



University Executive Board

Minutes of the meeting of 5 March 2024

Present: Professor Shearer West (Vice-Chancellor), Professor Sube Banerjee (FPVC MHS), Professor Jon Garibaldi (Provost UNNC) via Teams, Dr Paul Greatrix (Registrar), Professor Jeremy Gregory (FPVC Arts and interim FPVC Social Sciences), David Hill (CDO), Jaspal Kaur (Director of Human Resources), Professor Sam Kingman (FPVC Engineering and interim Provost UNM), Professor Katherine Linehan (PVC EDI and People), Professor Robert Mokaya (PVC GE), Margaret Monckton (CFO), Professor Jane Norman (DVC), Professor Tom Rodden (PVC RKE), Professor Sarah Speight (PVC ESE), Professor Zoe Wilson (FPVC Science).

Attending: Rowena Hall (Secretary), Rav Kalsi (Principal Executive Officer), Louella Houldcroft (Director of Communications and Advocacy), Anna Bertram (Associate Professor School of Chemistry), Hannah Noke (Associate Professor Nottingham University Business School), Sally Blackamore (Finance Director) for minutes 24.24 and 24.27, Kev Thompson (Deputy Director Governance and Assurance) for minute 24.25, Ang MacDonald (Associate Director Risk and Assurance) for minute 24.25, Jason Phoenix (Programme Director) for minute 24.26, Professor David Parks (Dean of NUBS) for minute 24.26, Mark Barber (Programme Director) for minute 24.27, Carolyn Stanhope (Digital Core Senior Business User for HR) for minute 24.27, Rosalie Parkin (Head of Procurement) for minute 24.27, Robert Philips (Programme Manager) for minute 24.27

24.22 Welcome, Quoracy and Declarations of Interest

- .1 The Secretary confirmed that the meeting was quorate and there were no declarations of conflict of interest.
- .2 The Vice-Chancellor's mentees Anna Bertram (Associate Professor School of Chemistry) and Hannah Noke (Associate Professor Nottingham University Business School) were welcomed to the meeting as observers.

24.23 Minutes of 6 February 2024 Meeting and Action Log

- .1 The minutes of the meeting held on 6 February 2024 (UEB/24/32) were confirmed as a true record.
- .2 It was NOTED that the Action log would be circulated after the meeting.

24.24 Finance

Latest Revised Forecast

- .1 UEB RECEIVED paper UEB/24/31 which set out the latest revised forecast including the cost-saving decisions agreed by UEB in January to address the material risk to the delivery of the budget. The paper also set out the forecasted projected deficit position as a result. It was NOTED that Finance Committee and Council approval for the Latest Revised Forecast was required.
- .2 There had been improved performance against the previously forecasted deficit of £6.8m; however some additional costs had been identified. As a result of those costs, the forecasted deficit, assuming delivery against cost-savings plans, was £10m. The additional costs included an increase in the amount of agents' commission, a revised cost associated with the



level of student deferral and withdrawals, and an increase in the expected tuition fee gap as modelled.

- .3 A £10m risk of non-delivery against the £21m cost-savings plan had been identified. A sufficient slow down in expenditure had not been seen based on the information received by the UEB Finance Sub-Group. This included travel and the raising of purchase orders. If further action was not taken, a £20m deficit was forecast. This would increase the risk of potential breach of the University's USS covenant.
- .4 The £10m risk of non-delivery was against agreed faculty cost-savings. It was NOTED that faculty spend was largely committed to pay. It was further NOTED that that the staffing levels in faculties had increased significantly since the pandemic.
- .5 The Chief Financial Officer expressed concern about the limited progress in the delivery of the cost-saving plans and indicated that strict financial controls would be required if significant progress was not made at pace. There was continued concern that faculties, with the exception of the Faculty of Engineering, would not be in a position to deliver their cost-savings plans as risk remained against the delivery of their budgets.
- .6 It was suggested that Faculty Operations Directors should more actively manage travel and purchasing order spend in faculties.
- .7 Whilst it was NOTED that a Human Resources plan was under development to continue to support faculties to address instances of poor performance, any financial benefits would not be realised for some time.
- .8 It was suggested that with a growing deficit and limited opportunity for further cost-savings to be delivered, the introduction of a voluntary severance scheme in early 2024/25 should be considered. The cost-value analysis activity and Future Nottingham plans would be at a stage of development which would support a more targeted approach to voluntary severance.
- .9 Consideration would need to be given to ceasing all non-committed strategic spend.
- .10 It was the Chief Financial Officer's view that it was unlikely that Finance Committee and Council would provide the required approval of the current Latest Revised Forecast on the basis that there was not sufficient delivery of cost-savings plan.
- .11 It was AGREED that:
 - .1 FPVCs and Faculty Operations Directors should be provided with access to the financial dashboards on travel and purchase order spend.
 - .2 Consideration should be given to the introduction of a voluntary severance scheme at the beginning of the next financial year.
 - .3 There should be urgent consideration of other suggestions for reducing spend made during the meeting before the submission of the Latest Revised Forecast paper to Finance Committee and Council.

Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP)

- .12 UEB RECEIVED paper UEB/24/34 which set out the proposed timetable for the development of the 2024/25 MTFP. The paper also reminded UEB of the assumptions that formed the basis of the previous MTFP and provided a high-level roll forward for the MTFP for discussion.



- .13 UEB NOTED:
- .1 The proposed timetable for the development of the 2024/25 MTFP.
 - .2 The principles and assumptions included in the 2023/24 MTFP.
 - .3 The MTFP was a five-year financial framework for the University, but it would be reviewed after the approval of the Future Nottingham business case.
 - .4 The proposal to include the following as additional principles of the MTFP until such time as Future Nottingham was implemented:
 - .1 An increase in the contingency for non-delivery of size and shape targets and changing student behaviour from £5m to £10m.
 - .2 A £10m contingency to support the implementation of Future Nottingham.
 - .5 The proposed assumptions for inclusion in the 2024/25 MTFP including the roll forward of the student under-recruitment position from 2023/24 and inclusion of student recruitment numbers discussed as part of the latest target setting discussions.
- .14 Subject to the consideration of a suggestion that the contingency for non-delivery of size and shape might be further increased, UEB AGREED the additional principles and the proposed assumptions for inclusion in the 2024/25 MTFP.
- .15 At the next meetings of UEB and Planning and Resources Committee there would be discussion on how to maximise student recruitment which would include conversion, tariff, confirmation and clearing, and how to manage any over recruitment in certain disciplines.
- .16 The Finance Director confirmed that option one of the proposed faculty funding allocation models included a £1200 allocation for international students, but no allocation for 'No Award' students. The allocation was designed to incentivise Schools to recruit international students.
- .17 It was NOTED that support would need to be provided to the Faculty of Arts as it had the highest proportion of 'No Award' students.
- .18 UEB AGREED option one for the faculty funding allocation model as set out in the appendix to the paper.

24.25 Strategic Risk Management Update

- .1 UEB RECEIVED paper UEB/24/29 which accompanied the Strategic Risk Register.
- .2 UEB NOTED that following discussion at Planning and Resources Committee, additional risks related to Potential for Non-Compliance with UK Visa and Immigration (UKVI) Regulations (Students) and Information Security – Cyber Resilience and Data Protection had been added to the register. It was further NOTED that there had been a change to the stated risk on 'Inability to Make Reasonable Adjustments for Disabled Staff' to include students within its remit.
- .3 It was acknowledged that the number of risks on the Strategic Risk Register had increased and did not closely represent the major risks with which UEB was concerned. It was suggested that a number of the current risks on the register should be delegated to UEB and Senate sub-committees for management.
- .4 It was AGREED that:



- .1 The Associate Director Risk and Assurance would work with UEB members and risk owners to seek to establish which risks should be included on the Strategic Risk Register and which should be removed and delegated to sub-committees.
- .2 A paper should be submitted to the next meeting of UEB to consider the Strategic Risk Register further.
- .5 An overview of the Strategic Risk Register would be presented to Council by the Deputy Vice-Chancellor at its next meeting.

	ACTION	OWNER	DUE
.6	To work with UEB members and risk owners to consider the inclusion of risks on the Strategic Risk Register	Associate Director Risk and Assurance	29 March 2024
.7	To submit a paper to the next meeting of UEB to consider the Strategic Risk Register further.	Associate Director Risk and Assurance	9 April 2024

24.26 Castle Meadow Campus (CMC) Infrastructure Business Case Phase Three / Nottingham University Business School on CMC Business Case – Phase One.

- .1 UEB RECEIVED and NOTED the content of both paper UEB/24/26 and UEB/24/30 which respectively set out the proposals to refurbish Building A as a student hub and to renovate Building B so that it could be occupied by the Business School for PGT teaching, research and staff.
- .2 The Programme Director for CMC provided an overview of the infrastructure plans contained in both papers and the Dean of Nottingham Business School provided an overview of the growth plans for the Business School.
- .3 There some discussion about the level of proposed growth and whether, given other business schools were also seeking to grow, the student numbers were realistic.
- .4 It was NOTED that the full funding as requested in the business cases was an indicative amount and further work was required to establish the required investment. It was highlighted that the figures currently set out in the business cases were not allocated within the MTFP.
- .5 In the event of a deceleration in the timescales for the development of CMC and the plans to relocate Business School activities, the Dean REPORTED that the planned growth in student numbers would be difficult to deliver and investment in facilities at Jubilee Campus would be necessary.
- .6 Before a paper could be approved for submission to Finance Committee and onward to Council, UEB was keen to understand the forecasted total cost for the CMC programme and how the financial ask in the papers had been developed, in particular any change from that originally forecasted when the site was acquired. There was also support for further examination of the forecasted NPV for the programme.
- .7 UEB remained very supportive of the CMC Programme, but in light of the current financial challenges, reconsideration of the speed of the delivery of the programme was necessary. It was NOTED that there were arguments for both accelerating and decelerating the programme.



- .8 Market analysis of the effect of acceleration or deceleration of various stages of the programme was required, in particular the impact that any deceleration would have on the potential growth of the Business School.
- .9 UEB AGREED that further analysis and revised versions of business cases would need to be considered and approved by UEB before they could be submitted to Finance Committee.

24.27 Digital Core Timeline Extension

- .1 UEB RECEIVED paper UEB/24/35 which provided an update on the progress of the Digital Core implementation project and set out a recommended option to manage ongoing challenges with data quality and data migration.
- .2 The successful entry into User Acceptance Testing was NOTED.
- .3 UEB AGREED the adoption of the recommended option three which would necessitate a delay to the go live of UniCore from May 2024 to November 2024. UEB also AGREED to RECOMMEND the consequential budget extension of £4.9m to Finance Committee for APPROVAL.
- .4 It was further AGREED that as part of communications to the University community about the reasons for the revised go live date, the significant progress and successes of the project to date should be highlighted. There should also be a focus on what had been learnt from the experiences of peer institutions.

	ACTION	OWNER	DUE
.5	To submit a budget extension request to Finance Committee for approval	Programme Director, CFO	XXXXXX

24.28 Meeting Feedback

- .1 Feedback on the meeting was provided by the PVC RKE who observed that:
 - .1 There had been a sense for some time that there were difficult decisions ahead. The agenda for the meeting heralded some of those decisions.
 - .2 Those difficult decisions would continue for several months; therefore, members needed to consider their resilience.
 - .3 Members should continue to be honest and challenge each other as appropriate to ensure that the best decisions were made in the difficult and changing circumstances.
- .2 It was observed by another Member that it was more evident that collectively UEB members were more comfortable in providing challenge.
- .3 There was a consensus that opportunities should be taken to reflect on successes and good news stories as a balance to the often difficult and challenging content of current meetings.