

## Council

---

### Open Minutes

Date of meeting: **Monday, 21 November 2016**

Duration of meeting: **6.00pm to 8.20pm**

Location: **G5.05, Gateway Building, High Wycombe Campus**

### Attendance

<b>Name</b>	<b>Role</b>	<b>Category of membership</b>
Michael Hipkins	Chair	Independent
Jenny Newton	Deputy Chair	Independent
Joanna Boardman		Elected PSE Representative
Rebecca Bunting		Vice-Chancellor
Gurdeep Chadha		Independent
Joseph Collins		Students' Union President
Maggie James		Independent
Irene Kirkman		Independent
Lise Llewellyn		Independent
Ken McCrea		Co-opted
Tim Marshall		Co-opted
Hilary Mullen		Elected Academic Representative
Bob Shennan		Independent
John Smith		Independent
Terri Teasdale		Independent
Phil Wood		Senate Nomination
Sue West		Senate Nomination

### Officers

<b>Name</b>	<b>Role</b>	<b>Category of membership</b>
Ellie Smith	Secretary	Clerk to the Council
Marcus Wood	Minute Secretary	N/A

### In attendance

<b>Name</b>	<b>Role</b>
Ian Plover	Deputy Vice-Chancellor
Sean Mackney	Pro Vice-Chancellor (Education)

Tim Middleton	Pro Vice-Chancellor (Research & Enterprise)
Tracey Price	Director of Finance

## Apologies

Name	Role	Category of membership
Baljit Dhillon		Independent
Anthony Murphy		Independent
Susan Rosser		Independent
Steve Dewhurst		Director of Strategic Development & Planning (In attendance only)

## Committee Business

### Welcome of new members

16.73 The Chair welcomed members to the meeting. New members of Council were invited to introduce themselves:

- Bob Shennan was recently appointed as Director of Radio at the BBC, having previously worked there and at other broadcasters in a variety of roles
- Irene Kirkman had retired from the Department for Education where she had worked on educational policy
- Sue West was the current Dean of the Faculty of Society & Health and had been nominated by Senate colleagues
- Joanna Boardman was a current Project Manager for the University leading on the University's NSS Improvement Plan having previously worked for the University for 16 years in a variety of student services roles. She had been elected uncontested as the Professional Services Employee representative

16.74 It was noted that Susan Rosser had also been appointed to Council.

### Declaration of potential conflicts of interest

16.75 No conflicts of interest were declared.

### Minutes and Action Sheet of the previous meeting

16.76 The Open Minutes of the meeting of 11 July 2016 were approved and signed as an accurate record.

16.77 An update on the one Action from the minutes in relation to the movement in debtors had been circulated to members prior to the meeting by email.

### Matters arising

16.78 There were no matters arising.

### Report on Chair's Actions

16.79 There had been one use of Chair's Action to approve an increase in the fees for full-time undergraduate students starting from September 2017 to £9,250 so that this could be advised to students at a University Open Day in accordance with Competitions & Markets Authority (CMA) advice. Council endorsed the decision.

## University Matters

### Vice-Chancellor's Report to Council (Paper C/16/34)

16.80 Council considered the report.

#### Academic Misconduct

16.81 Council noted that instances of academic misconduct were increasing, including an increase in the number of students plagiarising due to poor referencing. The University had invested in new software to support students with relation to academic practice which will be available to students on enrolment.

16.82 There had also been an increase in academic misconduct by students in two particular partners (150 cases in total); action had been taken to terminate both partnerships.

#### Social Mobility

16.83 Council welcomed the developments in relation to social mobility, specifically the work with the Universities of Oxford, Oxford Brookes and Reading. It was noted that this formed part of a Government initiative, funded by £60m provided by HEFCE, to work in 'cold spots' for access to HE.

#### Recruitment

16.84 Council noted the reliance on Clearing in recruitment and asked whether this could affect the rate of non-completion. The Vice-Chancellor explained that Clearing had changed significantly with several Russell Group Universities now entering Clearing due to the removal of the student number cap. This meant that students already holding offers were now entering Clearing to gain places at higher ranked universities. Students in clearing therefore may have a wide variety of experiences. Learning analytics will help the University to identify and track those students who may need more support.

16.85 It was noted that the Student Achievement Report had considered students by entry tariff and had identified an upwards trajectory of final award.

#### Key Performance Measures

16.86 Council asked how KPMs had been rated by the University. It was noted that the owner of the respective area had provided a draft rating which had then been challenged at the Vice-Chancellor's Strategy Group (VCSG) to determine the final rating. The following issues were identified:

- KPMs should be supported by a brief narrative
- All KPMs should have annual milestones and reports should provide the current year target in each case. This would provide a growth trend towards achievement by the target of 2020-21

16.87 The Director of Strategic Development & Planning would be asked to revise the report for the next meeting.

**Action: Director of Strategic Development & Planning**

### Students' Union President's Report (Paper C/16/35)

16.88 Council considered the report.

#### Staff turnover

16.89 It was noted that there was a perception that staff turnover was high though the figure is currently 15-18% which was not considered uncommon in similar sized institutions.

- 16.90 Exit interviews had been undertaken with willing staff and results were currently being analysed. It was agreed that a report on staff leavers would be provided to Council members with an accompanying narrative.

**Action: Deputy Vice-Chancellor / Director of Human Resources**

- 16.91 Members welcomed the Students' Union raising concerns which could then be discussed, and encouraged strong communication between SMT and the Students' Union. Members asked for feedback on previous concerns about staff delivery on teaching commitments. The Pro Vice-Chancellor (Education) noted that an audit of room usage is undertaken and results are now presented to Heads of Academic Department as accountable line managers. It was also noted that students are reassured as to the impact of staff changes as part of succession planning. In the meantime, a revised induction programme for new staff members is also being worked upon.

**Recruitment**

- 16.92 Council recognised the current challenge to meet student recruitment targets combined with the attrition rate for undergraduate courses identified in the report. The Vice-Chancellor explained that the University has been affected by changes in the sector, particularly the opening up of the market. A range of mitigating actions is in train.

**'Never OK' Sexual Harassment Campaign**

- 16.93 Council welcomed a verbal update from the President on the Students' Union campaign to raise awareness of sexual harassment and challenge behaviours.

**Transforming our NSS Performance – An Agenda for Improvement (Paper C/16/36)**

- 16.94 Council considered the paper. The Pro Vice-Chancellor (Education) noted that to improve the University's NSS scores, a targeted plan had been developed which focused on key outcomes and objectives. The full range of the University's resources will focus on prioritized departments. Similar plans are envisaged for other major areas of improvement.
- 16.95 Central service directorates have also been asked to produce action plans indicating how they will support the project and staff 'champions' will be identified in due course. Quality & Standards Committee will be responsible for tracking delivery of Department Action Plans and minutes will come to Council in due course.
- 16.96 Members asked how the Plan links with the Bucks Academic Framework (BAF, see below). The Pro Vice-Chancellor (Research & Enterprise) noted that the BAF does not explicitly mention the improvement plan but it does support the work more generally.
- 16.97 Council also noted that there are examples of excellence across the University and noted that those areas should be congratulated and encouraged to share their good practice more widely.

**Degree Apprenticeships**

- 16.98 The Pro Vice-Chancellor (Education) presented to Council on the University's plans to develop degree apprenticeships. The following considerations were noted:
- There has been a major expansion in the number of degree apprenticeships. This has been identified as a priority by the Government and is supported by an Apprenticeship Levy on all employers operating in the UK with a pay bill over £3m each year (which includes the University).

- This represents a major opportunity for the University and Bucks is a ‘vanguard’ institution in this area and has committed to developing ten new apprenticeship programmes for September 2017 with a combined total of 300 learners through seed funding from HEFCE.
- There are also risks to the University through an uncertain future for Foundation Degrees which may be replaced by apprenticeships, while there are weaknesses around limited employer-relationship management, IT infrastructure and inflexibility of some of the University’s processes.

A roadmap has been identified to put systems in place and a new Head of Apprenticeships has been employed to lead the HEFCE project. Rapid development is required around innovation, curriculum, systems and employers.

16.99 Council welcomed the opportunities for the University presented and considered that such an approach was ideal for Bucks given its mission. It was noted that strong relationships with employers were critical as these would be responsible for providing learners; this needed to be balanced by the University’s commitment to the learner as customer under the CMA.

16.100 It was agreed to provide further information including the next steps to be undertaken at the next meeting of Council.

**Action: Pro Vice-Chancellor (Education)**

### **Bucks Academic Framework: Update (Paper C/16/37)**

16.101 Council noted the update on progress.

### **‘Prevent’ Duty Update: Annual report to HEFCE**

16.102 An update was provided by the Deputy Vice-Chancellor and by Phil Wood, who was leading on the University’s Prevent duty due to his familiarity with the field of security and counter-terrorism.

- The University had submitted its annual report to HEFCE by the deadline of 1 April and Bucks was deemed to be ‘Prevent compliant’. It was also reported that Bucks was considered by the Funding Council to be leading the field in this area.
- A further report for 2016/2017 will be submitted for the deadline of 1 December but it is anticipated that there will be no major changes to process; instead there would be refinements to existing practice. The report needed to be approved by Council; it was agreed that this would be undertaken by Council Chair’s Action.

**Action: Deputy Vice-Chancellor / Chair of Council**

- The University was working with the community to take forward its Prevent duty. Within the University it was mandatory for all staff to complete the training module on Blackboard by 31 December 2016. The University was currently at 36% completion.
- Bucks will also be reporting to HEFCE in future with regard to its responsibility to monitor partners.

### **Minutes from University Committees (Paper C/16/39)**

16.103 The following minutes from University Committees were received:

- Senate (28 September 2016)
- Education Committee (25 October 2016)
- Research & Enterprise Committee (20 September 2016)

## **Use of the University Seal and Coat of Arms**

16.104 The report was received.

## **Council Committee Matters**

### **Governance Committee**

#### **Minutes of the meeting held on 11 October 2016 (Paper C/16/41)**

16.105 Council received the Open Minutes from the meeting. Attention was drawn to the publication of a new Governance Handbook for members.

#### **Amendments to Committee Constitutions**

16.106 Governance Committee had approved various minor amendments, including in particular the inclusion of elected staff representatives in the work of Council sub-committees.

#### **Council Membership (Paper C/16/42)**

16.107 Council noted the update on appointments provided.

16.108 It was reported that all three Independent or Co-opted Members due to complete their first term of office by 31 July 2017 had indicated that they would be happy to be reappointed for a second term. Accordingly, Council agreed to reappoint the following members until 31 July 2021:

- Maggie James
- Tim Marshall
- Ken McCrea

16.109 Actions to replace other members whose appointment was due to end would be taken forward by Governance Committee.

### **Resources Committee**

#### **Minutes of the meeting held on 25 October 2016 (Paper C/16/43)**

16.110 Council received the Open Minutes from the meeting.

#### **Financial position and forecast for 2016-17 (as at September 2016)**

16.111 The Director of Finance highlighted two issues:

- a) The effect of recruitment; and
- b) Charges on the Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS)

16.112 The position had been discussed in detail at Resources Committee. The LGPS position was partially due to FRS102 reporting requirements. Attention was also drawn to the provision of working capital for BEST.

16.113 The University will be recruiting to programmes commencing in February.

#### **Bucks Students' Union – affiliations / charities supported (Paper C/16/45)**

16.114 Council approved the list of affiliations and charities supported, following recommendation by the Committee.

### **Chiltern Student Village**

Note: This item was considered under Reserved Business.

## **Audit Committee**

### **Minutes of the meeting held on 8 November 2016 (Paper C/16/46)**

16.115 Council received the Open Minutes from the meeting.

### **Internal Auditors' Annual Report showing Audit Opinions (2015-2016) (Paper C/16/47)**

16.116 The report was approved.

### **Annual Accounts for the year ending 31 July 2016 (Paper C/16/48)**

#### **Bucks New University**

16.117 It was noted that a small surplus for the year of £330k had been generated.

16.118 The University's current cash position was relatively healthy at £13.8m and followed cash on assets expenditure of £6m. Reserves stand at £18m.

16.119 The accounts were approved following recommendation by Audit Committee.

#### **Missenden Abbey Limited (Subsidiary company)**

16.120 The accounts were approved following recommendation by Audit Committee.

#### **BCUC (Services) Limited (Subsidiary company)**

16.121 The accounts were approved following recommendation by Audit Committee.

#### **BCUC (Conferences) Limited (Subsidiary company)**

16.122 The accounts were approved following recommendation by Audit Committee.

#### **Buckinghamshire Education Skills & Training (BEST) (Joint venture with Aylesbury College)**

16.123 Council also considered a profit and loss statement for BEST. It was noted that these accounts will be considered by the BEST Board on 22 November 2016 where they will be accompanied by a narrative and the Auditor's opinion.

16.124 The accounts were approved following recommendation by Audit Committee, and subject to agreement by BEST Board.

#### **Other documentation**

16.125 The following associated documents were also received:

- Audit Findings document completed by GrantThornton
- Letters of representation from the University to GrantThornton in respect of the Financial Statements for the year ended 31 July 2016 for:
  - Buckinghamshire New University
  - BCUC (Services) Limited
  - Missenden Abbey Limited

#### **HEFCE Annual Assurance Return (Annex A)**

16.126 It was confirmed that the University had complied with the Concordat to support research integrity. Other questions in Part 1 had been answered in full and detail scrutinised by Audit Committee.

16.127 Part 2 related to consideration of the student academic experience and student outcomes. This had been scrutinised by the Joint Committee of Senate and Council which had preceded the meeting and which had approved the assurance statements (see minutes).

16.128 It was agreed that the return would be signed and returned by the Vice-Chancellor as the accountable officer as a governor and on behalf of all of the governors for the deadline of 1 December 2016.

**Action: Vice-Chancellor**

### **Value for Money Annual Report (Paper C/16/49)**

16.129 Council approved the Value for Money monitoring statement for HEFCE following consideration by Audit Committee.

### **ASSUR Annual Sustainability Report to HEFCE (Paper C/16/50)**

16.130 Council approved the Annual Sustainability Report following consideration by Audit Committee.

### **Annual Report from the Audit Committee to the Council and Vice-Chancellor as Designated Officer (Paper C/16/51)**

16.131 The Chair of Audit Committee presented the annual report which represented the Committee's work during 2015-16.

16.132 The Committee was recommending that Council should:

- a) Receive the report and note its submission to HEFCE
- b) Approve the annual report and financial statements for the year ending 31 July 2016
- c) Endorse the letters of representation for signature by the Chair
- d) Note any matters for action and refer these to the Vice-Chancellor as Designated Officer

16.133 Council approved the report and its recommendations as previously recorded during the course of the meeting.

### **Strategic Risk Assessment and Annual Report (C/16/52)**

16.134 The report had been reviewed by the Audit Committee and recommended to Council for approval.

16.135 The report included a mapping of key performance measures and strategic objectives to risk areas. Of the 11 Risk items identified there were 2 Red (High) and 7 Orange (Moderate) Raw Ratings which reduced to 5 Orange Ratings when mitigation / treatment was taken into account. Accordingly, there was a challenge for SMT to manage (and reduce) the level of risk.

16.136 Council approved the report.

### **Audit Committee's Review of the Effectiveness of the Internal and External Auditors**

Note: This item was considered under Reserved Business.

### **Remuneration Committee**

Note: This item was considered under Reserved Business.



## Other Business

### Resignation of the Deputy Vice-Chancellor

16.137 The Chair noted that this would be the final meeting of Council attended by the Deputy Vice-Chancellor, Ian Plover, following his decision to resign his position at the University from 31 December 2016.

16.138 On behalf of Council, the Chair thanked Mr Plover for his service to the University and to Council during his term of office. Members wished him well with the next stages of his career.

### Date of next meeting

16.139 The next meeting of Council was confirmed as being held on Monday 20 March 2016, at 4.00pm in Room 3.07, Uxbridge Campus.

16.140 The meeting was closed at 8.20pm.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_  
(Chair of Council)

Drafted (Minute Secretary):	23-Nov-2016
Checked (Clerk to the Council):	27-Nov-2016
Checked (Vice-Chancellor):	28-Nov-2016
Confirmed for circulation (Chair):	29-Nov-2016