



Bangor University

COUNCIL MINUTES

At a meeting of the Council held in the University on Friday, 23~~2021~~ 2021.

Present:

Mrs Marian Wyn Jones (Chair), Professor Iwan Davies, Dr Myfanwy Davies, Mr Atul Devani, Mr Iwan Evans, Mr Eric Hepburn, Dr Griff Jones, Dr Llion Jones, Mr Kailesh Kasiwala, Lambert, Mrs Alison Lewis, Dr Ian Rees, Professor Gareth Roberts, Professor Oliver Turnbull, Dr Lynne Williams, Mr Tudur Williams and Mrs Gwenan Hine (Secretary).

In attendance:

Professor Nicky Callow, Mr Rob Eastwood, Mrs Tracy Hibbert, Dr Kevin Mundy, Professor Paul Spencer, Mrs Lorraine Westwood and Mr Lars Wiegand.

In addition Professor Jean White attended as an observer, and Ms Jeannette Strachan, SUMS Consulting attended for item 2095.

20.91 WELCOME

Mr James Avison, Students' Union President and Mr Mabon Dafydd, UMCB President were welcomed to their first meeting as members of the Council. Professor Jean White was welcomed as an observer, and it was noted that Professor White would be joining the Council as an Independent Member in the autumn.

20.92 CONGRATULATIONS

A. On the award of Personal Chair:

Professor Rebecca Crane, School of Psychology

B. On behalf of the Council the Chair warmly congratulated Professor Crane.

20.93 DEATHS

The Chair referred to the recent deaths of:

Mrs Lorraine Day

Following questioning it was confirmed that SUMS Consulting would be continuing to work with the University in this area, and that work was ongoing in particular to ensure that international students are able to access the resources available to students around health and wellbeing.

- B. The Chair, on behalf of the Council, thanked Mr Strachan, Professor Callow and Mrs Hibbert for their informative presentation and updates and the positive results from the report were welcomed by the Council. It was noted that the People & Culture Committee would be updated on these matters going forward, on behalf of the Council.

20.96 MINUTES

- A. The Minutes of the meeting held on 30 April 2021 were confirmed.
- B. An action log was provided noting progress on all outstanding Council actions. Council noted the progress reports and completed actions.
- C. In relation to Minute 20.77 [USS] the Interim Director of Finance reported that following the submission of the response to the UUK consultation, UUK had issued a further short consultation. The two areas for consultation were that:
- The requirement for pari passu security would be triggered where new secured borrowing was greater than 10% of net assets; and
 - The Moratorium on exits would be immediate with a rolling 20 year moratorium

The matter had been discussed at the Executive and a decision had been made consistent with the University's previous response, the University would reject the counter proposal from the USS Trustee. It was noted that as the University had previously rejected pari passu security that it followed that it would reject further strengthening of this under the counter proposal.

20.97 VICECHANCELLOR'S BUSINESS

Report from the Executive

The Vice-Chancellor presented the report from the Executive Committee and updated members on higher education matters at a Wales and UK level. In particular the following updates were noted:

- A. Welsh Government Legislative Programme

Council members' attention was drawn to the inclusion of the commitment to establish a Medical School in North Wales as part of the recently published Welsh Government legislative programme. It was noted that a further update in relation to this matter was expected in the early autumn. The commitment was welcomed by

Council members as significant not only to the University but to the North Wales region

B. HEIW

The Council noted that the Executive had recently considered analysis of the outcome of the Health Professional Education and Training Services tender, along with growth opportunities. The Vice-Chancellor reported that the University was successful in 9 out of the 18 bids, including winning new areas of provision which are aligned with the vision for the future of the University, and advances its scope beyond North Wales including the award of the Wales Distance Learning programme for nursing and a Dispersed Learning programme for nursing which will be situated in Powys. It was noted that the outcome reflected the growing attention to (and acknowledgement of the benefits of) flexible and remote methods of learning across the health and care domains and aligned with both an expanded offer for students operating from the Wrexham campus and for the Medical School. In addition, it was noted that there were a number of growth opportunities for the University extending into the expansion of non-commissioned provision (e.g. around the prevention agenda). Work was also continuing on preparing for the Phase 2 commissioning round, and mapping the University's research strengths into teaching areas, as the University positioned itself as the University of choice in North Wales to study health, dentistry and medicine.

C. RWIF Funding

The Council were informed that HEFCW had announced in April 2020 the reintroduction of support for innovation and engagement activities in Welsh universities. The Executive had subsequently approved the University's RWIF strategy at its meeting on 23rd June 2020 which included plans to appoint to some key new roles supporting research activities and research governance

through voluntary means have been exhausted. In the light of this, and the improving recruitment position for September 2021, the Executive has agreed to remove the threat of compulsory redundancy from the small number of remaining staff. In agreement with the trade unions, further consultation meetings were held with staff who remained unplaced to inform them that they would either stay in their existing role or to identify alternative posts or changed job descriptions. For the majority of staff affected, their existing job description and contractual position would remain unchanged. A joint statement from the university and the trade unions in this regard was communicated to staff on 24 June.

- B. The Chair welcomed the final update on this matter and thanked both members of the Executive and Trade Union representatives for their work over the last few months to bring the University to the position of no compulsory redundancies.

20.100 FINANCIAL FORECASTS

- A. Mr Eastwood advised the Council that the University was required to submit a financial forecast running up to July 2025 to HEFCW by the end of 2021. The approach adopted by the University in compiling the forecast recognised that detailed work would be undertaken during the planning round, which would be completed later this year. It was noted that the Forecast facilitated the University's understanding of the likely funds available for investment over the coming years, and that this position would support the analysis and prioritisation of investment opportunities. Whilst recognising the risks remaining, the Forecast indicated a shift in approach for the University that it would be in a position to consider the higher level of investment that would be required to support its strategic objectives. The forecast included investment in the estate, IT and staff costs whilst maintaining cash balances in excess of £20 million at every year end. It was noted that this position had benefited from the actions taken in the restructuring exercise and improved income generation. Mr Eastwood reported that further improvement in cash generation remained an objective which would be considered during the planning round. Mr Eastwood informed the Council that the forecast was presented to the Finance and Strategy Committee on 9th July 2021 and that the Committee supported the submission of the Forecast to HEFCW.
- B. Following discussion and further consideration the Council approved the forecast for submission to HEFCW by the deadline date of 21st July 2021.

20.101 KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

- A. The Council noted the paper which outlined the current trends in relation to research funding. In addition Professor Spencer drew members attention to the increase in UK Government funding which was driven by the work of Professor Davey Jones and his team looking at public health monitoring of wastewater during the Covid-19 pandemic. It was noted that the University had £41m of pending grant applications awaiting a decision which was more than double what would normally be expected, and it was possible that the continuation of the Covid-19 pandemic with additional demands on staff time, the demands of the Research Excellence Framework causing delays in

reviewing grants, and also the ability of funds to get calls and awards had all contributed to this position. Professor Spencer noted that the University was confident it would recover its grant capture success. Following questioning it was confirmed that engaging with a variety of funding streams, both government and business, was important in this regard going forward.

- B. The Chief Marketing Officer provided the Council with an update on marketing and student recruitment progress. It was noted that Home Undergraduate numbers were looking more buoyant than they had been for some time, and it appeared that the University would go into the Clearing period in a stronger position. However there remained a degree of uncertainty around the position, with the growth in numbers being significantly driven by England domiciled applicants where the University had carried out a marketing drive. However, it was noted that very few of this year's applicants would have had the chance to physically visit the institutions they have applied to which may result in applicants changing their mind during the Clearing process. In addition, it was noted that the Home postgraduate market, and the international markets continued to be uncertain, although it was noted that traditionally these markets were known to pick up better than the Home Undergraduate market.

The Council welcomed the positive news in relation to student recruitment and noted the work which now needed to take

- [1] that the University is required to comply with the Charities Act 2011 in respect of the disposal of land;
- [2] that a Surveyor's report had been obtained, in accordance with Section 119(1)(a) of the Charities Act 2011 and the Charities (Qualified Surveyor's Report) Regulations 1992;

D. Members of Council confirmed that for Ynys Faelog

- [1] that they were reasonably satisfied that the valuer who prepared the report, is a member of the Royal Institute of Chartered Surveyors has the relevant ability and experience to undertake the valuation of the property and area in question; and
- [2] that, in accordance with Section 118 of the Charities Act 2011 there are no connected persons involved in the sale;
- [3] that, in accordance with Section 119(1)(c) of the Charities Act 2011, members were satisfied that the terms on which the disposition is proposed to be made are the best that can reasonably be obtained for the University and in line with the advice provided by the VOA and that the sales can proceed.

E. The Council agreed

- [1] that Ynys Faelog should be disposed of subject to finalisation of the contract; and
- [2] that Trewylan, Menai Bridge should be disposed of and the University should engage with selling agents and Solicitors
- [3] that Glyndwr, Menai Bridge should be disposed of and the University should engage with selling agents and Solicitors;
- [4] that Nantporth Boathouse should be disposed of and the University should engage with selling agents and Solicitors.

20.103 SCHOOL NAMES 2021/22

- A. Professor Turnbull noted that following the recent restructuring, the final names for Colleges and Schools were required to be presented to the Council for approval in line with University statutes XIV and XV. The Council noted that consultation had taken place within Academic Schools and the proposed names had been presented to the Executive by the College Deans following this consultation. At its meeting on 15th June the Executive had agreed to recommend to the Council that the school names were approved.
- B. Following discussion the Council approved the final names for Colleges and Schools.

Dr Griff Jones requested further information relating to the Pontio project which had been discussed at the Council Away Day in October 2020 and referenced in the minutes of the Finance & Strategy Committee. Particular further information was requested on any closure report, and the extent of the work still to be undertaken on the building. The Chair of the Finance & Strategy Committee noted that the report which came to the Finance & Strategy Committee looked at the much wider issue of the governance of capital programmes rather than specifically at Pontio.

Following discussion the Chair requested that the Chief Operating Officer considered the most appropriate way to address Dr Jones' questions and it was confirmed that the Finance & Strategy Committee would be updated as to the final outcome at a future date.

20.107 HEALTH AND SAFETY COMMITTEE

The Report of the meeting of the Health & Safety Committee held on 2 June 2021 (attached as Appendix I to the official copy of the Minutes) was approved. The In Year Report, August 2020–April 2021 was noted. The Chair of the Committee, Professor Gareth Roberts, thanked all members of staff who had worked tirelessly over the year on arrangements relating to the Covid19 pandemic.

20.108 AUDIT & RISK COMMITTEE

A. The Report of the meeting of the Audit & Risk Committee held on

20.110 NOMINATIONS AND GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE

- A. The Report of the meeting of the Nominations and Governance Committee held on the 14 June 2021 (attached as Appendix to the official copy of the Minutes) was approved and the appointments to Committees and External Bodies noted
- B. The Council considered and ratified the new and amended Ordinances presented to the Committee.

20.111 JOINT ENGAGEMENT FORUM

The Report of the first meeting of the Joint Engagement Forum held July 2021 (attached as Appendix VIII to the official copy of the Minutes) was approved. The Chair welcomed the establishment of the Forum and noted that the Forum would develop and mature into the new academic year.

20.112 HUMAN RESOURCES REPORT

- A. The Council received a report on Human Resources matters and the update in relation to the National Pay Awards 2022, the future of Collective Pay Bargaining and the Athena Swan Update
- B. A list of recent senior appointments was received for information.
- C. The Council approved the request to award Emeritus status to:
 - Professor Chris Freeman

20.113 CHARITY COMMISSION SUBMISSION

The Council noted the annual return for 2019/20 submitted to the Charity Commission in May 2021, within the deadline set.

20.114 SEALING

The Council ratified the sealing of documents listed in Agendum 15.

20.115 STRATEGY 2030

- A. The Vice-Chancellor presented the final version of the Strategy 2030 document. The importance of the document in the current context within higher education was emphasised especially as universities come out of the effects of the COVID pandemic. The Vice-Chancellor noted that it was an ambitious yet achievable value-led strategy which outlined the University's direction of travel for the next decade, including growing interdisciplinary research activity, increasing student numbers, and transforming the way students learn, underpinned by financial sustainability.

- B. The Chair, on behalf of the Council, extended her thanks to the Vice Chancellor and the Executive team for their leadership and energy over the past year and to the whole staff and student community for their dedication during a year of challenges that could not have been anticipated.