



POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE

28 January 2019

Minute

Present: Anne Richards, Vice-Convener of Court (Convener)
The Principal, Peter Mathieson
University Secretary, Sarah Smith
Vice-Principal Jonathan Seckl
Frank Armstrong, Co-opted Member
Doreen Davidson, General Council Assessor
Susan Rice, Co-opted Member
Eleri Connick, President, Students' Association

In attendance: Senior Vice-Principal Charlie Jeffery
Hugh Edmiston, Director of Corporate Services
James Saville, Director of Human Resources
Lee Hamill, Director of Finance
Gary Jebb, Director of Estates
Tracey Slaven, Deputy Secretary, Strategic Planning
Leigh Chalmers, Director of Legal Services
Lewis Allan, Head of Court Services

Apologies: David Bentley, Co-opted Member
Sarah Cooper, Senate Assessor

1 Minute Paper A1

The Minute of the meeting held on 19 November 2018 was approved.

2 Matters Arising & Review of Action Log Paper A2

- Staff Survey
Detailed School/Directorate level results have been issued and will be considered collectively with Heads of School at the next meeting of the Academic Strategy Group. Members commented on encouraging conversations in individual areas on responding to findings and ensuring that local and University-wide follow-up actions are visible and communicated.
- Core Systems Procurement
Exception Committee approved the Core Systems (Phase 1) procurement programme on 16 January 2019. This will be reported to the next Court meeting.

3 Principal's Communications Verbal

The Principal reported on: development of a new Strategic Plan, with consultation events led by the Principal taking place across the University's campuses; a recent senior team away-day to consider internationalisation activities as part of the

Strategic Plan development; work on capital prioritisation is nearing finalisation following two meetings held in December and will be reported to the next meeting of Estates Committee; a strong field of applications has been received for the Vice-Principal Students position, with shortlisting to take place in the coming weeks; insights gained from a recent widening participation event for Edinburgh secondary schools. Potential cross-border funding implications of the ongoing Review of Post-18 Education in England were discussed.

SUBSTANTIVE ITEMS

4 Business Plan Cycle 2019-22

Paper B

An update on the current business planning round including an overview of the current financial position and anticipated external pressures was reviewed. It was noted that the University Executive has agreed the expectation that Main Budget Holder plans should collectively deliver a 5% surplus over the cycle; allowing reinvestment in key University priorities as well as the capital programme. The importance of tuition fee income and options for mitigating the impact of possible tuition fee reductions for Rest of UK undergraduate students were discussed. Noting that the forecast is a conservative position taken in Quarter 1 and will be updated, it was requested that the subsequent paper should include scenario analysis and City Deal projections.

5 Brexit and Business Continuity Planning Update

Verbal

University planning for Brexit scenarios was considered. Medium term planning includes further improving recruitment of EU and non-EU overseas students, with initial application figures for 2019/20 entry highly encouraging

6 China Collaborations Annual Update

Paper C

The second annual update of current and proposed collaborations with Chinese universities and/or commercial partners was reviewed. More generally, the due diligence process for research collaborations in comparison with due diligence undertaken for the acceptance of philanthropic donations was discussed. A light touch review of the research collaborations due diligence process is underway, with outcomes to be reported to the Committee. Improving the internal sharing of information and experience gained from joint ventures and collaborations was discussed, with a China Group chaired by the Vice-Principal International to be established and a customer relationship management system under consideration for Chinese activities. Potential for investment in the BioQuarter was noted, with the Director of Corporate Services to update the Committee and the Commercialisation Sub-Group as appropriate

7 Director of Finance's Report

Paper D

The period 5 (December 2018) monthly management accounts, financial management for Brexit preparations and an initial analysis of the University's financial position for 2017/18 relative to Russell Group peer institutions was reviewed. It was noted that cautious forecasting in the early periods of the financial

year continue to occur, with noticeable underspending to date for 2018/19. Improving the accuracy of in-year forecasting could allow for earlier reinvestment decisions and reduce incentives for increased expenditure in the final quarter of the year. A newly formed cross-University Finance Executive is considering this matter further.

8 Annual TRAC Return

Paper E

The University's Transparent Approach to Costing (TRAC) Return for 2017-18 was agreed for submission to the Scottish Funding Council and UK Research & Innovation. It was noted that the data suggests a broadly break-even financial position but includes unrealised gains on investments, highlighting the need for the University to deliver a surplus to meet long term investment plans

9 People Report

Paper F

Updates on the Technician Commitment, 'Don't Cross the Line' respect campaign, ongoing sector-wide pay ballot, recruitment of modern apprentices in professional services roles and the Home Office's EU Settlement Scheme were noted.

ITEMS FOR NOTING OR FORMAL APPROVAL

10 UoE Utilities Supply Company Ltd: Revised Governance Arrangements

Paper G

A change of company name, revised articles of association, memorandum of agreement and proposed Board membership were approved.

11 Investment Committee Report

Paper H

The report was noted.

12 Research and Commercialisation Statistics – to December 2018

Paper I

The report was noted. Members discussed appropriately incentivising academics for work in industry/translational research with increasing opportunities for funding in this area and recording commercialisation income in the statistics.

13 Any Other Business

There was no other business.

14 Date of Next Meeting & 2019/20 Meeting Dates

Friday, 5 April 2019, 2.30pm.

The 2019/20 meeting dates were approved as:

- Monday, 16 September 2019, 2.30-5 pm
- Monday, 18 November 2019, 2.30-5 pm
- Monday, 27 January 2020, 2.30-5 pm
- Friday, 3 April 2020, 2.30-5 pm
- Monday, 1 June 2020, 2.30-5 pm