

THE COUNCIL



Minutes of the meeting held on 28 January 2019

- Present: The Chair of the Council (Mr J. Greenwell), the Vice-Chancellor (Professor D. Richardson), the Pro Vice-Chancellor (Professor F. Lettice), the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Professor N. Ward), Independent Members (Mr S. Blease, Mr J. Clayton, Mr M. Davies, Mr G Jones, Miss G. Maclean, Dr K Skoyles and Dr W. Thomson), Members appointed by the Senate (Dr L Bohn), Member appointed by the Support Staff (Mrs D. Mailey) and the Student Representatives (Ms S. Atherton and Mr O. Gray)
- With: The Chief Resource Officer and University Secretary (Mr I. Callaghan), the Chief Operating Officer (Ms J. Baxter), the Director of Finance, (Mr J. Brown), the Assistant Registrar (Ms L. Williams), the Head of Corporate Communications (Mr A. Stronach) and the Assistant Head of Corporate Communications (Mrs S. Lawson).
- In attendance: The Pro-Vice-Chancellors of Faculty (Professor S. Barrow, Professor F. Bowen, Professor D. Edwards and Professor P Gilmartin)
- Apologies: The Treasurer (Mr M. Williams), Senate member (Professor N Boodhoo) and Independent Member (Ms L. McGillivray),

37. MINUTES

Confirmed

the minutes of the Council meeting held on 27 November 2018.

(Noted that on Minute 30 regarding the Prevent duty, the Chief Resource Officer would provide an update on Safeguarding matters at UEA at a forthcoming meeting. On Minute 31 regarding the Risk Register, Brexit was being added as a risk in its own right rather than subsumed within "political turbulence". On Minute 32, the report from Governance Committee it was noted that Karen Jones had accepted the renewal of her appointment as Chancellor for a further period of 3 years. Also noted that Dr Wendy Thomson would remain a member of UEA Council until taking up her position at the University of London in the summer.)

38. STATEMENTS BY THE CHAIR

The Chair of Council congratulated Dr Thomson on her new appointment as Vice-Chancellor of the University of London and on behalf of the Council thanked her for her valued contribution to the work of Council.

The Chair congratulated Professor Phil Gilmartin upon his appointment as PVC International at the University of Hull from 1 April 2019. He thanked Prof Gilmartin for all his much valued contributions as PVC Science and particularly noted the turn-around in admissions during his tenure.

The Chair reported that he had been approached to join the CUC group working on USS Pension matters and which would be inputting into the USS Pension Consultation.

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39. STATEMENTS BY THE VICE-CHANCELLOR

The VC outlined that there were no substantive items to report this meeting following the meeting in November but the usual written report would be prepared for the next meeting. The VC outlined the continuing uncertainties for HE in the light of the political situation but he reassured Council that UEA was in a strong and resilient position. The financial plan had been stress tested by KPMG and Finance Committee and there was full commitment to delivering the plan and meeting the recruitment targets underpinning it. He reminded Council that with every challenge comes an opportunity and he believed that UEA was well positioned to take advantage of market opportunities.

40. DECLARATIONS OF CONFLICTS OF INTEREST (IF ANY)

The Chair reported that he had been invited to join a committee of King's College, London which he would discuss further with the VC and PVC-RI.

41. MEETINGS SINCE THE LAST COUNCIL MEETING

- Learning and Teaching Committee (28 November 2018)
- Learning and Teaching Committee (23 January 2019)
- Audit Committee (25 January 2019)

Noted that LTC was working on TEF Subject pilot submissions and the grade inflation agenda.

Noted that Audit Committee had received a presentation from Dir IT Mark Barry who was surfacing important issues and prioritising the technology workload going forward. This area would be revisited at the May meeting.

Jeremy Clayton reported that he had visited the Widening Participation group at the invitation of PVC ACAD and was very impressed by the quality of discussion and the work being undertaken on social inclusion. He reported that it was important to reflect UEA's work in this area in the new UEA Plan and hoped that there would be further research into the challenges faced by these under-represented groups. **ACTION: PVC ACAD/COO**

*42. UNIVERSITIES SUPERANNUATION SCHEME: CONSULTATION

Considered

a report from the Chief Resource Officer in respect of the current consultation on the April 2018 valuation for the Universities Superannuation Scheme. (A copy is filed in the Minute Book, ref. COU18D022)

Members noted the contents of the CRO's report and presentation and in particular the risk of further industrial action and attendant reputational risk. Noted that UUK were still awaiting additional actuarial advice from AON. **ACTION: CRO to circulate AON advice and UUK recommendations to Council members for information once received.**

Noted that the alternative option of a lower rate of regular contribution in return for agreeing to a contingent contribution mechanism which would be based on annual scheme valuations in a format to be agreed might be an option. There would remain a risk that payments are due in the future and the University may wish to consider

making provision should these be required. The negative pledge option was not seen as attractive for UEA.

CRO reported anecdotal evidence that lower paid staff are withdrawing from the current scheme as the level of employee contributions grows, which was obviously a concern. Support staff representative Daisy Mailey also voiced concerns about the impact on lower paid staff of having to withdraw from the current scheme due to cost and ask that this be monitored. Also she highlighted concerns about the cost of contributions for staff during the unpaid periods of maternity and paternity leave. Noted that this was potentially discriminatory and it was agreed that this should be looked into further. **ACTION: CRO**

In terms of the KPMG offer to stress test the various proposals for UEA at a fee of £24,500 plus VAT, Council supported the CRO's recommendation that this offer not be taken up at this time. Instead the USS and UUK further information would be awaited and considered and draft response to the consultation would be considered by Finance Committee in February. Agreed that Finance Committee should be given delegated authority to deal with this matter on behalf of Council and that Graham Jones should join Finance Committee for this item. **ACTION: CRO**

Graham Jones once again indicated his concerns about the USS attitude to hedging liabilities. He outlined that the important factors were not just contributions but the long term performance of the scheme. It was noted that the statement of investment principles did not say what USS would invest in, other than the high-level benchmarking on gilts.

VC outlined that Wesley Finance Directors would be discussing their responses and feeding back in due course. Also a People Working Group co-chaired by PVC HUM and CRO was about to be launched which would look into issues relating to pay, pensions and gender pay gap.

*43. LAND TRANSACTIONS

Considered

a confidential report from the Chief Resource Officer in respect of land transactions. (A copy is filed in the Minute Book, ref. COU18D023)

44. KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

Received

a confidential report providing an update to the University KPIs. (A copy is filed in the Minute Book, ref. COU18D024)

(Members indicated that the new format was now broadly acceptable and thanked those involved in pulling together all the information. Noted that in future an additional column would be added showing when a metric was expected to change, since in some cases there were only annual or even less frequent changes. Noted that ET should have ownership of this document and that the next UEA Plan would incorporate KPIs. Council would have an opportunity to review the new Plan and contribute towards its development in due course. Student member Sophie Atherton suggested that inclusive education and diversifying the curriculum be given prominence in the new Plan. **ACTION: COO/CRO**)

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*45. ADMISSIONS 2019/2020 AND FUTURE YEARS

Received

a presentation from the Director of Admissions, Recruitment and Marketing in respect of the current admissions environment and specifically for 2019/20 entry. (A copy of the presentation has been uploaded to the Council Blackboard site).

46. BREXIT

Received

an oral update from the Vice-Chancellor on the latest anticipated impacts arising out of Brexit preparations.

(Noted that preparations for no-deal were underway and the situation was being monitored closely. UUK were providing advice to universities. Heads of schools and Services had been asked to provide details to CRO of areas of particular concern in terms of provision of supplies and services. Mills and Reeve had provided briefing sessions for staff and students.)

*47. NATIONAL CONTEXT – AUGAR REVIEW

Considered

a confidential report from the Chief Resource Officer in respect of potential outcomes from the Augar Review. (A copy is filed in the Minute Book, ref. COU18D025)

(The headlines in respect of risks and potential impact upon UEA was noted in terms of the unit of resource and also the FE/HE context. Members shared insights and intelligence from their perspectives. Council would receive further updates once the report was published (end of February or later).)

48. INTERNATIONAL, NATIONAL AND REGIONAL CONTEXT

Considered

an oral report in respect of developments and opportunities

(Some aspects of this minute are confidential and appear in the relevant section.

Council were also informed about the Aurora Macron initiative (EU funding for networks of European universities undertaking real work together). Noted that PVC SSF was leading on bid process and that the VC is currently President of the Aurora network of universities.

PVC RI outlined that KEF was now underway, using HEBCIS metrics. The IOP bid for £14.3m had been submitted to the LEP on 11 Jan. (£12.3m for the building and £2m for equipment). This would be considered by the LEP Board at the end of March. It was a highly competitive round. Other funding avenues were being explored in the event that only partial funding was secured.

Plans for the Institute for Sustainable Development were outlined.

NRP and new governance arrangements for the Earlham Institute were reported on. A new Heads of Terms agreement was being drawn up.

PVC FMH reported on the new links with NNUH including an exploration of sharing space to enhance the partnership. It was hoped that further alignment including physical proximity would be a win-win for both organisations. CEO Mark Davies indicated that space pressures at the hospital underlined the importance both practically and symbolically of sharing space. He also reported on 2021 being the 250th anniversary of the hospital and 20th anniversary of the MED school and plans were being developed for joint celebrations.

VC reported on his forthcoming trip to Australia where he was a keynote speaker at Deakin university at their conference on sexual harassment and violence against women. The VC was also visiting a number of other campuses with a view to exploring innovative approaches to campus design; and attending an alumni event with donor prospects.

PVC HUM reported on the development of Medical Humanities course at UEA and also noted that the Oscar-nominated writer of The Favourite was a UEA HUM alumnus.)

49. DATES OF MEETINGS

Reported

(1) that the date of the next Council meeting was Monday 11 March 2019 - 9.30am.

(2) that the dates of future Council meetings were:

Monday 13 May 2019 – 9.30am **This is a Strategy Day and will finish at 5.45pm.**

Monday 24 June 2019 – 9.30am
