



UNIVERSITY EXECUTIVE

23 April 2020

Minute

- Present:** Peter Mathieson (Convener)
David Argyle, Leigh Chalmers, Chris Cox, Sarah Cunningham-Burley, Gavin Douglas, Hugh Edmiston, David Gray, Lee Hamill, Colm Harmon, Gary Jebb, Richard Kenway, Wendy Loretto, Gavin McLachlan, Dorothy Miell, Theresa Merrick, Andrew Morris Dave Robertson, James Saville, Jonathan Seckl, Aziz Sheikh, Tracey Slaven, James Smith, Sarah Smith, Sandy Tudhope, Andrew Wilson and Moira Whyte.
- In attendance:** Barry Neilson, Dave Gorman (for items 7 & 8), Fiona Boyd and Kirstie Graham.

1 Minute **Paper A1**

The Minute of the meeting held on 24 March 2020 was approved.

2 Matters Arising & Review of Action Log **Paper A2**

There were no matters arising and the action log was noted.

3 Principal's Communications **Verbal**

The Principal reported that the impact of Covid-19 on the University and its community will be long term and significant and against that backdrop he confirmed that the University would open for Semester 1 in September to deliver new and continuing degrees of the same quality, whether on campus, remote or a hybrid; the University will maintain its high quality research, contributing to knowledge on all aspects of the pandemic; staff have adapted well to the use of digital technology and will continue to develop and reshape to adapt to the changing circumstances.

DISCUSSION ITEMS

4 Director of Finance's Report **Paper B**

The Executive considered an update key financial matters in light of the current Covid-19 crisis, including the likely impact to the University's 2019-20 financial results; current cash reserves and liquidity; initial modelling of the impact of a significant reduction in revenue in 2020-21 and beyond and information on mitigating actions that have been taken and could be taken to reduce capital and revenue spend.

There was discussion of the significant ongoing impact on surplus, cash reserves and financial covenants and the proposed possible mitigations, recognising that there would be a long term impact on core business that would change how we

operate and that would have impact across the University. Work was ongoing in modelling scenarios that would come to a future meeting.

5 Covid-19: Mitigation and Renewal - Prioritisation and Management **Paper C**

The Executive considered the proposed approach to ensuring that the University emerges from the Covid-19 pandemic as a strong, renewed organisation, recognising that this will require a collective willingness to lead and embrace significant change in established ways of doing things.

The Executive thanked Tracey Slaven for the huge amount of work in leading the immediate response and noted the paper set out the next phase, which was focussed on mitigation and renewal. The paper set out the planned structure: a number of work-streams and the establishment of a “Mitigation and Renewal Group”, led by the Principal, to ensure co-ordination and alignment across the work-streams. This group will comprise the Senior Leadership Team and those in senior leader roles for work-streams and will be supported by a co-ordination director and small team.

There was discussion of the need to embed equality, diversity and inclusion matters across all work-streams, ensuring the student voice is represented, the leadership of the student facing work streams and the necessity of keeping governance agile and proportionate. Taking that into account, the Executive supported the proposed approach to co-ordination and governance.

6 Service Excellence

• Service Excellence Portfolio Prioritisation **Paper D1**

The Executive noted the Service Excellence Programme Board would be meeting that afternoon to consider the programme priorities in the light of Covid-19 and alignment with the Covid-19 mitigation and renewal work. It was therefore asked to consider and comment on the recommended priorities and approach to inform that meeting. Members recognised the challenging backdrop and supported the proposed approach, whilst requesting the work to date and ambitious plans for student support and the personal tutor review were not lost.

• People and Money Systems Programme Update **Paper D2**

The Executive noted the update on the People and Money IT Systems Programme, noting it was continuing despite the challenges of home working and although there would be some erosion of the timeline, mitigations were in place. There was discussion on ensuring staff realise that implementing the new systems is mission critical, with expenditure already committed and it was agreed it would be helpful to consider how to communicate this effectively as contributing to the mitigation and renewal from Covid-19.

7 Responding to the Coronavirus- Our City and University Community Paper E

David Gorman introduced a proposed approach to respond to community needs arising from the Coronavirus pandemic, working with community groups and citizens to promote a sense of common purpose and well-being in our City and the City Region. This identified 5 broad strands: digital connection including digital community engagement and data driven community research; space and associated safe places; guidance in a recognised central location for 'how to' volunteer; 'infrastructure' such as food, transport services, IT kit provision to vulnerable groups and charities; and micro-community grants focused on Covid-19 community-led responses. These activities, whilst relatively low cost, could have a substantial positive impact for some of the most vulnerable in our community.

In discussion, it was identified there may be a small amount of unused grant funding that could be repurposed to support community engagement activity and Development and Alumni were also able to be involved in this sphere. The Executive supported taking this work forward under the umbrella of the agreed Covid-19 coordination processes.

8 Social & Civic Responsibility Plan – Integrating the Sustainable Development Goals Paper F

Dave Gorman reported that an updated Social Responsibility and Sustainability (SRS) Strategy had been developed in, but then paused to ensure alignment with the updated University Strategy. The University has now launched Strategy 2030, which makes explicit reference to our contribution to the global Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

The Executive considered a new Social & Civic Responsibility Plan developed as part of Strategy 2030. In discussion, members commented on the widening participation measures of success; carbon sequestration; the link to the curriculum and integration with other work taking place across the University. Taking the above comments into account, the Executive approved the Social and Civic Responsibility Plan, noting additional work will be undertaken on the performance framework and next steps for implementation.

9 People Report Paper G

The Executive noted the update on people related matters and recorded its thanks for all the work undertaken by HR staff in the immediate response to the Covid-19 pandemic. There was discussion of issues around pay forgone from the recent industrial action, the need for guidance for staff working from home with caring responsibilities and ensuring staff continue to take their annual leave whilst working from home.

ITEMS FOR FORMAL APPROVAL/NOTING

10 Research Excellence Framework (REF) 2021 Update Paper H

The Executive noted the postponement of the REF 2021 submission deadline for an undefined period and that the current census dates for staff, impacts and outputs still apply.

11 Covid-19 Exceptional Process

Paper I1

The process for decisions by the University Executive between meetings due to Covid-19 was noted.

- **Electronic Meeting 14-16 April 2020**

Paper I2

The Executive noted the Minute of the electronic meeting that approved a single year amendment to the Fee Policy for final year postgraduate (taught and research) students, removing any inflation uplift on tuition fees due in 2020/21 following an Authorised Interruption of Studies required as a direct result of Covid-19.

12 University Executive Communications

Verbal

The Executive agreed there would be communication on the Covid-19 mitigation and renewal process, Service Excellence Programme prioritisation, community engagement, the Social and Civic Responsibility Plan and the postponement of REF2021.

13 Date of Next Meeting

The next meeting will take place on Tuesday 19 May 2020 at 10 am through Microsoft Teams.