

UNIVERSITY OF LEICESTER

COUNCIL

Minutes of a meeting held on
Wednesday 20 November 2013

Present:

Dr B Towle (Chair)

The Vice-Chancellor	Mr D Moore
Mr P Ash	Mr P Mulvihill
Professor M Barstow	Professor M Peel
Mr G Dixon	Dr M Rawlinson
Mr D Flatt	Dr N Reed
Mr I Johnson	Professor J Scott
Professor J Ketley	Ms V Sharma
Mr P Lawson	Professor M Thompson
Professor M Lester	Ms C Thorogood
Professor D Wynford-Thomas	

In attendance: the Registrar and Secretary, the Director of Finance, the Director of Estates, the Director of the English Language Teaching Unit, and Mr N Cox (Assistant Secretary).

Apologies for absence were received from Judge A Hampton, Mr M Hindle, Dr D Luckett and Mr A Morgan.

13/M53 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

The Vice-Chancellor and Mr Moore declared an interest as Trustees of College Court Conference Centre Limited. Mr Flatt and Dr Reed declared an interest as Trustees of the Students' Union.

13/M54 **ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHING UNIT**

Council received a presentation on the work of the University's English Language Teaching Unit. Council noted the background to the initial establishment of the Unit, the scale and pace of its expansion in the last few years, and its fundamental importance for the University's student recruitment and teaching activities. An urgent need to provide additional space for the Unit from January 2014 was being addressed by the Estates and Infrastructure Strategy Committee.

13/M55 **MEMBERSHIP OF COUNCIL 2013-2014**

Council received details of its membership for the academic year 2013-2014. Newly appointed lay and staff members were warmly welcomed to their first meeting.

Continued/.....

13/M56 RESPONSIBILITY OF MEMBERS AND CORPORATE GOVERNANCE

Council received the following documents concerning the conduct of Council business, the powers of Council and the role of members:

- a. Extracts from Statutes (Section 5) and Ordinances (Section 9), *'Powers of the Council'*
- b. *Council's Statement of Primary Responsibilities*
- c. *Council's Standing Orders*
- d. *The University's Corporate Governance Code of Practice*
- e. *The Register of Members' Interests*

Members were reminded of the need to ensure that any substantive changes to their entries on the Register of Interests were notified promptly to the secretariat.

13/M57 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

Council considered the minutes of the meeting held on 8 July 2013.

Council approved them as a correct record.

13/M58 VICE-CHANCELLOR'S BUSINESS

The Vice-Chancellor informed Council of a number of issues and developments involving the University since the last meeting, including:

- a rise of 35 places, to 161st place, in the QS World University Rankings and THE World University Rankings, consolidating Leicester's position in the top 2% of universities in the world
- the Roger Bettles Sports Centre had won the Large Non-Residential Scheme Award in the 2013 Leicestershire ProCon Awards
- the full judicial review hearing, to review decisions authorising the exhuming and reintering of King Richard III's remains in Leicester, would take place at the High Court on 26 November 2013
- the project to build the new £41 million Centre for Medicine on Lancaster Road started on site on 18 November, accompanied by the launch of a major fundraising campaign
- the Board of the 1994 Group of universities had announced its collective decision to bring the Group to an end. The possible emergence and shape of any replacement organisation was as yet unclear.

13/M59 AUDIT COMMITTEE

Council considered reports of meetings of the Audit Committee held on 26 September and 12 November 2013.

With regard to the report of the meeting held on 26 September 2013:

- a. **Council approved** the Audit Committee's terms of reference for 2013, noting that these now reflected (as did those of other committees of Council and Senate) the 'due regard' provisions of the Equality Act 2010;

Continued/.....

- b. **Council approved** a recommendation from the Audit Committee that, following a competitive tendering and selection process with formal interviews, KPMG be appointed as the University's new internal auditors for an initial period of four years commencing on 1 December 2013.

With regard to the report of the meeting held on 12 November 2013:

- a. **Council noted** that the Audit Committee had considered in detail the *2012-13 Financial Statements* and the external auditors' final report, including management letter points, on the conduct of the 2013 audit. There were no fundamental concerns regarding any audit-related matters and an unqualified opinion would be given.
- b. **Council noted** that the Audit Committee had considered the year-end report of the internal audit service and the head of internal audit opinion for 2012-13, which had provided 'significant assurance' of a generally sound and consistent system of internal control. **Council approved** the report, for submission to HEFCE.
- c. Council considered the Annual Report of the Audit Committee for the financial year 2012-13 and the three-month period leading up to the preparation of the report. **Council noted** the attention paid by the Committee during the year to areas such as risk management reporting, internet security, and the implementation of internal audit recommendations. The Committee's overarching opinion was that the University's system of internal control was generally sound and consistent, and provided a reasonable (though not absolute) assurance against material misstatement or loss. **Council approved** the Annual Report, for submission to HEFCE.
- d. **Council approved** a recommendation from the Audit Committee for the 'annual re-appointment' of the external auditors to conduct the audit of the 2013-14 accounts.

13/M60 **FINANCE COMMITTEE**

Council received reports of meetings of the Finance Committee held on 3 October and 15 November 2013.

With regard to the report of the meeting held on 3 October, **Council approved** the Committee's terms of reference for 2013-14.

With regard to the report of the meeting held on 15 November, **Council noted** that the Finance Committee had reviewed in detail the *2012-13 Financial Statements* and year-end outturn report, and had recommended the *Financial Statements* for approval by Council (minute 13/M61 refers).

Continued/.....

13/M61 UNIVERSITY ACCOUNTS 2012-2013

Council considered in detail the University's financial statements for 2012-13, including a financial overview of the year prepared by the Finance Office and the external auditors' final report, including management letter points.

With regard to the outturn for the year Council noted that the surplus of 2.6% was a positive result against the budgeted surplus of 1.9%, with the net cash inflow from operating activities increasing from £12.2 million in 2011-12 to £19.6 million in 2012-13. Although close to the average for the sector, Council acknowledged that this level of surplus was not sufficient to ensure sustainability in the long term, and emphasised the importance of the wider financial strategy to achieve consistent surpluses of at least 5%.

Council approved the University's financial statements for 2012-13 for submission to HEFCE, and authorised the Chair of Council to sign the external auditors' representation letter.

13/M62 ANNUAL ASSURANCE RETURN 2013

Council received a copy of the University's Annual Assurance return for 2012-13, signed by the Vice-Chancellor as the accountable officer, for submission to HEFCE. HEFCE required this document to be copied to Council and the Audit Committee alongside the financial statements.

13/M63 ANNUAL FINANCIAL SUSTAINABILITY RETURN

Council received a copy of the University's Annual Sustainability Assurance Report (ASSUR) for 2013, which was a new feature of the Annual Assurance Return to HEFCE, due in December. The report gave a figure for the University's 'Margin for Sustainability'. Essentially this was a measure of the level of cash generation required for the University to be sustainable, derived from the actual results in 2011-12 and 2012-13 plus a 3-year forecast from the financial forecasts agreed by Council in July 2013.

Council noted that the ASSUR had been discussed in detail and endorsed by the Finance Committee. **Council approved** the ASSUR for submission to HEFCE.

13/M64 SENATE

Council considered a report of a meeting of Senate held on 13 November 2013.

Council noted that Senate had considered a range of potential actions to protect and grow the University's market share at taught postgraduate level, including a strategy to increase and diversify recruitment of overseas postgraduates.

Council also noted that the *Festival of Careers* held on 5 November had been highly successful, attracting over 2,700 students. An *Employability Summit* planned for 17 December further emphasised the centrality of student employability to the work of the University.

Continued/.....

Council confirmed the 2013-14 terms of reference of the Enterprise Policy Committee, Information and Communications Strategy Committee and Staffing Policy Committee.

13/M65 **ESTATES AND INFRASTRUCTURE STRATEGY COMMITTEE**

Council considered reports of meetings of the Estates and Infrastructure Strategy Committee held on 17 September and 5 November 2013.

Council approved the Committee's terms of reference for 2013-14.

Council noted that the Committee was actively considering options regarding core catering facilities on campus, and an urgent need to provide additional space for the English Language Teaching Unit from January 2014.

13/M66 **SUMMARY OF INSTITUTIONAL PERFORMANCE 2012-2013 (KPIs)**

Council received the fifth, annual, summary assessment of the University's performance across the broad range of its principal activities and interests during the 2012-13 academic year. The assessments had been determined following detailed evaluation and discussion by the senior management team. **Council noted** that the continued uncertainty and unpredictable prospects for the higher education sector in general, coinciding with the depressed state of the wider economic environment, had become increasingly evident in the assessments over the last three years. The University's performance in some areas was now considered to be 'satisfactory' rather than 'good', but it was felt that the position of many other institutions would be similarly challenging at the present time.

Council approved the report, and requested that consideration be given as to whether any of the principal KPIs might be reported to Council more frequently than once a year, if updated data was readily and regularly available to facilitate this.

13/M67 **INTERNAL CONTROL AND RISK MANAGEMENT 2013-14**

Council considered the Vice-Chancellor's internal control report for the autumn term 2013, incorporating the University's corporate strategic risk register.

Council noted that the University's risk management policy had been amended to give more clarity to the factors to be taken into account when considering the removal of a risk from the register. The only risk assessment that had changed since the last report was a move from Medium to High in the protection of information assets from cyber-attack. This was linked to the growing use of smartphones, tablets and similar devices for University business, and **Council noted** that the issue was being addressed by IT Services in conjunction with the Information and Communications Strategy Committee.

Council approved the risk management report.

Continued/.....

13/M68 STUDENTS' UNION SABBATICAL ELECTIONS 2014

In accordance with Ordinance 22(8), **Council approved** the appointment of Professor Mark Thompson, acting in his capacity as the Senior Pro-Vice-Chancellor, to oversee the conduct of the Students' Union sabbatical elections with effect from 1 January 2014.

13/M69 HONORARY DEGREES BOARD

Council considered recommendations of the Honorary Degrees Board, as endorsed by Senate, for the award of a number of Honorary Degrees and a Distinguished Honorary Fellowship, for conferral from 2014.

Council approved the awards.

13/M70 VAN GEEST RESEARCH FUND TRUSTEES

Council considered a recommendation, from the Managing Trustees of the van Geest Foundation Heart and Cardiovascular Diseases Research Fund, for Mr David Moore to be appointed as a new Managing Trustee of the Fund. All such appointments required the approval of the Council, and the proposed appointment was intended to continue the precedent of the University Treasurer serving as a Managing Trustee.

Council approved the appointment, with immediate effect, of Mr David Moore, University Treasurer, as a Managing Trustee of the van Geest Foundation Heart and Cardiovascular Diseases Research Fund.

13/M71 HEALTH AND SAFETY COMMITTEE

Council considered a report of a meeting of the Health and Safety Committee held on 6 November 2013.

Council approved the Committee's terms of reference for 2013-14.

13/M72 ANNUAL REPORT OF THE NOMINATIONS COMMITTEE FOR 2012-13

Council received the annual report of the activities of the Nominations Committee during 2012-13. Council noted that, by longstanding arrangement, the Committee informed Council of its activities by means of specific recommendations when required, and an annual report, rather than by submission of its minutes.

Council noted the annual report.

13/M73 STANDING COMMITTEE OF THE ALUMNI ASSOCIATION

Council received reports of meetings of the Standing Committee of the Alumni Association held on 29 June and 4 October 2013. **Council noted** that the next Alumni Dinner in London would be held at Claridges on Thursday 20th February 2014.

Continued/.....

13/M74 REMUNERATIONS COMMITTEE

Council received details of the decisions of the Remuneration Committee regarding the remuneration of senior staff in 2013-14. **Council noted** details of the various awards determined by the Committee, and the factors that had been taken into account.

13/M75 UNIVERSITY SEAL

Council noted the affixing of the University seal to the documents listed in Appendix 13/M75 attached to the signed copy of these minutes.

13/M76 APPOINTMENT OF THE NEXT VICE-CHANCELLOR

Council received a progress report from Dr Towle, as Chair of the Joint Committee of Council and Senate with responsibility for conducting the process for the recruitment of the University's next Vice-Chancellor.

Council noted that the formal interview stage would commence in late November and was due to be concluded by Christmas. A Special Meeting of Council had been scheduled (provisionally) to be held on 29 January 2014 to approve the recommendation of the Joint Committee, with the aim that the name of the University's next Vice-Chancellor would be announced shortly thereafter.

13/M77 AMENDMENT TO THE TITLE OF 'VICE-CHANCELLOR' AND CHANGES TO THE CHARTER AND STATUTES

Council considered a proposal for the title of 'Vice-Chancellor' to be amended to that of 'President and Vice-Chancellor'. A number of prominent UK universities already used such a title, as it had much greater resonance in key HE markets overseas, where the 'Vice-Chancellor' was widely assumed to be someone other than the organisation's chief executive. In the context of the Vice-Chancellor's ambassadorial role and the wider importance of building the University's international links, **Council agreed** that the facility to use the title of President would be a significant advantage.

Council confirmed its support for the title of 'Vice-Chancellor' to be amended to that of 'President and Vice-Chancellor', **and agreed** to initiate the formal process to make the relevant changes to the Charter and Statutes.

Council accepted that, should the next Vice-Chancellor identify any significant problems with operating under the new title, the intended change probably would not be implemented. Any associated changes to other staff titles would be considered at a later stage.

CHAIR

Duration of meeting: Two hours and 5 minutes