Bangor University

**COUNCIL MINUTES**

At an extraordinary meeting of the Council held in the University on Friday, 23rd June 2017.

**Present** :

Dr Alwyn Roberts (Chair), Mrs Stephanie Barbaresi, Professor Andrew Edwards, Professor John Hughes, Professor Jerry Hunter, Dr Griff Jones, Mr Marc Jones, Miss Mirain Llwyd, Dr Lorrie Murphy, Ms. Ellen Parry Williams, Miss Ruth Plant, Professor Jo Rycroft-Malone, Mr Conor Savage, Professor David Shepherd, Professor Paul Spencer, Professor Carol Tully, Professor Oliver Turnbull, Professor Graham Upton, Mr David Williams, University Secretary, Director of Human Resources, Director of Finance, and the Director of Property and Campus Services.

Sir Paul Lambert joined the meeting by telephone.

**Apologies** :

Dr Peter Higson, Mrs Alison Lea-Wilson, Professor Richard Parry-Jones. Dr Tomos Dafydd, Dr Karen Jones, Mrs Julie Perkins.

**WELCOME**

The Chair welcomed Ruth Plant, the new President of the Students’ Union, and Mirain Llwyd, the new UMCB President, to their first meeting of the Council. The positive contribution of the Students’ Union to the Council in recent years was noted.

It was noted that this is an extraordinary meeting of the Council called to give Council members an opportunity to comment on the plans being developed by the University to address financial sustainability. The meeting is an opportunity for the Council to provide accountability and oversight of the plans.

**VICE-CHANCELLOR’S BUSINESS**

The Vice-Chancellor noted that the University had recently been awarded Gold in the Teaching Excellence Framework, and the only Welsh University to receive Gold. The panel noted that students from all backgrounds achieve consistently outstanding outcomes and a number of areas were specifically highlighted as evidence of the judgement. The Council congratulated the University on this performance and particularly thanked those involved.

**ACHIEVING FINANCIAL SUSTAINABILITY**

1. The Vice-Chancellor presented a plan setting out clear and detailed actions for achieving financial sustainability through academic restructuring and restructuring of Professional Services. Detailed proposals had been circulated to Council members in advance of the meeting. The following points were noted:

[1] Financial modelling has indicated that in order to achieve the level of savings required we need to consider reducing the University staff number by approximately 170 FTE delivering a saving of £8.5m.

[2] Proposals have been developed for integrating cognate disciplines into a smaller number of Schools in three Colleges. Whilst proposing to reduce the number of Schools, the plan seeks to maintain the broad range of academic disciplines offered by the University

[3] In the central service domain, the proposal is to create a smaller number of larger services with cognate functions. Each service would be led by an experienced director who is capable of managing the efficiency and effectiveness of their functions.

[4] Proposals have been developed to create a sustainable and consistent support structure for the University’s Colleges by establishing three new College Support Teams with clearly defined functions and common roles to provide effective and efficient administrative and technical support.

[5] The University has had a freeze in recruitment in place for some time and a voluntary severance scheme was opened earlier this year and again in the last few months. Based on the latest information about current vacancies and agreed voluntary severances the estimated number of redundancies still required is 106. It is hoped that this number will be reduced further and the University Executive has agreed to do everything possible to avoid compulsory redundancies, however this could not be guaranteed.

[6] The Council are not asked to take any decisions today but are invited to comment on the proposed plans and are asked, if thought fit, to agree the University’s plan to begin consultation with its recognised unions under s188 TULRCA 1992, and with staff, on these restructuring proposals. The Council is also asked to note the preliminary work since 22 May 2017 which has already been undertaken by the University, under s188 of the 1992 Act, to consult with its recognised unions upon ways to avoid redundancy or reduce the number of potential redundancies or to mitigate the potential effects of redundancy upon staff.

1. The Director of Human Resources outlined the consultation arrangements and HR processes that would be followed. Formal consultation upon these proposals would be opened the following week until 1 September 2017 and during this period regular meetings would be arranged with Trades Unions in order to consult with a view to reaching agreement. Feedback will be taken on board and a final proposal will be taken to the Executive and Council in September. Implementation will be in line with the Management of Change Policy agreed with the unions.
2. The Council broadly welcomed the plans, noting that they would be transformational and necessary for the future of the University. In the subsequent discussion, following points were noted:

[1] Consultation with students through the Students’ Union will be a priority once the business cases have been issued for consultation. From a student perspective it is expected that that there will be little change and existing academic disciplines will continue to be taught and the point of delivery should be unchanged.

[2] The balance between teaching and research requires further consideration and how the plan will enhance areas of excellence and align with KPIs.

[3] Implementation will be a challenge and concerns were expressed about whether appropriate resource was in place to deliver the plan. A programme with broad timescales and resource requirements was requested for the next meeting of the Council.

[4] A more detailed financial plan is required showing the longer term sustainability of the plans, including sensitivity analysis, and the costs of implementation. It was noted that the full 5-year financial forecasts are under development, alongside a business case for the provision of costs as a ‘fundamental restructuring’ and these would be considered at the next meeting of the Council. Assurance was sought that the plans delivered enough savings.

[5] There is need to keep risk assessments under constant review and mitigate risks throughout the next few months.

[6] The plan needs to deliver a sustainable university, not just in financial terms. Assurance was sought that the full subject breadth of the University is sustainable and further information was requested about the future vision of the University.

[7] Concern was expressed about Welsh medium activity and assurance was given that this would not be diminished, both in terms of teaching and support staff.

[8] It is important to ensure that consultation and dialogue genuinely take on board the expertise of staff to refine, improve and shape the business cases.

1. The Council ***agreed*** in principle that the plans met the requirements of sustainability and supported the plans for consultation with trades unions and staff, recognising that as a result of such consultation, the plans could change. The Council sought reassurance on a number of issues as outlined, but were now better informed to formally approve the plans at the next scheduled meeting of the Council, subject to consultation with the University’s recognised trades unions (under s188 TULRCA 1992) and staff, before any final decisions on those proposals are made or any implementation carried out.