

UNIVERSITY OF BIRMINGHAM

COUNCIL

14th October 2015 at 9.00am

MINUTES

Members present: Mr Ed Smith CBE (Pro-Chancellor, in the Chair); Mr Derrick Anderson; Professor Kathleen Armour; Dame Christine Braddock; Mr Alan Davey CBE; Professor Sir David Eastwood (Vice-Chancellor and Principal); Professor Peter Fryer; Mr Robert Halton; Mr Malcolm Harbour CBE; Mr Richard Haywood (Deputy Pro-Chancellor); Ms Sukhvinder Kaur-Stubbs; Dr Helen Laville; Mr Jack Mably (President of the Guild); Professor Hisham Mehanna; Mrs Caragh Merrick (Treasurer); Dr Ranjit Sondhi CBE; Mr David Stead; Professor Adam Tickell (Provost and Vice-Principal).

Also present: Professor David Adams (Pro-Vice-Chancellor and Head of College); Professor Jeff Bale (Pro-Vice-Chancellor); Professor Saul Becker (Pro-Vice-Chancellor and Head of College); Mr Chris Granger (Director of Finance); Mr Kevin Greenleaves (Consultant, Effectiveness Review of Council); Mrs Colette McDonough (Assistant Secretary); Professor Myra Nimmo (Pro-Vice-Chancellor and Head of College); Ms Heather Paver (Director of HR); Mr Lee Sanders (Registrar and Secretary); Professor Andy Schofield (Pro-Vice-Chancellor and Head of College); Professor Tim Softley (Pro-Vice-Chancellor); Professor Michael Whitby (Pro-Vice-Chancellor and Head of College); Ms Cathy Gilbert (Director of External Relations) (for Minute 15/57 and 15/58) and Professor Una Martin (Deputy Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Equalities) for Minute 15/62).

Apologies: Ms Joulie Axelithioti (Postgraduate Officer); Mr David Davies OBE; Mr Martin Devenish; Mr Richard Keys.

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

15/53 Membership and Terms of Reference

**Noted:** the membership and terms of reference of Council as set out in Paper CO.15.10.01 and welcomed the new members of Council and UEB to their first meeting.

15/54 Minutes of previous meeting

**Resolved:** that the minutes of the meeting held on 1st July 2015 be approved (CO.15.10.02). There were no matters arising from the minutes.

15/55 Pro-Chancellor's Items

**Reported:** that the annual one-to-one meetings with members of Council had been undertaken during the summer and a report on the outcome would normally have been submitted to this meeting. However, the findings of the 2014/15 meetings were currently being considered by the Effectiveness Review of Council. A report on the one-to-one meetings would therefore be submitted to Council on 27th November 2015, together with the Effectiveness Review report.

Vice-Chancellor's Items

**Considered:** a report from the Vice-Chancellor (CO.15.10.03).

(1) Higher Education Review

**Reported** that:

- (a) the University was preparing for review by the Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) under its Higher Education Review process. This included preparation of the University's Self-Evaluation Document and supporting evidence base, together with the staging of a mock review visit;
- (b) the actual review visit would take place during the week commencing 15th February 2016;
- (c) Council on 27th November 2015 would receive a further briefing on the preparation for the University's Higher Education Review, including a copy of the Self-Evaluation Document which would be approved by Senate.

(2) Circles of Influence

**Reported** that:

- (a) Council congratulated the University on the success of the Circles of Influence fundraising campaign, noting that the closure of the campaign would be marked by celebrating its success at the University's House of Lords Reception on 6th November 2015;
- (b) Simon Lerwill would be joining the University in January 2016 as the next Director of Development and Alumni Relations. His first priority would be to develop the University's strategy for the next phase of its fund-raising activities;
- (c) Members of Council were encouraged to use their networks in support of the University's fund-raising activities.

(3) University of Birmingham School

**Reported:** that arrangements would be made for members of Council to visit the University of Birmingham School.

Recruitment and Admissions Update

**Considered:** the recruitment performance of the University for 2015 entry (CO.15.10.04).

**Reported:**

- (a) that home undergraduate recruitment had been very successful. **[NOT FOR PUBLICATION]**
- (b) **[NOT FOR PUBLICATION]**
- (c) **[NOT FOR PUBLICATION]**
- (d) **[NOT FOR PUBLICATION]**
- (e) that the aim was to maintain the momentum of the University's overall recruitment process for the 2016 cycle;
- (f) the continual increasing student demand for study spaces. In addition to the measures reported in Paper CO.15.10.04, the University was investigating whether further study space could be provided on campus (for example, in the new Library);
- (g) that the student intake in respect of Medicine was reliant on the commissioning of student numbers by Government;

(h) **[NOT FOR PUBLICATION]**  
(i) early indications of where the market could be growing. The University was monitoring such areas to identify whether and how it might adjust its market position accordingly.

**Resolved:** that the University be congratulated on the success of its recruitment performance for 2015 entry.

15/58 National Student Survey 2015 Performance

**Considered:** the University's performance in the 2015 National Student Survey (CO.15.10.05).

**Reported** that:

- (a) the University was currently ranked 10th in the Russell Group for overall satisfaction and the overall satisfaction score had fallen from 89% to 88%. This was below the University's target of 90%. This was disappointing and had triggered a series of reflections which had informed development of the University's strategy for 2016;
- (b) the University was ranked equal 3rd in the Russell Group for 'Quality of Teaching' with a score of 91% and achieved highest or equal highest section scores over the period 2010-15. However, these must be improved further to reach the overall satisfaction target score of 90%, noting that there had been greater variation in the 52 subject areas which, without improvement at a local level, would compromise the University's ability to raise sectional, and in turn, the overall satisfaction score at an institutional level;
- (c) the University's proposed strategy for 2016 outlined in Paper CO.15.10.05 was:
  - (i) an enhanced NSS communication approach set within the context of a more ambitious student communication strategy (including by use of digital technology) to ensure relationships with students were strong and that areas of strength as well as areas of improvement were visible;
  - (ii) strong and effective management in Schools and Departments of an agreed list of actions to ensure approaches focused on specific needs whilst building on good practice already introduced;
- (d) **[NOT FOR PUBLICATION]**
- (e) the scope for improvement of the University's score for assessment and feedback, noting the importance of both speed and quality of assessment and feedback;
- (f) the benefit of using Canvas to obtain real time student feedback to enable the University to respond to and pre-empt problems if they arose at an early stage.

**Resolved:** that the strategy for the 2016 NSS as set out in Paper CO.15.10.05 be endorsed, noting that a report on the University's performance in the 2016 NSS would be submitted to Council in October 2016.

15/59 Employability Outcomes and Strategy

**Considered:** an update on the University's employability outcomes and strategy (CO.15.10.06).

**Reported** that:

- (a) the University's approach to graduate employability had been an area of tremendous success and had been recognised as sector-leading on multiple

- occasions, most recently by the designation of The Times/Sunday Times University of the Year for Graduate Employment;
- (b) the latest data from the Destinations of Leavers from Higher Education (DLHE) survey showed that the University's graduate employability results for undergraduate leavers continued to improve year-on-year, (although results had improved across the sector and the University was now in fourth place for the Russell Group, after being overtaken by the University of Oxford). The Graduate Employability rate now stood at 86.7%;
- (c) the next phase of the University's Employability Strategy was currently being developed, **[NOT FOR PUBLICATION]**

**Resolved:** that the Director of Student Employability and her team be congratulated on their tremendous success of shaping and delivering the University's strategic approach to graduate employability.

15/60 Report of the Strategy, Planning and Resources Committee

**Considered:** the report of the Strategy, Planning and Resources Committee (CO.15.10.07).

- (1) UK Collaboratorium for Research in Infrastructure and Cities (UKCRIC)

#### ***COMMERCIAL IN CONFIDENCE***

**Considered:** the business case for the University element of the UKCRIC (SPR.15.10.12 and 12A).

**Reported** that:

- (a) the University was a partner in a £128m Treasury investment, UKCRIC, an initiative that would transform the research landscape in the fields of infrastructure and cities, topics that were crucial to the UK's economy, society and the environment;
- (b) as part of a £32m package of investment that would establish the National Buried Infrastructure Facility (NBIF) and upgrade the existing TRAIN Rig facility within the School of Civil Engineering, there was a request for the University to invest £6m (in 2019/20) in capital equipment. The capital investment was a requirement from the government to demonstrate the University's commitment to this initiative. This had been reported to Council in July 2015;
- (c) **[NOT FOR PUBLICATION]**
- (d) the NBIF would require a new building (~1,500sqm) to be constructed with a 25m x 10m x 3-5m test pit with environmental controls. There was also a need to invest in a small number of posts to operate the facility and to provide additional academic capability;
- (e) **[NOT FOR PUBLICATION]**
- (f) **[NOT FOR PUBLICATION]**
- (g) **[NOT FOR PUBLICATION]**
- (h) SPRC had met the previous day and had recommended to Council that the University proceed with UKCRIC;
- (i) there were competing demands for such capital investment. However, UKCRIC was recognised to be a signature project for the University which had strong government backing and represented the opportunity to conduct high quality research with significant national investment.

**Resolved:** that the business case for the University element of UKCRIC set out in Paper SPR.15.10.12 and 12A be approved, including the investment of £6m in capital

funding to build a facility for the University of Birmingham within a maximum cost of £32m as part of the wider £128m UKCRC investment from Treasury.

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

(3) Sale of Housing Stock (Student) Houses in Selly Oak

**COMMERCIAL IN CONFIDENCE**

**Considered:** the proposed sale of the University's Housing Stock (Student) Houses in Selly Oak (SPR.15.10.13).

**Reported** that:

**[NOT FOR PUBLICATION]**

**Resolved:** that the sale of 16 university owned and managed houses located in Selly Oak for the best price attainable for each property on the open market be approved, noting that **[NOT FOR PUBLICATION]**

15/61 Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015

**Considered:** the approach and work undertaken to date to prepare the University for the implementation of the Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015 (CTSA) (CO.15.10.08).

**Reported** that:

- (a) the further guidance for higher education institutions (HEIs) on Prevent, including external speakers, was issued over the Summer and came into force on 18th September 2015;
- (b) HEFCE had been delegated by the Secretary of State for BIS with the new statutory function of Monitoring Authority for HE and had launched a consultation on the monitoring arrangements. In summary, HEFCE was proposing that HEIs submit in December 2015/January 2016 a self-assessment of institutional preparedness followed by a detailed submission, including the HEI's risk assessment and action plan, in Spring/Summer 2016. Thereafter, ongoing monitoring would consist of an annual report from the governing body each November;
- (c) HEFCE was expected to issue further guidance in November following the consultation and the University was reviewing its risk assessment and action plan in light of these likely new monitoring arrangements. These would be submitted to Council in November 2015, together with a proposed revision of the University's Code of Practice on Freedom of Speech and External Speakers;
- (d) the University was working closely with the Guild of Students on the Act and would continue to consider the issues in the context of student vulnerability;
- (e) the example of an event which was scheduled to take place the following day and had been dealt with in accordance with the Prevent duty because of an external speaker who had been invited to attend, noting the importance of taking a proportionate view on such events and maintaining an appropriate balance between meeting the requirements of the Prevent duty and upholding the principle of freedom of speech on campus;
- (f) Council understood that reaching a judgement on events and cases under the Prevent duty was complex and not easy and that the University's leadership should be supported in taking a pragmatic and balanced approach;

(g) Council noted it was unrealistic for the University to risk assess all student events off campus and advocated a 'best endeavours' approach which focused on University organised, funded or branded events.

**Resolved:** that the approach taken by the University to date and the proposed next steps set out in Paper CO.15.10.08) be endorsed.

15/62 Annual Assurance Report on Equality and Diversity

**Considered:** the Annual Assurance Report on Equality and Diversity (CO.15.10.09).

**Reported:**

- (a) the success of the University's designation of 2013/14 as the start of its Advancing Equality in Employment (AEiE) project which had signalled a step change in the University's approach to equality and diversity;
- (b) that the University had created two new roles to take forward the University's equality and diversity strategy - Deputy Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Equalities) and Staff Diversity Adviser (Engagement).

**Resolved:** that the Annual Assurance Report on Equality and Diversity be approved as set out in Paper CO.15.10.09.

15/63 Effectiveness Review of Council

**Reported** that:

- (a) the Effectiveness Review Panel had met twice to date. The first meeting had included consideration of a mapping exercise to compare the University's current governance practice against that recommended by the Higher Education Code of Practice. The second meeting had included an external workshop on board effectiveness hosted by Kevin Greenleaves, Consultant;
- (b) Mr Greenleaves had been invited to observe the Council Strategy Day (including this meeting) as part of his work for the Effectiveness Review of Council;
- (c) the report of the Effectiveness Review of Council, with its recommendations, would be submitted to Council on 27th November 2015, together with the report on the outcomes of the one-to-one meetings (see minute 15/53 above);
- (d) members of Council were encouraged to submit any further comments on how to enhance the effectiveness of Council to the Deputy Pro-Chancellor as Chair of the Review Panel.

15/64 Deputy Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Student Experience)

**Resolved:** that the appointment of Dr Julie Gilson as Deputy Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Student Experience) be approved as set out in Paper CO.15.10.10.

15/65 Capital Projects over £5m

**COMMERCIAL IN CONFIDENCE**

**Received:** a report from the Director of Estates (CO.15.10.11).

15/66 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.15.10.12).

15/67 Items Approved Between Meetings of Council

**Noted:** a list of items approved since the meeting of the Council on 1st July 2015, under the procedure for approval of business between meetings of Council (CO.15.10.13).

**Endorsed:** the sale of 78C Alderbrook Road for £870,000.

15/68 Amendment of Scheme of Delegated Powers of Council

**Resolved:** that the Scheme of Delegated Powers of Council be amended as set out in Paper CO.15.10.14.

15/69 Any Other Business

**Reported:** that all members of Council were encouraged to attend the Council Presentation and Dinner before the next meeting of Council on 26th/27th November 2015. This would be on the theme of 'Birmingham Health Partners - Opportunities for Future Collaboration presented by the National Healthcare Agenda'.

15/70 Programme of Meetings 2015/16

**Noted:** the programme of meetings of Council for the remainder of 2015/16:

Thursday 26th November 2015, 5.00pm, Council Presentation and Dinner  
Friday 27th November 2015, 9.00am, Council Meeting

Tuesday 2nd February 2016, 5.00pm, Council Presentation and Dinner

Wednesday 3rd February 2016, 9.00am, Council Meeting

Wednesday 20th April 2016, 10.00am, Council Strategy Day and Dinner

Tuesday 28th June 2016, 5.00pm, Council Presentation and Dinner

Wednesday 29th June 2016, 9.00am, Council Meeting