

THE COUNCIL



Minutes of the meeting held on 15 October 2012

- Present: The Chairman of the Council (Mr R. Jewson) (in the Chair), the Vice-Chancellor (Professor E.D.J. Acton), the Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Professor N. Norris), the Treasurer (Mr J. Sisson), Dr M. Blyth, Mr D. Edwards, Ms V. Keller-Dorsey, Ms L. McGillivray, Dr K. Skoyles, Mrs E. Slaymaker, Mr D. White and the Student Representative except for business marked ** (Mr J. Levell and Mr M. Myles).
- With: The Registrar and Secretary, the Director of Planning (Mr I. Callaghan), the Director of Finance (Mr S. Donaldson), the Senior Assistant Registrar (VCO) (Dr L. Mouland) and the Senior Administrative Assistant (Committee Office) (Mrs R. Phillips).
- In attendance: The Executive Deans of Faculty (Professor P. Gilmartin, Professor I. Harvey, Professor Y. Tasker and Professor N. Ward) and Ms A. Rhodes and Mr I. Carruthers for item *8.
- Apologies: Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Professor D.J. Richardson), Sir Richard Dales and Mr G. Jones.

1. MINUTES

Confirmed
the minutes of the meeting held on 2 July 2012.

2. STATEMENTS BY THE CHAIR

The Chair welcomed the new members of Council:

Dr Mark Blyth (Senate Representative)
Mrs Eve Slaymaker (Support Staff Representative)
Mr Joe Levell (Union of UEA Students Finance Officer)

3. STATEMENTS BY THE VICE-CHANCELLOR

There were no statements.

4. VICE-CHANCELLOR'S QUARTERLY REPORT

Received
the confidential Vice-Chancellor's quarterly report to Council. (A copy is filed in the Minute Book, ref. COU12D001)

(This report was shorter than previous reports in recognition that Council members now receive the monthly all staff letters from the Vice-Chancellor. The initial student number count has now taken place and it has confirmed that Home/EU

undergraduate numbers whilst broadly in line with target did not grow and are probably unlikely to grow in the short term. In terms of postgraduate taught numbers there was a significant shortfall which is believed to be common across the sector. This was discussed with senior civil servants from BIS on their recent visit to campus and it is clear that there is no chance of additional funding to support loans for PGT students. The point was emphasised that reduced capital funding was making finances difficult. It is anticipated that future years' numbers will follow the same pattern as this year in terms of distribution between Schools. Staff pay negotiations continue with a final offer of 1% having been made. All the Trades Unions either have or are in the process of balloting members with some early results indicating marginal results in favour of strike action or action short of a strike.

Over the summer a number of international league tables were published. It was clear from these that the biggest single component was citations and international influence. On this area the University is 9th in the UK, ahead of three quarters of the Russell Group.

The impact of the UKBA decision to withdraw London Metropolitan University's licence had a significant impact on their ability to manage international students and has impacted the UK Higher Education Sector. In response to a specific question it was confirmed that the University had been subject to a UKBA audit three months ago which had gone well. However, it is important to remain vigilant and ensure compliance by students and staff with the requirements of the Agency.

The Sainsbury Centre is seeking to acquire a model of the Tatlin Tower conceived during World War I to straddle the river in St Petersburg. Separately, six new Regis Professorships have been announced to celebrate the Queen's Diamond Jubilee. These will be awarded in recognition of marked achievement in any region and the deadline for submission is the end of November.)

5. CORPORATE PLAN: OPERATIONAL PLAN 2012/3

Received

a confidential report detailing the operational plan for 2012/3 together with a summary of key league table information and the outcome of the National Student Survey. (A copy is filed in the Minute Book, ref. COU12D002)

(The contents of this report were welcomed by Council members noting the significant improvement in the availability of data against which to monitor the Corporate Plan objectives. It was noted that some areas were stronger than others and it was important to ensure that all are embedded entirely. The actions taken to improve retention of students, good honours and graduate prospects were identified and it was confirmed that the good progress on good honours achieved in one Faculty this summer will be shared with other Faculties. In terms of the National Student Survey, assessment and feedback is the area most in need of additional focus, though not uniformly across the University. It was highlighted that some minor difficulties occurred as a result of the integration project settling down and these should have improved for 2012/3. Greater use of new/emerging technologies may aid improvements in this area but there are also significant difficulties in terms of the volume in some Schools. The task this year is to pick out the outliers; learn from the good and support those less good. It has also been identified that there may be an imbalance between summative and formative assessment and there may be a need for some curriculum redesign with a primary aim being to give feedback to improve the quality of future learning. It was also important to ensure that expectations of students and staff were managed in respect of assessment and feedback utilising the Staff Student Liaison Committees.)

*6. JOINT VENTURE AND PROJECT REPORTS

This minute is confidential and attached as a separate sheet.

7. EUROPEAN INVESTMENT BANK AND HEFCE ASC APPROVAL

Received

a confidential report from the Director of Finance summarising discussions to date with the European Investment Bank and an approach to HEFCE for authorisation to borrow. (A copy is filed in the Minute Book, ref. COU12D004)

(The application for funds continues to be in progress with the European Investment Bank at the higher (£40m) level. The Bank has asked whether the University wishes to be considered in conjunction with other UK Higher Education Institutions which are also now seeking funds but this offer has been declined with a request that the application be considered in its own right. The additional £10m has been nominally attributed to:

1. Extended clinical research facilities; and
2. A second Biomass plant.

In considering this request, the Treasurer stated that it was important for Council to satisfy three questions:

1. Is the funding required? There is no requirement for funding working capital however, funds are required if the Corporate Plan is to be delivered.
2. If required, is it affordable? Some finessing of the financial plan is required but on the basis of the information available there is no reason to suggest that repayments are not affordable.
3. Is the cost reasonable? There is no likelihood of better terms elsewhere and the main high street banks have made it clear that they do not have twenty year funds available.)

RESOLVED

1. To approve the proposed capital programme and associated borrowings of £40m from the European Investment Bank, delegating the detailed arrangement of the loan agreement to the Finance Group;
2. To approve the draft request for HEFCE consent to long-term borrowings of up to £40m to finance the capital programme, subject to finalisation by the Finance Group on receipt of the formal offer letter. This consent is required as a result of the impact on the University's deemed annualised debt service costs.

*8. CLINICAL ACADEMIC BUILDING

This minute is confidential and attached as a separate sheet.

9. INITIAL STUDENT NUMBER COUNT

Received

the confidential initial student number count for 2012-13. (A copy is filed in the Minute Book, ref. COU12D006).

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(It was noted that this was a good performance in a difficult market place. The Corporate Plan includes a growth strategy but this may need to be more cautious, or alternatively focussed, as the impact of the move to freeing up the market continues and in that context the application and enrolment information for September 2013 will play an important part. It should also be noted that one of the limiting factors on growth (availability of accommodation) will be alleviated in September 2014 with the construction of an additional 250 bed spaces.)

10. ISLAMIC PRAYER FACILITY

Considered

a confidential report from the Pro Vice-Chancellor (Academic) regarding prayer facilities on campus. (A copy is filed in the Minute Book, ref. COU12D007)

(This paper is presented to enable Council members to identify the principles to inform future developments in respect of prayer and wider religious observance. It identifies the need to pause current plans in respect of the Islamic Prayer Facilities pending a more detailed policy paper to be presented at a later date. This report would be produced using information gathered from the current consultation process to support the ultimate recommendation to Council whilst also taking into account appropriate use of the Estate and ensuring student and staff safety.)

11. SENSITIVE AND CONTROVERSIAL ISSUES

Considered

a paper regarding sensitive and controversial issues. (A copy is filed in the Minute Book, ref. COU12D008)

RESOLVED

to endorse the proposal as outlined.

12. OPPORTUNITY AND RISK MANAGEMENT POLICY

Considered

the Opportunity and Risk Management policy. (A copy is filed in the Minute Book, ref. COU12D009)

RESOLVED

to approve the policy as submitted.

13. SCHEDULE OF THE DELEGATED AUTHORITY OF COUNCIL

Considered

a Schedule of Delegated Authority. (A copy is filed in the Minute Book, ref. COU12D010)

RESOLVED

to approve the Schedule as submitted.

14. INVESTMENT DOCUMENTS

Considered

a proposal for Power of Attorney in respect of investment documents. (A copy is filed in the Minute Book, ref. COU12D011)

This item was incomplete and, as such, will be deferred to the next meeting of Council.

15. ORDINANCES

Considered

(1) the recommendation for a change in Ordinance 5 (19). (A copy is filed in the Minute Book, ref. COU12D012)

(2) the recommendation for a change in Ordinance 4. (A copy is filed in the Minute Book, ref. COU12D013)

RESOLVED

to approve the changes as submitted.

16. SERIOUS INCIDENT REPORTING POLICY

Considered

a report. (A copy is filed in the Minute Book, ref. COU12D014)

RESOLVED

to approve the Serious Incident Reporting Policy as submitted.

17. SAINSBURY CENTRE BOARD : TERMS OF REFERENCE

Considered

revisions to the terms of reference of the SCVA Board (a committee of Council) following recent work by a Governance Group appointed by the Board. (A copy is filed in the Minute Book, ref. COU12D015)

RESOLVED

to approve the revised terms of reference.

18. COUNCIL: TERMS OF REFERENCE AND MEMBERSHIP 2012-13

Received

the terms of reference and membership of the Committee 2012-13. (A copy is filed in the Minute Book, ref. COU12D016)

19. RESERVED AREAS OF BUSINESS AND CONFIDENTIALITY

Received

statements of the University's policies on reserved areas of business and confidentiality. (A copy is filed in the Minute Book, ref. COU12D017)

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20. ITEMS FOR REPORT

Received

the following Items for Report. (A copy is filed in the Minute Book, ref. COU12D018)

- (1) Sealings
- (2) Head of School (ECO)

21. DATES OF MEETINGS

Reported

that the dates of future Council meetings were:

- Monday 19 November 2012 (during CSC)
- Monday 21 January 2013 - 10.30am
- Monday 11 March 2013 - 10.30am
- Monday 20 May 2013 - 2pm
- Monday 24 June 2013 - 10.30am