



The
University
Of
Sheffield.

Strategy,
Planning &
Governance.

The Council, 6 February 2017

Council Effectiveness Review: response and action plan

1. Purpose of paper/action requested

- 1.1 This paper sets out a response to Pinsent Masons' report on the Council Effectiveness Review undertaken earlier in the year, and where appropriate details proposed actions. It is based on detailed consultation with relevant stakeholders, including the chairs and secretaries of Council sub-committees and discussion with the Effectiveness Review Oversight Group chaired by Alison Hope and the Officers' Informal Group (formerly 3Cs). Comments have been invited from members of Council.
- 1.2 Council is invited to consider the response and approve the proposed actions.

2. Background

- 2.1 The CUC's Higher Education Code of Governance states that "governing bodies must conduct a regular, full and robust review of their effectiveness and that of their committees" and that such reviews must be conducted at least every four years. The Code also notes that "many governing bodies find an external perspective in this process helpful, whether provided by specialist consultants or peer support from other governing bodies".
- 2.2 At its meeting in April 2016 Council approved the appointment of Pinsent Masons LLP to support the review, and agreed that it should cover the following themes:
 - progress since the last review;
 - compliance with the Higher Education Code of Governance;
 - effectiveness of key Council sub-committees;
 - effectiveness of the interface between Council and academic governance, particularly in the context of increasing governing body responsibility in this area.
- 2.3 In addressing the themes identified for the review, Pinsents adopted the following methodology/process:
 - questionnaire to members of Council seeking feedback on their view of Council's and their own effectiveness;
 - one-to-one interviews with Council members and relevant members of the Executive;
 - paper-based analysis of Council's and its sub-committees' governing documentation, terms of reference and minutes;
 - attendance at meetings of Council and Council sub-committees.

- 2.4 Council also approved the establishment of small Council sub-group¹ be established to have oversight of the Review and specifically:
- to provide a point of reference during the Review for the external adviser to raise questions/issues as appropriate, and to consider progress; and
 - to consider the resulting report and recommendations prior to their presentation to Council.
- 2.5 Pinsents' report, which was presented to Council in October 2017, concluded that the overall governance of the University was of a high standard, that Council performed well and that a good governance framework was in place. Six key recommendations were intended to support the further enhancement of effective governance. The report also included a number of additional recommendations, many of which would support the implementation of the key recommendations. Council agreed that a response should be prepared for consideration at the February 2017 meeting.

3. Response to key recommendations and related sub-recommendations

See Appendix 1 (not for publication).

4. Other sub-recommendations

See Appendix 2 (not for publication).

5. Next steps

- 5.1 Subject to Council's approval, actions will be progressed as indicated.
- 5.2 A follow-up review of progress will be undertaken by Pinsents during the early part of 2017 and a report made to Council.
- 5.3 Further progress reports will be made to Council as required.

¹ Membership: Alison Hope (Chair), David Young, Shearer West, Mary Vincent, Dom Trendall, Andrew West