



COUNCIL

Minutes of the Meeting held on 24 March 2020

Present: Sir Keith O’Nions (in the Chair), Simon Amess, Vicky Bailey, Professor Dame Jessica Corner, Lynette Eastman, Dr Rachel L Gomes, Ian Kenyon, Professor Kevin Lee, Sonya Leydecker, Professor Andy Long, Professor Jo Lymn, Sherry Madera, Carolyn Morgan, Trevor Moss, Dr Gabriele Neher, Professor Sarah O’Hara, James Pheasey, Professor Clive Roberts, Nora Senior, David Tilly, Cassie Ulrich, Professor Shearer West

Apologies: Richard Newsome, Dr Hamid Mughal

In attendance: Dr Paul Greatrix, Rowena Hall, Margaret Monckton, Tim Watkinson
For minute M364: Professor Kevin Shakesheff

STANDING ITEMS

3637 Welcome and Quoracy

The meeting was declared quorate.

3638 Declarations of Interest

The Chief Financial Officer declared an interest in item 11 – Digital Nottingham – A Civic Initiative at Crocus Place. There were no further declarations of interest.

3639 Minutes

Council AGREED that the minutes of the meeting held on 4 February 2020 were a true and accurate record of the meeting.

3640 Matters Arising

- .1 **CUC Consultation (M3622)** - A copy of the University’s proposed response to the CUC’s draft Code had been circulated to Council members for comment and had been approved. The University’s positive response to the consultation had been submitted to the CUC.

3641 Chair’s Business

- .1 The Chair reported how impressed he had been by the response of the Vice-Chancellor and her senior leadership team to the immediate challenges presented to the University by the Coronavirus crisis.

3642 Vice-Chancellor's Report

- .1 Council NOTED the Vice-Chancellor's Report (paper C/20/24).
- .2 The Vice-Chancellor thanked Council members for their confidence in and support for the senior leadership team's response to the Coronavirus crisis. It had been a challenging 10 days but both staff and students had reacted quickly and without panic to the changing situation. The changes in operation which had been effected in response to the challenges were both thoughtful and agile. The senior leadership team would continue with its short, medium and long term planning over the coming weeks to ensure the best outcome for the University, its staff and students.

3643 Health and Safety Report

- .1 Council NOTED paper C/20/25.

3644 COVID-19 Response Planning

- .1 Council received a presentation on a number of key areas of the University's planning and response to the COVID-19 outbreak.

Governance

- .2 The University had instigated its incident management process and convened a Gold Group meeting once or twice a day as required and a Silver Group meeting daily to operationalise Gold Group's strategic decisions. An Education and Student Experience Group met daily to plan and execute changes to online teaching and assessment.

Communications

- .3 An online COVID-19 hub had been set up which was a single authoritative resource for University information. Staff and student helplines were in place to provide advice. The University was in the 'crisis' phase of its communications plan, but beginning to transition to its 'continuity' phase.

People

- .4 Many staff had begun working remotely from 18 March and since the 23 March, the University had closed most buildings and was operating with a skeleton staff. Critical campus services were being maintained along with services to support the 500 or so students who remained living on campus. Wellbeing support continued to be available to staff.
- .5 The confirmation of the Government Job Retention Scheme had been welcomed and work was underway to consider how it would be best applied to staff. All non-business critical staff recruitment had been paused.

Teaching and Assessment

- .6 Extraordinary powers had been invoked under the terms of Ordinance XV and used to enable swift and considered changes to the Quality Manual to deliver and extend online assessment and examination where required. From 23 March, all teaching was provided online. Initial feedback had been good.

Student Experience

- .7 Students were being asked to return to their permanent address on 19 March if they were able to do so. A plan was under development to move remaining residents in halls of residence to one location.
- .8 All services apart from the halls of residence and the Cripps health centre were now provided online only.

Student Recruitment

- .9 Plans were underway to engage with prospective students virtually and to explore alternative recruitment routes for international students. Contingency planning for temporary and permanent change to the University's recruitment market was in progress. The recruitment of international students for the next session was likely to be extremely challenging.

Research

- .10 Research was being continued wherever possible online and on-site research was being shut down where it was non-essential. The externally funded research portfolio was being reviewed with requests for extensions, deferred start-dates and contractual amendments where required. Postgraduate student delivery had moved online. Preparations for REF continued as, to date, the census and submission dates had not been changed.

Technology

- .11 Business critical activities had been moved online and home and remote working IT solutions provided to thousands of staff. Online teaching had been facilitated in collaboration with IS and teaching and learning colleagues. Intensive monitoring would be underway to assure the IT infrastructure and key systems.

Facilities

- .12 Most buildings had been closed and the campus was being supported by a skeleton estates and security team. Work was underway with the PVC RKE to ensure that critical and essential research activities remained accessible.

Regulatory

- .13 All regulatory requirements were being considered to ensure compliance including Health and Safety regulations associated with suspension and closure activities. Monitoring was in place to ensure alignment with regulatory changes or requirements specified by the Office for Students. The University had not engaged in the practice of changing the offers made to applicants to unconditional offers. The Department for Education and Office for Students had made their position clear that unconditional offers should not be made.

National Effort

- .14 The PVC RKE was leading the University's response. Activities included the loan of PCR testing machines to support Covid-19 testing, supporting clinical staff to transition to NHS roles, facilitating early graduation for final year medical students and enabling those on other healthcare programmes to volunteer for service and readying the Jubilee Conference Centre for the provision of accommodation to NHS staff.

University of Nottingham, Malaysia

- .15 The government in Malaysia had invoked a very restrictive lockdown overnight. Residents were not allowed to leave their districts which had proved challenging for staff at UNM to ensure support the students and staff who remained on campus. Initially online learning was not permissible but the rule had been relaxed which allowed teaching provision to continue.

Feedback

- .16 The Vice-Chancellor confirmed that thought was already being given to a longer term recovery plan, which would ensure transition back to the 'new' normal and which would seek to maintain the agility that the University had displayed during the immediate challenges it had faced, its use of technology and the environmental benefits resulting from a different way of working.
- .17 Council's concern for the next generation of students who were suffering significant impact from the crisis, was shared by the Vice-Chancellor. Continued engagement with alumni was recommended.
- .18 The experience of UNNC would be utilised as far as possible to support UNM and UNUK through their lockdowns. It was suggested that the University used examples of the cross-campus support to demonstrate the 'One University, Three Campuses' approach at work.
- .19 A Council member suggested that if the lockdown were longer term, staff motivation and morale would start to be become affected and would require further support and attention.
- .20 Council members praised the University for its response to the COVID-19 crisis. They expressed their appreciation for the work undertaken and that which continued to be undertaken by staff and were keen that staff were made aware of their support. Council stressed the importance of the senior leadership maintaining their health and wellbeing at such an intensive time.

Financial Impact - RESERVED

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Finance Plans 2020/21 – RESERVED

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Accommodation Refund - RESERVED

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FINANCE MATTERS

3645 Financial Overview and Forecast

.1 Council NOTED paper C/20/26.

3646 Capital Replacement Programme

.1 Council NOTED paper C/20/27.

.2 The paper contained a business case for a strategically focused mechanical and electrical capital replacement programme required to reduce the increasing failure of key assets. The business case had been scrutinised by Finance Committee at its meeting of 27 February 2020 and it was agreed to make a recommendation of approval to Council.

.3 Council considered the importance of the programme of work and that its implementation should begin as soon as possible when access to buildings had been restored.

.4 Council APPROVED the Capital Replacement Programme and requested regular progress updates.

3647 RESERVED

3648 Project Xenia

.1 Council NOTED paper C/20/29 which set out the proposal for new build student accommodation comprising of 280 self-catered and ensuite bed spaces.

.2 The business case had been scrutinised by Finance Committee at its meeting of 27 February 2020 and at which it was agreed to make a recommendation of approval to Council. However, circumstances had changed significantly and the project was not currently considered a priority.

- .3 Council considered the project to be an important part of Project Stay but, given the uncertainty around student recruitment, was of the view that the project should be paused. The project could be picked up at a later date when the higher education sector had stabilised and its priority could be reassessed as part of the University's proposed investment portfolio.
- .4 The business case was NOT APPROVED for implementation at this time.

3649 RESERVED

SUBSTANTIVE ITEMS

3650 Council Member Self-Appraisal Analysis

- .1 Council NOTED paper C/20/31 which included a summary of responses received as part of the Self-Appraisal process.
- .2 Council AGREED that the Chair and Vice-Chair would work with the Registrar to develop a set of propositions arising from the responses to the Self-Appraisal process; categorised into short, medium and longer term activities. The propositions would be presented to Council for further discussion in June.
- .3 Council AGREED that the self-appraisal process would substitute as an interim Council Effectiveness Review with a full review to begin in 2021/22.

3651 RESERVED

3652 RESERVED

3653 Estates Development Framework

- .1 Council NOTED paper C/20/34. The Estates Development Framework would be submitted to the next meeting for Council for approval.

REPORTS

3654 Finance Committee

Council received and NOTED the report from the meeting of Finance Committee held on 27 February 2020 as set out in paper C/20/35.

3655 Audit and Risk Committee Report

Council NOTED Paper C/20/36

3656 Health and Safety Committee

Council NOTED paper C/20/37 including minutes of the meetings of Health and Safety Committee held on 14 January 2020 and 2 March 2020.

3657 Remuneration Committee

Council NOTED paper C/20/38 including minutes of the meeting of Remuneration Committee held on 3 February 2020.

3658 Senate Report

Council NOTED the report from the meeting of Senate held on 9 March 2020 (paper C/20/39)

3659 Suspension/Discipline Cases

The Registrar reported that since the last meeting one student had been excluded from residential accommodation for possession of drugs and an offensive weapon.

3660 Council Members' Attendance 2019/20

Council NOTED the membership attendance figures for the 2019-20 session to date (paper C/20/40).

3661 Any Other Business

Approach to Regulatory Changes

.1 Council NOTED paper C/20/41 including the proposal for expediting rule and regulatory amendments and the amendments to the listed regulations.

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