consideration should be given to the people involved before introducing new IT systems. The Programme Director confirmed that part of PA Consulting's role would be to facilitate this process.

The Group noted that a second assurance review was due to take place in July/August to ensure project readiness for development and assess the blueprint for delivery. This assurance review would identify whether the project should move forward or stay under development for a further year. A series of subsequent assurance reviews would be necessary at appropriate points throughout the project.

3. **Actions**

The following actions were agreed:

- that a scheme of delegation be appended to the Group's terms of reference;
- that a simple timeline, including brief descriptions of key phases and milestones be circulated to the Group in advance of the next meeting.
- that a representative from PwC would be invited to attend future meetings when significant issues or high risks were raised in assurance reports;
- that the Director of Finance be invited to attend meetings from time to time in order to provide assurance in relation to cost management and budgetary issues.

4. **Next meeting**

It was agreed that the Group would meet again in August/September (date to be confirmed) and would receive an update on the actions agreed at the last meeting, together with a copy of the next PwC Programme Assurance Report.