



**Approved Minutes**  
**Board of Governors 2019-20**  
**Finance & Resources Committee M1**  
**16 October 2019**

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**Present**

Prof Patricia Hind (Acting Chair)	Governor	PH
Ms Claire Gibson (by phone)	Governor	CG
Mr Graham Raikes MBE	Governor, Chair of the Board	GR
Prof Rob Warner	Vice-Chancellor	RW

**In attendance**

Mr Simon Arthurs	Finance Director	SA
Mr Geoffery Gulzar	Student Governor	GG
Mrs Unity Stuart	Clerk to the Board	US

**From item 6 onwards**

Mr John Bailey	Director of Estates & IT Infrastructure	JB
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## 1. Apologies & Conflict of Interests

- 1.1 Apologies were received from Alex Hawtin (Chair). Kate Doodson had recently joined the committee as a co-opted but was unavailable to attend the meeting.
- 1.2 Patricia Hind had agreed to Chair the meeting as the Deputy Chair, Claire Gibson, could attend by telephone only.
- 1.3 No conflicts of interest were declared.

## 2. Minutes of the previous meeting (5 June and special

## meeting 6 September 2019)

2.1 The minutes were approved with no amendments.

### 3. Matters Arising

3.1 All matters arising were considered complete.

### 4. To consider the Management Accounts

4.1 SA took the committee through some PowerPoint Slides surrounding the financial position. He outlined the two-year transition to a new financial approach which included reducing costs, driving growth and improving processes.

4.2 Inherent and new risks surrounding the financial position were briefly discussed.

The committee discussed various income sources and the health clinics were briefly outlined. It was suggested this could be a good opportunity for the Business School to engage in this area.

4.3 Improving staff understanding of finances and budgeting was noted as a positive improvement which the Committee had been keen to see.

4.4 The number of purchasing cards and the related processes were discussed and SA noted some planned improvements to the current system in the longer term.

4.5 SA noted that voluntary release is normally opened in the spring months but the plans were to open this in January instead. RW provided some context surrounding the process for opening up and granting voluntary severance. SA also noted that the Tribal review of staffing was also currently underway and might inform any considerations of applications for voluntary release.

4.6 CG raised some queries surrounding the outlined financial risks, including student accommodation and hourly budgets. RW confirmed that JB is the risk holder and will review and take this forward. SA confirmed that the risk surrounding 'hourly budgets' relates to staffing provision and how this is budgeted for.

4.7 The risk surrounding student recruitment was also discussed and it was

suggested that a more granular breakdown of the risks and opportunities relating to and feeding into the key risks would be helpful. RW confirmed that he and US had discussed earlier that day and a report would be made available to Audit committee and the Board.

## 5. To consider the draft Statutory Accounts for recommendation to the Board

5.1 SA confirmed that the outcome figures had been adjusted following the audit and allowing for pension adjustments, moving to 2% surplus due to some adjustments relating to the Chartwells income and holiday accrual.

5.2 Some final edits to the Financial Statements were noted which would need to be confirmed at the Audit committee meeting the following month.

5.3 GR suggested that some substance be added to the Public Benefit Statement on page 10. Some facts and figures including league table results should be included here and noted the Chair's introduction remains in draft form.

5.4 PH queried the figures surrounding tangible net assets and why these do not appear to have changed across years. SA agreed to review this and respond to PH. GR provided some comments regarding rounding of figures and requested some clarity surrounding LGPS and LPS.

**ACTION** SA to take forward suggested edits and respond to PH's query.

5.5 CG queried the strategic report section on sustainability and whether a note outlining how any surplus will be re-invested into student facing areas as well as providing resilience for the future. **ACTION** An additional statement surrounding surplus spend would be included.

5.6 The committee were asked to comment on what they would like to see from an Annual Report or year-end statements. It was agreed that presenting some of the data in a more interesting way with some graphics would be helpful in future, dependent on resources available.

5.7 **ACTION** It was suggested that identifying someone to provide a final 'proof read' of the document would be helpful and SA would take this forward if possible.

5.8 CG queried whether some additional narrative surrounding future plans,

direction of travel, confidence, sustainability and community might be a welcome addition to the Strategic report. **ACTION** SA agreed to add something in this.

5.9 How the end of year financial performance would be communicated more widely was briefly discussed and it was agreed a press release could provide reassurance to the city, prospective students and other stakeholders.

## 6. Priority process for capital planning

6.1 JB joined the meeting and indicated that the process for capital planning and projects has recently been developed, working with the Estates Director, DVC and the Ambition Project lead. He outlined the details of the new processes and related forms. This would include tick boxes for whether a project is legally required, whether the resource could be shared with other departments, how the project would benefit student experience, which departments would need to be informed and engaged and the financial model. The process for receiving and reviewing any capital expenditure projects in a more formal structure was also discussed and the Committee felt this was a positive step forward.

6.2 JB also confirmed that some guidance has been developed to support any project submissions and SA noted that a Financial Strategy Document will further detail the policy for capital expenditure projects.

6.3 The ongoing monitoring process and outcome evaluations were queried and JB confirmed this would include the requirement for regular project updates and a project closure report. SA confirmed the capital and revenue of each project would also be monitored monthly.

## 7. To review the Finance and Resources KPIs

7.1 SA outlined the key performance indicators in relation to financial performance, financial processes performance, and financial team performance.

7.2 GR noted that it would be important to identify the most important KPIs in order of importance or risk. **ACTION** Finance KPIs to be developed further and returned to the Finance Committee for further input.

## 8. Update on 2018-19 Investment performance

8.1 SA confirmed that the Ethical Investment Policy would need to be developed with support from the new Sustainability Officer and therefore sought some input from the committee. The current investments portfolio was fully managed by JM Finn and the parameters for investment had been previously agreed by the committee.

8.2 It was suggested that some additional research into the investment options available, and the sector norm should be undertaken and reported back to the committee for additional discussion.

8.3 CG confirmed that she was pleased to receive the Barclays report which provided some options to consider. She noted that the financial value of the investment was important as well as the narrative the University wishes to tell about itself in keeping with its values and heritage.

8.4 **ACTION** SA agreed to review when the arrangements with J M Finn were due to end and report back to the committee at a future date.

## 9. Health & Safety – introduction from new H&S Officer

9.1 John Chadwick joined the meeting, and introduced himself to the committee providing some information about his background and experience. He outlined some key plans already identified surrounding health, safety and security including ensuring a full business continuity plan is in place.

## 10. Consideration of community and business engagement, space utilisation and commercialisation

10.1 SA noted that the Campus Development Plan will represent future opportunities but there was a need to identify some opportunities earlier on. The Ambition project also included a work stream to address community and business engagement, space utilisation and commercialisation.

10.2 JB noted that space utilisation was also low and making immediate use of unused classrooms and spaces would be a short-term project. Other short-

term improvements, including to the timetabling process for example, would open up opportunities for further engagement and utilisation.

10.3 The committee suggested that ensuring that any developments add value and relate to the work and ethos of the University, developing partnerships along the way should also be a consideration.

10.4 GR noted that staffing would need to be a consideration as any commercial opportunities develop and a set of principals would be helpful to guide the decision making on any proposed opportunities or partnerships.

## 11. To receive a report from the Estates Task Group (meeting 2 October)

11.1 CG provide a brief update on the recent meeting of the Estates Group which had included a presentation from the appointed architects who would be developing the Campus Development Plan. They had outlined their experience and plans to include consideration of teaching and learning styles as well as sustainability.

11.2 How the Estates Development Plan is delivered and discussed with the Board at the Strategy Day was discussed and remained on the agenda for that meeting. CG noted that the Group would continue to report to the Finance Committee going forward.

11.3 PH left the meeting and CG took over as Chair for the final few minutes.

11.4 GR confirmed that engaging governors with discussion surrounding the Estates Development Plans would be key, and could include group work or activities at the Strategy Day.

11.5 The committee agreed that ensuring all Board members feel involved and understand the processes prior to any request for project approval will be important.

## 12. Assurance report confirming appropriate insurance arrangements are in place

Noted. GR raised one query surrounding the excess of £500 for laptops, whether self-insuring might be more economical and how well known the policies were with staff.

SA confirmed that some additional training and awareness-raising for staff surrounding insurance was planned.

### 13. To receive a report on Fraudulent, Whistleblowing, Health and Safety Incidents and Legal Activities

13.1 GR queried the incidents surrounding student welfare and requested some clarification in this area in future. The committee noted the important work that the Student Welfare team undertake.

13.2 GR queried the information surrounding 'nine of the eleven appeals' and what this related to. **ACTION** US to seek clarification to inform GR.