
Meeting: COUNCIL

Date and Time: Thursday 15 October 2020 at 3.15pm

Venue: Virtual meeting via Zoom

Present:

Pamela Chesters	Chair
Maria Bond	Appointed member
Tim Ford	Appointed member
Christine Gibbons	Appointed member
Professor Dot Griffiths	Appointed member
Mesar Hameed	Elected by professional service staff
David Hardy	Appointed member
Dr Marion Harney	Elected by Senate
Malcolm Holley	Elected by professional service staff
Tim Hollingsworth	Appointed member
Professor Tim Ibell	Elected by Senate
Francesco Masala	Student governor
Don McLaverty	Appointed member
Sujata McNab	Appointed member
Catherine Mealing-Jones	Appointed member
Charlotte Moar	Appointed member
Dr David Moon	Elected from Senate by Academic Assembly
John Preston	Treasurer
Professor Ian White	Vice-Chancellor and President
Dr Jane White	Chair of Academic Assembly
Annie Willingham	Student governor

In attendance:

Professor Jeremy Bradshaw	Pro-Vice-Chancellor (International and Doctoral)
Professor Peter Lambert	Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Learning and Teaching)
Professor Jonathan Knight	Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Research)
Professor Bernie Morley	Deputy Vice-Chancellor & Provost
Martin Williams	Director of Finance
Dr Cassie Wilson	Vice-President (Student Experience)
Keith Zimmerman	Chief Operating Officer

Secretariat:

Emily Commander	Secretary
Karen Gleave	Member of Secretariat

7217 WELCOME AND QUORUM

The Chair welcomed everyone and in particular Sujata McNab who was attending her first meeting. The attendance was noted.

7218 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

7219 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

The minutes of the Council meeting of 23 September 2020 (Paper C20/21 – 07) were **approved** as a correct record and would be signed by the Chair.

7220 ACTIONS AND MATTERS ARISING

- 1) 7213 (Redundancy Committee: Follow-up information on the Redundancy Committee to be provided in writing). At the Council meeting on 23 September, some members had requested further information about the remit of the Committee, which would be shared on Convene. **Ongoing**
- 2) 7198 (Governing documents: Privy Council approval of amendments). Privy Council approval was granted in September and all appropriate actions were underway. **Complete**
- 3) Council received an update from the Deputy Vice-Chancellor about the rate of coronavirus infections within the BANES local authority area; and from the Chief Operating Officer about the University's approach to managing cases within its community. The Chief Operating Officer also provided assurance about the robustness of the processes used by the University to seek advice and take decisions in the context of the pandemic.

7221 UPDATE FROM THE VICE-CHANCELLOR

The Vice-Chancellor presented paper C20/21 – 08. He placed on record his gratitude to staff for their hard work, particularly at the start of term, when they had been required to respond at pace and with little notice. He also thanked students for their positive engagement.

It was a major challenge to provide high levels of support to students self-isolating on campus, who currently numbered around 1,400 from 128 separate households, out of a total of around 3,300 campus-based students. Every effort was being made to ensure their wellbeing, with services provided ranging from the delivery of meals, through the collection of laundry to the provision of yoga mats. This work meant that business continuity was very stretched. He placed on record his particular thanks to Keith Zimmerman and Jane Loveys for coordinating this response.

Mental health continued to be an area of priority for the University with evidence that some students were under particular strain. The Vice-Chancellor expressed his deep sorrow and concern about the disappearance of a student earlier that week. He placed on record his particular thanks to Cassie Wilson, Anthony Payne and the security team for all their work in this challenging area.

The Vice-Chancellor announced that he had made two appointments to further the University's ambitions on strengthening equality, diversity and inclusion: Alex Butler, Chief Digital and Information Officer, had been appointed as Executive Chair of the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Committee, and Professor Rajani Naidoo had been appointed as Head of the Race Equality Task Force.

The University had moved into the top ten in the Times UK university rankings for the first time.

7222 STRATEGY

The Vice-Chancellor presented paper C20/21 – 09 on strategy.

The Chair of Council noted that progress towards the creation of a strategy had understandably slowed because of the pandemic. The paper was a reminder of what Council had previously agreed and set out plans for completing work on the strategy.

Members of Council asked questions and were answered as follows:

- Student experience was a cornerstone of the strategy, and work would be carried out to ensure that this was fully reflected in the final document.

Council noted plans to complete the work on the University strategy and reaffirmed the position already reached.

7223 SCHEME OF DELEGATION

The Chair of Council presented paper C20/21 – 10 on the Scheme of Delegation. From a governance point of view, there was a need for clarity about delegations: this would improve accountability and transparency and make the Scheme a more useful tool for staff.

At this stage, Council was being asked to approve a new, easy-to-use, format for the Scheme – a full review of the delegations contained within it would follow, coordinated by the Head of Strategic Governance. As part of that review, the Council Scheme of Delegation would be combined with the Senate and Executive schemes of delegation to make a single University Scheme.

HoSG

Members of Council asked questions and were answered as follows:

- The Scheme would be amended to clarify that Council was not responsible for agreeing each separate classification of the information made available under the Freedom of Information scheme.

- The term “on the recommendation of” allowed for the possibility that Council would not accept a recommendation made to it. This would be clarified within the introductory text.

Council considered and approved the new format Scheme of Delegation, on the recommendation of the Audit and Risk Assurance Committee.

7224 COUNCIL STANDING ORDERS

Council considered and approved revised Standing Orders for Council (paper C20/21 – 11).

7225 KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

The Chair introduced paper C20/21 – 12, noting that the University had a relatively under-developed performance management framework with limited delegations of authority. As had been discussed earlier at the Strategy Day, Council endorsed the desire to introduce a more devolved way of working and agreed that this would need to be underpinned by transparent performance tracking on key measures. In the first instance, therefore, the paper outlined the draft list of KPIs and PIs that UEB was considering for its own purposes from which the Council KPIs would be abstracted in due course.

Members of Council asked questions and received answers as follows:

- As the strategy was developed, links between the strategy and KPIs would be made more explicit. Some of the KPIs were linked to core institutional values rather than the strategy.
- Consideration would be given to see if there were ways in which staff and student happiness could be measured in a meaningful way.
- Council members underlined the need for equality, diversity and inclusion metrics to disaggregate BAME data, so that the number of black students and staff became visible as a separate category. The new Executive Chair of the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Committee would review all the metrics in this area during the course of the coming year.
- The proposed set KPIs was a starting point developed by UEB in the first instance for their own purposes. It was understood that while there was a willingness to share the output with Council as they were under development and bedding in, in the long run Council would expect to focus on a smaller number of strategic KPIs.
- The value of setting targets was noted, as the trajectory would provide assurance that the strategy was on track to be delivered. Council recognised that that in setting stretch targets, it was unlikely that they would always all be met and it would be important that if this occurred, there was a mature conversation with UEB as to the circumstances that had led to this situation.

Council noted the University’s approach to Key Performance Indicators.

7226 OPERATIONAL MATTERS

Council received an oral update from the Vice-President (Student Experience) and the Students' Union President, on campus restart.

The Vice-President (Student Experience) noted that the introduction of Student Living Ambassadors had been successful, and a particular help in the context of the pandemic. The ambassadors had helped settle students into their accommodation and were supporting those in self-isolation.

Over the summer and subsequently, a number of Covid-secure study and social spaces had been created on campus. A booking system had been introduced for the study spaces and demand and availability was being monitored to ensure students had the work space they needed. Three marquees on campus provided informal spaces for meeting people, eating and socialising during the day. In the evening they were used for Students' Union activities.

The team met regularly to consider what additional activities could be provided, but uptake remained slow, possibly because the safety messaging to students had been very effective. Effort was now being put into advertising available social spaces, and the SU had a plan of further activities.

A substantial proportion of students on campus were in self-isolation, which presented a challenge in terms of the support offered, as did those students in self-isolation in HMOs off campus, for whom less could be done. A Covid hub had been established for self-isolating students as well as a parent hotline. Volunteers enabled self-isolating students to have safe access to outdoor space. Feedback from parents and social media had been broadly positive.

Work was underway to enable students to provide feedback on their whole university experience, not just on the learning and teaching elements.

The President of the Students' Union said that Freshers' Week had been effective, with delivery of both online and in-person activities. The more wholesome offer available in the activities' arena had been particularly successful.

He put on record his thanks to the staff of the University for the success of the East Village. The SU had been using it to throw a lifeline to some of the businesses in town, with nightclubs coming up to campus to occupy tents, in the knowledge that students attending would be able to do so safely.

Efforts were being made to support students who had fewer opportunities to make friends than in a normal year: for example, a social event was being run each morning in the Students' Union to help students who had not made friends within their households.

He said that the support given to students at Bath was unparalleled within the sector, and that he felt the University should be proud, particularly given the depth of the challenges faced.

The Chair of Council put on record her thanks to the SU and staff for their hard work in this area.

7227 PROGRAMME OF FORTHCOMING COUNCIL MEETINGS

Council noted the programme of Council meetings for the 2020/21 academic year:

Thursday 26 November 2020: 9.30am – 12.30pm
Thursday 25 February 2021: 9.30am – 12.30pm
Wednesday 24 March 2021 (strategy day): 9.30am – 5.00pm
Thursday 13 May 2021: 9.30am – 12.30pm
Thursday 22 July 2021: 9.30am – 12.30pm

All meetings would be preceded by a virtual dinner and development session the evening beforehand. Meetings would be online until further notice.

7228 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

The meeting concluded at 4.32 pm
