Bangor University

**COUNCIL MINUTES**

At a meeting of the Council held in the University on Friday, 10th February 2017.

**Present** :

The Rt. Hon Lord Dafydd Elis-Thomas AM (Chair), Mrs Stephanie Barbaresi, Dr Tomos Dafydd, Professor Andrew Edwards, Dr Peter Higson, Professor John Hughes, Professor Jerry Hunter, Mr Ifan James, Dr Griff Jones, Dr Karen Jones, Mr Marc Jones, Sir Paul Lambert, Mrs Alison Lea-Wilson, Dr Lorrie Murphy, Ms. Ellen Parry Williams, Ms Julie Perkins, Dr Alwyn Roberts, Mr Conor Savage, Professor David Shepherd, Professor Paul Spencer, Professor Carol Tully, Professor Oliver Turnbull, Mr David Williams, Dr Olwen Williams, University Secretary, Director of Human Resources, Director of Finance, and the Director of Estates.

**Apologies** :

Professor Gillian Davies, Professor Richard Parry-Jones, Professor Jo Rycroft-Malone, Professor Graham Upton.

**DEATHS**

The Chair referred to the recent deaths of:

Mr Charlie Nicholson, a Student in the School of Environment, Natural Resources and Geography

Miss Sorcha Daly, a Student in the School of Healthcare Sciences

Professor Ross Mackay, a former member of staff in the Bangor Business School

Ms Shirley Harris, a fomer member of staff in the School of Social Sciences.

Mrs Dorothy Groundsell, a fomer member of staff in the Finance Office.

and members stood in tribute to their memory.

**CONGRATULATIONS**

The Chair expressed the Council’s congratulations Zhen Jing, in the School of Law, on the **award of a Personal Chair** and Peter Lepping on the **award of an Honorary Chair**.

**Other successes were also highlighted:**

An accreditation accepted as the ‘gold standard’ in archive management has been awarded to Bangor University’s Archives and Special Collections. The University Archive was among 11 new applicants to achieve The National Archives Archive Accreditation, to become one of the 62 accredited archives in the UK.

The University has awarded its ‘Women in Science’ scholarships to three outstanding female students: Emily Louise Dunn, Emily O’Regan and Kathryn Howard. All three were undergraduate students at Bangor and graduated with First Class Honours in July 2016.

The results of the annual UI Green Metric were announced at the start of the New Year. The University have moved up to 16th position out of 516 participating Universities from across the World in this international green league table. This puts the University in the top 4% of the World’s “green” Universities.

**MINUTES**

1. The Minutes of the meeting held on 25th November 2016 were confirmed and signed.
2. With reference to :

[1] **Estates Strategy (Page 3);** an update was given on the valuation and condition survey of the Old Post Office. A business case was under development.

[2] **Accounts 2015/16 (Page 5);** following some minor reclassifications and adjustments, the 2015/16 accounts have been cleared by KPMG.

[3] **Human Resources (Page 8**); the Council noted that the Redundancy Committee have meet to consider the decisions of the Financial Sustainability Board.

**VICE-CHANCELLOR’S BUSINESS**

The Vice-Chancellor raised a number of issues with the Council.

[1] **Hazelkorn Review:** The report has been accepted in full by the Cabinet Secretary for Education and a consultation on the review will be undertaken in the Spring by the Secretary for Education. A review of Research and Innovation and degree outcomes will also be commissioned. There are some concerns about the threats to the autonomous nature of HE.

[2] **Deans:** On the recommendation of the Vice-Chancellor, the Council agreed that the following Deans be re-appointed, each for a further term of 5 years:

* Professor Paul Spencer (from December 2016)
* Professor Andrew Edwards (from August 2017)
* Professor Nicky Callow (from August 2017)

It was further noted that Professor Callow will be taking study leave for a year from July 2017 and Professor Paul Downing will be seconded to the role of Dean in Professor Callow’s absence.

**REPORT FROM THE EXECUTIVE**

1. The Report of the meetings of the Executive held between December 2016 and January 2017 (attached as Appendix I to the official copy of the Minutes) was approved.
2. The Council noted :

[1] **HEFCW Funding Changes**: An in-year reduction in HEFCW funding of £1.8m to support the Tuition Fee Grant was noted. However, a further allocation has been made to HEFCW to address support for estates rationalisation; investment in higher level apprenticeships; business incubator and accelerator facilities; and a strategic development fund. This will go some way to mitigate the funding cut in year, and the University expects a net reduction in the region of £0.5m. This mitigation may not be available in future years and the sector does not expect to see a funding uplift from the implementation of Diamond until 2019/20. Therefore, the next few years are expected to be very challenging financially.

[2] **Student Recruitment**: The number of Home undergraduate applications for September 2017 is currently 12% lower than at the same point last year. The key focus now is managing the situation, maximising conversion and building relationships with firm accepts to secure their attendance in September. It was noted that the number of EU students is relatively stable and that any students recruited before Brexit are expected to maintain their current status for the duration of their studies.

The number of International applications is significantly higher than at the same point last year, although it is very early in the cycle. The Council noted that this increase is in addition to growth built in due to Bangor College China.

[3] **Pontio**: The success of the first year of operation was noted. A review of management and governance arrangements is currently underway. The Council requested further holistic information about the income and expenditure of Pontio, occupancy levels against planned targets and further information about the intangible benefits.

[4] **TEF Submission**: The TEF assessment framework is based on a number of metrics supplemented by additional evidence in the form of a narrative submission, which was included in the Council papers. The assessment criteria cover teaching quality, the learning environment and student outcomes & learning gain. Providers will attain one of three possible levels of excellence: Bronze (provision is of satisfactory quality), Silver (provision is of high quality) or Gold (provision is consistently outstanding).

**ACHIEVING FINANCIAL SUSTAINABILTIY**

1. The Deputy Vice-Chancellor updated the Council on progress towards achieving financial sustainability and the actions of the Financial Sustainability Board. The following points were noted:

[1] The individual work streams and the Financial Sustainability Board continue to meet on a fortnightly basis and report to the Executive. A stakeholder communication and engagement plan is also in place.

[2] Delivery of in-year savings has proved challenging and there remains some risk over delivery. Much of the low hanging fruit has already been picked and there is very little scope for savings without significant change or impact on service delivery. A further detailed update will be provided at the next meeting.

[3] A process for future consultation has been agreed in order to ensure genuine and meaningful engagement with staff and Trade Unions.

[4] New Procurement Procedures have been agreed that tighten up previous procedures and introduce e-tendering and the e-marketplace.

[5] One of the first actions taken by the Financial Sustainability Board was to establish a single admissions team and to appoint a new leaders to implement change in this area. As a result the turnaround times has been reduced significantly and there is currently no backlog.

[6] To date, longer term sustainable changes have involved a large amount of effort to deliver modest savings and have resulted in disproportionate objections. Radical solutions will be required to deliver £6m sustainable savings including a fundamental review of the core business and further review of academic structures and activity.

1. The Council noted that the Chair and Vice-Chancellor have received petitions and testimonies from students affected by the decision to discontinue Fine Arts, provision in the School of Lifelong Learning, and single honours in Archaeology. The Council agreed that it was not their remit to overturn this decision of the Executive, especially in the light of the challenging financial target and the ongoing consultation.
2. The Council ***endorsed*** the approach of the Financial Sustainability Board and encouraged them to identify further savings, noting that the University needs to make difficult financial decisions, and at times take risks, to secure its long term future. It was agreed to give further consideration to how the Council could engage more strategically with the process, including further strategic discussion at the next meeting.

**GENDER BASED VIOLENCE**

*Dr Olwen Williams declared an interest in this matter due to her involvement in the Amethyst Centre in Colwyn Bay.*

1. The Pro Vice-Chancellor (Welsh and Civic Engagement) presented the University’s summary of the Changing the Culture: Report of the Universities UK Task Force Examining Violence against Women, Harassment and Hate Crime’ which was published in October 2016.
2. It was noted that a sub-group of the Equality and Diversity Task Group has been established to oversee the University’s response and the Director of Student Services is a member of the Universities UK Task Force.
3. The Council strongly supported the work being undertaken. In the discussion that followed, the Council was pleased to note actions underway to minimise excess alcohol consumption, to address lad culture, and co-operation with the local community. It was noted that challenges can arise at times due to the University’s duty of care for students, internal disciplinary procedures and police action.

**FINANCE AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE**

1. The Report of the meeting of the Finance and Resources Committee held on the 23rd January 2017 (attached as Appendix II to the official copy of the Minutes) was approved.
2. With particular reference to :

[i] Minute 638 **(Financial Sustainability Board)**; the Committee noted their support for the work of the Financial Sustainability Board and were monitoring progress.

[ii] Minute 639 **(Resources Management Strategy)**; the Committee had considered the planned drawdown of £20M from EIB in March. The Council noted its conditions relating to the future drawdown: ensuring financial sustainability; meeting covenant tests and having a business case in place for any new capital spend. It also noted that deferral had been discussed with EIB but this is not possible, in part due to the imminent notice of article 50 by the UK Government; any undrawn funds at the end of March would therefore be forfeited.

It was noted that the opportunity cost of not drawing down the loan were significant. The Director of Finance presented data showing the increase in overall cost in the long-term if future debt was sought at commercial rates. This could also introduce funding risks and delays and could jeopardise the further EIB facility. The planned capital programme is essential if the University is to remain competitive. It was also noted that the interest costs are already included in the financial plan, at a higher rate, so there would be no negative financial impact.

Based on the information provided, the Council ***resolved*** to proceed with the £20M drawdown of the EIB facility subject to constraints on its use. The funding would be ring-fenced until the Council authorises it’s spend against an agreed business case.

[iii] Minute 641 **(Pontio)**; In July 2016, Pontio costs were capitalised, based on total spend of £52.4m. Since then the project cost, before recovery of liquidated damages, utility costs and defect repairs, has risen to £52.7m and looks likely to rise to £53.0m. The University hopes to resolve of the final account by May 2017.

Expert advice has been sought and the Director of Finance presented an update on the most likely scenarios for the settlement of the project. The Council were pleased to note that further financial risk is limited as the worst case scenario is expected to settle around the value of the fixed asset and will recover this year’s costs. The central case would result in a £1.3m credit to the University and the best case would result in a £2.7m credit to the University. It was noted that actual cash committed is currently very close to the central estimate.

[iv] Minute 642 (**Human Resources/Pensions Matters**) : The Director of Human Resources reported that the University continues to liaise with Trades Unions to consider the implications of proposals arising from the Financial Sustainability Board. A new form of consultation has been agreed and University policies have been amended to reflect the potential need for compulsory redundancies.

1. The University Secretary informed the Council that following the agreement in the Council Meeting in September, contracts have been exchanged for the disposal of Pen Parc with an expected completion date of 17 February 2017.

**ETHICS COMMITTEE**

1. The Report of the meeting of the Ethics Committee held on the 10th November 2016 (attached as Appendix III to the official copy of the Minutes) was approved.
2. With particular reference to Minute 218 **(Animal Welfare and Ethical Review Body Annual Report**); the council noted the Annual Report.

**NOMINATIONS AND GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE**

1. The Report of the meeting of the Nominations & Governance Committee held on the 13th January 2017 (attached as Appendix IV to the official copy of the Minutes) was approved.
2. With particular reference to :

[1] Minute 134 **(Chancellor)**; it was noted that all staff, students and Council members had been invited to submit their nominations for University Chancellor by the 6th January 2017 and 16 individuals had been nominated. On the recommendation of the Nominations Committee, the Council ***resolved*** that Lord Thomas of Cwmgiedd be invited to take the role of Chancellor. The Council also ***agreed*** to recommend to the Court that the term of the current Chancellor be extended until such time as a replacement has been agreed.

[2] Minute 135 (**Chair of Council**): Lord Elis-Thomas has indicated that he would formally step down from the role of Chair of Council following the meeting in April. The process for identifying a replacement was noted.

[3] Minute 136 (**Membership of Council Committees**): It was **resolved** that the following Council members be re-appointed to serve on the Committees shown for a further term of 3 years:

* Finance and Resources Committee: Dr Karen Jones,
* Health and Safety Committee: Ms Elen Parry Williams
* Ethics Committee: Dr Peter Higson
* Nominations and Governance Committee: Dr Peter Higson

**REMUNERATION COMMITTEE**

The Report of the meeting of the Remuneration Committee held on the 25th November 2016 (attached as Appendix V to the official copy of the Minutes) was approved.

**HUMAN RESOURCES MATTERS**

1. The Council received a report on Human Resources matters, including the development of Equality Champions and events to celebrate International Women’s Day.
2. A list of recent senior appointments was received for information.

**SENATE**

The minutes of the Senate meetings held on 5th December 2016 and the 17th January 2017 were received for information.

**UNIVERSITY TRENDS AND SCHOOL PROFILES**

The University’s Secretary presented the annual report on Student, Staff and Financial Trends, and Academic School Profiles. The Council welcomed the performance data by School and proposed that, in future years, a brief narrative on each School would be helpful.

**KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS**

The Council received data concerning research grants and contracts awarded, student numbers, applications, and quarterly financial performance indicators.

**UPDATE FROM THE STUDENTS’ UNION**

The Council received an update report from the Students’ Union for information.

**SEALING**

The Council ratified the sealing of documents listed in Agendum 13.