

UNIVERSITY OF BIRMINGHAM

COUNCIL

4th April 2019 at 3.45 p.m.

MINUTES

Members present: Mr Ed Smith CBE (Pro-Chancellor, in the Chair); Mr Derrick Anderson; Mr Alan Davey CBE; Mr David Davies OBE; Professor Sir David Eastwood (Vice-Chancellor and Principal); Mr Malcolm Harbour CBE; Mr Richard Haywood (Deputy Pro-Chancellor); Dame Lin Homer; Professor Tim Jones (Provost and Vice-Principal); Mr Harjinder Kang; Mr Mick Laverty; Professor Hisham Mehanna; Mrs Caragh Merrick (Treasurer); Dame Una O'Brien; Ms Joanne Park (Guild International Officer); Mr Reece Roberts (President of the Guild of Students); Professor Karen Rowlingson; Mr Richard Swann; Professor Nicola Wilkin.

Also present: Professor David Adams (Pro-Vice-Chancellor and Head of College); Professor Richard Black (Pro-Vice-Chancellor and Head of College); Ms Erica Conway (Finance Director); Ms Cathy Gilbert (Director of External Relations) - for Minute 19/26(3); Professor Laura Green (Pro-Vice-Chancellor and Head of College); Ms Rebecca Lambert, Deputy Director of Strategic Planning - for Minute 19/24; Mr Stephen McAuliffe (Academic Registrar) - for Minutes 19/23 and 19/24; Mrs Colette McDonough (Assistant Secretary); Ms Gillian McGrattan (Director of Human Resources) - for Minute 19/26(1); Mr Trevor Payne (Director of Estates) - for Minute 19/25; Mr Lee Sanders (Registrar and Secretary); Professor Andy Schofield (Pro-Vice-Chancellor and Head of College); Professor Michael Whitby (Pro-Vice-Chancellor and Head of College).

Apologies: Ms Deborah Cadman OBE; Mr David Stead; Ms Jacqueline Taylor; Professor Kathleen Armour (Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Education)); Professor Robin Mason (Pro-Vice-Chancellor (International)); Professor Corey Ross; Professor Tim Softley (Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Research and Knowledge Transfer)).

Papers: The minute book contains copies of all written papers or reports to which reference is made below unless indicated otherwise.

19/19 Minutes of previous meeting

Resolved: that the minutes of the meeting of Council held on 30th January 2019 be approved (CO.19.04.01).

19/20 Matters Arising

Reported: that there were no matters arising.

19/21 Pro-Chancellor's Items

(1) USS Update

Considered: the USS Update (CO.19.04.02).

Noted that:

- (a) the March 2017 valuation process had now concluded with a schedule of contributions that resulted in significant increases in contributions for both the employers and employees;
- (b) USS was currently undertaking a valuation for March 2018 and it was hoped that this would result in lower contributions than the October 2019 and April 2020 increases. USS was proposing that, in return for rebated and lower contributions, the employers take more risk, which would require a form of contingent contributions which might arise in the event of a significant deterioration in scheme funding;
- (c) key detailed information on how the contingent contributions would operate and on which employers were being consulted had now been provided by Universities UK (UUK);
- (d) the Council USS Sub-Group had met on 19th February and 7th March 2019 to consider the information provided by UUK and USS and approve the consultation response of the University to UUK. The approved consultation response was attached at Appendix 1 to Paper CO.19.04.**02**;
- (e) UUK had provided a summarised response from all employers to USS on 19th March 2019 (attached at Appendix 2 to Paper CO.19.04.**02**). A response from USS was awaited;
- (f) the next phase of the Joint Expert Panel work was commencing soon and would consider the long term sustainability of the scheme. As part of this work a review of the affordability of the benefits was expected. This was expected to feed into a March 2021 valuation.

[The Vice-Chancellor and Principal declared an interest in this agenda item by virtue of his position as Chair of USS].

(2) Reflections on Council Strategy Day: 4th April 2019

(a) Morning Session – The World to Come and Scenario Planning

Reported: that the focus of detailed discussions during the morning of the Council Strategy Day had been on the challenges of the higher education environment and the financial position and scenarios, strategy, principles and next steps for the University in this context.

Resolved:

- (a) that Council supported the following guiding principles:
 - (i) re-commitment to the vision of Birmingham 2026;
 - (ii) continuation of the aspiration for the University to reach the global top 50 of higher education institutions and aim to be the best research university in the UK after the top six;
 - (iii) continuation of the growth and diversification of the University's income streams;
 - (iv) continuation of delivery of a minimum annual 10% margin for sustainable investment in the future of the University. This would enable the continuation of investment in people, students, the estate and infrastructure, including recruitment and retention of the best academic staff in order to deliver enhanced teaching and research performance;
 - (v) achievement of savings through a blended approach;
 - (vi) delivery of efficiency and effectiveness wherever possible, through a range of measures;
- (b) **[NOT FOR PUBLICATION]**
- (c) that Council noted that one important potential response to a cut in tuition fees

was to re-balance the tuition fee account.

(d) that Council re-affirmed the commitment of the University to civic engagement and its key role in the West Midlands region;

(e) that these principles would inform discussions about future financial planning and actions in response to the impact of external factors such as the Augar Review, and also the next phase of the Strategic Framework, which would be discussed at the Council Strategy Day in October 2019.

(b) Afternoon Session

Reported: that the afternoon session at the Council Strategy Day had considered an update on the University's next Fundraising and Volunteering Campaign. Members of Council expressed their support for the plans, including the campaign identity, and noted their role in the campaign, including being advocates and donors, sharing networks, and meeting potential donors.

Noted: that the next Fundraising and Volunteering Campaign would be launched on the evening of the Council Strategy Day on 2nd October 2019 and all members of Council would be invited to attend.

19/22 Vice-Chancellor's Items

Noted: the report of the Vice-Chancellor (CO.19.04.03).

19/23 National Student Survey – Progress Report

COMMERCIAL IN CONFIDENCE

Considered: a progress report on actions being taken to address the outcomes of the 2018 National Student Survey (NSS) (CO.19.04.04). A progress report for this meeting had been requested by Council last October.

Reported:

(a) that SPRC had considered this progress report on 7th March 2019 and had expressed its appreciation of the assurance which the report provided on progress with actions to address the outcomes of the 2018 NSS;

(b) **[NOT FOR PUBLICATION]**

(c) the continuation of work on addressing the variability of NSS results between Schools;

(d) the measures which had been taken to address the priority of improving assessment and feedback;

(e) that the University's 2019 campaign for the NSS was now underway, supported by a positive central 'Making it Happen' campaign that was ensuring that communications for the whole NSS lifecycle were appropriately coordinated and consistently managed. The response rate was currently at 70%. The support of the Guild of Students in encouraging students to engage with the 2019 Survey was commended, noting that the results of the 2019 NSS would be available in September;

(f) the other measures of student feedback used by the University, including module evaluation and feedback via the student representation system.

Resolved: that Council welcomed the assurance provided by Paper CO.19.04.04, noting the actions being taken by the University to address the outcomes of the 2018 NSS and encourage positive student engagement with the 2019 NSS. The results of the 2019 NSS would be considered at the meeting of Council on 2nd October 2019.

Considered: an update on the work undertaken to develop the University's approach to its Access and Participation Plan, including identifying potential targets for inclusion in the plan (CO.19.04.05).

Reported:

- (a) that all universities wishing to charge the higher fee limit, must have an Access and Participation Plan (APP) in place approved by the Office for Students (OfS) (condition A1 of registration);
- (b) that APPs would span a five year period from 2020 onwards (although assessment would continue to be annual). In order to respond appropriately, and develop an APP which was robust but realistic, the APP Working Group had been convened in December 2018. Using internal data and guidance released by the OfS, the Working Group had formulated potential targets, which addressed the four key priority measures of the OfS and acknowledged self-assessment of the University's current performance;
- (c) that the OfS had recently supplied official data on which targets should be based and the APP Working Group would now work to consider if the targets identified were appropriate. Aligned to this would be a full assessment of current investment in access and participation activities to develop a clear idea of the cost of delivering the revised APP targets;
- (d) that an earlier version of Paper CO.19.04.05 had been considered by UEB on 11th March 2019. It had been revised for Senate and Council, taking account of the comments of UEB. The report of consideration of this paper at Senate was in Paper CO.19.04.11;
- (e) that the deadline for submission of the APP for 2020 onwards was 24th May 2019. Given this timescale, Council was invited to delegate approval of the final APP draft to the Pro-Chancellor and Chair of Council, on behalf of Council, as it had done before;
- (f) **[NOT FOR PUBLICATION]**
- (g) **[NOT FOR PUBLICATION]**
- (h) where the University had discretion to set its own targets, these needed to be realistic and achievable;
- (i) that, in relation to scholarships, it would be important to align in the APP the University's scholarships and financial aid with the APP targets (for example, scholarships for Quintile 1 students);
- (j) the importance of the University School in the University's Access and Participation Strategy, especially given the University's significant investment in the School and its role as an exemplar in widening access to higher education;
- (k) that the new APP would include evaluation of the University's APP activities and evidence, including reference to the University's academic research in issues related to access and participation;
- (l) Council noted that the University had a strong track record as a Russell Group University in access and participation, with sector-leading initiatives such as A2B and the University of Birmingham School. Council re-iterated its support for the University's access and participation strategy, and activities;
- (m) **[NOT FOR PUBLICATION]**

Resolved that:

- (i) the University's approach to the Access and Participation Plan (APP), including target setting, be endorsed;
- (ii) authority be delegated to the Pro-Chancellor and Chair of Council, to approve, on behalf of Council, the final version of the University's Access and Participation Plan for submission to the Office for Students. This was because Council, as the

University's governing body was required to approve the APP, and the deadline for submission of the APP was before the next meeting of Council;

(iii) the final version of the APP approved by the Pro-Chancellor and Chair of Council would be shared with members of Council.

19/25 University Station

COMMERCIAL IN CONFIDENCE

Considered: the proposed redevelopment of the University Station (CO.19.04.**06**).

Reported that:

(a) having a railway station on campus was unique in higher education in the UK, with the current University Station used by 3.3m passengers per year, of which 60% travelled to our main campus. The station suffered from serious passenger congestion issues and its redevelopment had been prioritised in the University and Hospital Master Planning exercise, by Birmingham City Council, and in the University's own transport strategy;

(b) the proposed redevelopment offered significant benefits to the University and supported a number of strategic drivers linked to first and last impressions, transport, the development of Battery Park, marketing, and accessibility. It would resolve the current issues associated with the poor user experience and safety of the existing station, with the Commonwealth Games offering leverage to deliver the redeveloped station at pace;

(c) **[NOT FOR PUBLICATION]**

(d) **[NOT FOR PUBLICATION]**

(e) members of Council supported the redevelopment of the station and recognised the significant benefits of this for the University. These included improved access to the University and the station as a key component of a new sustainable transport strategy for the University;

(f) **[NOT FOR PUBLICATION]**

Resolved: that the University would make a financial commitment to the University Station Redevelopment Project, **[NOT FOR PUBLICATION]**

19/26 Strategy, Planning and Resources Committee

Considered: the report of the meeting of the Strategy, Planning and Resources Committee held on 7th March 2019 (CO.19.04.**07**).

(1) Gender Pay Report

Considered: the University's Gender Pay Report for 2018 (CO.19.04.**08**).

Reported that:

(a) the University was required to publish its second round of Gender Pay data by 31st March 2019. The University data for 2018 were provided in Paper CO.19.04.**08**, together with comparative data from 2017;

(b) the gender pay and bonus gaps for the University had reduced compared with 2017. Progress was being made and the median gender pay gap had reduced from 23.3% to 19.6% and the median gender bonus gap had reduced from 50% to 25%;;

(c) the University did not outsource its facilities services, such as cleaning, catering and security, to third parties. This impacted on the lower pay quartile data, compared to other higher education institutions which did outsource.

(2) New Core Update

COMMERCIAL IN CONFIDENCE

Considered: the New Core Update (CO.19.04.09).

Reported:

- (a) that, as reported to Council and SPRC in January 2019, the go-live date for New Core had been deferred to 3rd June 2019. This was because there had been insufficient time to complete the testing of the remaining 13 key system integrations required to enable the original 4th February 2019 go-live to proceed;
- (b) that following further work by the UoB and Version 1 teams, these integrations had now been completed and testing had ended with a very low level of defects arising. User Acceptance and End to End testing had commenced and was going well. The programme status had changed from Red to Amber during the week commencing 25th February 2019 as the team moved to the next phase of delivery of New Core;
- (c) that Paper CO.19.04.09 provided an update on:
 - (i) the additional and ongoing activity required to secure the 3rd June go-live;
 - (ii) additional information around the revised go-live date;
 - (iii) the current status of the revised programme plan;
 - (iv) **[NOT FOR PUBLICATION]**
 - (v) the current benefits realisation plan;
 - (vi) post go-live arrangements;
- (d) that the third phase of User Acceptance Testing was scheduled to run until early April 2019 which would enable end-to-end testing of functionality across all HR, Payroll and Finance modules and would include load testing;
- (e) the importance of reviewing lessons learned from the experience of the New Core project was recognised, noting that a report on this would be prepared in due course.

Resolved: that Council congratulated the Finance Director and the New Core Programme Team on progress since the January meeting of Council and the change in status of the programme, noting:

- (i) the additional and on-going activities associated with the revised go-live date of 3rd June 2019;
- (ii) **[NOT FOR PUBLICATION]**

19/27 Senate

Noted: the report of the meeting of Senate held on 20th March 2019 (CO.19.04.11).

19/28 Audit Committee

Noted: the report of the meeting of Audit Committee held on 12th March 2019 (CO.19.04.12).

19/29 University of Birmingham Enterprise Ltd.

Noted that the re-appointment of Mr John Powell as Chair and Non-Executive Director on the University of Birmingham Enterprise Ltd. Board for two years from 1st March 2019 to 28th February 2021 had been approved by the Registrar and Secretary on behalf of Council.

19/30 Capital Projects over £10m

COMMERCIAL IN CONFIDENCE

Received: a report from the Director of Estates (CO.19.04.13).

19/31 Affixing of the University Seal

COMMERCIAL IN CONFIDENCE

Received: a report noting the transactions which had required use of the University Seal since the last meeting of Council (CO.19.04.14).

19/32 Any Other Business

(1) Pro-Chancellor and Chair of Council

Reported: that an update on progress with the search for the next Pro-Chancellor and Chair of Council would be provided to the next meeting of Council in June 2019.

(2) Next Visit to the Guild of Students

Reported: that a visit to the Guild of Students for members of Council would be arranged every two years. This meant that the next visit would be held during 2019/20.

19/33 Programme of Meetings

Noted: the programme of meetings of Council:

2018/19

Tuesday 25th June 2019, 5.00pm, Council Presentation and Dinner
Wednesday 26th June 2019, 9.00am, Council Meeting

2019/20

Tuesday 1st October 2019, 6.30pm, Council Dinner
Wednesday 2nd October 2019, 9.00am, Council Strategy Day
Tuesday 26th November 2019, 5.00pm, Council Presentation and Dinner
Wednesday 27th November 2019, 9.00am, Council Meeting
Tuesday 28th January 2020, 5.00pm, Council Presentation and Dinner
Wednesday 29th January 2020, 9.00am, Council Meeting
Thursday 2nd April 2020, 9.00am, Council Strategy Day and Dinner
Tuesday 23rd June 2020, 5.00pm, Council Presentation and Dinner
Wednesday 24th June 2020, 9.00am, Council Meeting