

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE RESOURCES COMMITTEE HELD ON THURSDAY 15 SEPTEMBER 2022 IN ROOM C1.05, 115 NEW CAVENDISH STREET AND VIA MICROSOFT TEAMS

PRESENT:	M X Wang (Chair) J Bairamian Dr P Bonfield C Morgan	T Sketchley P Wales S Wylie (Deputy Chair)
IN ATTENDANCE:	K Bojczuk (Minute 21.64) L Cole (Minute 21.62.18 to 21.62.22) C Hinge A Foderaro (to Minute 21.62) M Kirkup (to Minute 21.62)	J Lamarque (Secretary) E McMillan (Clerk to the Court) R Poole I Wilmot
APOLOGIES:	J Cappock (Company Secretary) D Barratt	D Hoyle

22.1 ANNOUNCEMENTS

- 22.1.1 The Chair welcomed members and attendees to the meeting.
- 22.1.2 Members noted apologies for the meeting as recorded above.
- 22.1.3 Members did not declare any conflict of interest for the matters on the agenda.
- 22.1.4 The Chair confirmed there were no requests to raise any items of business not on the agenda.
- 22.1.5 The Chair informed members that Charlotte Wilson had resigned from the Committee due to family and work commitments.

22.2 SAFETY, HEALTH AND WELLBEING UPDATE

- 22.2.1 Russell Poole, Director of Information Systems and Support (ISS) and a member of the Being Safe, Feeling Safe Group, updated members on activities overseen by the Group since the last meeting.
- 22.2.2 The Director of ISS reported that targeted communications will be sent to overseas students regarding vaccinations and how to access them. Members heard that monitoring of carbon dioxide levels continues.
- 22.2.3 Members were informed that data from the Head of Safety, Health and Wellbeing indicated an expected increase in colleague sickness absence, with a potential impact of an increased workload on colleagues. Previous mitigations are no longer acceptable.
- 22.2.4 The Director of ISS reported that the cost-of-living impacts are not known and may result in more or less colleagues on site.
- 22.2.5 New legislations include the Building Safety Act 2022 and the Fire Safety Act 2021 and the impacts of these on the university are being monitored.

22.3 STRATEGIC REPORTS

Enabling Being Westminster

- 22.3.1 The Vice-Chancellor introduced the strategic report and informed members that all plans and activities are oriented to deliver against the strategy.

Our physical environment

- 22.3.2 Chris Hinge, Director of Estates, Planning and Services and Alessandra Foderaro, Deputy Director – Capital Development, reported that a different approach has been taken to achieve cooperation, understanding and contribution to the vision. Members heard that estates workshops led by a UEB member were very successful and gave an opportunity to have an open-minded approach to the key topics. Emerging principles are permeable spaces and owning and belonging to the space.

Our digital environment

- 22.3.3 The Director of ISS reported on improved governance and alignment with Estates, the impacts of remote working and learning on wellbeing, supporting teaching and improving cyber security.
- 22.3.4 Members were informed of the action plan for improving sustainability and procurement, and the review of the managed learning environment.
- 22.3.5 The Director of ISS informed members of future plans which include [REDACTED] on equipment and spaces upgrade, consolidation of systems and a continued programme of improvement. The amount of equipment available to students will be increased.
- 22.3.6 Members heard that there has been an improvement in internal audits and National Student Survey results, and the department had been shortlisted for two national awards.

Our people

- 22.3.7 Malcolm Kirkup, Pro Vice-Chancellor (PVC) for People and Culture (PC) gave an update on the development of the refreshed People Strategy.
- 22.3.8 The PVC (PC) reported that focus groups have taken place across the university to ensure that colleagues focus on the fewest things that matter the most. Teaching, Research and Knowledge Exchange are key areas and the focus on teaching is exceptional performance in the classroom, the quality and consistency of feedback and academic support. The university has a large academic colleague base with a low staff turnover, and it needs to change.
- 22.3.9 Members heard that the Professional Development Review (PDR) has been defined and linked to the university Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) for the first time. PDRs are not centrally logged or adequately monitored, and software is being adapted to do this.
- 22.3.10 The PVC (PC) informed members that a Voluntary Release Scheme was introduced on 1 August 2022, and 90 applications had been received.

Our financial performance

- 22.3.11 Ian Wilmot, Director of Finance, presented the Management Accounts for June 2022 (Document RES 220915C).
- 22.3.12 The Director of Finance reported that the university has a strong balance sheet and will achieve the minimum surplus of 6% and salary costs are maintained at 54-55% in line with the industry norm. The year-end position is subject to the year-end pension adjustment.

Member discussion

- 22.3.13 A member commented that a robust system of assessment and KPIs is critical, with opportunities for people to move on, and would like to hear more about the training programme and how we align the values of colleagues and ways of working to support the strategy.

- 22.3.13.1 **ACTION Secretary** to add an update on the training programme to the schedule of business.

- 22.3.14 In response to a member's query on mitigating the impact of the pension liability, the Director of Finance responded that the focus is on the 6% surplus and there are no plans to leverage the balance sheet.
- 22.3.15 A member queried employer engagement and finding the right opportunities for our graduates. The PVC (PC) responded that every course proposal must have engaged with employers as a starting point. Each School has Employment Advisory Boards that meet three times a year. The university is in discussions with employers to ensure we are meeting their needs. 29 Marylebone Road is focused on increasing opportunities for students to get skills training and the right mindset.
- 22.3.16 A member commented that we are not yet seeing some of the positive changes in some of the harder measures and asked if there is a sense of the level of confidence that these measures are going to make the difference we want to see, and over what time period. The Vice-Chancellor responded that the university is above the threshold on the measures we have to report to the regulator – continuation, completion of the degree and employability. The Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF) submission is due in January, and we know what to do to improve. Teaching, feedback and personal tutoring are the focus and make the most difference.

Update on the Centre for Employability and Enterprise (29 MRD)

- 22.3.17 Linsey Cole, Director of Business Engagement (BE), presented an update on the development of a Centre for Employability and Enterprise at 29 Marylebone Road (29 MR) (Document RES 220915D).
- 22.3.18 Members heard that the project is on budget and on time, and there are no major issues to report.
- 22.3.19 The Director of BE informed members that the basement of the building will be used as a maker space for recent graduates, providing access to specialist equipment while they are developing their work. Local business networks are interested in using the space on the ground floor, and there will be a dedicated floor used by entrepreneurs and freelancers.
- 22.3.20 In response to a member's query on the biggest risks that could affect the target delivery, the Director of BE responded that the focus is on what the building is about and not compromising on the critical things. Activities are not a concern. Colleagues in mentoring, Westminster Working Cultures and student enterprise are working now and the building will be full when it opens.
- 22.3.21 A member commented that the construction industry was currently experiencing problems with the supply chain, selection of contractors and material costs which could pose additional risks to the 29 MRD project and contingency margin.
- 22.3.22 A member queried the risks associated with planning permission, and the Deputy Director – Capital Development responded that three aspects generated comments and there are solutions such as matching materials with the existing or a change of material. Plans for the roof space query require further work, but the team are optimistic.
- 22.3.23 Members requested that all presentations were shared and made available.
- 22.3.23.1 **ACTION Meeting Secretary** to upload presentations to Decision Time and inform members when completed.

22.4 FIVE-YEAR FINANCIAL FORECAST

- 22.4.1 Ian Wilmot, Director of Finance, presented five-year forecast (Document RES 220915E).
- 22.4.2 The Director of Finance reported that the forecast is based on Student Number Planning agreed at the University Planning Committee in April 2022 and includes a modest growth target year on year. As a result of the recent Research Excellence Framework submission, the university has received an extra £2m of research income from 2023/24, which is also matched by extra costs in the spend line.

- 22.4.3 Other operating income has returned to nearly normal except for commercial. Halls of residence are full, with one expected to close in 2023/24 which has been taken into account. Staff costs are challenging in the forecast, allowing for annual and spine point increases.
- 22.4.4 Members heard that there is an efficiency target built in. Once student numbers are known in November the focus will be on managing the cost base. The current year is predicted to be challenging. The Voluntary Release Scheme costs will be absorbed, expecting to feed through into staff cost numbers going forward. Income numbers are in line with those submitted to the Office for Students.
- 22.4.5 In response to a member's query on how we prepare ourselves for a worst-case scenario, the Director of Finance responded that our policy is to allocate capital investment based on the cash generated. If student numbers reduce, we will know quickly if we are going to be challenged and can take necessary action.
- 22.4.6 A member asked if the cash from selling the sports ground at Chiswick was included, and the Director of Finance confirmed that it was not.
- 22.4.7 The Director of Finance confirmed that the carrying value of the property at 29 MRD and the spend are all capitalised.
- 22.4.8 **AGREED** Members agreed the five-year forecast for recommendation to the Court of Governors.

22.5 STRATEGIC SUSTAINABILITY UPDATE

- 22.5.1 Katherine Bojczuk, Head of Sustainability, presented an update on strategic sustainability.
- 22.5.2 The Head of Sustainability reported on the following:
- The Environmental Strategy is being developed with three specific workstreams, each with their own objectives and targets
 - The carbon piece has grown, pushed by the UK government setting a carbon net-zero of 2050
 - Scope 1 emissions – direct emissions from sources on site, i.e., burning gas
 - Scope 2 emissions – indirect emissions through purchasing electricity
 - Scope 3 emissions – covers everything else and is difficult to measure and put programmes in place to reduce it
 - In 2010 the university set a target of 2020 to reduce carbon emissions by 48%, and we are now looking at setting new targets – net zero for Scope 1 and 2 by 2035, and reduce Scope 3 by 50% by 2035, with net zero for all by 2050, with challenging but realistic targets in line with industry standards
 - Developing a roadmap to net zero with five key areas – Measuring our impacts, Decarbonisation, Focus on energy reduction, Training and communication and Focus on Scope 3

- 22.5.3 Members were very encouraged and supported the approach to Scope 3.

22.6 TERMS OF REFERENCE AND SCHEDULE OF BUSINESS

- 22.6.1 The Governance Support Officer presented the terms of reference and schedule of business for 2022/23 (Document NOM 220915F).
- 22.6.2 Members were informed that the Effectiveness Review Working Group will be considering the balance of responsibilities for all committees. Members did not request any amendments to the terms of reference at this time.
- 22.6.3 **AGREED** Members agreed the terms of reference approved by the Court of Governors in July 2021.
- 22.6.4 **AGREED** Members confirmed that the schedule of business for 2022/23 delivers the responsibilities outlined in the terms of reference.

22.7 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING AND MATTERS ARISING

22.7.1 **AGREED** Members confirmed the minutes of the meeting held on 23 June 2022 (Document RES 220915G) are an accurate record.

22.7.2 Members noted an update on actions and matters arising from previous meetings (Document RES 220915H).

22.8 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

22.8.1 Members did not report any other items of business.

22.9 DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS

Thursday 8 November 2022 at 5.30pm*

*Thursday 9 January 2023 at 4.00pm***

Thursday 16 February 2023 at 4.00pm

Thursday 27 April 2023 at 4.00pm

Thursday 22 June 2023 at 4.00pm

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

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