UNIVERSITY OF BATH

EFFECTIVENESS REVIEW OF COUNCIL - MAY 2012

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The CUC Governance Code of Practice specifies that the effectiveness of governing bodies shall be reviewed not less than every five years.

The Effectiveness Review Group was established by Council on 20th October 2011 to review the effectiveness of Council as the governing body of the University. Its membership was as follows:

Andrew Fraser, External Chair of the Review Group
Peter Troughton, Chair of Council
Professor Dame Glynis Breakwell, Vice-Chancellor
Dr Michael Hipkins, External Member of Council
Thomas Sheppard, External Member of Council
Dr Steve Wharton, Chair of Academic Assembly
David Howells, President of the Students' Union

In attendance:
Mark Humphriss, University Secretary
Colette Milner, Secretary to the Group

The Group conducted a series of investigations to assess the effectiveness of Council against national criteria grouped under four main headings.

Our principal finding is that Council can continue to be assured of its effectiveness having regard to compliance with the Committee of University Chairs (CUC) Governance Code of Practice, assessment of four key effectiveness factors identified by the CUC/Leadership Foundation for Higher Education (LFHE) Framework, Council's Statement of Primary Responsibilities and other relevant good practice.

We recognise that the Council operates successfully and compares favourably to practice elsewhere within the sector. Our recommendations are therefore made in this context and are designed to finesse and make incremental enhancements to arrangements which have already proved to be highly effective for the University.

Our recommendations were approved by Council on 17th May 2012 and are at Appendix 1. These recommendations also build on the outcome of the last full effectiveness review in 2005 which, amongst other things, reduced the size of Council from 40 to 27 (subsequently reduced to 26 in 2009).

The next effectiveness review of Council will be conducted during 2014/15 and will be an interim review.

The next effectiveness review of Senate will be conducted during 2012/13. The findings of this full review will be reported to Council in due course.

Andrew Fraser
Chair of Effectiveness Review Group
May 2012
### APPENDIX 1

### SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations have been prioritised to assist members of Council and focus their consideration as follows:

- **High:** Regarded as a high priority for Council and expected to generate significant discussion at the meeting.
- **Medium:** Regarded as a medium priority for Council and expected to generate some discussion at the meeting.
- **Low:** Routine and not expected to generate any discussion at the meeting.

#### Recommendation 1 (Appendix 4, Page 2) - Low
That the need for greater clarity of knowledge/understanding of the system of delegation, Senate and the Executive Committee be addressed by:
- provision of further information on the roles of Senate and Executive Committee and the system of delegation to new members of Council as part of their induction;
- addition of a short statement reminding members of Council of the distinction between the Executive Committee, Senate and Council to the start of the agenda for the first meeting of Council in each academic year.

#### Recommendation 2 (Appendix 4, Page 2) - High
That further means of encouraging members of Council to contribute to the debate at meetings of Council in the spirit of 'critical friendship' and to enable them to feel their value in the process be explored.

#### Recommendation 3 (Appendix 4, Page 3) - Low
That one Vice-President of the Students’ Union be entitled to attend meetings of the Finance Committee as an observer.

#### Recommendation 4 (Appendix 4, Page 3) - Medium
That the effectiveness of the arrangements for constituting the membership drawn from Senate of Committees within the governance structure of Council/Senate be reviewed as part of the forthcoming Effectiveness Review of Senate.

#### Recommendation 5 (Appendix 4, Page 4) - Low
That a forward programme of business be routinely submitted to the October meeting of Council.

#### Recommendation 6 (Appendix 4, Page 4) - Medium
That assurance continues to be received of the effectiveness of the relationship between the Council and the Students’ Union but that the role of the BUSU Senior Treasurer requires review in the light of the new governance framework.

#### Recommendation 7 (Appendix 4, Page 5) - Low
That an oral summary of the items of business being conducted under the reserved agenda be given to the students by the Chair of Council before they leave each meeting.
Recommendation 8 (Appendix 5, Page 1) - High
That the effectiveness of the current approach to member recruitment be commended and that the importance of continuing to pursue broadening of the diversity of Council in terms of age, gender, disability and ethnicity be reiterated.

Recommendation 9 (Appendix 5, Page 2) - Medium
That the continuing professional development of members of Council be enhanced by:

i) introduction of informal review by the Chair of Council of how new members of Council are progressing after six months;

ii) re-introduction of a programme of opportunities for continuing professional development for a pilot period during 2012/13 to enable members of Council to enhance their knowledge of the University and the higher education environment in general and to provide the opportunity for members of Council to interact with each other and the stakeholders of the University.

Recommendation 10 (Appendix 6, Page 1) - Medium
That the Office of Policy and Planning be requested to develop a framework for maintenance of the Corporate Plan and its supporting strategies for consideration and approval by Council. This framework will set a rolling programme for review of the Corporate Plan and each supporting strategy and specify details of those with responsibility for each strategy and the arrangements for monitoring of progress with implementation.

Recommendation 11 (Appendix 6, Page 1) - Low
That a reference booklet of the strategic plan of the University be routinely issued to members of Council for ease of reference.

Recommendation 12 (Appendix 6, Page 3) - High
That the Office of Policy and Planning be requested to review the performance information submitted to Council in light of:

- the scope for application of the model for presentation of the Risk Register to KPIs;
- the suggestion that a report on each specific KPI be provided at each meeting subsequent to October to enable Council to focus on all KPIs in greater detail over the course of a year;
- the need to verify that the current KPIs remain relevant;
- the advent of the Key Information Sets;
- work being undertaken at national level to develop common KPIs and other good practice on KPIs within the sector;
- the suggestion that a standing heading be added to the agenda for each meeting of Council entitled 'Performance Information' as a means of focussing members of Council on the information which is routinely supplied to Council in respect of performance but which is not currently presented in terms of providing assurance to Council in respect of its performance monitoring role.

Recommendation 13 (Appendix 6, Page 3) - Medium
That the formal reporting of performance reviews to provide assurance to Council be enhanced by:

- formally advising Council when a review has been commissioned as part of the update on the annual planning process provided to Council each October;
- submission of an annual report to the Audit Committee to provide assurance of completion and actioning of the review which would be reported to Council via the minutes of Audit Committee.
**Recommendation 14 (Appendix 7, Page 1) - Medium**

That the following measures be adopted to present information to Council more effectively:

i) development of a standard report format normally limited to four sides of A4 and to include an executive summary with links to supporting information as Appendices or documentation available electronically. This report is an example of the type of format envisaged;

ii) the scope for greater use of technology such as IPADs, the Learning Material Filestore and the screens in the Council Chamber be explored;

iii) the use of e-mail as the principal means of communication with members of Council (e.g. for routine mailings and information alerts) be explored;

iv) development of an intranet site for members of Council. This could provide advance notice of key dates of upcoming meetings/events, past meeting papers and briefings on ongoing projects and webinars/podcasts;

v) use of electronic surveys to obtain information from members of Council (e.g. the annual equalities and skills returns).

**Recommendation 15 (Appendix 7, Page 2) - Low**

That communication to and from Council both within the institution and with key stakeholders and the public be further enhanced by improvement of the format of the Council Website to communicate the role of Council and its membership (e.g. by inclusion of summary biographies of members of Council and clearer contact information). There is also potential for this to be used as the access point for the intranet site for members of Council referred to above.

**Recommendation 16**

That the Implementation Plan set out at Appendix 9 be approved.