

APPROVED

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE RESOURCES COMMITTEE HELD ON THURSDAY 24 JUNE 2021 VIA MICROSOFT TEAMS

PRESENT:	G Morley (Chair) J Bairamian Dr P Bonfield	T Lovell P Wales S Wylie (Deputy Chair)
IN ATTENDANCE:	Professor D Anand (Minutes 20.46 and 20.47) Professor L Berry (Observer) J Cappock (Company Secretary) I Wilmot	Professor A Hughes (Minutes 20.46 and 20.47) E McMillan (Clerk to the Court) M X Wang (Observer) C Hinge
APOLOGIES:	D Barratt D Hoyle	R Poole The Venerable Canon D Stanton

20.46 ANNOUNCEMENTS

- 20.46.1 The Chair welcomed members and attendees to the meeting.
- 20.46.2 The Chair welcomed Mei Xin Wang and Professor Lynne Berry (independent governors), Professors Alex Hughes and Dibyesh Anand (Co-Chairs of the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Committee) as observers and presenters.
- 20.46.3 Members noted apologies for the meeting as above.
- 20.46.4 No interests were declared.
- 20.46.5 The Chair informed members there would be discussion of the starred HR policy proposals (see Minutes 20.53 and 20.54) as members had not confirmed their approval in advance of the meeting.
- 20.46.6 The Chair agreed to a request from the Deputy Chair to raise an item under Any Other Business (see Minute 20.52).

20.47 DRAFT EQUALITY, DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION STRATEGY

- 20.47.1 Professor Alex Hughes and Professor Dibyesh Anand, Co-Chairs of the EDI Committee, presented the draft EDI Strategy (Document RES 210624A).
- 20.47.2 Professor Hughes reported that the EDI Strategy will be accompanied by an annual action plan and that EDI is a common theme in all planning workstream charters.
- 20.47.3 Professor Anand informed members that consultation took place with the University Executive Board, Academic Council, the Students' Union and colleague networks as well as an open forum for colleagues and students.

APPROVED

- 20.47.4 In response to a member's query, Professor Hughes confirmed that the opening statement of the Strategy, which refers only to students, was taken from Being Westminster: Our Strategy 2018-23; the statement is expected to be updated to include all in our community when Being Westminster is refreshed.
- 20.47.5 A member asked why two groups of people (Part Time Visiting Lecturers and research students) were referenced explicitly while other groups were not. Professor Hughes confirmed that it was these two groups were identified through the consultation as being underrepresented and marginalised.
- 20.47.6 A member commented that only student facing activities and services were mentioned in relation to assessing and developing cultural sensitivities; however, cultural sensitivity is also important for engagement of colleagues with other colleagues. Professor Hughes confirmed that again the focus reflected feedback from the consultation and that the new Head of Learning and Development will review and develop EDI-related training for all colleagues, including middle and senior managers.
- 20.47.7 In response to a member's query, Professor Anand confirmed that whilst the Strategy explicitly references working in partnership with UWSU on inclusion implementation of the Strategy will engage widely with students.
- 20.47.8 In response to a member's query, Professor Hughes confirmed that there will be targets in the annual action plan and the planning workstream charters as well as an EDI objective for all colleagues through the professional development review.
- 20.47.8.1 **ACTION Independent governor Justin Bairamian** to share information with the EDI Committee Co-Chairs on how his employer approaches evaluation of senior leaders' performance on diversity.
- 20.47.9 **AGREED** Members recommend the EDI Strategy to the Court of Governors for approval.

20.48 SAFETY, HEALTH AND WELLBEING UPDATE

- 20.48.1 John Cappock - University Secretary and Chief Operating Officer (USCOO) and Chair of the Being Safe Feeling Safe (BSFS) Group and the Safety, Health and Wellbeing (SHW) Committee - briefed members on the work of the BSFS Group since the last meeting.
- 20.48.2 Members heard that the BSFS Group continues to meet weekly and recent discussions included addressing issues related to students whose home country is on the Government's red list for COVID-19.
- 20.48.3 The USCOO briefed members on behaviour on-site and student accommodation occupancy.
- 20.48.4 A member asked about our policy on vaccinations and the USCOO informed members that students will be signposted to register with their local GP and advised to get vaccinated as soon as possible. Colleagues and students will continue to be asked to take lateral flow tests before coming onsite.

20.49 STRATEGIC PERFORMANCE REPORTS

Digital environment

- 20.49.1 The USCOO presented an update on strategic matters relating to the digital environment (Document RES 210624B) on behalf of the Director of Information Systems and Support (ISS).
- 20.49.2 Members welcomed the inclusion of the qualitative analysis of Student Digital Insights 2021 and commented that this level of information is useful for the Committee.
- 20.49.3 In response to a member's query, the USCOO gave assurance on alternative arrangements if there was a cyber-attack.

APPROVED

- 20.49.4 Members discussed with the USCOO student views on the balance between remote and onsite teaching and learning activities and the link to students' views on value for money.
- 20.49.5 In response to a member's query, the USCOO explained support for students unable to afford the equipment and internet connectivity needed to participate in digital learning.
- Physical environment**
- 20.49.6 The Director of Estates, Planning and Services (EPS) reported that he has begun work on the built environment strategy and is working closely with UWSU, current and future students, and the commercial sector on how it relates to educational development.
- Management accounts report**
- 20.49.7 The Director of Finance presented the management accounts report for April 2021 (Period 9) (Document RES 210624C), which includes the Quarter 3 forecast.
- 20.49.8 Members heard that the current position is largely in line with the Quarter 2 forecast and is expected to improve further by the year end when there will be more clarity around the year-end pension adjustment.
- 20.49.9 The Chair commended all involved for their performance during this year.
- 20.49.10 A member highlighted a missing table heading in the report.
- 20.49.10.1 ACTION Director of Finance** to correct the report prior to submission to the Court.

20.50 UNIVERSITY BUDGET 2021/22

- 20.50.1 The Director of Finance presented the University Budget 2021/22 (Document RES 210624D).
- 20.50.2 The Director of Finance summarised the income and expenditure budget and informed members that the budget has been prepared on a prudent basis due to uncertainty around student numbers.
- 20.50.3 He reported that expenditure has increased including an annual increase for staff costs of around 4.5%, higher operating expenses as field trips recommence and a significant increase in software costs. Members noted that a contingency of £5m has been included.
- 20.50.4 The Director of Finance informed members that the budgeted surplus of £2.7m (before contingency) does not meet the KPI of 6% of income.
- 20.50.5 Members discussed with the Director of Finance, the USCOO and the Vice-Chancellor several factors contributing to the budget process:
- reductions in recruitment of students from the European Union post-Brexit;
 - static associated costs;
 - return to the pre-pandemic level for Other Income;
 - Government policy on tuition fees for non-STEM subjects; and
 - increases in staff costs and possible mitigations. The Director of Finance summarised the capital expenditure budget, which totals £25.9m and is expected to be funded from cash generated in year.
- 20.50.6 The Director of Finance informed members that business cases to support budgeted investment in three strategic projects – student residential accommodation at Harrow, the Student Hub and a physical centre to support the employability agenda (29 Marylebone Road) - will be submitted to the Committee in due course.
- 20.50.7 **AGREED** Members recommend the University Budget 2021/22 to the Court for approval.

APPROVED

20.51 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING AND MATTERS ARISING

- 20.51.1 **AGREED** Members confirmed the minutes of the meeting held on 29 April 2021 (Document RES 210624E) are an accurate record.
- 20.51.2 Members noted an update on actions and matters arising from previous meetings (Document RES 210624F).
- 20.51.3 **Pensions options (Action 20.21.11.1) [Redacted – confidential]**
- 20.51.4 Members repeated their request for a timetable for explorations and decision-making related to the University's pension liabilities.

20.51.4.1 **ACTION Director of Finance** to provide the timeline for the next meeting.

20.51.5 The Clerk to the Court informed the Committee of discussions at the Audit Committee around risk relating to the pension liability and informed the Chair that the Audit Committee Chair intends to approach him to discuss the matter before he retires from the role. A member suggested that the Chair may consider inviting a member of Audit Committee to observe Resources Committee discussions on pension issues.

20.52 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

- 20.52.1 On behalf of the Committee and the University, Simon Wyle, Deputy Chair, thanked the Chair for his services to the Committee.
- 20.52.2 The Chair thanked the USCOO and Directors for their work.

20.53 ABSENCE POLICY AND PROCEDURE

20.53.1 **AGREED** Members recommend the updated Absence Policy and Procedure (Document RES 210624G) to the Court for approval.

20.54 REDUNDANCY POLICY AND PROCEDURE

20.54.1 **AGREED** Members recommend the updated Redundancy Policy and Procedure (Document RES 210624H) to the Court for approval.

20.55 DIVERSITY AND DIGNITY AT WORK AND STUDY POLICY

20.55.1 Members received the updated policy (Document RES 210624I), which will be considered by the University Executive Board for approval.

20.56 DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS

Thursday 9 September 2021 at 4.00pm
Thursday 9 November 2021 at 5.30pm*
Thursday 20 January 2022 at 4.00pm**
Thursday 17 February 2022 at 4.00pm
Thursday 28 April 2022 at 4.00pm
Thursday 23 June 2022 at 4.00pm

Meetings will be held in Room RS109, 309 Regent Street and via Microsoft Teams

* Later start time as preceded by attendance at the Audit Committee meeting from 4.30pm

** Provisional – only goes ahead if required to consider urgent major project proposals