



UNIVERSITY EXECUTIVE

6 October 2020

Minute

Present: Peter Mathieson (Convener)
David Argyle, Leigh Chalmers, Chris Cox, Sarah Cunningham-Burley, Gavin Douglas, David Gray, Lee Hamill, Colm Harmon, Gary Jebb, Wendy Loretto, Gavin McLachlan, Catherine Martin, Ellen MacRae, Dorothy Miell, Theresa Merrick, Andrew Morris, Dave Robertson, James Saville, Aziz Sheikh, Tracey Slaven, Sarah Smith, Sandy Tudhope and Moira Whyte.

Apologies: Richard Kenway, Jonathan Seckl and James Smith.

In attendance: Barry Neilson, Fiona Boyd and Kirstie Graham.

1 Minute

Paper A1

The Minute of the meeting held on 8 September 2020 was approved, subject to an amendment to item 5, Paper C2, final paragraph to now read as follows: 'Concerns were raised by some members about implications at School and College level and the Finance Director addressed these in his further comments. Taking these into account, the proposal was approved, subject to review post implementation'.

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 updated members on:

- The latest information on the Covid19 pandemic: concerns raised by quarantining students regarding meal provision and internet access had been addressed; the potential impact on student mental health and wellbeing had been noted and the University was liaising with public health bodies to ensure support.
- The reshaping work was continuing, noting that although the need to reshape the business model had been exacerbated by the pandemic, there were drivers for change that pre-dated the pandemic.
- Brexit and the uncertainty over whether there would be a deal and what that deal would look like for the sector.

DISCUSSION ITEMS

4 Adaptation and Renewal Team - Report

Paper B

The Executive received an update on the recent work of the Adaptation and Renewal Team. The planning activity for semester 2 and the key planning assumptions were

noted. There was discussion of the variation in the provision of face to face delivery and the need to address this in semester 2, noting it was a complex picture. There was also discussion of course withdrawals, lease cancellations, the importance of monitoring protected characteristics, promoting inclusion and building community.

5 Director of Finance's Report

Paper C

This Executive noted the management accounts (excluding Subsidiaries) up to the end of August and considered an Analytical Review of the University's financial performance. The Analytic Review showed our underlying operating performance had been reducing steadily since 2015-16 at a time where our income had been growing. The receipt of front-loaded City Deal capital grant funding along with lower levels of operational City Deal activity meant the operating surplus had been supported by City Deal for the last two years. This steady decline in operating performance demonstrated the importance of reducing and managing our cost base better to become more financially sustainable. Although the Covid-19 outbreak had shone a light on this trend, the figures showed that the issues predated this.

There was discussion on how to effectively communicate this to inform staff of the underlying rationale behind the reshaping programme.

6 People Report

Paper D

The Executive noted the update on people related matters, noting that applications for the voluntary severance scheme had closed and were now being considered.

7 Enterprise and Innovation Strategy

Paper E

The Executive considered a proposed Enterprise and Innovation Strategy, to build on existing activity and deliver a University-wide strategic approach across the following Innovation Themes: Agriculture & Food Security; Digital Manufacturing & Automation; Financial Services; Health & Social Care; One Health; and The Smart City of Festivals.

Members noted there were many individual pockets of excellence delivering innovation across the University, however there was need for coherent, institution-wide support, structures and strategy to support innovation internally and deliver at-scale externally. The proposed direction of travel was warmly supported but more work was requested on the underpinning detail and specifically on the structure and composition of the proposed Innovation Forum and Working Group. This would return to a future meeting for further consideration before progressing to Policy and Resources Committee.

8 New Partnership between IntoUniversity and the Universities of Edinburgh and Glasgow

Paper F

The Executive welcomed and approved the University's participation in the launch of two new IntoUniversity Centres in Edinburgh and Glasgow.

ITEMS FOR FORMAL APPROVAL/NOTING

9 People and Money System and Financial/Transformation Update Paper H

The Executive noted the update on the HR and Finance Transformation Programmes and the People and Money system implementation.

10 University Executive Communications Verbal

The Executive agreed there would be communication on: the IntoUniversity Partnership, Adaption and Renewal, reshaping and Brexit.

11 Date of Next Meeting

The next meeting will take place on Tuesday 10 November 2020 at 10.00am.