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| **CONFIRMED MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON TUESDAY 26 MARCH 2024** | | |
| PRESENT: | | |
| Meg Munn (Chair) | Prof Liz Mossop | |
| Gabrielle Berring | Matt Parkin | |
| John Cowling | Prof Julietta Patnick | |
| Jeremiah Abiola Fasipe | Prof Keith Ridgway | |
| Ian Hall | Giles Searby | |
| Dr Claire Ketnor | Tim Smith | |
| Sameer Kothari (from item 6.1) | Emmanuel Owusu Takyi | |
| Dr Matt Lilley | Penny Thompson | |
| Dr Jia Liu |  | |
| IN ATTENDANCE: | | AGENDA ITEM |
| Michaela Boryslawskyj, University Secretary | | All |
| Richard Calvert, Deputy Vice-Chancellor Strategy and Operations (DVCSO) | | All |
| Prof Rory Duncan, Pro Vice-Chancellor Research and Innovation (PVCR&I) | | All |
| Ryan Keyworth, Chief Finance Officer (CFO) | | All |
| Clair Marlow, Head of Legal Services and Deputy University Secretary | | All |
| Tom Russell, Head of Strategic Insight and Data | | Item 6.3 |
| Prof Helen Scott, Pro Vice-Chancellor for Learning, Teaching and Student Success (PVCLTSS) | | All |
| Prof David Shepherd, Deputy Vice-Chancellor Academic (DVCA) | | All |
| Lorraine Stallard, Executive Assistant to the University Secretary and Chair of the Board of Governors (the Board) | | All |
| Prof Chris Wiggington, Pro Vice-Chancellor Global and Academic Partnerships (PVCGAP) | | All |
| Tracey Taylor, Board Secretary | | All |
| Sam Coulby, Senior Business Parter, Equity, Equality, Diversity & Inclusion (EEDI) | | Item 7 |
| Sinead O’Toole, Senior Business Parter, EEDI | | Item 7 |
| APOLOGIES: Joanna Allen, Angela Foulkes | | |

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| Minute Ref | Item of Business | Paper Ref |
| BG\_2024\_03\_26\_01 | DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST |  |
| 1.1 | There were no declarations of interest. | |
| BG\_2024\_03\_26\_02 | **MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING** | BG\_2024\_03\_26\_P02.1-02.4 |
| 2.1 | The minutes, including the confidential minutes, of the Board meeting and Strategic Update Day held on 6 February 2024 were **approved** as a correct record. | |
| BG\_2024\_03\_26\_03 | MATTERS ARISING/ACTION TRACKER |  |
| 3.1 | The Board **noted** the action tracker, including an update on the Online Project; a confidential minute was recorded. | |
| BG\_2024\_03\_26\_04 | OTHER URGENT BUSINESS |  |
| 4.1 | Members noted that this was the Chair and University Secretary’s last meeting and thanked them for their valued contribution to the work of the Board and the University generally. Board members also recognised the former Board Secretary’s excellent support and expressed their best wishes for her retirement. | |
| BG\_2024\_03\_26\_05 | VICE-CHANCELLOR’S REPORT | BG\_2024\_03\_26\_P05 |
| 5.1 | The Vice-Chancellor thanked her Executive colleagues for their efforts in leading the various change programmes taking place across the University and presented the highlights of the report, including:   * a summary of the Vice-Chancellor’s first three months in post; * progress with the thematic leadership review, noting that the PVC portfolio review was complete, and that further information would be shared with Governors in due course; further work was currently paused to prioritise other change programmes; * the [Office for Students (OfS) consultation](https://www.officeforstudents.org.uk/consultations-on-free-speech/consultation-on-proposed-regulatory-advice-and-other-matters-relating-to-freedom-of-speech/executive-summary/) on its draft Freedom of Speech guidance to help universities, colleges and students’ unions navigate the new free speech duties anticipated from 1 August 2024, together with the new free speech complaints scheme and amendments to the regulatory framework to reflect the OfS’s new duties in this area; * the review of the graduate visa route by the Migration Advisory Committee to assess whether the route was fit for purpose which was expected to report by 14 May 2024. Research by Universities UK (UUK) showed a 40% decline in international postgraduate taught student enrolments in January 2024 demonstrating the challenging context of international student recruitment and the impact of the government’s immigration regime; * the South Yorkshire devolution deal which would extend regional powers in adult skills provision, local transport funding, net zero funding delivery and affordable home programmes from 2026. It was suggested that this would be an appropriate pre-dinner topic for the Board; * work by Hallam Help which continued to receive a high number of enquiries; over 18,000 enquiries were dealt with in February within the agreed two-day service level agreement, representing an increase of 8% on last year. The Chair commented that it was reassuring to see these related mainly to course queries, rather than the cost-of-living crisis and other external factors; * a continued increase in research income, noting the strong pipeline with an increase in the number of bids submitted and almost double the research value compared with last year; and * the recent Bristol High Court ruling which found that the University of Bristol had contributed to the death of a student suffering from severe social anxiety and depression, having breached its duty to make reasonable adjustments under the disability provisions of the Equality Act 2010. Members noted Sheffield Hallam’s response to this case including a Disability Action Plan with clearly defined actions currently in progress, noting that the work also supported the University’s access and participation commitments and suicide prevention work. In response to members’ concerns about the level of resource and training required to mitigate risks in this area, the Vice-Chancellor acknowledged the challenges in the current financial context and competing change priorities. | |
| BG\_2024\_03\_26\_06 | **STRATEGIC OVERVIEW AND DELIVERY** |  |
|  | **Strategic Programmes and 2024/25 Financial Update** | BG\_2024\_03\_26\_P06.1 |
| 6.1 | The CFO updated the Board on the University’s challenging financial position, noting the aim of the Medium-Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) to achieve financial sustainability, with a minimum investment level per annum and secure sufficient headroom against banking covenants. It was noted that the University was entering this period of financial challenge with a history of relatively low cash generation and a level of debt required to accelerate capital investment. The current income and expenditure assumptions provided for minimum viable set of financials for the next three years but significant savings/additional income across the University in 2024/25 were required. | |
| 6.2 | A confidential minute was recorded. | |
| 6.3 | The Board was asked to consider its appetite on the approach the University was taking to mitigate the current financial challenge, particularly in relation to workforce proposals, pending the summer pay settlement. | |
| 6.4 | The DVCA reported that the Voluntary Severance Scheme (VSS) had made a significant contribution to the academic savings required and that, as the implementation of the College change programme progressed, further savings were anticipated; a confidential minute was recorded. | |
| 6.5 | Members were briefed on research initiatives, noting that it was imperative to retain the benefits of research with a commitment to quality:   * plans to reduce the scope and slow down the Transforming Lives Fellowship Scheme; * a planned review of Research Institutes with the aim of reducing costs, combined with an expectation that Research Centres would achieve at least a break-even position. In response to a member’s query on the savings potential of the smaller research groups, the PVCR&I confirmed the aspiration for areas to make a contribution to teaching and generate a surplus; * the development of clear and stretching performance expectations for Professors and Associate Professors to inform Performance and Development Reviews (PDRs) and objectives.   Members questioned at what point it was more effective to cease certain activity as opposed to implementing a blanket cost reduction across all academic areas. The DVCA advised that blanket cost reduction had not been implemented, with reductions varying according to the costs of specific areas. A confidential minute was recorded. | |
| 6.6 | Members were briefed by the DVCSO on the actions (and associated risks) to address the pay and non-pay savings requirement across Professional Services (PS) including vacancy management, non-replacement of posts. A confidential minute was recorded. Non-pay savings included the acceleration of system-led developments to increase efficiencies. A confidential minute was recorded. | |
| 6.7 | In response to a member’s question regarding the risk of reduced service levels affecting the student experience, the DVCSO confirmed that, whilst some impact would be experienced across the University, the University was seeking to protect core services and the student experience as a priority. Work was being undertaken on the combined effect of academic and PS workforce changes and any potential unforeseen consequences.  The Vice-Chancellor reaffirmed the ‘one University approach’ and the aim to develop a pragmatic set of actions to secure a positive student experience,  The representatives from the Students’ Union (SU) highlighted that many students needed part-time work to fund their studies and that work experience through casual work opportunities was key to supporting the aim of a highly employable Hallam graduate. Members echoed the valuable support from student engagement at events such as Open Days.  The Board recognised the need for a ‘capital light’ future with priority projects being delivered effectively and the importance of securing alternative funding streams. | |
| 6.8 | The DVCSO outlined plans for diversification to grow income, particularly in the areas of Higher Degree Apprenticeships (HDAs) and CPD which could positively impact on the University’s finances in the short term, a confidential minute was recorded.  Members were briefed on a range of University-wide actions for consideration. A confidential minute was recorded. | |
| 6.9 | Board members confirmed their support for the approach and noted the good progress made so far. Comments were raised as follows:   * a lack of appetite for moving away from national pay bargaining framework; * a confidential minute was recorded. * the potential to increase Development and Alumni Relations Office (DARO) activity; * a confidential minute was recorded. * the appropriateness of applying changes to the workforce as a whole rather than by segments, with flexible options for staff at different stages of their career and the need to explore options in the context of the total remuneration package; * clarity on the various options including detailed costings and how they would apply to staff, a confidential minute was recorded; and * acknowledgement that choices were framed around a suite of changes versus a significant headcount reduction.   The Vice-Chancellor noted that positive Leadership and culture would be required to deliver the changes to create a forward-looking and sustainable University. | |
|  | **Campus Plan** | BG\_2024\_03\_26\_P06.2 |
| 6.10 | The DVCSO presented the proposed revised approach to align the Campus Plan with the MTFS, as recommended by the Finance and Employment Committee (FEC), particularly:   * developments which the University was committed to delivering over the next two years, including: * a focus on completing the current phase of the Howard Street development which would be transformational for the campus and the student experience; * works (on a reduced budget) to consolidate occupancy at Collegiate over 2024/25 and 2025/26 to improve the accommodation for Health, Wellbeing and Life Sciences (HWLS). A confidential minute was recorded. * plans to move the Employability Service to Level 2 of the Owen building in summer 2024 to enable the Students’ Union relocation to the Careers Connect building around November 2024; * the deferral of major refurbishment works to Stoddart and the Owen façade. A confidential minute was recorded; and * retention of the Surrey and Howard Buildings for the medium to long term. | |
| 6.11 | The Board discussed the shortage of large group teaching space and were informed that, whilst one of the Colleges had already adopted an element of online synchronous teaching to resolve this, the PVCLTSS was working with the other two Deans on the potential for alternative solutions.  In response to a Board member’s query on the impact of delayed Estates projects on future recruitment, it was reported that the Howard Street development should drive marginal gain and lift overall perceptions of the quality of the Campus. A confidential minute was recorded. | |
| 6.12 | **Resolved:** to **approve** the approach to revising the Campus Plan, noting that a full capital and revenue affordability analysis would accompany the final Plan when presented for approval.  **Action: CFO** | |
| 6.13 | The Board received an update on progress with the Howard Street Development; Block B/C would be available for the Institute of Technology and general teaching from the start of Semester One. Blocks A and D would not be available for the start of the 2024/25 academic year, due to the exceptionally bad winter. Undergraduate (UG) teaching in these blocks would therefore commence in Semester Two. This meant that the Departments of Law & Criminology (DLC) and Psychology, Sociology & Politics (PSP) would remain at Collegiate for most of Semester One so as not to disrupt students part way through the term. In response to a query on communications with affected students, members were assured that students had been informed and that the impact was very much being thought through. | |
|  | **University Performance Report (UPR)** | BG\_2024\_03\_26\_P06.3 |
| 6.14 | The Head of Strategic Insight and Data presented the headlines from the Quarter 2 UPR, including:   * the shortfall against the January international student recruitment target, which reflected the national position; * the impact of the above and the September UG recruitment performance on the metrics; * positive research income performance, particularly in HWLS; * an upturn in the in-year data on student satisfaction following positive feedback from the Semester One module evaluation for final year students; and * an increase in academic sickness absence rates in-year to date; whilst the number of staff taking sickness absence was relatively static, there had been an increase in long term sickness.   Members queried whether improvements in sickness reporting could have contributed to the increase; however, it was noted that this should impact less on long term absence and further analysis was required. | |
|  | **London Campus** | BG\_2024\_03\_26\_P06.4 |
| 6.15 | The Board considered a proposal in relation to the procurement of design, project management and quantity surveying consultancy for the London Campus, to keep the programme on track to deliver an Autumn 2026 start. The following core elements of the procurement strategy were being recommended by both the Task and Finish Group and FEC, having deliberated in detail the risks involved with the approach.  A confidential minute was recorded. | |
| 6.16 | The Vice-Chancellor reported on a recent site visit to the Brent Cross development and affirmed that the vision aligned with the University’s aspirations as a University of Place, noting that future opportunities for Board visits would be offered. The Chair Designate highlighted that the collaboration between the University, the London Borough of Barnet and Related Argent was a credit to the Executive team. | |
| 6.17 | **Resolved:** to **approve** the procurement strategy as outlined above. | |
| BG\_2024\_03\_26\_07 | **UNIVERSITY ACTIVITIES** | |
| 7.1 | **Equity, Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EEDI) Framework** | BG\_2024\_03\_26\_P07.1 |
|  | **EEDI Framework:** the Senior Business Partners for EEDI presented the draft Framework which set the direction and priorities for EEDI work around the University’s vision, aims and equality objectives. Highlights included:   * the continued aspiration for a culture of inclusion; * a refreshed set of equality objectives; * the extensive consultation across the University in developing the Framework, particularly with the SU; and * next steps to align the Framework with the new Access and Participation Plan, and to develop delivery plans and associated KPIs by May 2024.   The Senior Business Partners for EEDI invited Board feedback on both the Framework and the Report, in response to which it was suggested that the Framework could be more directly aligned with the Sheffield City Goals. | |
| 7.2 | **EEDI Report 2022/23** | BG\_2024\_03\_26\_P07.2 |
|  | The Board noted the key elements of the report and achievements against all five Equality Objectives including:   * the creation of a new EEDI team to provide operational and strategic oversight of staff and student EEDI; * a range of Students’ Union successes; and * inclusive Curriculum Principles embedded through portfolio redevelopment,   In response to a Governor’s question on Report and Support processes, it was reported that, whilst this was not managed by the EEDI Team, it did receive the annual report on Report and Support activity. Members were invited to view the [Report and Support website](https://reportandsupport.shu.ac.uk/) which contained a lot of helpful information. | |
| 7.3 | **Resolved:** to **approve:**   * the University’s new EEDI Framework 2024-27, subject to the further updates outlined above; and * the 2022/23 EEDI report for publication. | |
| BG\_2024\_03\_26\_08 | **INSURANCE PROCUREMENT STRATEGY** | BG\_2024\_03\_26\_P08 |
| 8.1 | The CFO outlined a proposed change in the approach to procuring renewal terms via a broker-led tender as the most competitive and cost-effective way. In response to a member’s query, it was reported that the broker had been procured through an open procurement process. | |
| 8.2 | **Resolved:** to **approve** FEC’s recommendation:   1. To **approve** a broker-led tender; and 2. to **delegate** authority to the CFO to award insurance contracts within the scope of this report up to a maximum of 5 years and a value of £7.5m. | |
| BG\_2024\_03\_26\_9 | **UNIVERSITY SECRETARY’S REPORT (USR)** | BG\_2024\_03\_26\_P09 |
| 9.1 | Members noted the appointments in connection with the transition from Chair Designate to Chair of the Board on 4 April 2024, including ex-officio appointment to Board Officers and the Governance and Nominations Committee (GNC). The Board resolved to **approve** that the Chair Designate be appointed to the Academic Assurance, Finance and Employment and Remuneration Committees. | |
| 9.2 | It was reported that GNC had resolved to recruit one Independent Board Member with academic experience at its March meeting but would consider other external vacancies and proposals for the recruitment of academic staff members to the Board at its next meeting. | |
| 9.3 | A confidential minute was recorded. | |
| 9.4 | Other matters were noted as follows:   * University Secretary interim arrangements from 1 April 2024; * progress with the 2024/25 meeting schedule which would be issued shortly; * OfS updates; * confirmation from the OfS of a satisfactory 2022-23 Prevent accountability and data return; and * the government’s new definition of extremism which would not apply initially to universities; the University would continue to monitor developments in this area. | |
| BG\_2024\_03\_26\_10 | **BOARD EFFECTIVENESS REVIEW** | BG\_2024\_03\_26\_P10 |
| 10.1 | The Chair highlighted the importance of engaging with effectiveness reviews as an opportunity for the Board to enhance governance arrangements in support of developing University Strategy and priorities.  Members considered the proposal for the supplier to be selected by a small panel chaired by the Deputy Chair of the Board and comprising an independent member of the Board and the University Secretary.  The Board was briefed on initial areas for review and members were invited to provide further suggestions (to be fed through to the University Secretary/Deputy Chair of the Board), together with any suggestions on potential suppliers, noting that a more detailed proposal would be presented to the Board at its July meeting.  **Action: University Secretary** | |
| BG\_2024\_03\_26\_11 | **CHAIRS’ REPORTS** |  |
| 11.1 | The Chairs’ reports from the following meetings were noted:  1) Board Officers Group 16 January 2024; and  2) Remuneration Committee 31 January 2024. | BG\_2024\_03\_26\_P11.1  BG\_2024\_03\_26\_P11.2 |
| BG\_2024\_03\_26\_12 | COMMITTEE MINUTE |  |
| 12.1 | The Board received the following unconfirmed minutes:  1) Audit and Risk Committee 16 November 2023;  2) Remuneration Committee 31 January 2024; and  3) Health, Safety and Wellbeing Committee 19 October 2023. | BG\_2024\_03\_26\_P12.1  BG\_2024\_03\_26\_P12.2  BG\_2024\_03\_26\_P12.3 |
| BG\_2024\_03\_26\_13 | CORPORATION SEAL | BG\_2024\_03\_26\_P13 |
| 13.1 | The Board noted the report. | |
| BG\_2024\_03\_26\_14 | ANNUAL BUSINESS CYCLE 2023/24 | BG\_2024\_03\_26\_P14 |
| 14.1 | The Board noted the forward cycle of business, acknowledging the Chair’s request for pre-dinner topic suggestions. It was noted that the Academic Board would be receiving a presentation on AI in April, following which the Board would consider the appropriateness of the topic as a briefing/pre-dinner presentation.  It was also noted that the report from the recent Ofsted inspection was expected in approximately four weeks’ time and would be shared with the Board.  The next meeting of the Board would be held on **Tuesday 21 May 2024** at City Campus.  The Vice-Chancellor updated the Board on the DVCSO’s revised working pattern and the appointment of an Interim Chief Operating Officer (COO)who would be in attendance at the next Board meeting. | |