

APPROVED

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE RESOURCES COMMITTEE HELD ON THURSDAY 22 JUNE 2023 IN ROOM RS103, REGENT STREET AND VIA MICROSOFT TEAMS

PRESENT:	M X Wang (Chair) J Bairamian Dr P Bonfield	D Hoyle ¹ T Sketchley P Wales
IN ATTENDANCE:	O Adetona M Chan (Observer) L Cole ¹ (Minutes 22.57.10 to 22.57.14) C Hinge E McMillan (Clerk to the Court) ¹	C Molloy A Norris ¹ (Minute 22.61) R Poole ¹ I Wilmot ² (Deputy Company Secretary)
APOLOGIES:	J Cappock (Company Secretary)	V Foster

22.56 ANNOUNCEMENTS

- 22.56.1 The Chair welcomed members and attendees to the meeting.
- 22.56.2 The Chair welcomed Mandy Chan - Governance Support Officer, and Caragh Molloy – Director of People, Culture and Wellbeing (PCW) to the Committee.
- 22.56.3 Members noted apologies for the meeting as recorded above.
- 22.56.4 Members did not declare any conflict of interest for the matters on the agenda.
- 22.56.5 Members did not request to discuss starred items or items of business not on the agenda.
- 22.56.6 The Chair informed members about two events she had attended recently – a HEPI/UUKi/Kaplan event on the economic costs and benefits of international students, and the first of a series of annual workshops on the UN Sustainable Development Goals titled ‘SDGs at UoW: A University-Wide Workshop on Sustainable Development Beyond Acronyms’.
- 22.56.7 The Chair encouraged members to join Chapter Zero, an organisation that encourages non-executive directors to support decarbonisation and climate change.

22.57 ESTATES MATTERS

Estate Strategy

- 22.57.1 The Director of Estates Planning and Services (EPS) presented the proposed Estate Strategy 2022-2029 (Document RES 230622A).
- 22.57.2 The Director of EPS confirmed that the draft Strategy had previously been discussed with the Committee, reviewed by various groups and that there had been wide consultation prior to submission of the final version.

¹ Attended via Microsoft Teams

² Ian Wilmot attended as Director of Finance and Acting University Secretary and Chief Operating Officer (USCOO)

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- 22.57.4 The Director of EPS informed members that a designed version will be produced with a timeline including the past three years and future seven years and estates data added. A member suggested that this should be added to the cover sheet when the Strategy is submitted to the Court of Governors.
- 22.57.5 The Director of EPS informed members that details of the projects featured in the Strategy would be submitted to the Committee in due course and, in response to a member's query, confirmed that the projects are being prioritised currently.
- 22.57.6 The Vice-Chancellor commented that some elements of the Strategy are revenue-driven developments informed by planned growth in student numbers and others are an investment in the student and colleague experience.
- 22.57.7 A member suggested that the Strategy could benefit from a short statement about project governance including how projects are authorised to proceed and how financing is approved. The Vice-Chancellor noted that details such as these will be included in a strategic plan that will be more flexible to account for contextual changes; however, he assured the Committee that once a decision has been taken to proceed with a major project the University will deliver the project.
- 22.57.8 In response to a member's query, the Director of EPS confirmed that space utilisation is one of the strategic key performance indicators (KPIs).
- 22.57.9 A member queried whether the planned developments can be fully delivered within the dates stated in the Strategy. The Director of EPS confirmed that not all elements of the development may be completed within the time period and noted the suggestion that dates should be removed from the document if they are not achievable.
- 22.57.10 **AGREED** Members recommend the Estate Strategy to the Court of Governors for approval, subject to consideration of the enhancements suggested at the meeting.

29 Marylebone Road project update

- 22.57.11 Linsey Cole, Director of Business Engagement, presented an update on the 29MR project (Document RES 230622B).
- 22.57.12 The Director reported that planning and procurement had progressed since the last meeting and that Westminster City Council commended the University's approach to sustainability and shared the University's vision for the building.
- 22.57.13 The Director informed members that there are some risks to achieving the opening date of Spring 2025, that will reduce as the programme of works proceeds, and that the proposal to award the second stage contract will be submitted to the Committee in November 2023.
- 22.57.14 Members discussed the timing of the next cost appraisal and whether there is sufficient contingency in the budget.
- 22.57.15 The Director informed members that enabling works should have started by September 2023 and a member suggested that the commencement is an opportunity for a news item on the development.

22.58 DIGITAL STRATEGIC UPDATE

- 22.58.1 The Director of Information Systems and Support (ISS) presented a strategic update on our digital estate (Document RES 230622C).
- 22.58.2 The Director of ISS informed members about a recent significant ransomware attack and data breach at another UK university and assured members that the University is taking all necessary precautions to protect the University.
- 22.58.3 In response to a member's query, the Director confirmed that the Westminster Managed Learning Environment is working on open protocols.

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22.60 MANAGEMENT ACCOUNTS – APRIL 2023

- 22.60.1 Oyin Adetona, Deputy Director of Finance presented the Management Accounts for April 2023 (Document RES 230622D), which included the Quarter 3 forecast.
- 22.60.2 The Deputy Director reported that the projected £12.8m surplus is slightly lower than the Quarter 2 forecast and staff costs are higher as they now include the cost of the voluntary release scheme (resulting in a reduction in the contingency).
- 22.60.3 The Deputy Director noted however that student fee income has performed better than budget (due to lower dropouts), which offsets the interest rate rises, and the year-end pension provision is expected to be lower than stated in the budget.
- 22.60.4 The Deputy Director informed members that the balance sheet remains strong and assured members that although the debtor position appears high at this point in the year, it has since been reduced significantly because of receipt of Student Loan Company payments.
- 22.60.5 Members discussed the potential impact of the Government's change in policy on allowing postgraduate students to bring dependents to the UK.
- 22.60.6 In response to a member's query, the Director of Finance explained the reduction in commercial income, noting that commercial lets are still impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic and that work on the halls of residence reduced their availability for summer lets.

22.61 UNIVERSITY BUDGET 2023/24

- 22.61.1 The Director of Finance the proposed University budget for 2023/24 (Document RES 230622E), which includes the capital expenditure budget.

Income and expenditure budget

- 22.61.2 The Director explained that income figures are based on student number planning work that has taken place over the last few months and that the target numbers are challenging following the Government announcement on dependents discussed earlier in the meeting.
- 22.61.3 The Director reported that staffing costs remain the most significant expenditure and cover the full complement of colleagues in each area, and that depreciation (a non-cash item) is higher this year due to the level of planned capital expenditure.
- 22.61.4 The Director informed members that the projected surplus does not meet the strategic KPI therefore in-year savings will be necessary and any new initiatives will be expected to be delivered within existing budgets.
- 22.61.5 The Director answered a member's queries on staffing numbers and Quintin Hogg Trust funding.

Capital expenditure budget

- 22.61.6 The Director summarised the Estates and ISS projects within the capital expenditure budget.
- 22.61.7 The Director informed members that whilst capital projects are usually funded from cash generated in year, due to special projects there will be a need to draw approximately £13m from existing cash reserves to fund the planned expenditure.
- 22.61.8 Members noted that there is a property that could be considered for disposal.
- 22.61.9 The Director of Finance, Director of EPS and Vice-Chancellor answered a member's query about the source of funding and timing of the development of halls of residence at Harrow.
- 22.61.10 The Director of Finance notified members that the capital expenditure table would be updated prior to submission to the Court to include an additional £[REDACTED] for works on the Regent Street roof and façade.

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- 22.61.11 In response to a member's query, the Director of Finance explained that the decarbonisation investment is to deliver a decarbonisation plan for each campus.
- 22.61.12 **AGREED** Members recommend the University budget 2023/24 to the Court for approval, including the additional capital expenditure on the Regent Street building.

22.62 COLLEAGUE WELLBEING SURVEY OUTCOMES

- 22.62.1 The Director of PCW and Andy Norris, Head of Culture and Inclusion summarised the outcomes from the recent colleague survey (Document RES 230622F).
- 22.62.2 The Head of Culture and Inclusion informed members that there had been an improvement in all the People Strategy KPIs, although there is more work to do to achieve the key performance targets.
- 22.62.3 Members heard that the key strategic message from the survey is the embedded disparity between responses from academic and Professional Services colleagues. The Director of PCW noted that survey participation rates are low for academic colleagues and more analysis will be done, including work to identify whether the responses are representative or consistent across the academic colleague community.
- 22.62.4 Members discussed the impact of industrial action on the wellbeing of, and relationships between, academic colleagues.
- 22.62.4.1 **ACTION Head of Culture and Inclusion** to compare responses from the recent survey and the previous year and reflect on the context at both periods to identify whether there is a correlation between survey responses and periods of industrial action.
- 22.62.5 A member suggested that the University continues to work to increase overall survey participation rates and that there is deep dive analysis into the responses to build a better understanding of the current environment.
- 22.62.6 A member requested that the Committee allocates more time at future meetings to explore people issues, commenting that people are the foundation to deliver Being Westminster 2022-2029 and the enabling strategies.

22.63 ANNUAL PENSIONS UPDATE

- 22.63.1 Members received the annual pensions update (Document RES 230622G).
- 22.63.2 The Director of Finance informed members that there will be accounting considerations if the Local Government Pension Scheme liability goes into surplus.
- 22.63.3 The Director reported that pension options will be considered alongside a review of overall remuneration packages; however, there are no proposals to change the pension schemes currently.
- 22.63.4 In response to a member's query, the Director confirmed that some universities have implemented a defined contribution scheme for new entrants.
- 22.63.5 A member suggested that the update should include the number of colleagues enrolled in each of the three pension schemes not just the number in the USS.
- 22.63.6 In response to a member's query, the Director confirmed that the University has limited influence on the employer contribution rate and that it is possible to plot a graph to identify future contributions only for the LGPS.

22.64 COMPLIANCE UPDATE – HEALTH AND SAFETY

- 22.64.1 Members received the draft minutes from the Safety, Health and Wellbeing (SHW) Committee meeting on 18 May 2023 and a copy of the SHW Legal Register (Document RES 230622H).

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- 22.64.2 The Acting USCOO confirmed there have been no significant health and safety matters or breaches of regulations reported since the last meeting.
- 22.64.3 Members heard that work is progressing to ensure full compliance in response to changes to legislation.
- 22.64.4 The Acting USCOO reported two incidents - a flood in the Copeland Building that caused damage but no injuries and a fire in an IT lab at the Marylebone Road campus that was quickly extinguished with little damage. The Acting USCOO confirmed that the incidents had been reviewed and appropriate remedial action taken.

22.65 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING AND MATTERS ARISING

- 22.65.1 **AGREED** Members confirmed that the minutes of the meeting held on 27 April 2023 (Document RES 2306221) were an accurate record.
- 22.65.2 Members noted that there were no outstanding actions from previous meetings.

22.66 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

- 22.66.1 Members did not raise any other items of business.

22.67 DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS

Thursday 14 September 2023 at 4.00pm
Tuesday 14 November 2023 at 5.30pm (preceded by attendance at Audit Committee from 4.30pm)
Thursday 18 January 2024 at 4.00pm (provisional - for urgent approval of major projects only)
Thursday 15 February 2024 at 4.00pm
Thursday 25 April 2024 at 4.00pm
Thursday 20 June 2024 at 4.00pm

Members may participate in meetings via Microsoft Teams or onsite in Room RS103, 309 Regent Street.