

Council

Open Minutes

Date of meeting: **Monday, 09 July 2018**

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

Location: **Missenden Abbey**

Attendance

Name	Role	Category of membership
Michael Hipkins	Chair	Independent
Jenny Newton	Deputy Chair	Independent
Rebecca Bunting		Vice-Chancellor
Gurdeep Chadha		Independent
Anna Crabtree		Independent
Maggie James		Independent
Irene Kirkman		Independent
Lise Llewellyn		Independent
Ken McCrea		Co-opted
Tim Marshall		Co-opted
Anthony Murphy		Independent
Lauren O'Shea		Students' Union President
Cheryl Pitt		Elected Academic Representative
Bob Shennan		Independent
John Smith		Independent
Phil Wood		Senate Nomination

Officers

Name	Role	Category of membership
Ellie Smith	Secretary	Clerk to the Council
Marcus Wood	Minute Secretary	

In attendance

Name	Role
Nick Braisby	Deputy Vice-Chancellor
Sean Mackney	Pro Vice-Chancellor
Rod Mercer	Director of Finance

Apologies

Name	Role	Category of membership
Joanna Boardman		Elected PSE Representative
Baljit Dhillon		Independent
Susan Rosser		Independent

Welcome / Apologies for Absence

18.48 The Chair welcomed members to the meeting, including the newly appointed President of the Students' Union. Three apologies for absence were recorded.

Declaration of potential conflicts of interest

18.49 No conflicts of interest were declared.

Minutes and Action Sheet of the previous meeting (Open Business)

18.50 The Open minutes of the meeting of 19 March 2018 were approved and signed as an accurate record.

18.51 The status of actions was noted as per the Action Sheet. It was confirmed that outstanding audit actions were being followed up.

Matters Arising

18.52 In order to complete the University's insurance renewal, Council members were asked to confirm by correspondence whether they were aware of any circumstances which have resulted or may result in a claim being made against the University or against any of its employees (past or present) in relation to the services which would fall under Professional Negligence or Governor Liability Insurance.

Action: Council members

In future this requirement would be built in to Council summer updating.

Report on Chair's Actions

18.53 The Chair reported that he had approved a change to the University's energy contract (necessary given the size of the contract). It was noted that this would support the University's commitment to reducing its environmental impact. Council endorsed the decision.

University Matters

Vice-Chancellor's Report to Senate (Verbal)

18.54 The Vice-Chancellor gave a verbal report to Council.

New Funding and other Recognition

18.55 The University had been awarded funding as follows:

- €297k Horizon 2020 funding as part of a three-year multi-University partnership towards the Waterspout Project to provide clean water to villages in Africa, now extended to Indian sub-continent.
- €374k funding as part of its involvement in an Erasmus+ project to provide an international training programme for the Carbon Neutral management of sports marinas

- 18.56 The University has been recognised with Wycombe District Swimming Club as one of five new Swim England national performance centres for swimming. The centre will be based at Handy Cross and will help further develop the University's partnership with Wycombe District Council.
- 18.57 Outcomes from the recent UK student Engagement Survey are encouraging and show improvements in (among other things) students' critical thinking, interaction with staff and the challenging nature of their course.

National Update

- 18.58 The University has submitted its Access and Participation Plan as part of its application to register with the Office for Students (OfS) and is being challenged to focus activities on improving student success rather than further widening access, reflecting the OfS's focus on outcome measures.
- 18.59 The Government has confirmed that the FTUG tuition fee cap for 2019-2020 will remain at £9,250 as expected. Part-time fees will be capped at £6,935.

Regional Update

- 18.60 The University is actively engaging in regional initiatives:
- The Oxford-Cambridge Corridor will link the two cities and will provide new road and rail infrastructure. Bucks has been involved in discussions with other universities through the LEP and will seek to offer skills training to companies along the corridor. Initial meetings will commence in 2018-19.
 - HS2 provides potential training opportunities and Bucks has contacted the HS2 lead for education. Discussions are focused on a number of areas and will seek to collaborate with Buckinghamshire College Group and to use the premises at UCAV.
- 18.61 There is likely to be a single Unitary Authority for the whole of Buckinghamshire. This will affect the University in its dealings with local government. Should Bucks become a single unitary authority then the current BTV LEP will continue; however, should there be two unitary authorities (as urged by the District Councils) then the LEP would be reorganised.

Key Performance Indicators (COU18.16)

- 18.62 Council considered the updated KPI ratings provided:
- The current position is stable with the RAG ratings showing some decline, but with trend indicators showing improvement
 - KPI5 (proportion of students in employment and/or further study within six months and based on a national survey) has moved from Green to Red. This is being explored with the new survey contractors and may be linked to a change in the survey methodology which would be likely to affect other universities as well.
 - KPI6 (proportion of students in highly skilled employment / further study) has seen a 6% improvement and may be linked to the success of a new Postgraduate Certificate in Business Leadership
 - Ratings linked to the NSS await publication of the outcome of this year's survey results in July
- 18.63 The paper also presented a new framework of proposed KPIs underpinned by guiding principles. The framework incorporated a hierarchical structure of KPIs where detailed internal indicators will inform higher level KPIs. Proposed KPIs had been discussed with the Chairs of Audit and Resources Committees and was linked to

broader high-level performance areas, e.g. finance, recruitment. These included both immediate and longer-term (reputational) indicators.

- 18.64 Council welcomed the new framework and encouraged the University to proceed and to identify targets against each indicator. For measures of esteem, a greater understanding of the factors used by some league tables (for example research funding) would be helpful.

Transformation Programme: Progress Report (COU18.29)

- 18.65 Council noted the paper. The Pro Vice-Chancellor drew attention to:

- The University is projecting to be ahead of the expected financial position following deferral of some restructuring costs
- The focus is on the development of new programmes; these expect significant recruitment and by 2019/20 will add £5.7m to University income
- Market intelligence is being reviewed following the publication of new standards for some degree apprenticeships; this will also inform curriculum development for other mainstream programmes.
- The University has already won business for apprenticeships for 2018/19 and 2019/20 supporting income growth expectations
- Five activity strands are underway supporting programme renaissance
- Restructuring activities are balancing further efficiency savings with the need to manage and maintain growth and staff to deliver
- A business-focussed/entrepreneurial approach to partnerships has seen income rise ahead of budget projections. Additional governance and quality assurance measures are in place to support new areas with the largest partnerships having an enhanced level of oversight.

Overall, it was reported that the programme is progressing across all workstreams and progress is being scrutinised via the Council Advisory Group. Activities are demonstrating that the University is developing a niche in the marketplace and can succeed in a competitive environment.

- 18.66 Council welcomed the update and in subsequent discussions noted that:

- Deferment of some restructuring is offset by additional income from other sources. Monthly meetings of the executive are helping to manage progress
- Programme renaissance has adopted a slower pace due to the current emphasis on product development. The scale of changes planned require careful consideration. A revised curriculum framework will include:
 - Work experience opportunities for all programmes, including the appointment of a centralised placements team
 - A new assessment strategy
 - A comprehensive redevelopment of personal tutoring to ensure improvements in provision
- CMA compliance remains a risk to the agile approach necessary to enable quick turnaround and is being closely monitored
- Figures included in projections make allowance for trends: for example, a rise in nursing apprenticeships at the expense of nursing degree courses

- Application statistics (including conversion) are being benchmarked against competitor institutions and marketing approaches reviewed accordingly. A newly-implemented CRM system is helping the University maintain contact with applicants and will support Clearing.
 - Capital investment in IT equipment is underpinning a number of transformation activities to maintain pace
- 18.67 Council considered that the approach to new programme development strongly resonated with the University's strategic mission to provide learners with strong vocational skills and ensure they were ready for work. More will be done to refine the University's proposition and develop the supportive environment and embracing students as part of a learning community.

Students' Union President's Report (COU18.17)

- 18.68 Council received the report which outlined a revised approach for the incoming SU executive to work with the University to support a range of activities, including:
- Engaging students from the BAME community to help reduce the gap in student achievement
 - Supporting students entering a foundation year by introducing them to wider networks and activities at the University
 - Providing targeted support to courses with lower levels of student satisfaction by enabling course teams to augment students' experiences and improve their perception of the University
 - Supporting retention activities by developing extra-curricular programmes of guest speakers and staff development sessions to help engage students
- 18.69 The paper also outlined a series of 15 Key Performance Measures to be completed by 2019-20.
- 18.70 Council warmly welcomed the positive approach outlined in the paper which closely aligned to other papers to be considered at the meeting and commended the joint working with the University.

Minutes from University Committees (COU18.18)

- 18.71 Council received the minutes from the following committees:
- Senate, 14 March 2018 and 6 June 2018
 - Education Committee, 9 May 2018
 - Research & Enterprise Committee, 15 May 2018
- 18.72 The Vice-Chancellor told Council that Senate had recently approved the Bucks Academic Framework. Work will now begin on the development of both a Bucks Professional and a Bucks Leadership Framework.
- 18.73 Council also formally noted with pleasure the award of Silver to the University from the Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF).

Amendments to University Processes

Student Complaints Procedure (COU18.19)

Student Disciplinary Procedure (COU18.20)

- 18.74 Council approved both revised procedures.

Use of the University Seal and Coat of Arms

18.75 It was reported that neither the Seal nor the Coat of Arms had been used since the previous meeting.

Resources Committee

Minutes from the meeting of 26 June 2018 (Open Business)

18.76 Council received the minutes from the meeting. Attention was drawn to the presentation by the new Director of Human Resources on the vision for a new HR strategy.

Financial position and forecast for 2017-18 (COU18.21)

18.77 Council noted the financial position as at Month 9 (30 April 2018) and updated 2017-18 year-end forecast which had been discussed in detail by the Resources Committee (see minutes).

18.78 It was confirmed that the capitalisation of staff costs associated with the Business Connect and Student Connect projects referred to in 2.10 of the paper will be undertaken at year end.

Further comment was considered under Reserved Business

Budget for 2018-19 and two-year forecast to 2020-21 (COU18.25)

18.79 Council considered the budget set out in the paper as recommended by Resources Committee. The budget included a continuing focus on reducing costs while expanding the range of income generating activities, including partnerships and apprenticeships on top of the University's core FTUG programmes. It would deliver growth while including prudent allocation of contingency funding.

18.80 In discussion Council noted the following:

- The Transformation Programme will both increase activity and efficiency as its strands of work progress
- Planned restructuring in 2019-20 is fundamental to success and will be achieved through careful consideration of areas of growth alongside more efficient models of delivery
- Additional contingency measures recognise the level of risk in some areas and achieve a prudent 'mid-point'
- Forecast income increases in 2019 reflect new programmes in their second year of delivery
- The need for further discussions with BEST regarding future developments of the UCAV campus.

18.81 Council approved the budget.

Office for Students (OfS) five-year Financial Forecast

18.82 Council noted the commentary to support the forecast was not yet ready. Council agreed that the completed forecast would be circulated by the Director of Finance to members for review; the Chair would then formally approve the forecast, based on members' views, for submission to OfS by 17 September.

Action: Director of Finance / Chair

Banking Charge (COU18.24)

- 18.83 Council agreed in principle the proposal on the banking charge.
- 18.84 Council further agreed in principle to consequential amendments to the Treasury Management Policy.
- 18.85 These changes would be formally approved by Chair's Action following agreement by the bank.

Action: Director of Finance / Chair

Tuition fees for 2019-20 for non-controlled provision (COU18.25)

- 18.86 Council agreed to increase non-regulated fees (PT Undergraduate; Postgraduate; and Overseas student tuition fees) by the 2.4% inflationary increase recommended by Resources Committee.
- 18.87 Council further noted revisions to the process for setting University fees going forward.

Students' Union Draft Budget and funding

- 18.88 The Chair of Resources Committee said negotiations between the SU and SMT had led to an agreement on a budget for the Students' Union reflecting the reduction proposed by the University. The final budget position would be approved by Chair's Action of Resources Committee.

Audit Committee

Minutes from the meeting of 12 June 2018 (Open Business)

- 18.89 Council received the minutes from the meeting. Attention was drawn to the following internal audit outcomes:
- Financial Processes and Systems (Limited Assurance)
 - Payroll and associated HR processes (Limited Assurance)
 - Collaborative Partnerships and Business Development (Satisfactory Assurance)
- Recommendations had been identified for follow up in each case
- 18.90 It was further noted that outstanding internal audit reports for 2017-18 would now be presented to the November meeting of Audit Committee.

Governance Committee

Minutes from the meeting of 29 May 2018 (Open Business)

- 18.91 Council received without comment the Open minutes from the meeting.

Deputy Chair of Council

- 18.92 Council formally noted the appointment of Irene Kirkman as Deputy Chair of Council from 1 August 2018 as announced and endorsed at the recent Council strategy meeting.

Membership of Council on other Boards and Committees (COU18.26)

- 18.93 Council approved the allocation of members to Council committees and other bodies. No requests had been received from members for changes to current appointments.

Calendar of meetings for 2018-19 (COU18.27)

- 18.94 Council noted the paper. Dates for meetings of the BEST Board would be circulated in due course. All dates would be incorporated in the Council Governor's Handbook which would be updated as part of the Summer updating process.

Other Business

Banking Mandate Permissions (COU18.28)

- 18.95 Council approved a change to the University's mandate for bank payments and transfers as set out in the paper.

Feedback from sector events attended by Council members

- 18.96 The Chair reported that he had attended the CUC Spring Plenary in April which focused on reputation management and included items on senior employee remuneration (being taken forward through the work of the Remuneration Committee) and lessons learned through the TEF.

Thanks to the Deputy Chair of Council

- 18.97 On behalf of Council, the Chair formally thanked Jenny Newton for her work as Deputy Chair of Council over the preceding two years.

Date of next meeting

- 18.98 The next meeting was confirmed for 9 October 2018 and would be a strategic meeting. The next Business meeting would be on 19 November 2018 and would be preceded by a joint meeting with Senate.

Signed: _____ Date: _____
Michael Hipkins (Chair of Council)

Drafted (Minute Secretary): 12-Jul-2018
Checked (Vice-Chancellor): 13-Jul-2018
Confirmed for circulation (Chair): 16-Jul-2018