



The
University
Of
Sheffield.

Office UEB/2019/1911/03
Of
The President &
Vice-Chancellor.

Minutes University Executive Board

Date: 5 November 2019

Present: Professor K Lamberts (KL) (in the Chair),
Professor J Derrick (JD), Mrs H J Dingle (HJD), Professor S Fitzmaurice (SF), Professor M J Hounslow (MJH), Professor W Morgan (WM),
Professor C Newman (CN), Professor D Petley (DP), Mr R Sykes (RS),
Professor G Valentine (GV), Professor C Watkins (CW)

In attendance: Dr T Strike (TS), Ms T Wray (TW) and Mr J Merryclough (JM) (Item 1), Mr I Wright (IW) (Item 2), Dr M Butler (MB) and Mrs D Stevenson (DS) (Item 3), Ms S Bridgeford (SB) (Item 4), Mr R Gower (RG) (Item 10)

Apologies:

Secretary: Mr D T Swinn (DTS)

1. Update on the Sustainability Strategy (TW and JM in attendance for this item)

1.1 UEB received and noted an update and an accompanying presentation on the development of a Sustainability Strategy and supporting action plan. It was proposed to follow a transparent, evidence-based and ambitious but pragmatic approach that was supported by positive engagement with academic and professional staff and students. Attention was drawn to the major strategic themes, four of which would be developed through high-level recommendations made by dedicated task and finish groups led by relevant academic expertise from within the University. It was recognised that the final strategy and action plan needed to be both ambitious but deliverable, informed by considering the various attendant challenges, in the context of overall institutional activity.

1.2 The following points were raised in discussion:

- Clarification was provided that the purpose of the task and finish groups would be to identify potential sustainability aims and objectives, options for achieving them and any relevant timescales, for consideration by the Delivery and Steering Groups.
- The University should demonstrate a clear commitment to areas in which it could make a meaningful impact and others which were of particular concern to students and other stakeholders.
- Sustainability aspirations and associated actions should be consistent with wider strategy and institutional activities, with appropriate caveats where necessary.
- With respect to buildings and estates, it was important that PEGs drew their discussions about sustainability issues to the attention of ECSG and UEB. The relevant task and finish group would consider the contents and ownership of sustainability assessments and related University policies.

- The development of the SCR engagement theme should be consistent by wider work around the SCR, driven by institutional strategy.
- The lack of public transport between the city centre and the AMRC/USID sites was a key challenge.

1.4 **Actions:**

- (a) Further discussion would take place about SCR engagement.
- (b) The final draft Sustainability Strategy would be circulated to UEB for comment in advance of sign-off by the Delivery and Steering Groups, for approval by UEB on 26 November.
- (c) Subject to (b), the Strategy would be published during December, with formal launch and communications in early 2020.

2. **Closed Minute**

3. **Outbound Student Mobility Funding for 2020/21**

(MB and DS in attendance for this item)

3.1 UEB considered an update on the impact of a 'No Deal' Brexit on access to funding for students participating in an Erasmus+ mobility during 2020/21 academic year and related funding options. UEB noted that the intention was remove current uncertainty for students in planning for their year abroad by introducing a temporary one year measure to cover 2020-21. UEB agreed to option two, as set out in the related paper, whereby the University would provide a full underwrite and cover the full cost of replacing all outbound student grants on a like-for-like basis. UEB also endorsed further work to develop a sustainable future funding model providing equitable access to the range of global opportunities the University offered.

3.4 **Actions:**

- (a) In the event of a no- deal Brexit, the decision to implement option two might be revisited as part of wider considerations.
- (b) Global Engagement would work with the Policy team to communicate the decision to underwrite.
- (c) Proposals for a sustainable future funding model for global opportunities would be developed.

4. **Annual Prevent Declaration and Accountability Statement**

(SB in attendance for this item)

4.1 UEB received and noted an update on the University's implementation of and compliance with the 'Prevent' duty, and approved the draft Declaration and data return which would be presented for Council approval in November and submission to the OfS. It was noted that the University enjoyed positive relationships with relevant regional bodies, which was increasingly important. Attention was also drawn to the introduction of Prevent review meetings by the OfS in 2018, for which the University could expect to be selected as part of the annual sample during the next four to five years.

5. **Proposal in Relation to the Disclosure of Senior Staff Salaries**

5.1 UEB considered a proposed approach to dealing with Freedom of Information requests relating to senior salaries, which had been informed by legal advice and endorsed by Senior Remuneration Committee, subject to consultation with UEB. Attention was drawn to the University's existing arrangements for ensuring compliance with OfS requirements and those of the CUC HE Senior Staff Remuneration Code, and ICO Guidance. Clarification

was provided about the application of potentially relevant exemptions, in particular privacy and commercial interests, and the level of granularity that may be required in any information that was released in future.

5.2 UEB endorsed the proposed approach.

5.3 **Actions:**

- (a) Individual FOI requests would continue to be considered on a case by case basis.
- (b) The University's Publication Scheme would be updated.
- (c) Individual UEB members would be consulted about the release of any information if they fell within the scope of an FOI request.

**6. Report of the UEB Risk Review Group
(Meeting Held on 24 October)**

6.1 UEB received and approved the Report, including the first iteration of the 2019-20 Corporate Risk Register which would be presented to Council and Audit Committee in November. It was noted that the register had been subject to rigorous review and revision during 2018-19; attention was drawn to subsequent changes to the inherent and/or residual risk ratings for three risks. It was reported that Planning & Insight would be holding a workshop with AMRC colleagues to inform the development of a revised AMRC risk register.

**7. Report of the UEB Mental Health Strategy Group
(Meeting Held on 9 October)**

7.1 UEB approved the Report, including amending the Group's title to include 'Student' to clarify its focus on overseeing delivery of the Student Mental Health Strategy; separate work around staff mental health was being undertaken by HR, Health & Safety, and Trade Unions. UEB also endorsed the Suicide Mitigation Policy as a positive development. It was noted that a joint OfS-UUK working group was due to report in 2020, which could further inform the University's approach.

7.2 **Action:** Further work was required to ensure that colleagues understood the relevant escalation routes in cases of concern, and the circumstances in which it was permissible for the University to contact parents through the appropriate wellbeing and support staff.

**8. Report of the UEB Estates and Capital Sub-Group
(Meeting Held on 22 October)**

8.1 UEB received and approved the Report, including a number of proposals set out in the related paper and accompanying business cases, subject to Finance Committee and/or Council approval where relevant in accordance with the Scheme of Delegation:

- (a) Northumberland Road Building – Social Sciences Management School: Approval of additional budget release to proceed through the RIBA stages.
- (b) Elmfield Development: Approval of additional fees to develop the current project design to a RIBA Stage 3 and undertake initial asbestos abatement works for phase 1.
- (c) Regent Court: Approval of further gross Capital funding to cover the fees associated with RIBA Stage 3 design stage of a refurbishment and reconfiguration project.
- (d) Learning Management System (LMS) replacement: Noted the release of capital funding for the implementation of a new LMS.

- (e) Translational Energy Research Centre (TERC) Update: Approval of a budget increase, funded by BEIS and ERDF, to align the original business case costs with the final grant funding agreements.
- (f) Sustainable Transport Fuels Research and Innovation Centre (Formerly Heaviside) - New Building & Equipment Bid: Approval in principle of the release of gross fees to progress the design to RIBA Stage 3, which was required to complete the full grant funding application for ERDF. The Faculty of Engineering would underwrite the fees if the application was unsuccessful.
- (g) Expansion of the Wolfson Light Microscopy Facility (LMF): Approval of budget release, subject to confirmation of funding from the Wolfson Foundation.
- (h) Development of the ground floor of the new PET MRI Building: Approval of costs for the design and construction of the ground floor of the new PET-MRI building, fully funded by Faculty Strategic Funds.
- (i) STEM Laboratory Teaching Building: Approval of the release of design fees to appoint a design team and develop a scheme up to RIBA stage 1.
- (j) Refurbishment of Family Flats 13&14 Endcliffe Avenue, 36 Oakholme Road: Note the approval of funds to resolve an overspend on refurbishment works. It was clarified that these works were not related to accommodation used by KL.
- (k) Acquisitions & Disposals Paper: Logistics Centre Update: Approval of budget for the purchase of a property and the medium case fit-out, subject to conditions set out in the report.
- (l) Acquisitions & Disposals Paper: Hoyle Street Lease Renewal: Approval to enter in to a new 5 year lease on a 5 year term at 78 Hoyle Street with an increased cost and for the reduction in service charge, as a result of the transfer of cleaning provision.
- (m) Acquisitions & Disposals Paper: Renewal of short term lease from the University to Siemens Gamesa: Approval of a further 5 year lease to Siemens Gamesa, with legal costs to be borne by Partnerships and Regional Engagement.

UEB considered a recommendation relating to the proposed refurbishment of Stephenson Hall, which ECSG had reappraised following the capital prioritisation project, at UEB's request. Whilst recognising that the property would require some capital expenditure regardless of the final approach taken and the need to develop an attractive residential offer for PGT students, further clarification was sought from the Director of Infrastructure regarding potential third party interest in the site and alternative options. Further clarification was sought as to the competitiveness of the proposed offer compared to alternative private provision.

Actions:

- (a) Business cases approved at paragraphs (a), (e) and (k) would be presented to Finance Committee and Council for approval in November.
- (b) ECSG would review the Stephenson Hall proposal when additional information was available.

9. Closed Minute and Paper

10. SRDS Review Update

(RG in attendance for this item)

- 10.1 UEB discussed an update on the review of the SRDS process and emergent proposals that followed a staff consultation, with oversight provided by a strategic review group, chaired by GV. In particular, this sought to address dissatisfaction with the way in which the SRDS

process enabled staff development, variations in the approach to conducting reviews themselves, and proposed introducing a new Appraiser Reviewer role to meet a specific need in academic departments.

10.2 Following discussion, UEB endorsed the recommendations, as set out in the related paper. The following points were noted:

- The Appraiser reviewer role should be recognised appropriately through the ACP framework, which would necessitate an open call for expressions of interest; be recognised in workload allocation models; and HoDs should be encouraged to agree an approach to implementation with their FVP.
- It should be possible for HoDs and FVPs to seek Appraiser Reviewers from other cognate departments.
- Recommendations about the timing of reviews should take into account the work of the Workload Allocation Group.

10.3 **Actions:**

- (a) The success of the Appraiser Reviewer role would be reviewed after one year, informed by the methodology used in a recent internal audit review.
- (b) Guidance on escalation routes for colleagues who were dissatisfied with the outcome of the review process should be clearly stated.
- (c) FVPs and Faculty HR managers would provide support for HoDs and departmental panels in decision-making over promotion cases.

11. **Round Table**

- (a) Electoral registration: WM reported that the University was ranked first for registering students to vote, building on a House of Lords report from 2017 which highlighted the University as an exemplar and specific mention in the OfS framework.
- (b) Reappointment of the Chancellor: TS reported that Dame Anne Rafferty DBE had been reappointed as the University Chancellor.
- (c) Council membership: Members were invited to propose suitable external candidates to be considered for future Class (3) Council vacancies.
- (d) Equality, Diversity & Inclusion: FVPs were asked to ensure that HoDS recognised ED&I activities as being core under the Academic Career Pathway. More broadly, it was important to ensure that colleagues were recognised appropriately for all legitimate ACP activity.
- (e) UEB Away Day venues: GV invited suggestions for venues for future UEB Away Days.
- (f) Fellow of the Academy of Social Sciences: CW reported that the Academy of Social Sciences had conferred the award of Fellow on Sarah Blandy (Law) and Petra Meier (SchARR). KL would write letters of congratulations and GV would host a celebratory reception.