

**UNIVERSITY OF SALFORD
COUNCIL
MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON
21 MARCH 2013**

Present: Dr A Mawson (Chair)

Mr M Amin
Cllr D Antrobus
Mr M Appleton
Mr K Brady
Mr T Britten
Prof M Bull
Dr M Burrows
Mr N Collins
Mr P Crompton
Mr T Doyle
Ms J Fawcett
Prof M Hall
Mr E Healey
Mr M Johnson
Ms C Kennedy
Ms J Luca
Ms A Mullan
Prof G Murphy
Mr S Sorrell
Mr W Smith

Apologies: Ms C Moreland
Ms R Turner (maternity leave)

In attendance: Dr A Graves (Registrar and Secretary)
Mr D Reeve (Interim Director of Finance)
Mr K Beal (Interim Executive Director of Estates and Property Services– items COU.13.16 to COU.13. 21 only)
Mr P Cartwright (Director of Planning and Change – items COU.13.16 to COU.13.21 only)
Mr J Forshaw (Director of Planning and Performance – items COU.13.22 to COU.13.28 only)
Ms J Halliwell (Associate Director of Finance – items COU.13.22 to COU.13.28 only)
Prof H Morris (Pro-Vice-Chancellor, Academic and External – items COU.13.22 to COU.13.28 only)
Mr A Snowden (Chief of Staff)
Mr M Rollinson (Head of Governance Services and Deputy Secretary)

The meeting was preceded by a presentation from the Interim Executive Director of Estates and Property Services on the future of the University estate and the Campus Master Plan; the presentation is available on the members' resources section of the Governance website.

COU.13.16 MINUTES (COU.13.12)

Council confirmed the minutes of the meeting held on 7 February 2013.

COU.13.17 MATTERS ARISING

1. Student Residences Project

Further to minute COU.13.5, the Registrar and Secretary confirmed that the Chair of Council, the Lead Member for Finance and the Lead Member for Estates had approved the appointment

of a preferred bidder for the Student Residences Project to enable the conclusion of financial arrangements.

COU.13.18 **CONFIRMATION OF STARRED ITEMS**

Council confirmed the following items were starred and would therefore be approved or noted without discussion:

- Report from Nominations and Governance Committee
- Report from Council Advisory Group
- Report from Senate
- Use of University Seal

COU.13.19 **CHAIR'S ACTION**

Council noted the approval by the Chair (on behalf of Council) of the recommendation of Senate, at its meeting on 27 February 2013, to award an Emeritus Professorship to Prof Andy Steele (as set out in the report from Senate, item COU.13.26 below).

COU.13.20 **VICE-CHANCELLOR'S STATEMENT**

Council agreed to vary the order of the agenda to enable the Vice-Chancellor to make his statement before consideration of the report on the Gateway Project (item COU.13.21 below). The Vice-Chancellor reported as follows:

- i) the Students' Union elections had concluded and Mishal Saeed had been elected President for 2013/14 and, together with the new sabbatical team, would take up post from 1 July 2013; the Vice-Chancellor congratulated the Students' Union on a well organised and orderly election process;
- ii) HEFCE had recently produced a report on the impact of the 2012 reforms. The report made interesting reading and, amongst other matters highlighted, the significant (40%) decline in part-time student numbers; given that most part-time students were mature students and the University's student demographic (in the top ten HEIs for mature students), this had significant implications for the University;
- iii) a further reduction in Department of Business, Innovation and Skills budget appeared likely in the next Comprehensive Spending Review (potentially in the region of 8%); such a reduction was likely to see the removal of dedicated Widening Participation funding;
- iv) in the light of the volatile policy climate and proposals for future direction (as outlined in COU.13.22 below), the current Strategic Plan would be revised. Council would consider a first draft of this in July with further review at the Strategic Conference in September;
- v) conversion of applications to offers and acceptances was crucial and the University was placing renewed emphasis on developing the pre-arrival relationship with students through the Salford "prequel" programme;
- vi) development and maintenance of relationships with local feeder institutions was receiving urgent attention and international partnerships continued to be cultivated (through imminent and recent Vice-Chancellorial visits to China and Dubai respectively);
- vii) as would become apparent during consideration of the item on future strategic direction, improvement of the University estate and, specifically, investment in the Gateway Building was crucial to the University's future. It was essential for the University to tackle underutilisation of the estate and to move out of inefficient, sub-optimal buildings (particularly Adelphi and Allerton Studios, which were no longer fit for purpose). It was apparent from the recent visit to Dubai that the University's presence at MediaCityUK was a key differentiator and a major reputational asset; construction of another contemporary, cutting edge facility such as the Gateway Building had the potential to further enhance the University's attractiveness and reputation.

COU.13.21 **GATEWAY PROJECT – APPOINTMENT OF MAIN CONTRACTOR (COU/13/19)**

Council considered a report from the Interim Executive Director of Estates and Property Services seeking approval for the appointment of a contractor to the second stage of the procurement process for the Gateway Building, the undertaking of site investigations to assure the design of the piled foundations and for the design team to be instructed to undertake the next stage of the procurement process. Council also received the relevant extract from the minutes of the Executive meeting held on 18 March 2013, which had endorsed the recommendations in the report (the recommendations had also been endorsed by the Gateway Project Board and the Lead Member Estates).

Council noted the importance of the Gateway Project in ensuring the University's future success and viability as articulated in the Vice-Chancellor's Statement and reinforced by the Registrar and Secretary. Essentially, the Council was being asked to commit to approximately £680,000 at this stage to enable the project team to move to the next stage and establish a fixed price sum for the construction works; approval of the recommendations did not commit the University to expenditure beyond the overall approved budget of £53.6 million (target construction costs for the Gateway Building were £30 million). Noting comments and questions from some members about the appropriateness of such a significant capital investment in the current challenging financial situation, Council noted that the phasing of the project enabled a further review before full commitment to construction and Council approval would be sought at this stage. Council was reminded that the loan facility to enable construction was already in place.

The Registrar and Secretary advised that the timing of the investment had also been discussed at Executive and this discussion was reflected in the extract from the minutes before Council. The construction of the Gateway Building represented an essential investment in the student experience; failure to do so would mean that subjects representing key strengths for the University, particularly those in the School of Arts and Media, would remain located in inadequate and inefficient buildings with inevitable consequences for future student recruitment and viability. Members of Council noted the success of the Chapman Building and that this represented the standard of student facility and experience to which the University should now aspire; the Gateway Building also had the potential to provide wider benefits for the local community and the local economy.

Having given the matter full consideration, Council **resolved** to:

- i) approve the appointment of BAM Construction North West Ltd as main contractor for the second stage procurement process (costings for this were set out in the report);
- ii) approve the instruction for the design team to work with BAM through the second stage process;
- iii) approve the instruction for further site investigation works to assure the piling design and allow maintenance of the programme (noting that, should the project cease, results from this work would be the property of the University).

COU.13.22 **FUTURE STRATEGIC DIRECTION (COU/13/13 – 14)**

Council considered a report from the Vice-Chancellor setting out the work carried out to date by the Executive Planning Group and recommendations for future strategic direction that had been endorsed by Executive. Accompanying the report were background papers including performance reports, application, offer and acceptance statistics, financial summaries and performance data (including contribution analysis). The minutes of the Budget Review Group meeting held on 21 February 2013 were also available for information and members noted that there had been a further briefing of Budget Review Group members (by teleconference) on 20 March 2013.

To augment these documents, Council received a detailed presentation from the Registrar and Secretary, the Interim Director of Finance, the Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Academic) and the Director of Planning and Change. The presentation set out the challenges facing the UK higher education sector, the impact of these changes on Salford (including potential impact on strategic direction and vision) and the process of analysis and review carried out by the Executive Planning Group, including its review of academic areas. This review had identified key strengths (including areas for growth and potential investment) and key challenges (including areas where student applications and numbers were declining); alongside the review of the professional services, this work had enabled the emergence of a potential future strategic direction and focus of the University, including a revised financial model.

After lengthy consideration and robust questioning from members, Council **resolved** to endorse the broad direction of travel as outlined in the presentation, including the implementation of next steps (which included the identification of key issues and risks and the construction of an effective and comprehensive communication plan). Council noted that the detail of the strategy would be further developed and refined and presented to the April meeting of the Council Advisory Group for final consideration and subsequent report to the meeting of Council on 23 May 2013. Council noted that Senate would also be apprised of developments.

COU.13.23 **REPORT FROM AUDIT COMMITTEE (COU/13/15)**

Council considered the report from the meeting of Audit Committee held on 19 February 2013.

The Chair of Audit Committee reported that the evaluation panel appointed by Audit Committee and given delegated authority to consider tenders for external audit services and make recommendations to Council had met on 20 March. The Panel comprised Eric Healey (Chair of Audit Committee), Tony Britten, Peter Crompton and David Reeve (Interim Executive Director of Finance).

After careful consideration of bids and presentation from the four firms invited to tender (KPMG, Ernst and Young, Deloitte and Grant Thornton), the Panel had recommended the reappointment of Grant Thornton as external auditors for the three year period 1 August 2013 to 31 July 2016. Council **resolved** to endorse the appointment, subject to successful conclusion of formal arrangements with Grant Thornton and ratification by the Council at its next meeting on 23 May 2013.

COU.13.24 **REPORT FROM NOMINATIONS AND GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE (COU/13/16)**

Council received the report from the meeting of Nominations and Governance Committee held on 28 February 2013 and **resolved** to:

- i) appoint Joyce Redfearn as a co-opted member of Nominations and Governance Committee;
- ii) approve the Code of Ethical Fundraising Practice and Gift Acceptance Policy;
- iii) approve the amendments to the Code of Conduct for Members and Senior Officers outlined in the report;
- iv) approve the schedule of Council and committee dates for 2013-14 and 2014-15;
- v) approve the amendments to the terms of reference of the Remuneration Committee.

Council also received a supplementary report from the Committee outlining a recommendation for the award of an honorary degree. Council **resolved** to award an honorary Doctor of Letters to Prof Muhammad Yunus, with the conferment to take place during Prof Yunus' visit to the University during May.

COU.13.25 REPORT FROM COUNCIL ADVISORY GROUP (COU/13/17)

Council noted the report from the meeting of Council Advisory Group on 28 February 2013, including the appended reports from the various Lead Member meetings.

COU.13.26 REPORT FROM SENATE (COU/13/18)

Council received the report from Senate and **resolved** to approve the minor amendment to the Regulations for the Award of Honorary Degrees, noting that the award of the title of Professor Emeritus to Prof Andy Steele had been approved by Chair's action (as set out in COU.13.19 above).

COU.13.27 USE OF UNIVERSITY SEAL

Council noted that there had been no use of the University Seal since the previous meeting of Council.

COU.13.28 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Thursday 23 May 2013 at 2pm.