

## Board of Governors

### Minutes of the Meeting held on 20 September 2017

#### **Present:**

Andrew Scarborough (Chair)

David Baker

Sue Dutton

Rafael Garcia-Krailing

Richard Horsley

Sylvia Hughes

Frank Jordan

Lee Machado

Mark Mulcahey

Nick Petford

Nick Pitts-Tucker

Nick Robertson

Danjie Zhong

#### **Apologies:**

Sara Goodwin, Jeff Halliwell, Martin Pettifor, John Skelton

#### **In attendance:**

Miriam Lakin (Clerk), Becky Bradshaw (Health, Safety and Environment Manager) for item 154, Jane Bunce (Director of Student and Academic Services), Murdoch Cameron (MCW Architects) for item 154, Terry Cox (Head of Infrastructure

Services) for item 154, Bob Griggs (Waterside Project Manager) for item 154, Deborah Mattock (Director of HR, Marketing and International Relations), Terry Neville (Chief Operating Officer), Ann Shelton-Mayes (Executive Dean Student Experience)

### **148/17 Appointment of Chair and Deputy Chair**

148.1 The Chair of the Audit Committee proposed the appointment of Andrew Scarborough as Chair of the Board until 31 July 2018. This appointment was agreed by the Board.

148.2 Andrew Scarborough assumed the Chair. He proposed the appointment of Sylvia Hughes as Deputy Chair until 31 July 2018. This appointment was agreed by the Board.

### **149/17 Welcome, Apologies and Quorum**

149.1 The Chair welcomed those present, noted apologies and confirmed quoracy.

### **150/17 Declarations of Interest**

150.1 No declarations of interest were received in addition to those held on file by the Clerk's Office.

### **151/17 Minutes of Previous Meeting**

151.1 The Board approved the minutes of the meeting held on 17 July 2017 as a true record of that meeting.

### **152/17 Matters Arising**

152.1 The Board received Paper A on actions arising from previous meetings.

Additional comments were received on the following:

152.2 Speaker from the Office for Students (Minute 134.1)

The Vice Chancellor had written to Sir Michael Barber, the Chair of the Office for Students, to invite him to visit the University.

Minute 152.3 is in the confidential section of these minutes.

### **153/17 Strategy Refresh**

153.1 The Board received a presentation from the Vice Chancellor. This covered the University's current position and operating environment, and suggested a revision to the strategic plan and in particular to the critical success factors set out in that plan.

153.2 In particular, the Vice Chancellor noted:

- The results of the most recent staff survey which had shown a high level of support amongst staff for the strategy
- Increasing pressure on the University from declining applications nationally, and increasing competition for applicants. This coupled with a changing regulatory environment, for example the new Office for Students, and political environment
- Nationally, there had been a 4% fall in applications, and there were a number of factors contributing to this such as demographics, and the withdrawal of the grant system for nursing students. Nationally, business and administration subjects had suffered the largest decline. There had been a fall in clearing applications and a rise in universities giving unconditional offers of places.

153.2 Members noted that the overall number of potential applicants to the sector was smaller, and that full demographic recovery was not expected until 2025. It was noted that the business case for the Waterside campus was predicated on maintaining the level of student numbers rather than any growth.

153.3 It was noted that whilst there had been a national decline in applications to nursing and midwifery courses, this had not affected the University particularly as these courses were generally selecting due to a high number of applications. Whilst it did produce additional pressure, it also indicated that the Faculty of Health and Society may maintain income more easily than some of the other faculties.

153.4 The Vice Chancellor discussed the assumptions and strategic responses underlying the strategy as written in 2015, and addressed whether these were still relevant. He suggested that some adjustments some be made in order to respond better to the changing environment.

153.5 The Vice Chancellor referred to the results of a 2017 [national survey of undergraduates](#) carried out on behalf of Universities UK. This had shown that the top three things students value from their university were:

- A service in return for tuition fees
- Personalised advice and support
- A collaborative relationship with university staff.

The survey also found that students linked good value for money with:

- Good facilities for study
- Employability after graduation
- High quality lecturers and tutors
- High quality course content
- Academically challenging course.

It was noted that the concept of 'high quality' needed to be explored further in order to understand what students were seeking and to ensure that this could be both offered and marketed effectively to them.

153.6 The Board discussed the concept of academic challenge in more detail, noting that for students this could be tied up with the quality of feedback and the timeliness of its delivery, as well as their interest and motivation. It was noted that the relationship between teaching staff and their students was also important, and should be of a consistently good quality. It was noted that the use of active blended learning challenged teaching staff to produce and deliver effectively high quality content, and that some would need support to achieve this.

153.7 Members asked about the ability to provide two year degree courses as this had been mentioned in the press as a way to provide improved value for money. The Vice Chancellor stated that it had been found that there was little appetite amongst potential students for accelerated degrees, most were seeking a full university experience rather than a period of intensive study. However, it was also noted that as higher fees could be charged for an accelerated degree, more universities may now move to offer them.

153.8 The Vice Chancellor reported on the outcomes of work to refresh the brand which had been undertaken with an external consultancy. Many members of staff had been involved in the exercise to consider the University's mission, 'Transforming Lives and Inspiring Change' and ensure that the mission and wording used by the University were aligned to the brand. Through focus groups with staff, three factors had been identified which exemplified the University's purpose and core beliefs. These were:

- Super supportive
- Future focused
- Positive impact.

Underlying these was the concept of the University as welcoming, bold and positive.

153.9 Members discussed the idea of the University as 'bold', and asked if the University was as bold as it could be. It was noted that developments like Waterside and the teaching and learning model were undoubtedly bold, but that in other areas the culture was still risk averse.

153.10 The Vice Chancellor noted that the current strategy was based on four critical success factors and associated metrics (student experience, intellectual capital, strategic alliances, financial sustainability). The Vice Chancellor stated that these could be complicated to understand and did not sufficiently distinguish the University from other institutions. He therefore proposed that the University adopt as critical success factors:

- Super Supportive
- Future Focussed
- Social Impact.

The Vice Chancellor noted that much of the existing work and measures under the current critical success factors would map well onto the new critical success factors. However, there would also be an opportunity to remove some of the complexity in the current measures and to focus on a smaller range of key indicators.

153.11 The Vice Chancellor stated that in alignment with being supportive, future focussed and having social impact, there would be opportunities to explore new sources of income.

153.12 Members gave their feedback on the proposed new critical success factors. There was general support for their adoption. It was noted that they were clear and simple from a student perspective and would be easy to articulate. There was support for the idea of being bold, and especially of applying this to current activities. It was noted that while the brand and the

strategy were fully aligned they needed to be expressed in a manner appropriate to their different audiences. The brand would appeal to students and applicants, whereas the strategy needed to be understood by staff and stakeholders. It would be helpful to have consistent language across the brand and the strategy, with an awareness of the different audiences. It was requested that further work was done to ensure that the new critical success factors aligned to what was sought by students as evidenced by the Universities UK survey.

153.13 In summary, the Chair stated that the existing critical success factors had been valuable but that the proposed new critical success factors better articulated the University's current strengths and direction of travel, and should provide strong guidance about where management efforts and resources were directed. The Board confirmed that it was content with the focus and direction of travel as set out in the three proposed new critical success factors. These were super-supportive, future focused, and social impact.

Minutes 153.14 – 153.17 are in the confidential section of these minutes.

153.18 The Vice Chancellor confirmed that the next steps would be:

- Presentation of a high level draft of the revised strategy to the Board on 18 October
- Publication by the end of October
- Discussion of the operational plan and metrics, covering new revenue streams and a new operational budget. These discussions should be concluded by the Board Away Day on 11 and 12 January 2018.

## **154/17 Security and Resilience on Waterside Campus**

154.1 The Board received Paper B, a report on the measures taken to ensure security and resilience for the Waterside campus and in preparation for the move. It was reported that this work had three aspects:

- Physical security at the Waterside campus
- Business continuity
- Provision of a security service to protect staff and students.

154.2 The Waterside Project Director reported that physical security at the Waterside campus had been under consideration since early spring. Measures had been designed to inhibit some movements and to protect both buildings and people. These measures were outlined in the paper.

154.3 Members commended this work and asked if an outside expert would be asked to assess the robustness and quality of the work. It was reported that advisers in the existing project team had input their expertise. These included Mace who were working on other projects around the UK. The University was also working closely with Northamptonshire Police. It was suggested that a review of the current security team by a consultant could also include a review of the physical security measures. However, as a range of external advice had already been taken, it would not be necessary to do more than document this advice.

Action: Waterside Project Director

154.4 Members asked how the security measures would appear to users of the site. It was reported that they had been planned to give a good balance between security and a welcoming environment. In some cases, minor adjustments to existing physical infrastructure such as using wider bollards had been appropriate.



154.5 Subject to confirmation of independent checking and benchmarking of the arrangements for physical security on the Waterside campus, the Board noted the paper and thanked the presenters.

154.6 It was agreed that Paper B was confidential to the Board.

### **155/17 Student Recruitment Update**

155.1 The Board received and discussed Paper C, an update on the current student recruitment position compared with the same time last year. It was reported that the data showed all students including international, postgraduate and undergraduate. There had been an overall 5% fall in student numbers. Entrants expected in January 2018 were not included in the figures.

155.2 It was noted that numbers had fallen particularly in Business and Law. It was noted that postgraduate applications had increased. This was attributed to a new loan system nationally, a marketing campaign and an attractive scholarship offer for international students.

155.3 Members asked about the impact of student recruitment on the budget. The Director of Finance reported on a recent reconciliation he had carried out. This was based on a reduction of 500 students in the current year, but overall a similar position had been reached for the current year.

155.4 Members asked about the situation in future years. It was reported that KPMG had been asked to carry out a full reforecast and future scenario planning. A revised forecast would be available in October, and a revised budget around December. The whole financial model would be worked through, especially now there were good estimates of the sale value of the University's existing sites. It was confirmed that the total deficit projected remained at £2.75m and would be kept at that level.

Minute 155.5 is in the confidential section of these minutes.

### **156/17 Operational Plan Review**

156.1 The Board received and noted Paper D, a report on performance against metrics in the Operational Plan. This covered two of the four sets of metrics, namely Student Experience and Intellectual Capital. Metrics on Financial Sustainability and Strategic Alliances would be available at the October meeting.

### **157/17 Risk Management and Risk Appetite over 2017/18**

157.1 The Board received and discussed Paper E, a statement of the University's risk appetite, and a report on how risk would be reported over the year.

157.2 The Board approved the levels of risk appetite as set out in the paper. It was noted that these should be considered again once the University's strategy and operational plan had been revised.

### **158/17 Report from Project Assurance Committee**

158.1 The Board received Paper F, the minutes of the meetings of the Project Assurance Committee (PAC) held on 11 July and 12 September.

158.2 The Board received written comments from the Deputy Chair of PAC and noted the following:

- Following a review, recommendations had been received from independent fire consultants. Where these had been accepted, it was on the basis of safety and reducing risk
- PAC was pleased with progress, and all work packages were progressing well. There had been no significant changes to financial and works-related risk
- In reviewing the latest update from IT, PAC had requested assurance and further activity to align IT delivery for Waterside with the main delivery programme more closely. PAC had received assurance that this was in

hand and that management of the IT and engagement with the supplier would be further strengthened. IT staffing issues were also discussed and assurance had been received that this was in hand

- Progress on the delivery of a park and ride service was also discussed.

158.3 On IT, the Chief Operating Officer reported that Mace had carried out a review and their recommendations were awaited. This was designed to see what actions were necessary to support the IT team in their engagement with the contractors.

158.4 It was reported that planning permission for the sports facilities on site had been granted.

Minutes 158.5 – 158.8 are in the confidential section of these minutes.

158.9 The Board thanked and congratulated all of those involved in the recent positive developments.

### **159/17 Report from the Vice Chancellor and Chief Operating Officer**

159.1 The Board received and noted Paper G, a report from the Vice Chancellor and Chief Operating Officer.

### **160/17 Donor Relations and Acceptance of Donations Policy and Procedure**

160.1 The Board received Paper H, a draft policy on donor relations and the acceptance of donations. The Board agreed minor changes to 9.2 and 11.2. Subject to these changes, the Board approved the policy as set out in the paper.

160.2 It was reported that a complementary policy on naming rights would be also be brought to the Board for approval.

### **161/17 Board Effectiveness Review**

161.1 The Board received and approved Paper I, the scope and next steps of an external review of the Board's effectiveness.

161.2 The Clerk confirmed that the intention was to seek proposals from a number of suppliers who had experience both in the HE sector and in other sectors.

161.3 The Chair confirmed that the Clerk and Senior Independent Director would have responsibility for the management of the external review process. A proposal on the appointment of a Senior Independent Director would be brought to the next meeting.

Action: Chair/Clerk

161.4 The Board approved the scope of the effectiveness review as set out in the paper. The Board authorised the Clerk, in consultation with the Chair, to seek proposals and contract with a suitable individual or company to carry out the review.

Action: Chair/Clerk

### **162/17 Ratification of Signatures Under Seal**

162.1 The Board received and ratified the signature of documents under seal as set out in Paper K.

### **163/17 Any Other Business**

163.1 Management Accounts

The Director of Finance tabled Paper J, the consolidated income and expenditure section of the management accounts for the year ended 31 July 2017. The full version of the management accounts would be distributed to the Board shortly. A generally favourable overall position was noted.

## 163.2 Events

A topping out ceremony for the Francis Crick Halls of Residence on the Waterside Campus had been held the previous day, allowing Board members to see the excellent progress that was being made across the site. A successful Annual Research Conference for New Researchers had taken place on 14<sup>th</sup> September. The Approaches to Inequalities conference was taking place that day.

## **164/17 Confirmation of Availability of Papers**

164.1 The following papers were confirmed as confidential to the meeting:

Confidential section of the minutes of the meeting held on 17 July 2017

Paper B – Security and Resilience on Waterside Campus

Paper C – Student Recruitment Update

Paper D – Operational Plan Review

Paper E – Risk Management and Risk Appetite

Paper F – PAC Minutes

## **165/17 Date of Next Meeting**

165.1 Wednesday 18 October at 10.30am in the Board Room, Senate Building