

## UNIVERSITY OF SALFORD

## COUNCIL

## MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 18 DECEMBER 2015

UNCONFIRMED

Present: Baroness Beverley Hughes (*Chair*), Dr Mike Burrows, Jonathan Carson, Phil Cusack, Garry Dowdle, Jill Evans, Julia Fawcett, Ben Gallop, Amina Helal, Marina Hristova, Professor Helen Marshall, Ian Moston, Sean O'Hara, Sam Plant, Susan Price, Ahmed Rafiq, Joyce Redfearn, Tom Russell and Professor Tony Warne

Apologies: Derek Antrobus and Geoff Bean

In attendance: Vikki Goddard (*Chief Operating Officer*), Julie Charge (*Director of Finance*), Andrew Hartley (*Director of Legal, Planning & Governance*), Chris Larkin (*Director of Communications*), Julie Byrd (*Chief Executive, University of Salford Students' Union*, for minute COU.15.118 only), John McCarthy (*Director of Marketing & Student Recruitment*, for minute COU.15.112 only), Stephen Talboys (*Director of Estates & Property Services & IT Services*, for minutes COU.15.112 and 119 only), Keith Watkinson (*Director of Human Resources*, for minute COU.15.112 only) and Stewart Smith-Langridge (*Secretary*).

COU.15.108 **MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 27 NOVEMBER 2015 (COU/15/83): Confirmed**

COU.15.109 **MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES**

Noted: the update on the previous meeting's actions appended to the minutes.

Reported: Arising from minute COU.15.95: Academic Sub-Strategies further consideration of the sub-strategies would be given through the cycle of committee meetings reporting to the March 2016 meeting of Council.

COU.15.110 **STARRED ITEMS: Confirmed** that agenda items 16 (Prevent Duty) and 17 (Use of University Seal) would be noted without discussion.

COU.15.111 **CHAIR'S ACTION:** Reported that the Chair appointed Sam Plant as Chair of the Governance and Nominations Committee.

COU.15.112 **KEY FUNCTIONAL STRATEGIES (COU/15/84)**

Considered: a paper providing a strategy map 2016/17 – 2020/21 and summary document for each of the University's Key Functional Strategies (KFSs) supporting the implementation of the University's academic priorities.

Noted:

- i. KPIs, allied to a more detailed timescale with milestones, were in development. These would be instrumental in not only outlining the methodology for achieving the KFS priorities but also demonstrating how progress towards their achievement would be measured;
- ii. the current outline timeframe did not explain why some priority activities were not scheduled for earlier implementation. It was acknowledged that some essential groundwork remained to be completed in order to lay the foundation for further progress;
- iii. the absence of KPIs from the current draft of the KFSs was noted. Adoption of KPIs would provide assurance on delivery of the strategies;
- iv. the Council Away Day on 29 January 2016 would provide the opportunity to consider draft KPIs before a consolidated strategic plan was brought to Council in March 2016;
- v. the annual operational planning round, driving the shape of the 2016/17 budget, was scheduled to report into Finance and Resources Committee in April 2016. This year's process incorporated a series of challenge days not only to test plans but also to ensure synergies through exposure to managers of other Schools and Professional Services;
- vi. a careful review of the timescale for Council's consideration of KPIs, operational plans and budget proposals needed to be undertaken, including prior committee

- vii. consideration to inform Council's decision-making;  
Government savings targets in the grant letter to HEFCE were expected to result in an in-year budget cut for the University, details of which had yet to be determined. Members suggested that the University undertake scenario planning for such cuts;
- viii. the Lead Member for Human Resources welcomed the modernisation of language and cultures evident in the People KFS and it was considered that HR processes and structures had to change significantly to ensure their future fitness for purpose;
- ix. the view that any realignment of HR structures should be founded on principles of organisational design to ensure the optimal location of suitable resources;
- x. any restructures needed to demonstrate that efficiencies could be achieved whilst simultaneously improving performance. It was acknowledged that Operational Plans for business areas would provide more detail on any realignment of Professional Services to better serve the revised strategy;
- xi. the University should consider the merits of articulating in the People KFS an ambition to meet the Investors in People Standard;
- xii. the Marketing KFS showed progress in setting a challenging ambition to position the University as a first choice institution for students;
- xiii. the determination of the character of Industry Collaboration Zones (ICZs) was critical to the marketing of the concept and the engagement with external bodies, including graduate employers who should be more explicitly referenced as stakeholders;
- xiv. the Estates KFS aligned progress already in train from the previous Estates Strategy with the new Vision and Academic Sub-Strategies;
- xv. it was imperative that the Estates KFS spoke to all stakeholders, including current and prospective students. The Student Experience Committee was already considering how the University was mindful of any potential adverse effect on current students of projects primarily designed to benefit future intakes and to mitigate any negative impact on student satisfaction scores;
- xvi. the Information & Technology KFS was building on good progress in establishing a robust infrastructure and demonstrated a clear balance between business as usual and strategic developments;
- xvii. improving the use of technology to meet student needs should become a significant differentiator for the University, in addition to contributing towards a reduced cost base;
- xviii. the Finance KFS sought to provide a longer term approach to sustainability, generating both flexibility and efficiency.

**Resolved:**

- i. that the KFSs be further developed, taking into account views expressed by Council members, for submission to the next Council meeting;  
ACTION 1: VICE CHANCELLOR, CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER, KFS LEADS
- ii. that the Vice Chancellor and Chief Operating Officer liaise with the Chair and Deputy Chair on the scheduling of the Council and committee consideration of operational planning outputs and budget proposals in the context of a consolidated strategic plan  
ACTION 2: VC, COO, CHAIR, DEPUTY CHAIR

COU.15.113

**VICE CHANCELLOR'S REPORT (COU/15/85)**

Received: a report from the Vice Chancellor on key issues.

**Noted:**

- i. the University, as both an individual institution and part of the wider sector, would be seeking to influence Government policy in its response to the Green Paper 'Fulfilling our Potential: Teaching Excellence, Social Mobility and Student Choice';
- ii. the introduction of a Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF) was expected to raise the sector's quality threshold. Student retention and progression would be a key determinant and the University's underperformance in this respect was a critical risk to mitigate;
- iii. the proposed replacement of NHS bursaries with standard student loans would

- iv. impact HE providers and the University was already implementing strategies to mitigate any longer term impact;  
the University's ICZ concept would speak well to the Government's focus on employability;
- v. that the ambassadorial role of Council members was being considered for inclusion within the emergent Public Affairs Strategy

**Resolved:**

- i. that the Economic and Social Impact report commissioned by the University be submitted to a future meeting of Council  
ACTION 3: COO, DIRECTOR OF LEGAL, PLANNING & GOVERNANCE
- ii. that the University's Public Affairs Strategy be submitted for information to a future meeting of Council  
ACTION 4: VC, DIRECTOR OF LEGAL, PLANNING & GOVERNANCE
- iii. that members offer feedback to the Vice Chancellor on the format and content of her report to Council  
ACTION 5: ALL COUNCIL MEMBERS

**COU.15.114 QUARTERLY PERFORMANCE REPORT Q1 2015/16 (COU/15/86)**

Considered: the University's Performance Report for Quarter 1 of 2015/16.

**Noted:**

█ [REDACTED]

█ [REDACTED]

█ [REDACTED]

█ [REDACTED]

█ [REDACTED]

█ [REDACTED]

**Resolved:** to commend the University's cross-functional project team responsible for reducing the UKVI refusal rate for international student visas  
ACTION 6: COO

Paragraphs from this minute have been redacted as they are considered to be exempt information as defined by section 43 (2) of the Freedom of Information Act 2000

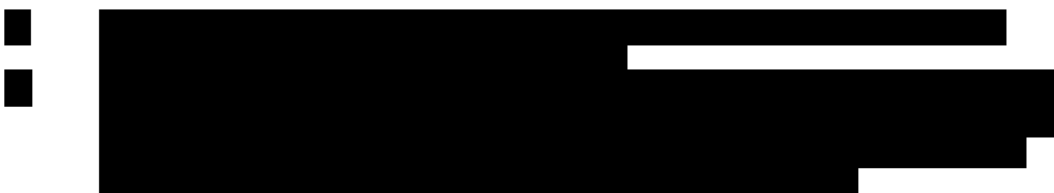
**COU.15.115 FINANCE UPDATE (COU/15/87)**

Considered: the financial update for Quarter 1 2015/16.

**Noted:**

█ [REDACTED]

█ [REDACTED]



Paragraphs from this minute have been redacted as they are considered to be exempt information as defined by section 43 (2) of the Freedom of Information Act 2000

COU.15.116 **VARIATION OF AGENDA: Resolved** to vary the agenda to consider items 11 (Students' Union Constitution) and 12 (Students' Union Strategy) before other remaining items of business.

COU.15.117 **STUDENTS' UNION CONSTITUTION (COU/15/89)**

Considered: the revised Constitution of the University of Salford Students' Union (USSU).

Noted: the proposed change to allow for the appointment rather than election of Student Trustees sought to provide for representation and engagement from a wider cross-section of students.

**Resolved:** to approve the revised Constitution of the University of Salford Students' Union.  
ACTION 7: USSU CHIEF EXECUTIVE, DIRECTOR OF LEGAL, PLANNING & GOVERNANCE

COU.15.118 **STUDENTS' UNION STRATEGY (COU/15/90)**

Received: a paper providing the USSU Strategy 2015-2018 and a presentation from the USSU Chief Executive outlining the development and goals of the USSU Strategy.

Noted:

- i. the Students' Union's strategy had to evolve and modernize to reflect changes to the sector and to ensure value for money for students who contributed indirectly to the Union through the fee element of the University's grant to USSU;
- ii. the Union should contribute to the attractiveness of the University to prospective students and work in harmony with the University to co-create opportunities for learning, employment and volunteering;
- iii. changes had been effected to the portfolios and election of sabbatical officers to ensure a better fit of candidate to each post;
- iv. the Union had to operate more smartly than previously, reprioritising its expenditure and improving the effective use of IT resources in collaboration with the University;
- v. Union representatives were actively participating in Salford community meetings to promote improved relationships with local communities;
- vi. members welcomed the vibrant and ambitious Strategy to provide a framework for co-creating events and activities with students.

COU.15.119 **PROGRAMME FOR IMPROVEMENTS IN TEACHING SPACE UTILISATION (COU/15/88)**

Considered: a report on the implementation of enhancements to teaching space utilisation.

Noted:

- i. measures to improve the University's space utilisation had to be considered and implemented with care so as not to adversely affect the student view of the timeliness, reliability and convenience of their timetables;
- ii. a programme level review of timetabling would ensure that teaching timetables were tested against space utilisation targets prior to publication;
- iii. members regretted the slow progress made in recent years and expressed the view that proposed annual increments of 2% in space utilisation were not ambitious in resolving the issue. Continuing student dissatisfaction with timetabling had to be addressed as a matter of urgency as it risked impacting significantly on the overall satisfaction rating of the University;

- iv. lessons should be learned from practice in other institutions, particularly with regard to the use of IT which should be critical in effecting a step change in performance and producing efficiency gains;
- v. plans to implement a space-financing approach to effect a cultural change in staff behaviours were supported in principle.

**Resolved:**

- i. to express concern at the lack of progress and ambition in improving current space utilisation;  
ACTION 8: CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER
- ii. that an update on the further development and implementation of improvement measures be provided to a future meeting of Council during 2015/16.  
ACTION 9: CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER, DIRECTOR OF ESTATES & PROPERTY & IT SERVICES, DIRECTOR OF LEGAL, PLANNING & GOVERNANCE

COU.15.120 **REPORT FROM SENATE (COU/15/91):** Received: a report of the meeting of Senate held on 8 December 2015.

COU.15.121 **REPORT FROM THE GOVERNANCE AND NOMINATIONS COMMITTEE (COU/15/92)**

Considered: the minutes of the Committee's meeting held on 4 December 2015.

**Resolved:**

- i. To approve the revised terms of reference for the Honorary Degrees Committee;  
ACTION 10: DIRECTOR OF LEGAL, PLANNING & GOVERNANCE
- ii. To approve the revised Memorandum of Understanding between the Students' Union and University;  
ACTION 11: USSU CHIEF EXECUTIVE, DIRECTOR OF LEGAL, PLANNING & GOVERNANCE
- iii. To approve the amendment of University Statutes to reflect the current practice for the appointment of the Chair of Council;  
ACTION 12: DIRECTOR OF LEGAL, PLANNING & GOVERNANCE
- iv. To endorse proposals for the terms of reference, reporting line and membership of the Ethics Committee to be revised.  
ACTION 13: DIRECTOR OF LEGAL, PLANNING & GOVERNANCE, REGISTRAR

COU.15.122 **REPORT FROM THE STUDENT EXPERIENCE COMMITTEE (COU/15/93):** Received: the minutes of the Committee's meeting held on 4 December 2015.

COU.15.123 **PREVENT DUTY (COU/15/94):** Received: a report on how the University was fulfilling its statutory duty to have due regard to the need to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism.

COU.15.124 **USE OF UNIVERSITY SEAL (COU/15/95):** Received: a report on the use of the University seal since the previous meeting.

COU.15.125 **DATE OF NEXT MEETINGS**

Friday 29 January 2016 – Council Awayday at MediaCityUK  
Friday 18 March 2016 at 2pm

Noted: all members were also welcome to attend the induction event for new members on 8 January 2016.

COU.15.126 **ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

1. Register of Interests

Reported: that members would be emailed in the near future with a request to complete their annual Register of Interests declaration.

## 2. Annual Operating and Financial Review

Reported: that members would be receiving shortly the Annual Operating and Financial Review, a glossy bound version of the 2014/15 financial statements incorporating an externally facing annual review.

COU.15.127

### **REFLECTIONS ON THE MEETING**

Noted: in response to the Chair's invitation to comment on the conduct of the meeting a member provided the following observations:

- the succinct and clear VC's Report was a welcome addition to the standard items for Council meetings;
- in outlining the University's performance the VC had focused admirably on the areas of highest challenge and risk;
- Lead Members' prior engagement in University business had been evident in discussion and the assurance of Council members had profited from that engagement;
- discussion had illustrated an evolving interface between Council and University management with regard to the role and timing of Council members in strategic planning;
- the presentation on the USSU Strategy had been energetic and illuminating.