

the
GOVERNING BODY

**MINUTES of the Governing Body Strategy Session held on
Tuesday, 19 October, 2021 in Room 010, Queen Anne Court, Greenwich campus
and via Microsoft Teams, commencing at 2.00 pm**

Present:	Ms B Hill CBE (in the Chair)	Mrs A Mehta
	Ms A Ayoub	Mr M Orr
	Professor J Harrington (Vice-Chancellor)	Ms S Ragab
	Mrs T King	Mr S Saluja (via Teams)
	Mrs D Khanna	Mr A Sharma (via Teams)
	Miss D Larnder	Mrs E Sideris
	Professor A Maragiannis	Professor A Westby

In attendance:

Ms S Bolingbroke (Halpin Partnership) (Observer)
Mrs T Brighton (SEO Governing Body) (minutes)
Mr M Farmer (Strategy Programme Manager)
Mr C Forster (Director of Estates & Facilities)(item 6)
Mr P Garrod (University Secretary)
Ms H King (Director of Communications & Recruitment)
Dr S Lewis (Director of Strategic Planning & Business Intelligence)(item 4)
Mr P Taylor (Chief Operating Officer)
Ms L Watson (Chief Financial Officer)
Mr P Clarke (Aecom)(item 6)
Mr M Hughes (Aecom)(item 6)
Mr N Satchell (Aecom)(item 6)

Apologies for Absence:

Mr R Hicks, Mrs D Khanna, Mr C McWilliam
Professor J Bonet (Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research & Enterprise))
Professor J Roscoe, Deputy Vice-Chancellor

THIS IS OUR TIME – IMPLEMENTATION

**1. INTRODUCTION BY THE CHAIR: OVERVIEW AND PURPOSE OF THE STRATEGY SESSION:
*Bronwyn Hill, Chair of the Governing Body***

The Chair welcomed Governors and attendees to the strategy session, which would update Governors on how the strategy was moving towards implementation, early actions, and the role of

Governors. Risks and opportunities facing the University would be considered. The proposed set of strategic KPIs would be re-presented to Governors, together with what success would look like through the ten-year period of the strategy. The session would conclude with a presentation from the Director of Estates & Facilities Manager on current thinking on the refreshed Estates Strategy.

2. THIS IS OUR TIME: UPDATE: Professor Jane Harrington, Vice-Chancellor

The Vice-Chancellor outlined progress in implementing “*This is Our Time*”, together with the next stages of implementation as the University worked towards its objective of becoming the best modern university in the UK by 2030.

Mike Farmer had recently been appointed as the Strategy Programme Manager and a project management framework had been put in place. The strategy governance processes for the sub-strategies were being finalised. High-level governance processes existed and would inform dashboards on progress for the Governing Body, which would flag up the need for deep dives into specific areas.

Development of the three sub-strategies (*Student Success, Research and Knowledge Exchange and Partnerships*) and three enabling strategies (*People, Digital and Estates*) was under way. Action plans and priorities for the next five years were being mapped out, with KPIs and clear linkage to the core strategy. ‘Business as usual’ activities were being factored into all projects together with emerging activities. The interdependencies between individual sub-strategies would need to be closely examined and the priorities would need to be determined. The sub-strategies and enabling strategies would be launched simultaneously in spring 2022.

The Chief Financial Officer reported that the strategic investment envelope was being agreed. The University had strong cash reserves and there would be no immediate need to raise external finance. The sub-strategy action plans would be reviewed as they matured in order to assess the magnitude of the costs. The costs of the first five years of activities [REDACTED] would be covered, although some external risks, such as the Government’s response to the Augar Review, were still awaited and would need to be factored into our financial planning..

A summary of progress for each of the three sub-strategies and enabling strategies was provided:

- ***Student Success***: a set of medium-term goals had been created and action plans for the next 12-18 months were being developed. The priorities had evolved from a process of interrogating individual themes.
- ***Research and Knowledge Exchange***: projects were being scoped and KPIs developed. A research centre would be established to develop programmes of research and focus on the impact and development of knowledge exchange. Stretch targets had been set to increase research output.

- **Partnerships:** the University would establish meaningful relationships with its international, local and business partners and a mapping project was underway to understand the management of existing relationships. A better understanding of the University's return on investment for its international activities was needed.
- **Enabling strategies:** The Digital Strategy would have a business focus rather than a technology focus, concentrating on people, capabilities and experiences. A Digital Engagement Plan would be developed. Key themes for the People Strategy were emerging through consultation with staff focus groups.
- Development of the Estates Strategy was reported later in the meeting (refer to para 6).

The Vice-Chancellor encouraged Governors to engage with the strategy development process and welcomed their contribution as critical friends. Governors would be invited to attend workshops on the sub-strategies and enabling strategies to test out current thinking, with each Governor linked to specific sub-strategies. Governors supported the suggested modes of engagement and requested that the workshop sessions be set up quickly. It was proposed that pairs of Governors would be assigned to each strategy; the Vice-Chancellor invited Governors to indicate if they had any preferences.

The Governing Body recognised the importance of digital capability as a key enabler across all the strategies. Improving the digital environment whilst planning for the future was a challenge, as was understanding the expectations of a student of 2030. The need to manage strategic risks over the next five years was emphasised and was an area where Governors could provide constructive input.

3. 'THIS IS OUR TIME' EARLY PROJECTS: Professor Jane Harrington, Vice-Chancellor

The Vice-Chancellor gave a presentation on early projects linked to the sub-strategies and enabling strategies.

Governors welcomed this early work and agreed that it was instrumental in bringing about cultural change. There was particular interest in the work of the National Student Survey (NSS) Task Force, relevant to the Student Success sub-strategy, which had been established to improve the student experience. Governors welcomed the approach which included learning from good practice in high performing areas and the involvement of GSU.. The Vice-Chancellor said that one aim of the work was to ensure that staff fully understood that students mattered and that attention was paid to the qualitative comments in the NSS. The actions plans to bring about improvement in under-performing areas would be closely monitored.

The Chair reported that she would be meeting the Pro Vice-Chancellors with the Vice-Chancellor, the Vice-Chair and Tricia King to discuss the NSS work, to convey the huge importance that the Governing Body attached to this area.

In relation to the Digital and Estates enabling strategies, the Governing Body noted the work that had been completed over the summer, including a moot court room at Greenwich, upgraded libraries and two new laboratories at Medway. It was intended to hold future Governing Body meetings at different campuses to provide an opportunity to see the new laboratories and facilities.

4. STRATEGIC RISKS: Professor Jane Harrington, Vice-Chancellor and Aruna Mehta

The Vice-Chancellor and Aruna Mehta outlined their initial thinking on the potential strategic risks facing the University. A structured approach had been taken to identify these and the principal categories of risks (ie students, staff, delivery, estates, finance and external stakeholders and partnerships) had been examined.

The Governing Body welcomed the list of key risks, with the following points made in discussion:

- While it might be implicit, consideration should be given to geo-political risks in the context of the University's international activities and student recruitment;
- The University's resilience to handle external financial risks and other sudden changes in the external environment should be considered, including the risk of deterioration in the UK's economic situation, 'cyber' risks and risks related to key suppliers and partners;
- Reputational risk was an important consideration and included the impact on management capacity in managing reputational issues;
The University would need to continue to monitor risks related to the regulatory environment, e.g. the Office for Students;
The Vice-Chancellor agreed to examine risks related to research. While research was much less significant than teaching for the University's income, it was important in attracting staff and could create reputational risks;
- How the University would continue to attract staff and anticipate the expectations of the 'employee of 2030' were also important considerations in 'People' related risks.

The Chair highlighted that as the sub-strategies and enabling strategies were developed, their associated risks should be worked through against a common framework and presented to the Governing Body for consideration. The strategy development process would inform the University's understanding of its strategic risks.

5. KPIs, TARGETS AND DRAFT MILESTONES: Professor Jane Harrington, Vice-Chancellor and Dr Simon Lewis, Director of Strategic Planning & Business Intelligence

The Director of Strategic Planning & Business Intelligence presented nine proposed strategic KPIs, which were also on the agenda for the Governing Body's subsequent business meeting. The

Governing Body had previously seen eight of the KPIs, but KPI #8 (Research Power) had been developed following feedback at the Governing Body's meeting in June. A new scorecard format had been produced to monitor the KPIs. They were linked to the four strategic priorities and each had a long-term target for 2030. Yearly milestones were under discussion. Target trajectories had been set for KPIs #1-#7.

In discussion, it was suggested that digital effectiveness (ie the extent to which services were delivered in a digital manner) should be incorporated into a KPI. The Vice-Chancellor said that she preferred not to increase the number of strategic KPIs and would discuss with the Director of Information & Library Services how digital issues were reflected in underlying KPIs. Governors discussed KPI #6 (Staff Engagement) and whether it could be expressed differently (e.g. "Would you recommend the University of Greenwich as a place to work?"). It was agreed that the wording would be reviewed.

6. ESTATE STRATEGY: Chris Forster, Director of Estates & Facilities with representatives from AECOM, Patrick Clarke, Mark Hughes and Niltay Satchell

The Governing Body received a presentation from Chris Forster, Director of Estates & Facilities Management and AECOM representatives on development of the Estate Strategy.

The Director of Estates & Facilities Management stated that the University's overall estate was large for its purposes. All of the campuses had specific challenges and the overall functionality did not align well with the needs of the University. The three historically rich campuses included a large proportion of listed buildings. The backlog of maintenance work required within the next five years was estimated at [REDACTED]

An Estates & Digital Steering Group (chaired by the Vice-Chancellor) had been established to oversee the work to produce the Digital and Estates enabling strategies. This was a huge undertaking and the University had appointed AECOM, experienced master planners within the HE sector, to assist. The draft Estates Strategy would be supported by separate masterplans for each campus. The strategy would be driven by the future size and shape of the University to ensure Greenwich had an infrastructure which could anticipate future changes. A number of workstreams included feasibility studies across the three campuses to understand how growth could be absorbed. The draft sub-strategy was scheduled for completion by December 2021.

The Director of Estates & Facilities Management stated that some general principles underlying the estate vision and development had been established. Quality of space would take priority over quantity. Space needed to be multi-purpose wherever possible to provide flexibility. The digital and physical provision needed to be intertwined. The historic nature of much of the estate made our ambitions for inclusivity, accessibility and being carbon neutral challenging.

Priority themes informed by feedback from stakeholder groups had been developed and a set of key deliverables in terms of strategic direction had been drawn up for each campus:

- **Avery Hill:** would continue to be the home of the University's sports offering and green spaces. The campus would support wellbeing, recovery and care provision and become a community centre linking the University to the local community. There would be an emphasis on improving the student experience; residential accommodation would be updated and temporary buildings would be replaced.
- **Greenwich campus:** strategic ambitions would build on business and creative industries and establish the campus as a skills and enterprise hub.
- **Medway campus:** the focus would be on developing the campus into an innovation and enterprise zone within the local community. The University's sustainability, science and engineering offering would be enhanced through state-of-the-art facilities.

The Chief Financial Officer reported that the current projections for years 1-5 of the emerging Estates Strategy, excluding business as usual activities, totalled [REDACTED]. The 10-year programme was expected to be in the region of [REDACTED]. These estimates had been discussed with Murray Orr and Craig McWilliam. Financing beyond the five-year period was under review.

AECOM presented the emerging concepts for the masterplans for each of the three campuses and outlined the current thinking regarding new build, re-build, refurbishment and landscaping. The following points were made in discussion:

- It was noted that, alongside other options, the plans included [REDACTED] of new build.
- The leases of the Old Royal Naval College buildings ran for 130 years and the possibility of an extension should be examined before major strategic investment at Greenwich.
- The Governing Body welcomed the ambition to reduce carbon emissions to zero by 2030 and recognised the challenge given the nature of the estate. The Chief Operating Officer noted that this was particularly the case at Medway where the engineering provision needed to be updated. More modern facilities were crucial to student recruitment in this area.
- Short-term capital projects would continue across the campuses to keep pace with changes throughout the period of development of the Estate Strategy.
- There were plans to re-configure space in some older buildings at Avery Hill which principally housed professional services staff. The detail was still to be worked through as it was necessary to understand the future pattern of hybrid working amongst the staff.
- It was recognised that car parking was always of concern to staff in planning the estate. . The University had a progressive Green Travel Plan but the ability to improve connections to/from campuses in the local communities was largely outside its control. Liaison with local authority planners would be necessary.

- Community space would feature on all campuses. The flexibility of a mixed-use environment was advantageous and many of the student and shared facilities would be accessible for use by the public.

The Chair thanked the Director and AECOM for their interesting presentation and invited Governors to send further comments direct to the Director of Estates & Facilities. The Governing Body looked forward to seeing the Estates Strategy at a more developed stage. Governors requested that the next iteration specifically reference staff in the estate vision and that additional 'big picture' information on travel plans between campuses be included.

The meeting ended at 4:50 pm.

T A Brighton

11 November 2021