



## University Executive Board

### Minutes of the meeting of 6 June 2023

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**Present:** Professor Shearer West (Vice-Chancellor), Dr Paul Greatrix (Registrar), Professor Jeremy Gregory (FPVC Arts), David Hill (CDO), Jaspal Kaur (Director of Human Resources), Professor Sam Kingman (FPVC Engineering), Professor Todd Landman (FPVC Social Sciences), Professor Katherine Linehan (PVC EDI and People), Professor Sarah Metcalfe (Provost UNM), Professor Nick Miles (Provost UNNC), Professor Jane Norman (DVC) via Teams, Professor Robert Mokaya (PVC GE) via Teams, Professor Clive Robert (FPVC MHS), Professor Sarah Speight (PVC ESE) for minutes, Margaret Monckton (CFO), Professor Zoe Wilson (FPVC Science).

**Attending:** Rowena Hall (Secretary), Professor Mark Fromhold (Head of School, Physics and Astronomy), Nalayini Thambar, (Director of Planning, Performance and Strategic Change) for minutes 23.62 to 23.64, Sally Blackamore (Financial Controller) for minutes 23.62 to 23.64, Helen Lawrenson (Director of Financial Management) for minute 23.62 and 23.64, Helen McNamara (Director of Organisational and People Development) for minute 23.65, Kate Pritchard (People Insights Consultant) for minute 23.65, Avril Lane (Organisational Development Manager) for minute 23.65, Professor Mark Bradley (APVC Teaching and Curriculum Leadership) for minute 23.66, Professor Katharine Reid (APVC, ESE, Science) for minute 23.66, Jason Carter (Director of Governance and Assurance) for minute 23.67, Kev Thompson (Associate Director for Risk Management) for minute 23.67, Ruth Eccles (Head of Professional and Work-Based Learning) for minute 23.68, Professor Jonathan Tallant (Chair of QSC) for minute 23.68.

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#### **23.59 Welcome, Apologies, Quoracy and Declarations of Interest**

- .1 The Chair welcomed Professor Mark Fromhold (Head of School, Physics and Astronomy) to the meeting as an observer.
- .2 The Secretary confirmed that the meeting was quorate and there were no declarations of interest.

#### **23.60 Minutes of 11 May 2023 and Action Log**

- .1 The minutes of the meeting held on 11 May 2023 were confirmed as a true record.
- .2 The Registrar provided an update on Action 21.79.3: The Higher Education (Freedom of Speech) Act 2023.
- .3 The remainder of the Action Log was NOTED.

#### **23.61 Chair's business**

- .1 The Vice-Chancellor had circulated an update to UEB members prior to the meeting.

#### **23.62 Latest Revised Forecast (LRF) 3**

- .1 UEB RECEIVED the paper (UEB/23/76) from the Chief Financial Officer which summarised the key movements between LRF2 and LRF3.



- .2 UEB NOTED the following:
  - .1 A £3m HMRC VAT refund would be delayed to the 2023/24 financial year.
  - .2 An estimated £5m difference between forecasted and actual billings of tuition fees for 2022/23 had been identified. It was reported that a difference between the two figures was normal; however, the size of the current discrepancy was unusual. Work was underway to interrogate the figures.
  - .3 A forecasted underspend in the strategic revenue and the non-pay budgets.
  - .4 A forecasted surplus of £10m for the 2022/23 financial year.
- .3 UEB expressed concerned about the significant variance in the forecasted and actual tuition fee figures and was supportive of a review of the student number modelling being carried out by Planning, Performance and Strategic Change to ensure its accuracy.
- .4 UEB welcomed the visibility provided on debtors and was keen that the development of a detailed debt recovery strategy was progressed.
- .5 Further consideration was given to the forecasted underspend in strategic revenue and non-pay budgets including whether budgets should be reduced in the following year to a level which enabled all areas of the University to deliver their business plans, but which would remove the high levels of underspend annually. Training had been provided to staff in Faculties, and an approach for supporting Professional Services would be developed.

	<b>ACTION</b>	<b>OWNER</b>	<b>DUE</b>
.6	To develop a debt recovery strategy	Chief Financial Officer	31 October 2023

**23.63 Performance Progress and Business Planning Update**

- .1 The paper (UEB/23/80) was RECEIVED from the Deputy Vice-Chancellor and presented by the Director of Planning, Performance and Strategic Change.
- .2 The paper provided a summary of progress towards institutional KPI targets and the alignment of major projects to the KPIs. An overview of the development of operational delivery plans was included along with the key priorities, risks and mitigations identified through the process.
- .3 The Director of Planning Performance and Strategic Change highlighted that the Performance Framework would need further refinement to take account of the lag in reporting of some KPIs. Lead indicators would be considered which would allow for in-year monitoring of progress. There would also be consideration of how to broaden out the concept and measurement of value at the University.
- .4 UEB considered the recent Business Planning round and aspects of the leadership and cultural challenge as articulated in the paper. UEB NOTED a year-on-year improvement in the business planning process.
- .5 It was recognised that there had been instances where collective responsibility was not being modelled in committee decisions and this included at UEB. Outside the decision-making meeting, individuals had distanced themselves from, if not disagreed with, some decisions made.
- .6 Suggestions for further refinement of the business planning process included:
  - .1 Ensuring that portfolio PVCs had the opportunity to review, prior to submission, those business cases developed by professional service departments vital to the delivery of their strategic accountability.



- .2 Considering whether plans should be reviewed by theme rather than organisational structure. This would mean business plan owners would need to attend a number of conversations across different themes.
- .3 Embedding understanding across the University that business plans should address the University’s identified priorities within agreed local budget envelopes.
- .4 Themes arising from the business plan discussions should be incorporated into an action plan with clear ownership of actions to be submitted to Planning and Resources Committee.
- .7 It was NOTED that all the unfunded activity included as part of business plans had been considered as part of the business planning process, and feedback would be provided to business units.

	<b>ACTION</b>	<b>OWNER</b>	<b>DUE</b>
.8	To collate the themes arising from the business plan discussion and submit this to Planning and Resources Committee in the form of a action plan.	Director of Planning, Performance and Strategic Change.	14 July 2023

**23.64 Medium Term Financial Plan 2023/24 and Budget 2023/24**

- .1 UEB RECEIVED and DISCUSSED papers UEB/23/77 and UEB/23/81. The first paper set out the final version of the Medium-Term Financial Plan (MTFP) and the second set out the proposed budget for 2023/24 which was aligned to the first year of the 2023/24 MTFP.
- .2 UEB was reminded that discussions related to the development of the MTFP had been included on the UEB meeting agenda for the last three meetings, and the paper presented to the meeting included feedback received during those discussions.
- .3 The following was REPORTED:
  - .1 The plan had been stress-tested to ensure the University could withstand the financial impact of unknown issues.
  - .2 Since the last meeting of UEB, a sub-group of UEB had met to finalise the investment pipeline which set out the prioritised investment over the following five years.
  - .3 The most significant major project to be undertaken over the MTFP period would be investment in the Medical School Building. The value of investment required was currently indicative only, and it would be achieved via a combination of:
    - .1 Funds from University operations as part of our normal strategic investment (c£100m).
    - .2 Additional borrowing specifically raised to fund the Medical School Building (c£100m).
    - .3 External funding generated through philanthropy and other routes (c£150m)
- .4 UEB DISCUSSED the following matters:
  - .1 The approach to managing projects which were not prioritised in the Medium-Term Financial Plan and currently were outside of the University’s investment and business plan.



- .2 The importance of the collective ownership of the MTFP by UEB following its approval.
- .5 UEB AGREED to RECOMMEND APPROVAL of the MTFP and the Budget for 2023/24 to Finance Committee

### 23.65 People and Culture Survey 2023 Results

- .1 UEB RECEIVED the paper (UEB/23/75) sponsored by the Director of Human Resources which was accompanied by presentation of the organisational level findings of the People and Culture Survey 2023. The results were presented by a consultant from People Insights and supported by the Director of Organisational and People Development.
- .2 The combined response rate across the University (UNUK, UNNC and UNM) of 65% was NOTED.
- .3 An overview of the comparators used as part of the external benchmarking and the approach to the presentation of the results was provided.
- .4 Areas of particular focus during the presentation included:
  - .1 The highlights and lowlights of the survey results. The University score for managing change and staff expectations of the response to the survey results was similar to other HEIs and Russell Group institutions. A high negative score was received in connection with communication and collaboration between different parts of the University. High positive scores were received in areas concerned with staff members' understanding of how their work contributed to the success of the University and line managers treating direct reports fairly and with respect. Staff considered the best things about working at the University to be the teamwork, values and culture, and flexible working.
  - .2 The key drivers that had an impact on the overall staff engagement score for the University, which was 76%, one point below the Russell Group benchmark and two points above the HEI benchmark.
  - .3 The key thematic areas of response were: Inclusion and fair treatment, communication and collaboration, learning and development, and health, safety and wellbeing.
- .5 UEB considered:
  - .1 The possible correlation between staff engagement and NSS results and research performance.
  - .2 What further improvements could be made, given the significant focus that had already been placed on engagement with staff over recent years.
  - .3 What action could be taken to address the correlation between more positive scores from staff who had been employed at the University for a shorter periods and the lower scores given by staff who had been employed for longer periods. There was some discussion on the approach to career mobility of staff within the university.
- .6 The results of the survey were considered to be positive with clear indicators of areas for future focus.
- .7 UEB was apprised of the timeline for the dissemination of results, providing access to the dashboard of results and for the completion of action plans by managers.
- .8 It was AGREED that the results of the survey would be presented to Council at its meeting in November. The Vice-Chancellor would provide an update on the completion of the survey via the Vice-Chancellor's statement to be submitted to the next meeting of Council. A session to



explore the results of the survey further would be delivered at the forthcoming UEB Away Day.

	<b>ACTION</b>	<b>OWNER</b>	<b>DUE</b>
.9	To schedule a presentation of the results of the survey at the November Council meeting.	Secretary	30 June 2023
.10	To update Council on the completion of the survey via the Vice-Chancellor's statement to be submitted to the next meeting of Council.	Vice-Chancellor	27 June 2023
.11	To conduct a full analysis and provide an appraisal to the Vice-Chancellor of where the most significant areas of concern are as evidenced by the results of the survey. To include specific themes and locations of staff.	Director of Organisational and People Development	31 July 2023

**23.66 Curriculum Nottingham: Curriculum Transformation and e-Assessment: Briefing Paper for UEB**

- .1 UEB RECEIVED the paper (UEB/23/63) from the PVC ESE. Following review by both internal and external auditors, it was proposed to integrate the Curriculum Transformation and the Curriculum Management and E-Assessment programmes into a combined Curriculum Nottingham programme. The paper proposed new governance arrangements for the integrated approach.
- .2 The APVC ESE Science confirmed that the integrated business case would ensure the matters related to the impact on staff of rolling out the new curriculum alongside teaching out the old curriculum would be addressed. It was likely that new digital platforms and digital assessment would support a reduction in workload.
- .3 Despite assurances from the paper authors that the integrated programme would identify the appropriate priorities to deliver success, there remained some concern that the anticipated benefits of the programme should be more clearly defined. The DVC had hoped to see a better articulation in the paper of the potential curriculum simplification that could be delivered by the programme.
- .4 Reassurance was sought that the integration of the programmes would not have negative impact on the speed of delivery of the Arts Reimagined project. There was a view among some members that this activity was not progressing at the pace originally anticipated. It was confirmed by the APVC Teaching and Curriculum Leadership that it would be kept as a separate strand of work to ensure current momentum was maintained. The lengthy approvals process for new programmes was cited as the reason that new programmes would not be introduced until 2026. It was recommended that some consideration should be given to whether there was a way to expedite the approvals process.
- .5 The Vice-Chancellor summarised that UEB was supportive of the integrated programme and APPROVED its proposed governance arrangements, but it remained concerned about the size and complexity of the project.

**23.67 Strategic Risk Management Update**

- .1 UEB RECEIVED the paper (UEB/23/61) from the Director of Governance and Assurance which accompanied the Strategic Risk Register.



- .3 UEB NOTED that following discussion at Planning and Resources Committee, an additional risk related to aspects of the University Governance Structure had been added to the register and the stated risk on the Culture of Accountability and Responsibility Among Senior Leaders had been broadened in scope.
- .4 An overview of the changes to the Strategic Risk Register would be presented to Council by the Deputy Vice-Chancellor at its next meeting. This would also include a focus on the risk mitigations in progress related to the Trusted Research risk.
- .5 UEB was reminded that it was the residual score, not the inherent score, of a risk that informed the University's risk profile. It was NOTED that risk relating to the ongoing marking and assessment boycott was referred to within the 'Declining Student Satisfaction' risk.

#### **23.68 Degree Apprenticeships Update**

- .1 UEB RECEIVED and NOTED the paper (UEB/23/70) from the PVC ESE. UEB was reminded that a number of priority areas for degree apprentice activity had been agreed.
- .2 UEB remained supportive of the concept of the establishment of a centralised approach to the support provided for degree apprenticeship programmes. It was NOTED that a business case would be developed to seek the financial approval for the establishment of an Institute for Professional and Workbased Learning