

## Council

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### Open Minutes

Date of meeting: **Monday, 19 March 2018**

Duration of meeting: **4.00pm to 6.00pm**

Location: **UX3.07, Uxbridge Campus**

### Attendance

<b>Name</b>	<b>Role</b>	<b>Category of membership</b>
Michael Hipkins	Chair	Independent
Jenny Newton	Deputy Chair	Independent
Rebecca Bunting		Vice-Chancellor
Gurdeep Chadha		Independent
Anna Crabtree		Independent
Irene Kirkman		Independent
Ken McCrea		Co-opted
Tim Marshall		Co-opted
Ben Parmar		Students' Union President
Susan Rosser		Independent
John Smith		Independent
Phil Wood		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	

### In attendance

<b>Name</b>	<b>Role</b>
Rod Mercer	Director of Finance

### Apologies

<b>Name</b>	<b>Role</b>	<b>Category of membership</b>
Joanna Boardman		Elected PSE Representative
Baljit Dhillon		Independent

Maggie James		Independent
Lise Llewellyn		Independent
Anthony Murphy		Independent
Cheryl Pitt		Elected Academic Representative
Bob Shennan		Independent

## Committee Business

### Welcome / Apologies for Absence

18.03 The Chair welcomed members to the meeting. Seven apologies for absence were received. In addition, it was noted that the Deputy Vice-Chancellor and Pro Vice-Chancellor had been unable to attend.

### Declaration of potential conflicts of interest

18.04 The Chair declared a conflict of interest in respect of agenda item 4 – Update on Chair and Deputy Chair elections. It was agreed that the Deputy Chair of Council would deputise for this item.

### Minutes and Action Sheet of the previous meeting

18.05 The Open and Reserved minutes of the following meetings were approved and signed as an accurate record:

- 20 November 2017, including the Joint Meeting with Senate
- 13 February 2018

### Matters Arising

This item was considered under Reserved Business.

### Report on Chair's Actions

18.06 Chair's Action had been taken as follows:

- a) To approve the final PREVENT Annual Report to HEFCE (minute 17.130 refers). A response had been received from HEFCE confirming approval and highlighting two areas for the University to focus on as follows:
  - i. Greater interaction with students
  - ii. Update to the IT Acceptable Use Policy
- b) To approve and sign new Banking Covenants for the University (see further below, 18.23ff.)

18.07 Council endorsed the Chair's Action in both instances.

## University Matters

### Vice-Chancellor's Report (Presentation)

#### Academic Restructure

This item was considered under Reserved Business.

### **Office for Students (OfS) registration**

- 18.08 Work is ongoing to submit an application for registration in May, including the preparation of a Student Protection Plan as a compulsory requirement for all HE providers. It was noted that Council members will also need to be approved by the OfS under the Fit and Proper Persons Test and so members will also be asked for permission to share relevant personal information.
- 18.09 The outcome will be confirmed in September 2018. In the interim, applicants for programmes starting in 19/20 will receive a letter with a statement confirming that registration is pending. Due to prioritisation of UCAS A cycle providers, UCAS B cycle providers (including Bucks) would be at a competitive disadvantage while awaiting confirmation of registration. This had been raised with the OfS by a number of providers but, although the discrepancy had been acknowledged, there had been no change to the process.

### **Student Funding Review**

- 18.10 The Prime Minister had announced a majority review to focus on student choice, value for money, access to higher education, and skills provision to future proof the economy. This may lead to some realignment of funding away from HE towards FE providers through changes to student loan funding.

### **UCU Strike Action in relation to the USS pensions scheme**

- 18.11 National strike action did not affect Bucks as it related solely to USS pension changes. The University only has two members of staff in the scheme with other staff in either the Teachers' Pension Scheme (TPS) or the Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS). There may be some ancillary impact on the University, e.g. external examiners may take strike action affecting the University's moderation process.

### **Consultation on Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF) at Subject Level**

- 18.12 Details of the consultation have now been published with a broad definition of 'subject' due to the need for aggregation of data. Preliminary data has been published which for Bucks shows one Gold rated subject area, a number of Silver, and four Bronze.
- 18.13 A copy of the Presentation was saved with the minutes.

### **Key Performance Measures (COU18.01)**

- 18.14 Council considered the Key Performance Measures. It was noted that these had been agreed when the 2016-2021 Strategy had been launched, predated issues relating to market and fee cap, and contained many targets that were at the time considered aspirational but which in the current context would be impossible to achieve.
- 18.15 Accordingly, Council agreed that KPM targets should instead be linked to targets for the Transformation Programme where possible and should be expanded to include apprenticeship numbers and other more recent innovations.

### **Transformation Programme Update (Presentation)**

- 18.16 The Vice-Chancellor presented an update on progress against the Transformation Programme (TP). A copy of the presentation was saved with the minutes. Council noted the following:
- Most TP workstreams were progressing to the plan
  - Some savings had yet to be put in place which had reduced outlay for 17/18 but delays would impact on 18/19 and 19/20. This has impacted on other timescales

- TP is making an impact, but not as significant as had been initially anticipated at this stage:
  - Further work is needed on market analysis
  - Programme renaissance will not impact on Sept-2018; although work is focussed on developing new programmes for 18/19 with both September and February intakes set to be launched through Clearing; meanwhile the approval process has also been streamlined with more flexible programmes able to be offered across locations / campuses
  - Take-up of apprenticeships by employers has been slow; nevertheless 37 students have been recruited to the Nursing degree apprenticeship which is higher than expected
  - Turnover of HR staff is delaying phase 2 restructuring activity
- TP is evolving with a new focus on international recruitment (fees reset; new agent structure in place; targeted scholarships and an international foundation year developed for Sept-2018) and an acceleration of partnership development activity (UK and overseas) with contract models being refined and developed

18.17 Members welcomed the update and endorsed the approach being taken, including in particular the development of new programmes which were considered to reflect the 'Bucks brand'.

### **Student' Union President's Report (COU18.02)**

18.18 Council considered the report and noted the crossover between issues identified by the SU and by the University itself.

- Members recognised the challenge created by a new focus on degree apprentices and the SU's decision to consider apprentices as students and the need to keep this under review as capacity increased.
- Council congratulated the SU on being shortlisted for Best Students' Union in the Whatuni Student Choice Awards 2018 and wished them success in the final selection.

18.19 Council also noted the outcome of the recent sabbatical officer elections as follows:

- Lauren O'Shea (President)
- Charlie Cotton (Vice-President: Student Involvement)
- Georgia Nosal (Vice-President: Education and Welfare)

The Chair asked the outgoing President to pass on Council's congratulations to the successful candidates and looked forward to working with the new sabbatical team in due course.

### **Minutes from University Committees (COU18.03)**

18.20 Council received the minutes from the following committees:

- Senate, 13 December 2017
- Education Committee, 21 February 2018
- Research & Enterprise Committee, 27 February 2018

### **Use of the University Seal & Coat of Arms (COU18.04)**

18.21 Council received the paper.

## **Feedback from sector events attended by Council members (Verbal)**

18.22 The following feedback was provided:

- a) A recent 'DigiFest' JISC conference had highlighted the importance of artificial intelligence and the Internet of Things that may be of significance for growth of the University's academic portfolio. The conference had also provided the opportunity to review the growth of analytics although it was unclear how effective this was proving as a methodology. Conversations with other HE delegates had supported the overall direction being taken by Bucks through its transformation programme and that the University was further ahead of a number of other providers which was encouraging.
- b) Toolkit for Governors: This event had been organised by the Leadership Foundation and included updates from the OfS registration process and from Universities UK on governance in general. Discussions were similarly encouraging, particularly for the annual joint meeting convened between Council and Senate. It was reported that conditions for OfS registration may be time consuming (since each of the 24 conditions of registration will have a separate risk assigned) and presented the potential for reputational risk to providers (as the OfS will publish ongoing conditions for individual providers. The event had highlighted the need to add a section on Compliance to the Risk Register and it was reported that discussions are already ongoing to consider this.

## **Resources Committee**

### **Minutes from the meeting of 6 March 2018 (COU18.05)**

18.23 Council received the Open minutes of the meeting and noted the key points arising, including:

- Agreement with the Bank of new Covenants for the University
- Initiation of a two-year Student Connect Project to replace the University's legacy student record system with a new Student Management System, U4SM

### **Financial Position (Month 5, December 2017) and forecast for 2017-2018 (COU18.06 and Presentation)**

18.24 Council considered the paper and a presentation by the Director of Finance which had been previously prepared for new Heads of Schools and noted:

- Income from the University's own courses was down by £1.5m and half of the contingency fund had been released to compensate. The University is approximately 342 students down on Transformation Programme forecasts (see above). A stronger performance from the Educational Partnerships team in developing new relationships and generating revenue is helping to offset other falls in income
- Cash position and adherence to covenant requirements remain on track with achievement of all covenant targets to date this year. There is flexibility to repay some loans via the revolving credit facility to reduce borrowings should this be required. The cash balance covenant will be formally measured in April 2018
- The range of new activities discussed earlier in the meeting would be incorporated in a revised 3-year plan.

18.25 The Director of Finance further noted that in relation to credit control discussions are ongoing with the HR Directorate regarding restructuring activity – since Finance is

being asked to support a growing number of projects but is currently not resourced to this level.

- 18.26 It was agreed that future financial position papers would adopt the sector standard of reporting surplus as positive and deficits as negative as the present reporting method was confusing.

**Action: Director of Finance**

## **Audit Committee**

### **Minutes of the meeting of 20 February 2018 (COU18.06)**

- 18.27 Council received the Open minutes of the meeting and noted the key points arising, including the following Internal Audit Report outcomes:

- Receipt of a Limited Assurance report on the Admissions Student Systems, specifically in relation to Direct Applications and CRM / Management Information
- Receipt of a Satisfactory report on UKVI / Tier 4 Compliance. A small point regarding levels of attendance reporting in the aviation area had since been addressed.

## **Governance Committee**

### **Minutes of the meeting of 6 February 2018 (COU18.08)**

- 18.28 Council received the Open minutes of the meeting and noted the key points arising, including:

- Election of the Chair and Deputy Chair (see above under Reserved Business)
- Ongoing work to revise the terms of reference for the Remuneration Committee and mapping to the CUC draft HE Remuneration Code of Practice

### **Annual Health and Safety Report (2016-17) and Planned Activities (2017-18) (COU18.09)**

- 18.29 Council approved the report following detailed consideration by the Governance Committee.

### **Calendar of Meetings (Sept-2018 to Dec-2019)**

- 18.30 Council noted the calendar and incorporation of Council Advisory Groups (CAGs) into the schedule.

## **Remuneration Committee**

This item was considered under Reserved Business.

## **Honorary Awards Committee**

### **Minutes of the meeting of 6 February 2018 (COU18.12)**

- 18.31 Council received the Open minutes of the meeting. The key item of business was the approval of Honorary Awards (See Reserved Business).

## **Honorary Award Nominations (COU18.13)**

This item was considered under Reserved Business.

### **Date of next meeting**

18.32 The next meeting was confirmed for Tuesday 5 June 2018, at 4pm in G5.05, High Wycombe Campus.

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

Drafted (Minute Secretary):	26-Mar-2018
Checked (Clerk to the Council):	27-Mar-2018
Checked (Vice-Chancellor):	4-Apr-2018
Confirmed for circulation (Chair):	6-Apr-2018