

UNIVERSITY OF SALFORD

COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 6 MAY 2016

CONFIRMED

Present: Baroness Beverley Hughes (*Chair*), Geoff Bean, Mike Burrows, Jonathan Carson, Phil Cusack, Garry Dowdle (*from minute COU.16.28*), Jill Evans, Ben Gallop, Amina Helal, Marina Hristova, Professor Helen Marshall, Ian Moston, Sam Plant and Ahmed Rafiq.

Apologies: Derek Antrobus, Julia Fawcett, Sean O'Hara, Susan Price, Joyce Redfearn, Tom Russell, Tony Warne

In attendance: Julie Charge (*Director of Finance*), Vikki Goddard (*Chief Operating Officer*), Andrew Hartley (*Director of Legal, Planning & Governance*), Chris Larkin (*Director of Communications*), Professor Richard Stephenson (*Deputy Vice-Chancellor*), Rik Sterken (*HR Policy Projects & Employee Relations Manager, for minute COU.16.32*), (Keith Watkinson (*Director of HR, for minute COU.16.32*) and Martin Toner (*Secretary*).

COU.16.21 **ATTENDANCE (COU/16/14):** Received: the Schedule of Attendance for Council and Committee meetings.

COU.16.22 **MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 18 MARCH 2016 (COU/16/15): Confirmed** subject to the addition an action under COU.16.6 Strategic Plan Update, requiring the effectiveness of the brand strapline to be reviewed and a report submitted to the Council meeting in March 2017.

COU.16.23 **MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES: Agreed:** that the numbering on the Action Points table be amended so that it matched the numbering of the actions in the minutes.

ACTION 1: COMMITTEE SECRETARY

COU.16.24 **STARRED ITEMS: Confirmed** that agenda items 1.2 (Schedule of Attendance) and 15 (Use of University Seal) would be noted without discussion.

COU.16.25 **CHAIR'S ACTION:** Reported that there were no actions to report.

COU.16.26 **VICE CHANCELLOR'S REPORT (COU/16/16):** Received: a report from the Vice Chancellor on key issues.

COU.16.27 **ANNUAL OPERATING PLAN (AOP) 2016/17 (COU/16/17):**

Considered: the University's Annual Operating Plan for 2016/17. Council undertook to consider the AOP and Budget in turn, with any decisions and actions agreed at the end

Reported: The University had adopted a bottom-up approach to the construction of the AOP, with individual Schools and Professional Services' plans being drafted and then subjected to scrutiny by the rest of the University Management Team via a series of Challenge Days, following which the plans were finalised and the University AOP produced.

The paper provided a summary of the University's operational priorities, divided into the four Academic Sub-strategies and enabled by the five key functional strategies.

Noted: that Council welcomed the new format of the AOP, which was clear, helpful and action-focused.

Industrial Collaboration Zones: The single most important strategic priority was

around the introduction and development of the Industrial Collaboration Zones (ICZs). The ICZ programme would underpin all aspects of student experience and development: seven ICZ work-streams which would act as enablers to the success of the programme. The AOP was intended to be iterative, which meant that it could be further developed and refined as the ICZs were established. A more detailed plan for the introduction of the ICZs would be brought to the next Council meeting.

Academic Growth and Diversification: Success in this priority area would ultimately be dependent upon the University's ability to shift the working culture within the academic areas, as co-production between all parts of the University and industry was at the heart of the ICZs: it was intended that going forward, all parts of the curriculum would be developed in a co-productional space. The prime importance of the quality of teaching to the success of the ICZs was recognised and would be underpinned by a considerable programme of staff development. Council noted that the Key Performance Indicator (KPI) around student numbers made no reference to the quality of student recruited. It was confirmed that the University had an agreed minimum tariff score and that this also applied to clearing.

Research and Enterprise: Innovation and enterprise opportunities within the ICZs would be underpinned by establishing a robust data repository and through key account and relationship management which would provide an overview of the numerous industry relations required for the success of the ICZs.

International: Appropriate resource allocation between the key recruitment markets would be determined using regional intelligence and would focus on the use of agent networks. Quarterly regional workshops would be held for the Schools.

COU.16.28

BUDGET 2016/17 (COU/16/18)

Considered: the University's Budget for 2016/17.

Reported: The HEFCE grant for 2016/17 had been confirmed in April. This was as expected and had confirmed HEIF funding for another year. There had been some concern expressed by FRC over the introduction of a fundraising levy, but this had proved to be a relatively low sum. A prudent view of future HEFCE funding had been adopted, with a projected additional £10m in student income comprising £5.8m from returning students and the remainder from additional student numbers. Pay costs were forecast to increase but the majority of contributing factors were outside the control of the University. The activity currently appearing in the capital budget was mostly flow-through, and the University was seeking to move to a more long-term approach to capital planning. The one exception was the proposal to fund the remainder of refurbishment of the Newton Building, a paper requesting approval of which was tabled.

Noted: As the University was in the process of developing a fully detailed capital plan, detail that would have normally been available to support the budget for example funding availability had not been provided. This would be presented as part of the plan in due course. While Council was currently content with a projected pay to income ratio of 55% it considered that the situation would require close monitoring.

Resolved:

- i) that the Annual Operating Plan and Budget be approved subject to the following actions:
 - a reference to maintaining the quality of the student intake be added to the first AG&D action within the AOP;
 - the University should continue to monitor its performance against, and

ACTION 2: VICE-CHANCELLOR

the appropriateness of, the agreed pay to income ratio and would report back in twelve months.

ACTION 3: VICE-CHANCELLOR

- ii) that the proposal for the funding of the remainder of the Newton Building refurbishment plan would be brought to the next Council meeting;

ACTION 4: DIRECTOR OF FINANCE

- iii) that a more detailed business plan for the ICZs be brought to the next Council meeting.

ACTION 5: VICE_CHANCELLOR

COU.16.29 **CONVERSION OF ACCOUNTING STANDARD (COU/16/19) Agreed:** a request for authority to be delegated to the Chair and Deputy Chair to approve on Council's behalf the conversion of the University's financial accounts to the new FRS102 standard.

ACTION 6: CHAIR AND DEPUTY CHAIR OF COUNCIL

COU.16.30 **YORKSHIRE BANK CREDIT RATING (COU/16/20) Considered:** a report on the University's response to the change in credit rating of Yorkshire Bank, which currently holds University funds

Noted: that the University was currently taking action to mitigate the situation and had informed the University's external auditors. It would continue to monitor the bank's rating and would seek to withdraw the funds at the earliest available opportunity.

COU.16.31 **HEFCE RISK ASSESSMENT (COU/16/21) Considered:** HEFCE's annual risk assessment letter to the University.

Reported: that the report found the University to be "not at high risk", the more favourable of the two available outcomes.

COU.16.32 **BEST COMPANIES SURVEY (COU/16/22) Received:** a presentation and draft action plan for the University's response to the Best Companies Survey 2015.

Reported: The University's overall score of 577 was not sufficient to reach the Survey's "One to Watch" threshold of 600, although there was a significant difference between the relative mean scores in the Professional Services (606.4) and Schools (543.3). Benchmarking against comparable organisations showed that the University was in the bottom quartile in seven of the eight areas, reaching the second quartile in Fair Deal. A number of actions were outlined to address the two lowest performing areas, Leadership and Wellbeing.

Noted: no formal work had been undertaken to interrogate the reasons behind the 37% non-response rate, but there was some evidence that one significant factor was the perception that the University's actions in response to previous staff survey's had been limited. Increasing the engagement of staff was key and among the initiatives being introduced in this regard was the Leadership Forum on 11 May which was open to all staff. Council encouraged the University to consider how the introduction of the ICZs might be used as a mechanism for improving levels of staff engagement. Over the last two years the University had introduced a number of actions in response to National Student Survey results which had brought about significant improvements in subsequent performance, and the same was now needed for staff. Close collaboration between HR and Communications would be required to bring about the required changes. HR was overseeing the submission of local actions plans and was working on ensuring the plans were of an appropriate quality

Agreed: that an update on progress against the Action Plan would be brought to

Council early in 2016/17.

ACTION 7: DIRECTOR OF HR

COU.16.33 **ENABLING THE STUDENT JOURNEY (ESJ) – ASSURANCE REPORT**

Received: an oral update on the ESJ Assurance Review.

Reported: that the Council sub-group charged with the review was now in place and had agreed the Terms of Reference for the review with the internal auditors. An interim report would be submitted to the next meeting of FRC.

COU.16.34 **REPORT FROM THE FINANCE AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE (COU/16/23):**

Received: the minutes of the Committee's meeting held on 15 April 2016.

COU.16.35 **USE OF UNIVERSITY SEAL (COU/16/24):** Received: a report on the use of the University seal since the previous meeting.

COU.16.36 **DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

Friday, 17 June 2016 at 2pm.

COU.16.37 **ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

Graduation 2016: Council members were reminded that this year's Graduation ceremonies would take place between 19 and 22 July and that the visibility of Council at the ceremonies was desirable.

Agreed: that a reminder would be sent to Council members, including a schedule showing attendance by members as currently confirmed.

ACTION 8: DIRECTOR, LEGAL, PLANNING AND GOVERNANCE

Joint Senate/Council meeting: There would be an opportunity for Council members to attend and observe the meeting of Senate on 5 October 2016. In addition, the Chief Operating Officer, Registrar and Director of Legal, Planning & Governance would be delivering an information session on the roles of Council, Senate and Executive during the latter part of the calendar year.

Agreed: that Council members be informed of the confirmed date for the information session.

ACTION 9: DIRECTOR, LEGAL, PLANNING AND GOVERNANCE

COU.16.38 **REFLECTIONS ON THE MEETING**

Noted: in response to the Chair's invitation to comment on the conduct of the meeting, members provided the following observations:

- The relationship between Council and its standing Committees appeared to be strengthening;
- The reduction in the amount of paperwork was welcomed, as was the overall improvement in the quality of reports received.